

Developing a Foundation for Quality Guidance for arts organisations and artists in Scotland working in participatory settings

A report commissioned by Creative Scotland

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	5
Executive Summary	7
CHAPTER ONE: ABOUT THIS STUDY	23
Circumstances and Purpose of this work	23
Methodological approaches taken	24
CHAPTER TWO: IMPORTANT CONTEXT AND NUANCES	29
What do we mean by ‘participatory arts’?	29
Nuances in understanding quality	35
Purpose for developing a quality framework for participatory arts	40
CHAPTER THREE: QUALITY CONCEPTS AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT	43
Defining quality	43
How can quality be achieved?	44
Continuous quality improvement	47
Perspectives on quality from participatory arts contexts	49
Recognising different lenses on quality	
CHAPTER FOUR: ARTICULATING QUALITY PRINCIPLES FOR PARTICIPATORY ARTS	57
Aspirational objectives for participatory arts	57
Articulating quality principles	58
Approaches to measuring quality against principles	69
CHAPTER FIVE: KEY QUALITY CONDITIONS AND HOW STAKEHOLDERS INFLUENCE THEM	73
Quality conditions	73
External stakeholders and their role in enabling quality	80
Evidence from the sector on the realities of partnership working	84
CHAPTER SIX: SUPPORTING THE SECTOR THROUGH A QUALITY FRAMEWORK	89
The need for ‘scaffolding’	89
What kind of support do artists need?	90
A cross-artform approach or sector-specific?	95
Existing resources and models	96
Existing frameworks and tools of potential interest to Creative Scotland	98
CHAPTER SEVEN: QUALITY AND CREATIVE SCOTLAND	105
Review of Quality Framework (2009) in context of current perspectives	105
Specialist Advisers and artistic quality	109
Quality criteria inherent in funding programmes	110
Foundations of the Online Creativity Portal	112
Youth Arts Strategy	114
CHAPTER EIGHT: KEY LEARNING POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	117
A. The nature, components and format of a quality framework	117
B. Engaging the sector in a quality process	127
C. Summary of proposed next steps for Creative Scotland	132
D. Moving forward: what else is happening	132
BIBLIOGRAPHY	135

LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Artistic Vibrancy Self-Reflection Tool (Australia Council for the Arts)
- Appendix 2: Infographic depicting Artist-Partner views on quality (Artworks Scotland)
- Appendix 3. HMIE's *How Good is Our Community Learning and Development?* Framework
- Appendix 4. Use of resources to inform this study
- Appendix 5. Full dataset and assessment of quality frameworks and resources (*electronic only*)

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Nature of source materials informing this study (n=102)	26
Figure 2: Focus of source materials informing this study (n=102)	26
Figure 3: Participatory Settings worked in by % Artists	31
Figure 4: Level of engagement on participatory arts spectrum	32
Figure 5: Brown's Five Modes of Arts Participation	33
Figure 6: Locus of this Study on a combined Audience Involvement Spectrum	34
Figure 7: Gradual, Incremental and Breakthrough Quality Improvements	48
Figure 8: Quality Lenses in Participatory Arts	53
Figure 9: Summary of Quality Principles	59
Figure 10: Evidence For Principle 1. Artistic Distinction	60
Figure 11: Evidence For Principle 2. Authenticity And Social Relevance	61
Figure 12: Evidence For Principle 3. Inspiring And Engaging	62
Figure 13: Evidence For Principle 4. Participant-Centred	63
Figure 14: Evidence For Principle 5. Purposeful, Active And Hands-On	64
Figure 15: Evidence For Principle 6. Progression For Participants (And Legacy)	65
Figure 16: Evidence For Principle 7. Participant Ownership	66
Figure 17: Evidence For Principle 8. Suitably Situated And Resourced	67
Figure 18: Evidence For Principle 9. Properly Planned, Evaluated And Safe	68
Figure 19: Occurrence of Essential and Important Factors, from Artists' viewpoint	78
Figure 20: Decision Makers who Impact the Quality of Participatory Arts Experiences	82
Figure 21: Support needs for artist confidence, by career stage	95
Figure 22: Excerpt from Helix Arts' Dialogic Participatory Practice Conversations	101
Figure 23: ACE Self Evaluation Framework sample page: Quality of Experience	102
Figure 24: A Quality Improvement 'Escalator' in Constant Upward Motion	120
Figure 25: Integrated Quality System Model	126
Figure 26: How a Quality Framework might Interface with the Sector	131

The purpose of this study

This study has been commissioned to provide a foundation for a quality framework for the participatory arts in Scotland, rationalising, synthesising and condensing learning from the body of knowledge extant in the fields of arts, culture and education (and emerging from the Artworks programme), which can inform the development of a guidance toolkit at a later stage. There is currently no commonly used reference point for quality in participatory settings, to aid staff within Creative Scotland and the sector for funding this work or planning organisational developments. Once this is developed it will feed into a new framework and guidance on Quality for the arts in Scotland, based on solid foundations of knowledge and best practice.

Creative Scotland's focus on quality in participatory arts settings represents a significant development. Participatory arts are becoming more prevalent and subject to greater demand (Kay 2012), which is evidenced by recent reporting by the Institute for Research in the Social Science (IRISS) that social care employers are reliant on commissioning artists to deliver activities with people who use services (Pattoni 2013).

A number of investigations have found gaps in recognition and support for participatory arts and a lack of a framework for strengthening practice and capturing outcomes (Schwarz 2014, Lowe 2011, Siedel et al 2010, Lord et al 2012). Creative Scotland is in a unique position to facilitate developments in this sector in the interests of managing quality in its funded activities. Through its development of a new quality framework for participatory arts, Creative Scotland can lead the way in a new, informed understanding of quality and how best to foster it.

Definitions and nuances

When using the term “participatory arts” this report references:

- Artists from across artforms working with participants in a range of societal settings
- Where the creative control exercised by the participant extends to co-creation or inventive arts participation

There are many nuances that have developed through previous thinking and reporting on this subject, and it is the intention of this report to build on what has gone before. Thanks to the identification of a number of challenges in addressing quality by researchers such as Seidel et al in the US, and the fruitful work of the Artworks pathfinders to investigate more

deeply participatory arts work and notions of quality, this study is able to draw on many important insights and to build on established findings. One of the most significant of these is a move towards a more holistic understanding of quality.

When used in the arts sector, the term “quality” is commonly perceived as meaning something fit for purpose, meeting specifications and stakeholder expectations, achieving the very best results and outcomes, and quality is also applied to how an organisation is managed, how services or projects are run, and those who deliver the work (Schwarz 2014 p8).

In terms of what quality is *not*, according to the British Chartered Quality Institute (CQI):

- Quality is not perfection, a standard, a procedure, a measure or an adjective.
- No amount of inspection changes the quality of a product or service.
- Quality does not exist in isolation

Holistic understanding of quality

Thinking continues to develop to produce a more holistic view of the “qualities” that make up quality, acknowledging both processes and the final product as important. This more holistic approach is exemplified by Matarasso’s Five Phases of Participatory Arts, which embody both planning and output in a holistic view of an arts project, from *conception* through *contracting*, *working*, *creation*, and *completion* (Matarasso 2013).

To take a holistic view of quality means acknowledging the influence of each phase of a project on ultimate quality and not just the creative/participatory phase. This correlates strongly with evidence from beyond the arts sector that quality can only be ‘*built in*’ during early planning stages.

Matarasso stresses that *it is possible to identify the characteristics, the objective qualities*, that need to be in place to ensure a good participatory arts process (Matarasso 2013 p9), underlining the importance of underpinning *principles*. And even though it can never be absolutely guaranteed in advance that the final project or showcase will be an artistic success, the evidence shows that “a good quality process can form a reliable precondition for creating good art” (Matarasso 2013 p9), meaning that there are quality *conditions* that can be planned for.

Crucial distinctions and conditions

The view of the Chartered Quality Institute is that *when someone is assigned responsibility for quality, this means giving a person the right to cause things to happen. With this right should be delegated the authority to control the processes* which deliver the output, the quality of which the person is responsible for (CQI 2013b).

This is an important statement as it has been recognised by several recent studies (Seidel et al 2010, Dean 2012, Pheby 2012), and contended in this one, that there are many aspects of a participatory arts project that are outside the artist’s control.

The quality of anything, while influenced by many groups, has to be *first specified and then built in*. It cannot be assured, audited, or tested into the entity (Marino 2007, p35). This strengthens the rationale for the focus to be on providing conditions for quality to occur, and recognising where responsibility can reasonably be placed.

Quality can only be “built in” during the development process (Baker 2007, cited in Marino 2007 p21). In a participatory arts context, this would equate to the planning, resourcing and situating of a project and relates back to the significance of Matarasso’s *five phases* of participatory arts projects.

Crucially *once quality has been built in, subsequent “deployment, operation, and maintenance processes must not degrade it”* (Marino 2007 p21). This statement underlines the potential impact that, in a participatory arts context, external factors controlled by hosts, partners and other stakeholders can have on the delivery of quality work.

In summarising key factors in a study undertaken on successful quality management approaches, the Chartered Quality Institute notes that in almost every case, quality hinges on these key elements:

- the **objectives** which the organisation is trying to achieve
- **the resources required to ensure that processes can function**
- **the factors that can influence how (well) the processes operate**
- the processes themselves
- the outcomes of the processes (CQI 2013a)

Defined principles are considered essential to establish a common understanding of what is desired before being able to judge whether quality has been achieved (Marino 2007). With respect to participatory arts, the need for a quality framework based on clearly defined principles is equally pertinent. This is what has been missing from historic quality frameworks devised by the Scottish Arts Council and inherited by Creative Scotland. It is interesting to note that in an industrial context, such specification is deemed critical to any contract. Yet historically in an arts council context, artists have been asked to deliver quality participatory arts work without a defined set of principles against which the quality is characterised or measured. Therefore, *determining the aspirational values for and desired features of funded participatory arts work has to be central to any quality framework developed*.

Continuous Quality Improvement

The approach to ‘quality assurance’ has evolved into a contemporary concept of ‘quality improvement’ as expectations change and what was considered good practice previously is no longer appropriate for changing times. Continuous Quality Improvement forms the basis of HMIE’s *How Good Is Our ...* framework and has been recommended by previous researchers (Bamford 2010; Schwarz 2014) as the *most appropriate approach for quality development* in educational and participatory arts settings.

Diversity of need and purpose

The findings from Artworks' artist consultations reinforce the reality that each project has a unique set of requirements, context and content and, as such, needs to be developed individually and assessed according to its specific context and objectives. It is therefore *counterproductive to adopt a formulaic approach to establishing quality* or seek to replicate processes from other contexts or settings (Salamon 2013 p17).

Ideas about what constitutes quality can and should *vary across settings*, depending on the purposes and values of the programme and its community (Seidel et al 2010 p45). The task, then, is to produce a common framework for evaluating and assessing quality that accords with diversity of need and purpose across genres and settings. The approach must be a holistic one that enables different 'qualities' of each piece of work to be acknowledged, as well as recognising that experiences and expectations of quality will vary according to different stakeholders in the project. This leads into the vital concept of 'lenses' of quality.

Incorporating different lenses on quality for a holistic view

Seidel et al, in their education study on participatory arts, realised that respondents were approaching the question from a variety of different stakeholder perspectives, and commenting on different elements of quality. Predominant dimensions of quality were characterised as different 'lenses' through which to view quality: *student learning, teacher pedagogy, community dynamics, and environment* (Seidel et al 2010).

Likewise Bamford, writing for the Scottish Arts Council in 2010 also in an education context, drew out concepts of quality from the perspectives of: *The Consumer; The Commissioner or Partner; and the Professional Artist* (Bamford 2010). For the purposes of this study, these perspectives have been conflated and characterised as *participant experience, artist intentions and practice, the commissioner or partner's intentions, setting/group dynamic, and project facilities*.

Figure 8: Quality Lenses in Participatory Arts



Each lens helps to bring focus on a number of particular, observable elements that give a holistic indication of quality arts learning experiences. Seidel et al emphasise that that the quality of any of these elements cannot stand alone; they all contribute to the quality of the experience. Chapter Three of this report captures research from Artworks and other studies on what quality might look like from each of these perspectives.

Establishing quality principles for participatory arts

It is vital to be clear about the purpose of establishing quality principles in order to know whether the work has met its purpose and how it can be further improved. *Any quality principles need to stem from what is trying to be achieved*, which makes it important to have recognised *purpose, objectives* and *aspirational values* for doing the work. Good practice would be for project aims, objectives and desired outcomes to be agreed by all project partners at the very outset during the *Conception* phase.

Principles should be intended as list as “guidelines rather than regulations, to meet “practitioners’ aspirations to do their best and not just ... to regularize their work” (Schwarz 2014, p23 citing White 2010).

Aside from reflecting aspirational values, quality principles tend to be built upon recognised good practice. To be effective, a quality framework needs to articulate what high quality work ‘looks like’ i.e. its characteristics.

There exists *a general consensus on the elements that characterise quality* participatory arts experiences (Schwarz 2014, p27). Schwarz’s paper presents in some detail the quality approaches taken in quality frameworks constructed in recent years by sector agencies including Arts Council England. Many of the same frameworks also informed this research study.

A useful launching point for this investigation was a comprehensive study from 2012 by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) for Arts Council England (ACE), which gathered an extremely large dataset to capture perspectives on what constitutes quality in

an educational arts setting (Lord et al 2012). Indeed, the list of seven quality principles on arts education generated by the report has since been incorporated by ACE into its Priorities for 2011-2015.

This research has found that the seven quality principles defined by NFER in the context of arts education are consistent with concepts of quality in the participatory arts more broadly, requiring only minimal nuancing as demonstrated in Figure 9 overleaf. This study has identified two additional quality considerations (items 8 and 9 below), based on evidence and insights from stakeholders in participatory arts work.

Figure 9: Summary of Quality Principles

NFER Principles adopted by ACE <i>... in context of children, young people and arts education</i>	Common quality principles synthesised through this research <i>... in context of participatory arts</i>
1. Striving for Excellence	1. Artistic distinction and professionalism
2. Emphasising authenticity	2. Authenticity and social relevance
3. Being inspiring and engaging	3. Inspiring, engaging
4. Ensuring a positive child-centred experience	4. Participant-centred
5. Actively involving children and young people	5. Purposeful, active and hands-on
6. Providing a sense of personal progression	6. Progression for participants
7. Developing a sense of ownership and belonging	7. Participant ownership
	8. Suitably situated and resourced
	9. Properly planned, evaluated and safe
Lord et al (2012); ACE (undated)	

Chapter Four of this report maps out in some detail the nine quality principles that emerged from, and indeed correlated across, the 30 different frameworks and studies we looked at, showing how evidence collated synthesises into the themes. The full dataset and assessment of the frameworks and resources reviewed has been made available in Appendix 5 (*available in electronic copy only*).

Approaches to Measuring Quality against Principles

While there are generally recognised principles of what represents quality participatory arts work, unfortunately there *there is no existing single framework for understanding and introducing measures for quality*, as concluded in the Artworks Evaluation Literature Review. The problem seems to centre on identifying appropriate indicators for quality that may be measured.

Nevertheless by looking at existing frameworks and literature, it is possible to identify distinct approaches that have been used to date in measuring quality. Three useful approaches are provided by:

Lowe (2011) in his <i>Audit of Participatory Arts Practice for Artworks</i>	Proposing that excellence in participatory arts can be measured and understood through a series of indicators relating to: <i>Elements of excellence in the participatory process</i> <i>Excellence in the work produced/product</i> <i>Excellence in the impact of the work</i> Capturing evidence from satisfaction of Artists, Users/Participants, Critics/Audience
Bamford (2010) developing the Creativity Portal for SAC	Recommends that quality assessment of arts and education partnerships include measurement of: <i>Levels of risk taking</i> <i>Partnerships</i> <i>Levels of shared and collaborative planning;</i> <i>Detailed reflection and evaluation practices;</i> <i>Awareness of and reaction to local contexts</i> <i>Opportunities for presentation/publication and public communication</i> <i>Professional development provisions</i>
HMIE framework for <i>How Good Is Our Community Learning and Development?</i> (HMIE 2006a)	The key indicators developed by HMIE are structured as follows: <i>What key outcomes have we achieved?</i> <i>How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?</i> <i>How good is our delivery of key processes?</i> <i>How good is our management?</i> <i>How good is our leadership?</i> <i>What is our capacity for improvement?</i> HMIE guidance outlines extensive performance outcomes and measures for each of these indicators.

It is necessary to develop indicators specific to participatory arts practice and settings, engaging the sector as far as possible. Artworks reports that artists believe new ways of evaluating and measuring participatory arts practice and projects are needed, to define what constitutes success (Salamon 2013a p5).

Arts Council England is currently working with the arts and cultural sector to develop a set of metrics which will allow it to measure the “value and impact” of its funding investments with regard to its goals for excellence and work “by, with and for children and young people” (ACE 2014).

Enabling Pre-Conditions for Quality to Occur

If quality can only be planned for and ‘built in’ early in the process, *the only feasible way to manage quality is to focus attention on fulfilling the conditions* required for quality to occur.

Three studies in particular offer useful insights into the conditions for quality in participatory arts: Lowe’s Audit of Practice for Artworks (2011), Dean’s Peer-to-Peer Networks study for Artworks Scotland (2012) and Salamon’s Artist Labs Report for Artworks (2013). Chapter Five of this report presents the key findings from these important pieces of research, and synthesises them into what might be considered a list of preconditions for quality participatory arts work.

The Artworks Scotland research signals that the value of reflection time is a critical element, alongside the importance of buy in and trust between all partners (Dean 2012). As evidenced by Lowe’s findings, there are key *processes* that need to be in place (Lowe 2011) that are seen as essential and important to support quality.

Partnerships and stakeholder dedication emerge as a crucial theme in Dean’s study with “having ‘buy in’ and trust between all partners/participants”, “feeling valued” by each other, “shared processes of working together across planning and evaluation” and clear and realistic expectations all being *essential* preconditions. The same factors also arise in HMIE’s understanding of conditions for quality (HMIE 2007b).

Drawing these sources together, *key quality conditions* may be understood as:
(in no order of importance)

- **Sufficient resources, including fit for purpose environment**
- **Sufficient time, for planning, building relationships and implementing project**
- **Designed and resourced for participants’ needs and support**
- **Opportunities to reflect, adapt, evaluate**
- **Realistic aims**
- **Understanding of artist and partner roles**
- **Buy-in and Trust by all parties**
- **Clear and realistic expectations**
- **Democratic decision-making (artist-partner-participant)**

While several of these conditions may seem plainly obvious (for instance having sufficient time, resources and appropriate content), *the significant insight gained by Artworks and through this research is that these preconditions for quality are NOT always in place* for participatory arts projects, meaning that expectations of quality outputs and outcomes are heavily undermined. When Dean’s study investigated how often these quality factors occur from artists’ point of view, it found that *many of the essential and important factors occur only sometimes, and many happen rarely* (Dean 2012, pp27-28), indicating that there is much more that can be done to enable quality in participatory arts.

Further research by Artworks Scotland investigating partners' perceptions of how often quality conditions are in place revealed a significant disconnect with the perceptions of artists, underlining the importance of clear expectations and strong communication in partnerships. If we value the view of the Chartered Institute of Quality that "*when someone is assigned responsibility for quality ... with this right should be delegated the authority to control the processes which deliver the output*" (CQI 2013b) then it is clear that [these findings highlight a significant issue that must be resolved if a quality framework is to be meaningful and effective](#). Key to this is engaging external stakeholders in participatory arts work (namely partners and commissioners/co-funders) in recognising overarching quality principles and enabling quality conditions.

The results of Dean's research revealing divergent artist and partner perspectives assume still greater significance once we appreciate the influence that partners in participatory arts projects can have over the delivery of such work.

Stakeholder Theory and the Interconnectedness of Decision Makers

The significance of stakeholders, particularly Partners, has been outlined by Seidel et al (2010) in terms of the *interconnectedness of decision makers* and the impacts that they have on whether quality outcomes are possible.

Seidel et al characterise three groups of decision makers who are able to influence the quality of arts learning experiences:

- [Those in the "room"](#) *meaning participants, artists and occasionally others, such as carers, support aides, parents*
- [Those just outside the room](#) *i.e. people who may interact with those in the outer-most circle and who may visit the room in which arts learning experiences occur, like supervisors, programme administrators, arts coordinators, parents, mentors, evaluators, and site liaisons.*
- [Those furthest from the room](#) *the official who may rarely, if ever, enter the room, yet have significant control over decisions relating to the work (like funders, arts coordinators, committee or board members, representatives from local government)*
(Seidel et al 2010, p61)

The findings of Seidel et al's research is [that those just outside the room and those even further away who may never, or only rarely, enter the room, have powerful influences on the likelihood that those in the room will have a high quality arts learning experience](#). Their decisions are also critical to whether that quality can be achieved and sustained consistently over time and across settings (Seidel et al 2010 p62).

This brings us back to an important insight gained from a global view of quality (true for industry or the arts), that: [once quality has been built in, subsequent "deployment, operation, and maintenance processes must not degrade it"](#) (Marino 2007 p21).

Artworks has done a great deal to investigate the realities of working with partners in participatory arts settings from the point of view of artists. Key findings from artist focus groups include:

- Stakeholders influencing outcomes in ways that practitioners (who are typically less prescriptively goal centred) find unsatisfactory
- Stakeholders often enforcing content control where practitioners don't believe this is suitable (Pheby, 2012).

Results from artist consultations by ArtWorks Scotland highlight similar problems in partnership working in participatory arts, specifically:

- Under-developed relationships between artists and host/commissioners;
- Unrealistic commissioner expectations; and
- The absence of a common language across different sectors/stakeholders (Consilium 2012a).

Likewise, recent research undertaken by the Institute for Research in Innovation and Social Services (IRISS) brings together learning points for both artists and social care practitioners developing and delivering participatory arts projects (this is outlined in Chapter Five).

The challenge of creating a meaningful dialogue among partners is profound, and it doesn't happen without intentionality and serious effort (Seidel et al 2010, p69). The goal for a Creative Scotland quality framework should be to achieve alignment between all stakeholders on what constitutes quality, what quality experiences look like and how best to create these experiences in a specific setting.

Supporting the Sector in Delivering Quality

For artists and other stakeholders to engage meaningfully with a quality framework, it will require 'scaffolding' and supporting resources. A balance of *contextual* (setting) and *personal* (skills) support is needed (Killick 2012).

A review of research across the participatory arts sector by Artworks generates valuable insights into what artists feel would enhance their practice and capacity to achieve quality; these are outlined in detail in Chapter Six of this report.

Key artist support needs
highlighted from sector
consultations are:

- Guidance on what is being aimed for
- Resources and tools for delivery
- Self-reflection tools
- Peer review and support
- Mentoring
- Networks
- Training and CPD

The findings from a range of Artworks consultations are that there would be great value in facilitating *cross artform* dialogue around issues of quality and good practice. But it is

equally important to recognise the *need for specialist knowledge* and experience for work in certain settings (i.e. dementia, people with mental health issues), as highlighted by artists and commissioners and reported by Taylor (2012).

As Schwarz comments in her 2014 Artworks review, there is no shortage of existing guidance out there to be accessed (Schwarz 2014 p10). A list of useful resources and reviews of sector support is given in Chapter Six. Useful models highlighted by this study for Creative Scotland are:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <i>Frameworks for Continuous Quality Improvement</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMIE: How Good Is Our Community Learning and Development? (2007) • Youth Music: Do, Review, Improve... (2013) |
| <i>Self-Reflection Tools</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic Vibrancy Self-Reflection Tool (Australia Council For The Arts) (2009) • Helix Arts Quality Framework (2012) • Arts Council Of England Self-Evaluation Framework (2006) • Practical Tools For Reflection (Seidel et al 2010) |
| <i>Managing Partnerships</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Circles Of Decision Makers: A Tool For Analysing Alignment and Misalignment across Levels Of Decision Makers (Seidel et al 2010) |

Quality and Creative Scotland

This study provides a brief overview of quality approaches manifest across Creative Scotland at present, in order to map areas of strength – and gaps – against the holistic view of quality developed through this study. Specifically, it examines:

- The SAC Quality Framework 2009 in the context of current understanding of quality
- Notions of Artistic Quality inherent in the Specialist Advisor evaluation system
- Quality criteria stated in Creative Scotland funding programmes
- Work to develop the Online Creativity Portal
- Notions of quality in the Youth Arts Strategy 2013

The existing **Quality Framework** from 2009 outlines what an effective and strategic organisation looks like, but does not offer guidance on what might constitute a quality piece of work. Internal documentation from Scottish Arts Council during the drafting of the 2009 Quality Framework demonstrates that many key principles associated with quality in arts education/participatory arts did actually underpin the framework; however, this was not articulated within the actual document. *It is vital that quality principles be communicated to the sector.*

The primary mechanism used by SAC to evaluate artistic quality was the evaluation of funded work by Specialist Advisers. This **Artistic Evaluation framework** offers a useful paradigm for what might be considered quality indicators for public engagement/

education/participatory work. It aligns reasonably closely with more recently conceived principles of quality work with participants including *engagement*, *participant-centred*, *participant ownership*, etc. The Artistic Evaluation Framework may be viewed differently in light of insights from this study that many criteria for quality used in this system *may be outside the direct control of the artist*, underlining the future importance of recognising partner responsibility for quality outputs.

Consultation with Creative Scotland staff overseeing the Public Engagement programme confirms that development of a formal quality framework for participatory arts would help to define and capture important elements for work, and to define fair and achievable measures underpinning the work (Scott 2013). Any quality framework for participatory arts is seen as useful for developing a common language for and understanding of what Creative Scotland means by quality and seeks from projects (Petrie 2014).

The Youth Music Initiative programme relates closely to participatory arts through music education. The intended outcomes for Creative Scotland's **Access to Music Making fund** resonate with key principles identified for participatory arts and the funding criteria map across to several key characteristics of quality in participatory projects.

The development of the **Online Creativity Portal** is based on quality principles that align broadly with generic principles for participatory arts identified in this study. Elements of the Creativity Portal mirror Seidel's Lenses of Quality (2012), and the thinking contained in an internal document drafted in Creative Scotland in April 2011, entitled *Quality in Creative Learning with an Artist*, could provide a useful platform for laying a new quality framework for the participatory arts.

Creative Scotland's recent **Youth Arts Strategy** (2013) aligns very closely with key quality themes and conditions highlighted through this research: recognising the needs of artists, focusing on conditions for quality, providing a range of support tools including networks and information, and creating a framework for CQI through self-reflection. The only thing missing from the formula are explicit guidelines about what quality youth arts is.

In summary, various elements of the quality themes and principles identified through the research for this report are visible in existing Creative Scotland approaches to establishing quality work in the arts. However, *the overriding factor that appears to be missing from all of the apparatus reviewed is clear and detailed guidance for the sector and for applicants on what constitutes "high artistic quality"* and what it is that Creative Scotland would like to aim for, in whatever context (arts education, youth music, public engagement, etc.). This could be expressed through a statement of formal Principles that would overarch all development and funding routes for participatory arts (or indeed, other areas of Creative Scotland's work).

Key Learning Points and Recommendations

The requirement for this study is to generate key learning points and recommendations for Creative Scotland "addressing the optimum nature, components and format of a robust and relevant quality framework," including measures needed to ensure that a toolkit functions

properly, can be easily understood and used, and is valued (Creative Scotland brief August 2013).

The key learning points and recommendations generated by the study may be summarised as follows:

A. THE NATURE, COMPONENTS AND FORMAT OF A QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Key learning points	Recommendations
Be clear and transparent about the purpose of a quality framework	1. Focus the Quality Framework as a development tool. Align it to funding streams, but in a manner than enables artists to access funding for professional development, project development and networks as well as for delivering projects. 2. Publish the outputs of this research and related useful materials to enhance transparency.
Any framework should focus on Continuous Quality Improvement	3. To achieve CQI, Creative Scotland needs to foster a system that supports honest evaluation and freedom to acknowledge things that don't go right first time, as part of an important learning process. Artists need to feel that they can highlight negative issues without prejudice. 4. Enthuse the sector to embrace a CQI approach for themselves, aided by resources and leadership from Creative Scotland. 5. Work with the sector to identify constructive and non-constrictive modes of evaluation to aid a process of CQI. Purposeful evaluation geared at CQI will include self-reflection but also ways to record impacts and outcomes for participants.
Base everything on agreed Principles	6. Develop a set of guiding principles/aspirations for quality participatory work, and identify indicators for what success looks like against each of the principles, so that all parties to projects know what is being aimed for, why and how. 7. Engage with practitioners to develop and test the quality principles and develop success indicators through a series of workshops or roundtables, fine-tuning if needed the list generated by this study and rationalising it within different settings.
Focus management approach on facilitating optimum quality conditions	8. Set the focus on ensuring that conditions for quality are in place, recognising the impact of these conditions on likely outcomes, and recognising that the responsibility for quality is shared by partners as well as the artist. 9. Provide guidance for artists and partners on building constructive partnerships for quality, identifying optimum conditions for quality experiences and outcomes from all stakeholder perspectives, and setting realistic aims and expectations for projects.
Recognise Stakeholder responsibilities for quality	10. Recognise partner's roles and influences in the delivery of participatory arts projects for quality product and outcomes. Funders and partners together need to help fulfil the conditions that enable the artist to reach for high quality experiences. 11. Create mechanisms to foster understanding between project partners/stakeholders to articulate shared aims (Principles), understand any varying expectations, and identify mutual benefits for the project.
Avoid a prescriptive	12. Don't prescribe: allow flexibility for principles to be applied as

approach	appropriate in different projects and different settings, and with different emphasis.
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B. ENGAGING THE SECTOR IN A QUALITY PROCESS

Key learning points	Recommendations
Engage the sector to make sure QF is valued, understood and used	13. Establish a forum or body to represent artists working in participatory arts settings, with which to engage. Utilise precedents formed by Artworks Scotland and build on their experience as basis for developing a more permanent and cohesive platform for participatory artists 14. Practitioners and partners who have already engaged in discussions around quality through Artworks Scotland be further mobilised as sector advocates or champions for quality and a culture of CQI. 15. Documented data should be sourced from the sector for the purpose for collective learning, to build a critical mass of understanding from which themes can be pulled out, which can then be used to inform evolving concepts of quality (Lowe 2013).
Provide support for the sector for CQI	16. Scaffolding is needed for a quality framework to support artist needs outlined above. This can draw together existing resources but new materials will need to be produced that relate directly to the quality principles underpinning the new framework. 17. This research should inform work with the sector to produce toolkits most fit for purpose. 18. Promote existing Creative Scotland CPD and mentoring funding opportunities to the participatory arts sector, and broaden the promotion and scope of existing mentoring programmes like the FST's. 19. Support knowledge-sharing among practitioners in participatory arts. Gather evidence of best practice through reflection/evaluation of Creative Scotland-funded projects and share this (anonymising the material).

Figure 26 in Chapter Eight depicts how a Quality Framework/Creative Scotland might interface with a diverse participatory arts sector, illustrating gaps in sector networks and highlighting a missing layer needed at an intermediate level.

Proposed next steps for Creative Scotland

1. Creative Scotland devises a preliminary Quality Framework for Participatory Arts, articulating clear principles and purpose, to engage with the sector for rationalisation and testing.
2. Creative Scotland facilitates the formation of a cross-artform, cross-setting platform through which to engage people working in participatory arts, continuing the pattern of sector engagement which Artworks Scotland has begun to establish.

3. Creative Scotland generates and engages with a wider community of *people interested in quality in participatory arts*, enabling all stakeholder groups to engage in this conversation. It will be important that participant and partner perspectives are included.

This report notes ongoing activities to develop thinking around quality and frameworks going forward from this point - at *Artworks Scotland*, *Artworks Cymru* and *Artworks London*, at *Arts Council of England* and work being taken forward by *Helix Arts* - and recommends that Creative Scotland engage with the continued learning and insights emerging from these endeavours.

And finally, [in answer to the original research questions posed by Creative Scotland](#), a summary of key learning points and recommendations is arranged below to provide direct answers to the questions posed for this study by Creative Scotland.

[1. What do we know about quality from the work that has already been undertaken and what gaps are there in our knowledge?](#)

A great deal has been investigated in recent years concerning quality in participatory arts, providing a rich foundation for building a new, informed approach to enabling and managing quality. Useful evidence from this research is presented in this report concerning defining quality concepts, challenges in addressing quality, ethical dimensions of quality, dangers of instrumentalising participatory art, and so on (see Chapter Three).

A shift has occurred in the form of a focus on Continuous Quality Improvement rather than quality assurance or quality control, recognising the futility of setting benchmarks that become outdated as (hopefully) standards and expectations rise. The most prominent CQI approach is that currently employed by HMIE; it is also already filtering into some other CS contexts (i.e. Youth Arts Strategy). The main gaps in Creative Scotland's existing quality approach are apparent from the old Quality Framework which is mainly process-driven and is lacking components that now recognised in a holistic view of quality. These include qualities of the product itself and the quality of experience for participants and other stakeholders.

[2. Is there a consensus on language, factors, conditions and or indicators for quality?](#)

There are a number of terms related to 'quality' which need to be distinguished. Move away from ideas of quality control or quality assurance (not appropriate for a developmental quality framework) towards a concept of quality management and CQI. The term 'quality' itself has some limitations and a more useful approach is consider the variety of 'qualities' that are inherent in good practice participatory arts work.

There is general consensus in the literature and from sector consultations on what constitute the preeminent 'qualities' of quality participatory arts. These are presented in this report and should form the basis of a set of aspirational principles for work in the sector.

Recognised conditions for quality are consistently cited by the sector (both through Artworks consultations of artists, participants and partners and from academic literature

from the UK and US). The importance of these basic conditions to overall quality outcomes is underlined by global insights on *building in* quality gained from international bodies like the Chartered Institute for Quality. However, it is evident from Artworks Scotland research that most of the time these conditions are *not* currently in place, and also that artist and partner perceptions of the fulfilment of very fundamental quality factors are misaligned.

3. Could the guidance be relevant to partner organisations (for example the prison service or youth sector) and employers as well as the cultural sector and to what extent is the information we have relevant to partners?

This study has highlighted the crucial role of partner organisations as commissioners, collaborators and hosts for participatory arts work, based on *stakeholder theory* and the *interconnectedness of decision makers* (Seidel et al 2010). It will be of paramount importance to engage partners in the quality process, and guidance developed by Creative Scotland will certainly be relevant.

A framework will be needed to foster constructive partnerships between artists and other stakeholders based on clear lines of communication on key issues such as aims, intended outcomes and expectations. Dedicated resources for this purpose will be required. Tools developed by Seidel et al (2010) can be used as a starting point.

4. How simple and generic could we keep the guidance while achieving the outcomes we want?

In order to be relevant across a diverse participatory arts 'sector', the quality framework will need to be founded upon generic principles that guide what everyone should aim for through this kind of work. Overarching quality principles are already recognised in the sector, and have already influenced ACE's approach to work with children and young people (Lord et al 2012; ACE 2013).

5. Should guidance be for arts organisations and individual artists, or should there be two separate tools which dovetail or relate to each other?

While the quality principles should be simple and generic, to allow for different settings and scales of organisation, the ideal would be for setting-specific guidance and examples to be provided. Some guidance will be needed to illustrate 'what quality looks like' against each of the principles, as a reference point for artists working in different contexts on what is being aimed for.

Beyond this, it will be necessary to 'scaffold' the quality framework with tools and resources designed to support practitioners in adopting practices encouraged under a process of continuous quality improvement: i.e. peer review and mentoring, self-reflection and development.

6. What steps are needed to develop the guidance?

Using principles developed from this study, agree with the sector an overarching vision for what people working in participatory arts should aspire to, to form basis for a quality

framework. Engage artists to help develop sector-specific indicators to clarify and illustrate good practice across each of the principles.

7. What steps would we need to take to make sure that the tool was valued, understood and used both within Creative Scotland and the sector?

A Quality Framework has to be seen as a development tool for the benefit of participants, artists and other stakeholders. Guidance needs to be produced on what is intended from a process of CQI, and what is needed from all stakeholders to enable it to happen. Toolkits and other supporting resources will be required to help artists to engage with and benefit from the process, particularly a new focus on conditions and developing constructive partnership relations.

CHAPTER ONE: ABOUT THIS STUDY **1**

CIRCUMSTANCES AND PURPOSE OF THE WORK

At this point in time in the formative years of Creative Scotland, its remit and programmes, there exists no common reference point for officers or for the sector for defining and assessing Quality in the delivery of projects and learning experiences within the arts and creative industries.

Creative Scotland is preparing to develop a new framework and guidance on Quality for the participatory arts in Scotland, based on solid foundations of knowledge and best practice. An impediment to this is that there currently exists no commonly used reference point for quality in participatory settings, to aid staff within Creative Scotland and the sector for funding this work or planning organisational developments. This study was therefore commissioned to provide a foundation for a quality framework by rationalising, synthesising and condensing learning from the body of knowledge extant in the fields of arts, culture and education (and emerging from the Artworks programme), which can inform the development of a guidance toolkit at a later stage.

This report is intended to provide a “useful stepping stone to developing a framework which supports quality both in terms of organisational practices and project planning and development” (Creative Scotland brief, August 2013).

The overarching tasks of the study are to:

- Rationalise and connect the learning from a number of pre-existing documents, reports, digitised content, and current initiatives on quality;
- Identify gaps in knowledge; and
- Report condensed information about quality in relation to work in participatory settings.

Pursuant with Creative Scotland's brief for this work, the report makes recommendations on the nature, components and format of a quality framework and next steps to its development.

Timing

This work was scheduled by Creative Scotland to take place during October 2013 - February 2014. The study was undertaken during a period of increased attention to concepts of quality, and a focus on participatory arts practice in particular. The substantial Artworks programme, funded for 2011-2014 by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and consisting of regional pathfinders exploring aspects of quality, has been of enormous value in gathering evidence and data and advancing thinking around quality in the participatory arts.

In January 2014 Artworks published a paper capturing key findings and perspectives on quality from Artworks research through its various Pathfinders (Schwarz 2014). The focus of that paper, entitled *Quality: because we all want to do better*, overlaps significantly with the brief for this study; however this report goes further in nuancing the optimum approach to managing quality and makes specific recommendations for Creative Scotland.

Arts Council of England (ACE) is also currently undertaking parallel thinking on quality. Based on research commissioned in 2012 from the National Foundation of Education Research (Lord et al 2012), ACE has developed a set of quality principles for work with children and young people. ACE is undertaking ongoing consultations with sector to develop a robust quality framework. This includes consultancy by Helix Arts to establish a peer review network for participatory arts activity with children and young people which is due to report in July 2014.

This study for Creative Scotland is able to draw on knowledge and developments so far in this field, and contextualises it within the scope of Creative Scotland's remit and objectives.

Key Research Questions

The key research questions for this study presented by Creative Scotland were:

1. What do we know about quality from the work that has already been undertaken and what gaps are there in our knowledge?
2. Is there a consensus on language, factors, conditions and or indicators for quality?
3. Could the guidance be relevant to partner organisations (for example the prison service or youth sector) and employers as well as the cultural sector and to what extent is the information we have relevant to partners?
4. How simple and generic could we keep the guidance while achieving the outcomes we want?
5. Should guidance be for arts organisations and individual artists, or should there be two separate tools which dovetail or relate to each other?
6. What steps are needed to develop the guidance?
7. What steps would we need to take to make sure that the tool was valued, understood and used both within Creative Scotland and the sector?)

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TAKEN

The approach and methodology for this study is focused by the research questions above and the required outputs stated by Creative Scotland. Step-by-step, the research approach has been to:

Establish and collate the **body of knowledge** through web research for relevant materials to contribute to the study. Relevant national/international schemes are identified and profiled for comparison and inspiration.

Validate the sources, assessing the context, relevance and rigour of each source to ensure that the study is based on valid materials. To ensure the integrity of material cited in this report, it:

- Cites only material from professional agency, academic or accredited press sources;
- Fully references all data included in the report.

A detailed **Content Analysis** of relevant quality frameworks and structures is undertaken. Resources are reviewed to identify themes, topics, and create a list of **variables** that reveal a set of generic quality principles applicable to the participatory arts. A **database** has been created to organize the data collected effectively and format it by category (See Appendix 5 – in *electronic copy only*).

Literature is **segmented and synthesised** according to key variables to identify common approaches to ensuring and assessing quality.

The dataset is **evaluated** to distinguish important **learning issues** and **best practice**.

Finally, Creative Scotland's existing approach to quality is evaluated against the findings to **highlight gaps or weaknesses** in the current approach and to identify areas for development.

Desk Research

The literature reviewed for this study may be distinguished as:

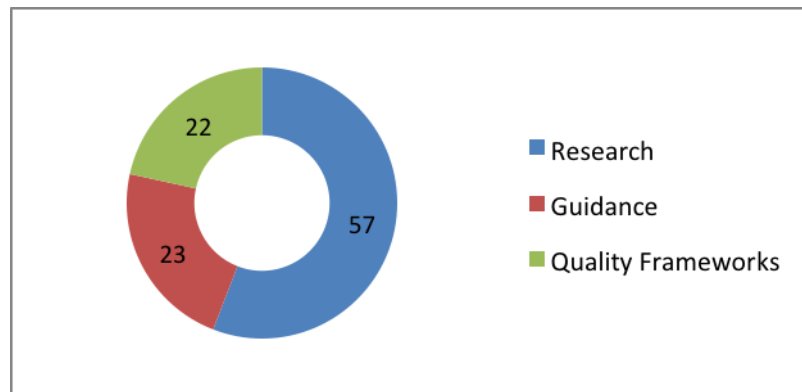
RESEARCH Studies identifying, capturing and developing understandings of quality from a variety of perspectives and contexts within participatory arts and beyond. These include the many Artworks research publications and discussion papers, and seminal studies cited extensively in this report like Seidel et al (2010) *The Qualities of Quality* and Lord et al (2012) *Research and Consultation to Understand the Principles of Quality*.

GUIDANCE Documents, tools and resources provided by agencies concerning quality concepts, evaluation of quality, working in the participatory arts. Key sources include the *Chartered Institute for Quality* and guidance and

support materials developed from within the sector.

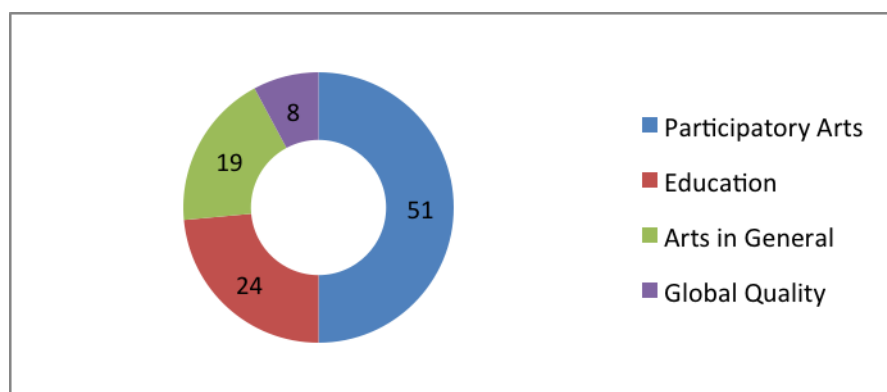
QUALITY FRAMEWORKS Frameworks and quality assurance mechanisms, including codes of practice, standards and competency frameworks.

Figure 1: Nature of source materials informing this study (n=102)



As can be seen in Figure 2 below, within the body of literature accessed and reviewed for this study, the majority of resources (51) are specific to Participatory Arts work and settings, although some specific sector approaches (17) are also found that relate to Community Arts, Music, Dance and Theatre. Reports, studies and frameworks relating specifically to arts education contribute in large measure to this study (24). A small number of texts (8) developing 'global' definitions of quality were able to provide some profound insights for this study. These issued mainly from the Chartered Institute of Quality and the American Quality Institute.

Figure 2: Focus of source materials informing this study (n=102)



Within the dataset on Participatory Arts, the majority of sources (39) are generic regarding setting and artform. However, the dataset includes some studies and frameworks focused on particular settings and target groups which are therefore represented in this study.

These may be distinguished as: Healthcare settings (2); Community settings (3); Youth Arts (2); Young People at Risk (1); Adults (1); Prison settings (1) and Social Services (1).

Appendix 4 contains a full list of resources accessed and how they feed into this study.

Consultative Interviews

In addition to extensive desk research, a number of interviews were undertaken internally at Creative Scotland to explore how quality considerations for participatory arts filter across the organisation, and to gather further perspectives for the study. Key contacts were made externally to engage with ongoing Artworks research and relevant consultancy work on quality and peer review being undertaken for Arts Council England.

<i>Interviews within Creative Scotland</i>	● Joan Parr, Portfolio Manager for Education, Learning and Young People	21 October 2013
	● Chrissie Ruckley, Development Officer	21 October 2013
	● Sambrooke Scott, Portfolio Manager for Audience Development, Participation and Equalities	31 October 2013
	● Colin Bradie, Project Manager Youth Arts	6 January 2014
	● Sharon May, Development Officer Youth Arts	6 January 2014
	● Anne Petrie, Development Officer Public Art	6 January 2014
	● Jaine Lumsden, Acting Portfolio Manager Theatre, Talent Development and Own Art	6 January 2014
<i>External interviews</i>	● Toby Lowe, Helix Arts and Artworks NE member	13 November 2013
	● Dr Fiona Dean, Artworks Scotland researcher	15 January 2014

The following chapter establishes context for this study, and highlights important nuances that must be acknowledged when considering concepts of quality.

CHAPTER TWO: IMPORTANT CONTEXT AND NUANCES

2

This section of the report establishes context for this study, including what can be understood as “participatory arts”, the scope of activities that can be considered within this topic, the parameters of what this study focuses on, and important issues and challenges around dealing with this subject that have been articulated by previous writers.

Key points: this study focuses only on inventive participatory arts where participants are engaged in a minimum of co-creation with an artist, or as creators themselves, as opposed to passive engagement or as material for an artists’ work. It is important to recognise a holistic view of quality, as exemplified by Matarasso’s Five Phases of Participatory Arts, as fundamental to appreciating the processes involved in delivering quality.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “PARTICIPATORY ARTS”?

Terminology

The remit of this study on quality is focused on participatory arts specifically. To establish the parameters of this study on this subject we need to consider first of all, what forms of participation are considered relevant to this research and to recognise the range of settings in which participatory arts work takes place.

The definition of “art in participatory settings” used by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation is: “artists working with participants in different places”. The examples given include “schools, community spaces, prisons, health settings.” (Lowe 2011, p62)

When employing the term “participatory arts”, as we do in this report for simplicity, it is important to note that artists undertaking work in this field do not appear to be in the habit of using this term. Practitioner and commentator Toby Lowe reports that of the artists he interviewed for his *Audit of Practice of “Arts in Participatory Settings”* for Artworks Northeast, only some used the phrase “participatory arts”, and none actually employed the Paul Hamlyn Foundation’s form of words “arts in participatory settings”. In fact Lowe’s respondents used a total of 23 different terms in describing the work they undertake in this field, including “community work” and “engagement” (Lowe 2011, p54).

Furthermore, the term “participatory arts” is not widely used outside the UK and many international case studies noted by Artworks refer instead to “community arts practice” (Tiller 2012, p8).

It is also important to note that there are particular terms which have been popular in the recent past, but which artists seem to be **deliberately moving away from**:

- “Outreach” – at least one organisation in Lowe’s study stated that they are deliberately “moving away from outreach” because of its connotations, being seen “as a journey that organisations have reached the end of”; outreach is seen by one of Lowe’s respondents as “slightly colonial” (Lowe 2011, p55).
- “Creative practitioner” – Two organisations have consciously stopped using this phrase which is strongly associated now with the Creative Partnerships programme (Lowe 2011 p55).

Scale of participatory arts work and where it occurs

According to a research report on *Artists Working in Participatory Settings* commissioned by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for Artworks in 2010, an estimated 200,000- 250,000 artists in the UK “regularly engage in work that requires them to facilitate the learning and creativity of others” (Burns 2010 cited in Schwarz 2013a, p4).

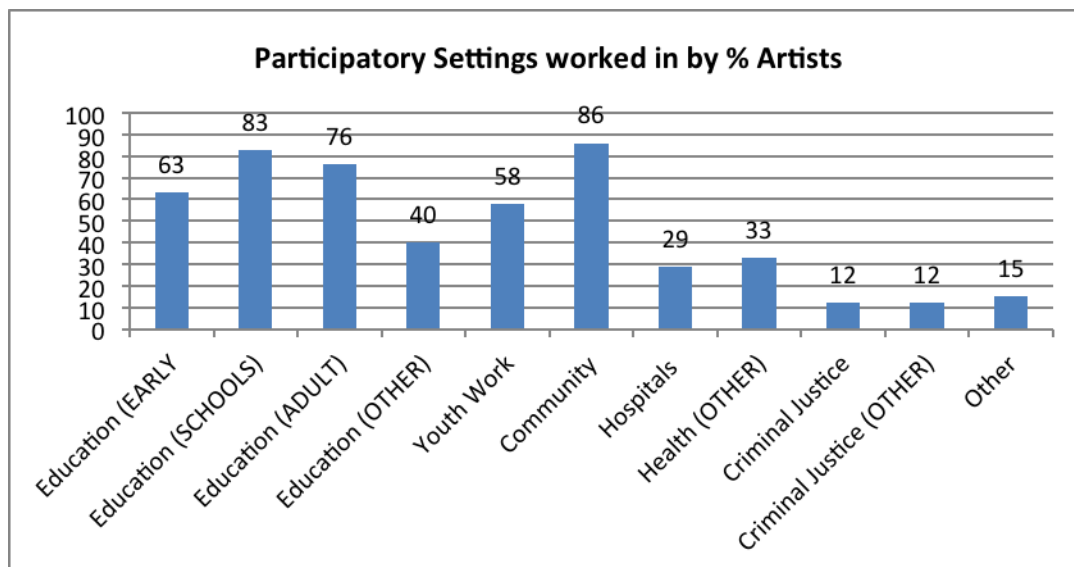
This practice takes place in a myriad of sectors which have been recorded as follows by Artworks:

ARTS	COMMUNITY (which can be geographic)	CULTURAL i.e. gender, ethnicity, disability
CRIMINAL JUSTICE	EDUCATION (across the lifelong learning continuum)	ECONOMIC/
ENVIRONMENT	HEALTH AND WELLBEING	EMPLOYMENT
HOUSING	LIBRARIES	HERITAGE
MUSEUMS	REFUGEES	MEDIA
SOCIAL CARE	SPORT	REGENERATION
		YOUTH

(Schwarz 2013a, pp19-20)

Figure 3 below shows the participatory settings worked in by artists, as recorded in research for Artworks in 2012. It shows that participatory arts work happens predominantly in education and community settings, with a much lower proportion of artists working in criminal justice and healthcare contexts.

Figure 3: Participatory Settings worked in by % Artists



(Consilium 2012 p15)

In terms of the *types of settings* registered by Artworks, these cover every conceivable format:

- Formal, non-formal and informal;
- Open to anyone, for target groups or for closed groups (both institutional and non-institutional);
- Inside and Outside;
- Rural or Urban;
- Real or Virtual (Schwarz 2013a, pp19-20).

Spectrum of participant engagement, and how this study is focused

It is also necessary to make a distinction between different levels of participant engagement in arts work. Leading commentator Toby Lowe of Helix Arts distinguishes several forms of participatory art work:

Art Making

Activity whose primary purpose is to enable artists and participants to work together to produce new artwork, or for artists to work with other people to develop their skills and talent so that they can make their own art

Engagement and outreach

Activity whose primary purpose is to stimulate people's interest in the arts and their desire to make their own art

Providing space and creating communities of practice

The provision of space for people to undertake creative activity and the possibility of meeting like-minded people

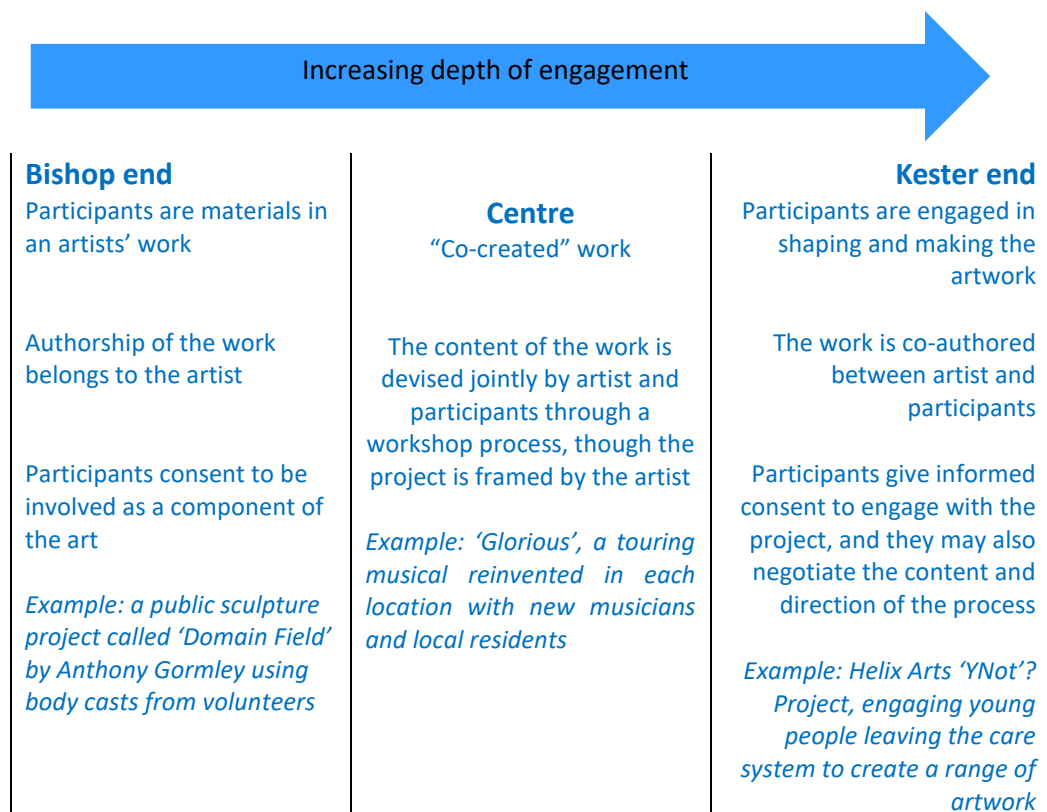
*Progression
opportunities*

Activities focused on enabling participants to pursue further creative activity after their involvement with a particular project or programme

(LOWE 2011, pp14-15)

Levels of engagement in participatory arts may be viewed on a continuum, with opposite ends characterised by theories associated with Kester (2004) and Bishop (2006), as presented by Lowe (2012) as a preface to Helix Arts' Quality Framework. This continuum is demonstrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Level of engagement on participatory arts spectrum

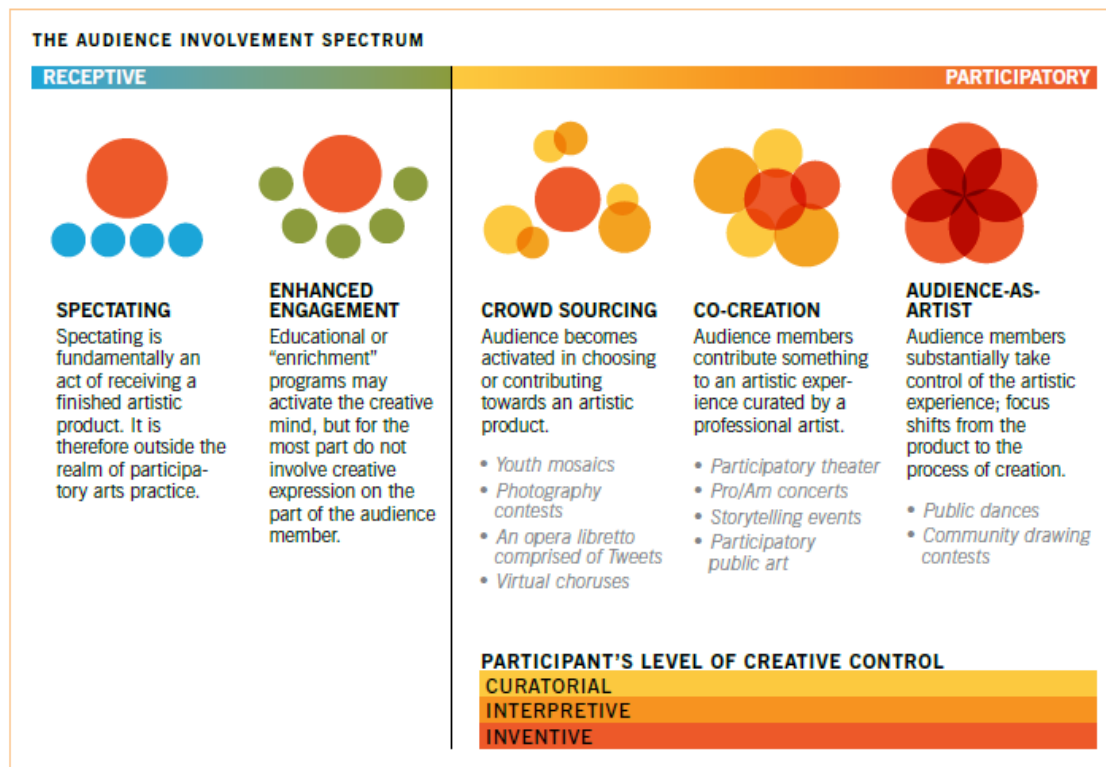


(Lowe 2012 pp3-5)

The nuances of these levels of engagement in terms of the amount of creative control exercised by the participant are expanded further by Brown (2011) who presents five modes of arts participation, from *Spectatorship*, *Enhanced Engagement* and *Crowd Sourcing*, *Co-Creation* through to *Co-Creation* and the *Audience-as-Artist*.

/Figure 5: Brown's Five Modes of Arts Participation (diagram reproduced from Brown 2011)

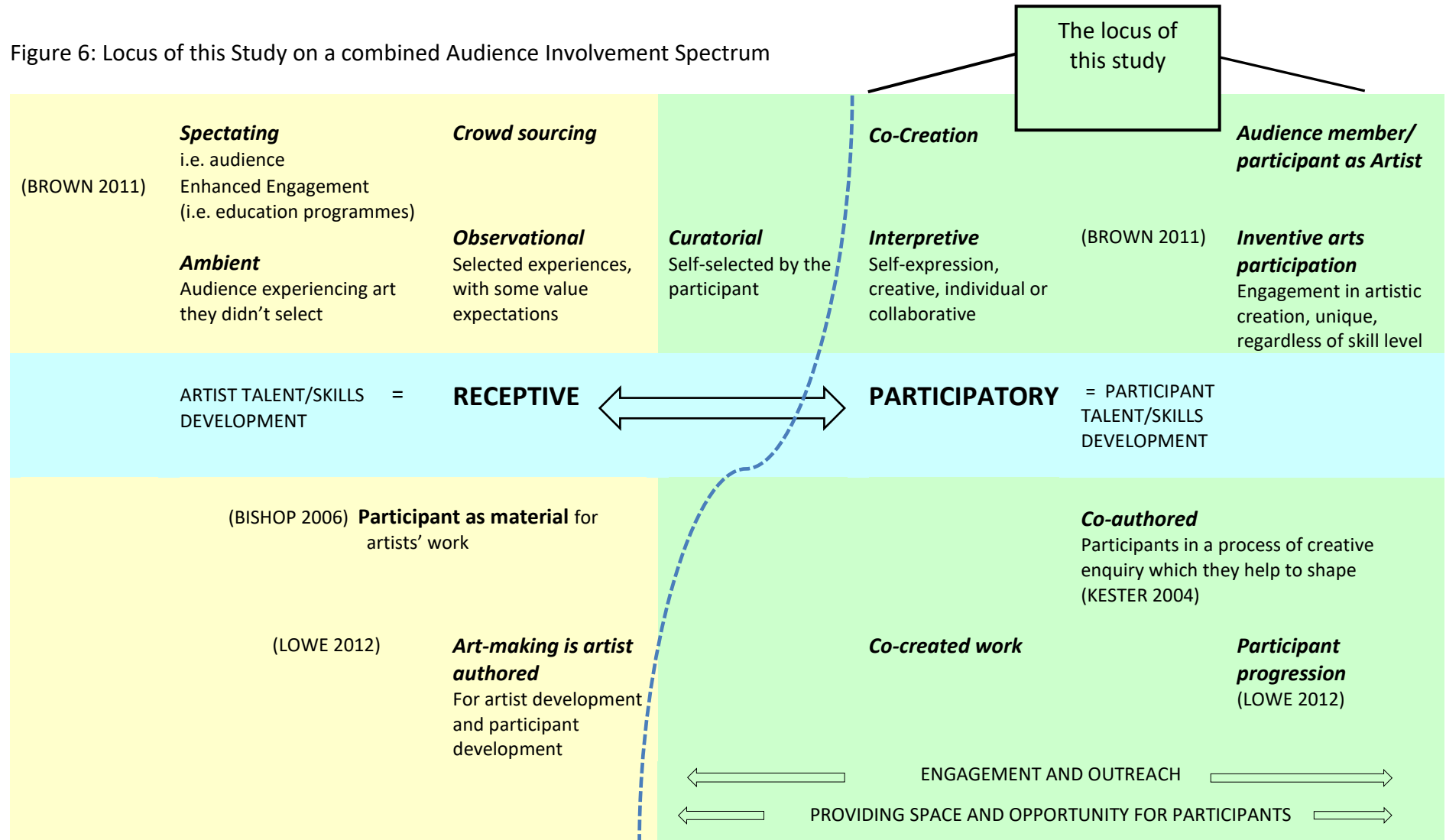
Figure 5: Brown's Five Modes of Arts Participation (diagram reproduced from Brown 2011)



The diagram overleaf synthesises all of these modes and indicates the remit of this study, which is concerned only with participatory arts as co-creation between participants and artists and inventive arts participation (or the participants as artists).

/ Figure 6: Locus of this Study on a combined Audience Involvement

Figure 6: Locus of this Study on a combined Audience Involvement Spectrum



Derived from Bishop (2006), Brown (2011), Kester (2004), Lowe (2012)

When using the term “participatory arts” this report therefore references:

- Artists from across artforms working with participants in a range of societal settings
- Where the creative control exercised by the participant extends to co-creation or inventive arts participation

NUANCES IN UNDERSTANDING QUALITY

There are many nuances that have developed through previous thinking and reporting on this subject, and it is the intention of this report to build on what has gone before.

Challenges of identifying quality and defining excellence

The challenges of identifying quality in the cultural sector are widely recognised. NFER in their report for Arts Council England on quality arts education stated that “artistic and creative quality is probably one of the most difficult areas to define and measure” (Lord et al 2012, p11). Standards of excellence are also subject to change: “As the arts change and develop, so too does the consensus of what is good or of quality” (Arts Council Wales 2009).

Artworks research and activity to date has encountered a number of challenges in relation to quality including:

- A lack of clarity in the articulation of what we mean by ‘quality’ and differences in understanding what quality is
- This lack of clarity contributing to negative perceptions of the sector in terms of artistic quality
- A mix of interest and unease about formal approaches to quality assurance and improvement
- The critical importance of a shared understanding of quality between artists and commissioners as a way to address these issues (Schwarz 2014, pp17-18)

Indeed, Lowe notes from his surveys of artists that there isn’t a shared understanding of what quality outcomes might be, and there are no agreed definitions for excellence. There are wide ranging criteria for describing excellence across different art forms and practices, in part based in the “subjective nature of judgement” (Lowe 2011, p6). Lowe’s concern is that if the sector isn’t able to define what constitutes good participatory art, “it means we can’t assert the value of participatory arts on its own terms, and will always be judged by other people’s standards – whether those standards are from other areas of the arts, or from the social policy contexts in which much of participatory arts occurs” (Lowe 2012 p2).

Lord et al (2012) confirm that the diversity of the arts and cultural sector is part of the challenge: “The breadth of work involving children and young people in the arts and cultural sectors, the differing art forms, and the range of practitioners and arts organisations present a number of challenges to developing a cohesive understanding of quality” (Lord et al 2012, p11).

Artworks reports that, crucially, in the past there has been “inherent confusion about whether excellence and quality relate to the inputs of artistic practice or the outputs of projects and programmes (whether artistic, societal or in terms of personal experience)” (Consilium 2012a p8).

Thanks to the identification of these challenges, researchers such as Seidel et al in the US, and the fruitful work of the Artworks pathfinders to investigate more deeply participatory arts work and notions of quality, this study is able to draw on many important insights and to build on established findings. One of the most significant of these is a move towards a more holistic understanding of quality.

Developing more holistic concepts of quality

The position of recent previous reports on quality is that it is possible now to move away from arguments around process versus praxis or product, described as “old ground” by Lord et al (2012). The debate can also progress beyond “principles that focus on features of organisation (such as governance, safeguarding children from harm, equality and diversity) which ... are necessary, but not sufficient in themselves to ensure high quality” (Lord et al 2012 p16).

Thinking continues to develop to produce a more holistic view of the “qualities” that make up quality, acknowledging both processes and the final product as important. This more holistic approach is exemplified by Matarasso’s Five Phases of Participatory Arts, which embodies both planning and output in a holistic view of an arts project (Matarasso 2013).

Five Phases of Participatory Arts

According to Matarasso, when considering quality projects it is important to distinguish between different phases required for the development and delivery of a quality project, and the expectations attached to each phase. This approach seems particularly important in light of evidence from artists that preparation time and reflection/evaluation time is often extremely limited by budgets (Dean 2012), undermining the likely quality of the product. To take a holistic view of quality means acknowledging the influence of each phase of a project on ultimate quality and not just the creative/participatory phase. This correlates strongly with evidence from beyond the arts sector that quality can only be ‘built in’ during early planning stages, as outlined in Chapter Three.

Matarasso classifies the following five identifiable phases in the participatory arts process:

Phase 1 CONCEPTION	Phase 2 CONTRACTING <i>(between artist and participant)</i>	Phase 3 WORKING	Phase 4 CREATION	Phase 5 COMPLETION
<i>A clear articulation of how and why</i>	<i>Confidentiality, participant</i>	<i>Great care needs to be given to</i>	<i>Does the work produced offer an artistically</i>	<i>How a project ends is also an important</i>

<i>specific arts interventions are expected to result in desired outcomes is an essential theoretical basis both for work and how it is going to be evaluated (p7)</i>	<i>consent and acknowledging the limits of what the project can do to change someone's life all matter. Who should know what about whom, how participation will be granted or denied, and the responsibilities associated with taking part should be decided (p7).</i>	<i>planning and preparation of a participatory practice that is well founded in skill, theory and experience. Good conception, planning, process and practice will increase the probability of a successful outcome (p8)</i>	<i>satisfying experience both in its own terms, and in the wider context of what is considered to be good in the arts today? Is there a sense of achievement for the participants? (pp9-10)</i>	<i>aspect of its quality; this can influence the meaning and therefore the result of all that happened. Is there continuing support, and progression for the participants? Is there a process of reflection, review, evaluation for future planning? (p11)</i>
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(Matarasso 2013)

This description of a quality process provides a helpful framework for understanding the evidence gathered in this study, and to map out commonly stated quality principles. Concerning quality of process, **Matarasso stresses that *it is possible to identify the characteristics, the objective qualities, that need to be in place to ensure a good participatory arts process*** (Matarasso 2013 p9), underlining the importance of underpinning *principles*. And even though it can never be absolutely guaranteed in advance that the final project or showcase will be an artistic success, the evidence shows that “a good quality process can form a reliable precondition for creating good art” (Matarasso 2013 p9), meaning that there are quality *conditions* that can be planned for. This study explores both of these concepts in Chapters Four and Five and generates recommendations on both (Chapter Eight).

Moving Beyond Instrumentalisation of Participatory Arts

Salamon points out that artists working in participatory settings are by definition “socially engaged”. However, this “socially engaged practice – with a focus on longer-term collaborative community engagement, building sustained relationships and working with participants for *artistic* ends – is often erroneously conflated with work in participatory settings, where an *educational* or *social* improvement of some kind is expected” (Salamon, 2013a, p1). As such, participatory arts tend to be heavily instrumentalised. Lowe advises us to resist the idea that it is possible to judge the quality of intervention by social outcomes; this is the realm of impact studies and should be kept as just one component of quality consideration (Lowe 2013).

Research for Artworks also warns of the dangers of instrumentalisation of participatory arts activities, questioning whether instrumentalism and bureaucracy within the institutional context for socially-engaged work can “stifle the organic quality of collective processes and scope of human interactions that are fundamental to this way of working”. The multiple expectations and agendas of contexts where “dialogic work” takes place with participants raises “tensions surrounding the prioritisation of social over aesthetic outcomes” (Consilium 2012a p26, citing Wilson 2008).

Matarasso highlights this issue also and illustrates it with a helpful example. Since both the artist and participant have only partial control over what is experienced and the meaning made of it, the correlation between an artistic activity and the lifestyle change that, say a homeless charity, works to support is impossible to guarantee at an individual level. The tangible improvement in a participant’s social situation is not in the artist’s control (Matarasso 2013, p6).

Using an analogy with medicine, Matarasso makes a comparison with healthcare:

No medical treatment is effective in every case because humans are living, active beings, not passive machines. They interact with treatment, even as they interact simultaneously with many other influences in their lives, and the outcomes will be affected by each and by the interaction between them (Servan-Schreiber 2011).

Nor do we understand, let alone control, the influences that may affect how a person responds to treatment. Such complexity makes individual health outcomes unpredictable, so medicine uses probability to forecast results and inform necessary decisionmaking. From the outcomes of thousands of individual treatments, medical researchers can reliably predict that the same treatment will produce, say, a five-year survival rate in 40% of similar cases.

In social policy, where unknowable influences have a far greater effect than in medicine, such approaches would be both more appropriate and more useful than those currently employed in British arts policy and management and promoted through various evaluation toolkits.

(Matarasso 2013 p6)

Academics looking at the subject observe that “in terms of public value, there is an over-evaluation of the arts in terms of impact outcomes and an under-researching in terms of practice” which means that discussion and analysis tend to emphasise value and impact, rather than quality of practice (Oliver & Walmsley 2011 p88). Indeed, the Artworks Evaluation Literature Review reports that a substantial part of the literature on participation and participatory arts is concerned with instrumental outcomes – social gains, benefits and value - rather than with quality (Consilium 2012a p10).

There is significantly less material considering professional practice of artists in participatory arts from their own perspective or in relation to the specific skills, routes and accreditation

and training required for professionalizing and regulating practice. This is why Artworks Pathfinders have focused heavily on the *professional development needs and experiences for artist-practitioners* to improve understanding of their career trajectories and motivations, in order to contribute to the knowledge base which can inform policy and practice (Consilium 2012a, p10). The data reported across the Artworks pathfinders has provided many crucial insights for this study.

Ethical dimensions of quality

There are various ethical considerations connected to participatory arts, which often involve artists working with vulnerable people.

The concept of **duty of care** towards participants is an important consideration for artists engaged in participatory work. This was raised and discussed at an Artworks Scotland conference in November 2013. Needless to say, artists working with vulnerable people have a responsibility not to cause them mental, emotional or physical harm through the activities. But how far does the duty of care extend? Matarasso points out the difference in the ethical contract that can be expected of care and support services, and of artists working with participants:

Care and support services are able to establish clear ethical contracts with users because the people they support have come for help in making a change in their lives. Both parties accept avoidance of behaviours that undermine progress towards that change as essential to their agreement. But while participating in ARTS programmes may have beneficial results for individuals, those programmes are not designed with a remedial purpose and still less on the basis of a mutually agreed diagnosis (Matarasso 2013 pp7-8).

Informed consent from participants is central to participatory art, and in a dialogic process (one of co-production of meaning) then it is ethical to allow participants to influence the content and direction of the process (Lowe 2012; Kester 2004). Matarasso points out that who decides what is good (the criteria of quality) is a critical aspect of contracting: unless the people who are supposed to benefit from an activity can participate in defining the criteria of its success, then control remains firmly with the professional organisations and any claim of empowerment must be open to question (Matarasso 2013).

In the case of participants from for instance healthcare, social or justice settings, how much artists should know about the case history of their participants, and to what extent is informed consent needed here? **Ethical use of data** about participants is raised as an issue by Matarasso. From his observations, artists tend to prefer to know only what participants themselves choose to share with them. “It matters who knows what about whom, how access to participation is granted or denied, the responsibilities associated with taking part and the nature of the consent that is secured” (Matarasso 2013, pp7-8).

At the very least, requirements for safety standards and legislative obligations for protecting vulnerable people are an important element of a framework of quality principles. Concepts relating to duty of care, ethical use of data and informed consent should also form part of the conversation about what is safe and ethical for work with participants.

PURPOSE FOR DEVELOPING A QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR PARTICIPATORY ARTS

A key question in nuancing the approach to this study of quality has to be: why are we considering quality and what is the framework for?

NFER, in their report to ACE, propose that there are a number of drivers for articulating and demonstrating quality. These include:

- Self-improvement
- Recognising excellence
- Comparing organisations/activities against a common standard
- Providing evidence of impact to demonstrate value.

(Lord et al 2012 p8)

Different kinds of approaches are appropriate for different functions. NFER recommends that for demonstrating self-improvement, self-evaluation and reflection tools are used. For achieving a standard or an award, then specific evidence needs to be produced against criteria. If benchmarking organisations' activities and work, then indicators of success may be used, alongside moderation, and peer or external assessment. For demonstrating the value of the sector, a range of project and organisational-level evaluation is needed, focusing both on participation and on outcomes (Lord et al 2012 pp8-9).

What is a Framework for?

Schwarz defines "frameworks" as "ways of formally addressing quality in projects, programmes or organisations" (Schwarz 2014 p37).

In this respect, a quality framework offers a structured way of approaching quality for this defined end:

"A well-crafted framework can provide a common language which can be used for the review, evaluation and development of organisations, projects and individuals... The framework is essentially a guide for defining what is excellent professional practice." (Schwarz 2014 p37).

Why Creative Scotland's approach represents a significant development

It is asserted (Leadbeater, 2009) that our society is moving away from provision of culture and more in the direction of participation in and creation of culture (Kay 2012 p3). There is an emerging move towards the art of *with* rather than *to* or *for* people and the advent of a kind of 'personalisation' that begins to challenge traditional ideas of expertise, ownership and control (Kay 2012).

In this respect, participatory arts are becoming more prevalent and may become subject to greater demand. Indeed, Burns (2010) concludes that:

[C]ontext is creating greater demand for artists to work in participatory settings... and it is arguable that artists are in greater demand than ever before to make interventions in both formal and informal settings... Artists are being asked to work in a hugely diverse range of participatory settings...and are now playing an integral role in the learning experiences of people across the whole age spectrum (Burns 2010 p7).

Further demand for participatory arts is demonstrated from a recent survey by the Institute for Research in the Social Science (IRISS) of 105 social care practitioners, which highlighted that while many projects are delivered collaboratively by artists and social care staff, a number of social care employers are reliant on commissioning an artist to deliver an activity with people who use services. IRISS found that up to 78% of activities were delivered by professional artists/arts organisations (Pattoni 2013 p8).

As this report shall show, there are gaps in recognition and support for participatory arts and a lack of a framework for strengthening practice and capturing outcomes. Creative Scotland is in a unique position to facilitate developments in this sector in the interests of managing quality in its funded activities. Through its development of a new quality framework for participatory arts, Creative Scotland can lead the way in a new, informed understanding of quality and how best to foster it.

CHAPTER THREE: QUALITY CONCEPTS AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

3

This chapter collates existing understanding about quality and approaches to achieving it, drawing not only from recent studies in the UK concerning participatory arts but also from global definitions of quality management, from sources like the Chartered Quality Institute. This approach helps gain a purer perspective on what is meant when we talk about quality.

There are clear insights to be gained from this broader business management perspective on what quality is and isn't, as well as how far quality can be 'built in' to a product. This chapter also presents findings on commonly recognised characteristics of high quality participatory arts, which can be taken as a basis for establishing fundamental quality principles. Important LENSES through which quality may be viewed are also explored: quality from the perspective of Artists, Participants, Partners, and with respect to the Setting and the Facilities.

This research overlaps with a parallel exercise by Artworks London to capture existing concepts of quality with particular attention to the insights emerging from the Artworks programme. Artworks Working Paper 8, authored by Mary Schwarz, published in January 2014 and entitled *Quality: Because We All Want to Do Better*, presents a general overview of quality terms, concepts and approaches. This report offers here thinking from other sources not referenced in the Artworks paper, which are intended to complement what has been covered already by Schwarz.

DEFINING QUALITY

In the seminal US study *The Qualities of Quality*, Seidel et al (2010) offer a useful generic definition of Quality as:

1. An inherent feature; a characteristic.
2. A judgment of excellence; a feature of value.

This is consistent with more generic conceptions of quality, for instance this perspective from the software industry whose definition of quality includes two similar aspects:

1. the concept of attributes
 2. the satisfaction or degree of attainment of the attributes
- (Marino 2007 p16)

In terms of what quality is *not*, according to the British Chartered Quality Institute (CQI):

- Quality is not perfection, a standard, a procedure, a measure or an adjective.
- No amount of inspection changes the quality of a product or service.
- Quality does not exist in isolation - there has to be an entity, the quality of which is being discussed.
- Quality is not a specific characteristic of an entity but the extent to which that characteristic meets certain needs.
- The value of the characteristic is unimportant - it is how its value compares with customer needs that signifies its quality. (CQI 2013b)

When used in the arts sector, the term “quality” is commonly perceived as meaning something fit for purpose, meeting specifications and stakeholder expectations, achieving the very best results and outcomes, and quality is also applied to how an organisation is managed, how services or projects are run, and those who deliver the work (Schwarz 2014 p8).

Who is responsible for delivering quality?

According to CQI, one can only be responsible for doing something *relative* to quality. So a person or organisation could be responsible for:

- Specifying quality requirements
- Achieving quality requirements
- Determining the quality of something

But they can't be responsible for guaranteeing quality itself.

The view of the Chartered Quality Institute is that *when someone is assigned responsibility for quality, this means giving a person the right to cause things to happen. With this right should be delegated the authority to control the processes* which deliver the output, the quality of which the person is responsible for (CQI 2013b).

This is an important statement as it has been recognised by several recent studies (Seidel et al 2010, Dean 2012, Pheby 2012), and contended in this one, that there are many aspects of a participatory arts project that are outside the artist's control [see Chapter Five and the influence of “those furthest from the room”]. *A quality framework for participatory arts needs therefore to recognise this reality and enable as much as possible for the artist to control the conditions in which the project is taking place.*

HOW CAN QUALITY BE ACHIEVED?

The CQI outlines the following methods that have evolved to achieve, sustain and improve quality. These are known as quality control, quality improvement and quality assurance -

collectively thought of as *quality management* (quality management, not in the sense of one manager but of many stakeholders managing a system).

“Quality is achieved through a chain of processes, each of which has to be under control and subject to continual improvement”. (CQI 2013b)

The American Society for Quality determines Quality Assurance as: “The planned and systematic activities implemented in a quality system so that quality requirements for a product or service will be fulfilled.” (ASQ undated)

Quality Control can be understood as “The observation techniques and activities used to fulfil requirements for quality.” (ASQ)

Likewise in her work to develop foundations for Quality Assurance via the Creativity Portal, Bamford states that “Quality is not a random occurrence in arts and creativity partnerships. *The achievement of quality must be planned*. Any virtually mediated arts partnership (such as proposed in the Creativity Portal) requires both quality assurance and quality control components” (Bamford 2010, p2).

But Bamford’s study recognises that quality is “largely determined by the programme funders and the clients”. Quality Assurance cannot absolutely guarantee the production of quality products, but does make quality more likely. Quality control can be used to determine if the deliverables meet the quality assurance guidelines and processes (Bamford 2010 p11).

Indeed, global views on quality reinforce this:

“The [mistaken] belief is that if a Quality Assurance organization exists and is assigned to the project, this will ensure quality in the product. This belief contradicts the principle that ‘Quality is everybody’s business’. Quality does not occur from after the fact inspections, audits, or tests ... quality evaluation only results in a determination of the quality or level of quality that has been built in.” (Marino 2007 p30)

In other words, Quality Assurance and Quality Control can be seen as checks and measures: a process for checking that standards and quality of provision meet agreed expectations (Schwarz 2014 p9). Evaluation can only capture outcomes from quality that has been built in to a project.

Building Quality into a Product

The manufacturing industry could be considered to be at the leading edge of thinking about quality, relying as it does on consumer satisfaction and perception. It is interesting therefore to note the following precept from this context:

“One of the foundational aspects of [a framework] is how well quality can be built into a product, not how well one can evaluate product quality. While evaluation activities are essential activities, they alone will not achieve the specified quality.” (Marino 2007 p21)

That is, "Product quality cannot be evaluated (tested, audited, analyzed, measured, or inspected) into the product. *Quality can only be “built in” during the development process*" (Baker 2007, cited in Marino 2007 p21). In a participatory arts context, this would equate to the planning, resourcing and situating of a project and it brings us back to the significance of Matarasso’s *five phases* of participatory arts projects (Matarasso 2013, as presented in Chapter Two).

Crucially *once quality has been built in, subsequent “deployment, operation, and maintenance processes must not degrade it”*. (Marino 2007 p21) This statement underlines the potential impact that, in a participatory arts context, external factors controlled by hosts, partners and other stakeholders can have on the delivery of quality work.

To summarise, “the quality of anything, while influenced by many groups, has to be *first specified and then built in*. It cannot be assured, audited, or tested into the entity” (Marino 2007, p35). This strengthens the rationale for the focus to be on providing conditions for quality to occur, and recognising where responsibility can reasonably be placed.

In summarising key factors in a study undertaken on successful quality management approaches, the CQI notes that in almost every case, quality hinges on these key elements:

- the **objectives** which the organisation is trying to achieve
- **the resources required to ensure that processes can function**
- **the factors that can influence how (well) the processes operate**
- the processes themselves
- the outcomes of the processes (CQI 2013a)

We shall see in Chapter Five how this dovetails with the stakeholder theory explained by Seidel et al (2010) which provides insights on the roles of different stakeholders in enabling quality outcomes. This study also pulls together detailed evidence from studies and consultations in participatory arts on the resources required and the factors, or *conditions* that enable quality outcomes.

Minimising Variation

Improving quality involves reducing the degree of *variation*: the difference between an ideal and an actual situation. According to the American Society for Quality (ASQ), an ideal represents a standard of perfection—the highest standard of excellence — that is uniquely defined by stakeholders. Excellence is synonymous with quality, and excellent quality results from delivering the right things, in the right way. Although this has been expressed

within a generic context (applicable equally to manufacturing and business service as to the arts), it is clear how this perspective of quality can relate to participatory arts projects.

“The fact that we can strive for an ideal but never achieve it means that stakeholders always experience some variation from the perfect situations they envision. This, however, also makes improvement and progress possible.” (ASQ, not dated)

In simple terms, reducing the variation stakeholders experience is the key to quality and continuous improvement.

The Chartered Quality Institute qualifies this by pointing out that, “[if] quality is the result of a comparison between what was required and what was provided... [i]t is judged not by the producer but by the receiver.” (CQI 2013b) This is an important distinction for the purposes of this study. It has been raised by other commentators that the voice of participants needs to be heard more (Salamon 2013c).

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

‘Quality assurance’ has evolved into a concept of ‘quality improvement’ as expectations change, and *what was considered good practice previously is not good enough now* or less appropriate for changing times. As HMIE state in the foreword to *Journey to Excellence*:

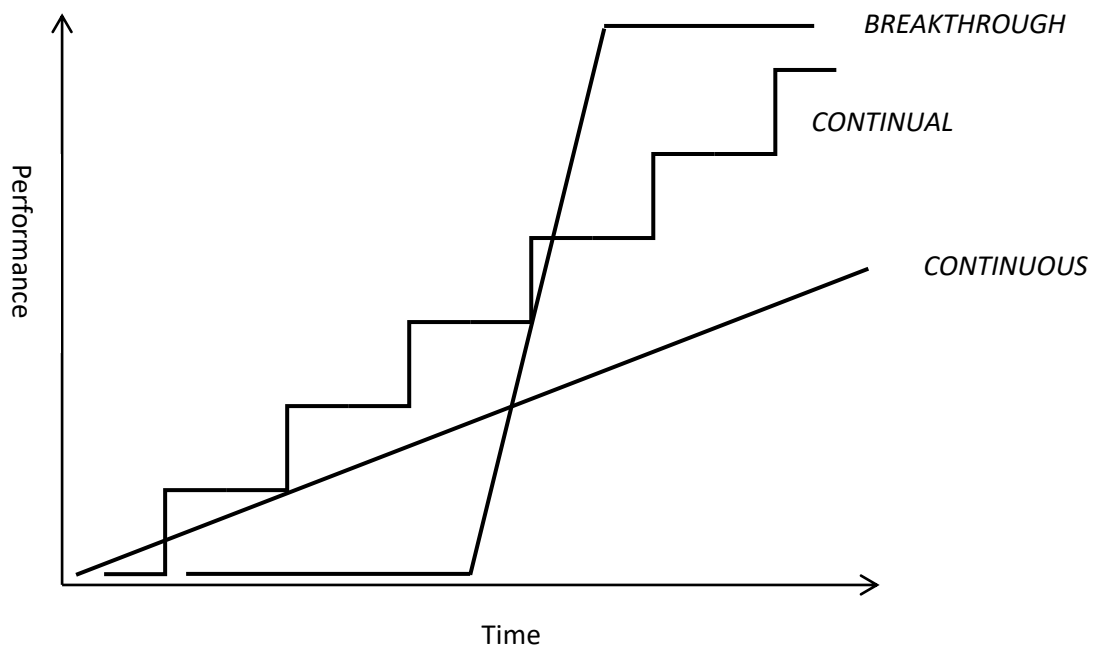
“Over the years, the emphasis has increasingly been on continuous improvement, on reviewing the quality of education, on planning and delivering a better service. This emphasis is as it should be. For children and young people in Scotland, ‘only the best will do’.” (HMIE 2006b, p13).

A term for quality improvement that has become widely used is that of *Continuous Quality Improvement*. It forms the basis of HMIE’s *How Good Is Our ...* framework, and has been recommended by previous researchers (Bamford 2010; Schwarz 2014) as the most appropriate approach for quality development in educational and participatory arts settings.

Continuous improvement is a type of change that is focused on increasing the effectiveness and/or efficiency of an organisation to fulfil its policy and objectives. It is not limited to quality initiatives; improvement in business strategy, results and relationships can be subject to continuing improvement. Essentially it means ‘getting better all the time’ (CQI 2013c). As a continuous process, it is “a proactive, cyclical system of planning, doing, reviewing and improving – or enhancing – what is delivered and how it is delivered” (Schwarz 2014 p9).

There are three types of improvement, demonstrated in Figure 7 overleaf. Continuous improvement is gradual never-ending change, whereas continual improvement is incremental change. Breakthroughs are improvements in leaps: a step change. Breakthroughs tend to arise from chance discoveries and can be years apart. Despite these distinctions, the method of achievement is the same (CQI 2013c).

Figure 7: Gradual, Incremental and Breakthrough Quality Improvements (CQI 2013c)



Quality Principles

It is recognised that any assessment of quality must stem from a set of overarching aims or principles for the work. Defined principles are considered essential to establish a common understanding of what is desired before being able to judge whether quality has been achieved. The reality of this is apparent even from the perspective of the software manufacture industry which is the context for the following statement:

*“Without clear articulation of the quality attributes, it is impossible to develop a product or determine whether the finished product has the needed quality. **A specification is required to communicate to others which attributes and attribute values constitute the product’s quality. Contractually, this specification is critical.**”*
(Marino 2007 citing Baker 1982a.)

With respect to participatory arts, the need for a quality framework based on clearly defined principles is equally pertinent. This is what has been missing from historic quality frameworks devised by the Scottish Arts Council and inherited by Creative Scotland. It is interesting to note that in an industrial context, such specification is deemed critical to any contract. Yet historically in an arts council context, artists have been asked to deliver quality participatory arts work without a defined set of principles against which the quality is characterised or measured [see commentary in Chapter Seven on the pre-existing SAC Quality Framework].

In setting these principles, one needs to be mindful that they may take different orders of precedence according to the nature of the participatory work, and some principles may be more important to one group of practitioners than another (Lord et al (2012) p160; Lowe 2011; Renshaw 2013).

This is validated from a non-arts context by Marino 2007:

"... [A] set of attributes that one community deems important as a measure of quality may not be deemed important by another community. Rather, each community is likely to have its own set of attributes and attribute values with which to measure quality." (p20)

Therefore, *determining the aspirational values for and desired features of funded participatory arts work has to be central to any quality framework developed*. Chapter Four of this study identifies key quality principles, based on characteristics of quality participatory work that have been articulated in more than 30 relevant contexts, to provide a foundation for Creative Scotland in articulating guiding principles.

PERSPECTIVES ON QUALITY FROM PARTICIPATORY ARTS CONTEXTS

Semantic Problems with the Term Quality

Matarasso points out that one of the problems approaching this subject is the use of "an objective term, 'quality', in place of a subjective term, 'good'" (Matarasso 2013 p4). A key distinction for Matarasso is that quality is a *characteristic* of things: it does not determine their value; take for example: metal. 'Hardness' would be a quality (a characteristic) of metal; however the *value* of the metal depends on the function for which it is being used (Matarasso 2013 p4).

Another issue is that some quality aspects seem to be intuitive: we know that some things are better than others, and we know when we have done good work. While we may not be able to define excellence, we can at least identify standards for 'good' and 'less good', 'admirable' and 'acceptable' (Matarasso 2013, p5).

The way we use the word 'quality' in our language implies a judgement or an absolute measure: funders aspire to support 'high quality art'; artists seek to present 'high quality art'. The word is used as an adjective that implies a measure. A more practical way to manage the issue of defining quality might be to think instead of it as a noun – a *quality* or *characteristic* - and to study the 'qualities' of what we would consider to be 'high quality work'. Indeed, Matarasso stresses that *it is possible to identify the characteristics, the objective qualities*, that need to be in place to ensure a good participatory arts process. (Matarasso 2013 p9).

Essentially, quality can be recognised as an *intangible* phenomenon wrapped up in the transition to something with special impact. To conceptualise this Lang (2013) quotes French philosopher Francois Jullien and his example of melting snow:

“it is a process, rather than a thing. ‘Meltingness’ is a property of the snow only in the movement of its transformation from frozen to liquid water. Strictly speaking then, it’s not a property of the snow at all. In recognising a transformation like ‘melting’, we cannot cling to the idea of a permanent identity (e.g. snow that is frozen). The world is not substance, but transformation, and [quality does not belong to any thing or person, but is manifest by them, ineluctably, as a process of change.](#)” (Lang 2013)

Recognising purpose and context

Likewise Renshaw argues for setting aside any notion of an absolute ideal of quality: “Definitions of quality will vary depending on the purpose and context of the particular project and on the nature of the activity” (Downie 2011 citing Renshaw 2010).

Renshaw (2013) suggests that qualitatively different judgements would be anticipated for different settings and activities, which exist across a spectrum even within one artform (Music). For instance:

- A music therapist working with an autistic child in a special language unit
- A master drummer leading a drumming workshop in a community context
- A collaborative arts workshop in a young offenders’ unit
- An open-access ensemble performing a genre-free collaborative composition in a club for young people
- The experimental work of a sound and image lab for young musicians, visual artists, singers, DJs and programmers.

(Renshaw 2013, p51)

The findings from Artworks’ artist consultations reinforce this argument: each project has a unique set of requirements, context and content and, as such, needs to be developed individually and assessed according to its specific context and objectives. It is therefore counterproductive to adopt a formulaic approach or seek to replicate processes from other contexts or settings (Salamon 2013 p17).

Ideas about what constitutes quality can and should **vary across settings**, depending on the purposes and values of the programme and its community (Seidel et al 2010 p45).

Renshaw (2013) argues that a distinction should be drawn between:

- Generic criteria that apply to judging quality across all forms of music experience; and
- Specific criteria that would apply to quality music making (including process, project and performance) in particular contexts.

This relates to the distinction made by Seidel et al (2010) between experiences 'with quality' and 'of quality' (p20). Educators in their study wanted young people to have experiences ‘with quality’ – with excellent materials, outstanding works of art, and passionate and

accomplished artist-teachers modelling artistic processes. They also wanted young people to have experiences ‘of quality’ – powerful group interactions and ensemble work, performances that make them feel proud, and experiencing technical excellence and expressivity. These seem to be about ‘authenticity’ – the first set of experiences (i.e. ‘with quality’) particularly so (while the second set seem to be more about technical excellence) (Lord et al (2012) p20).

The task, then, is to produce a common framework for evaluating and assessing quality that accords with diversity of need and purpose across genres and settings.

Notions of quality as Artistic Excellence

High quality in the form of artistic excellence does not necessarily correlate with a high level of resource, or even of professional experience. As Bamford points out in her work for the Creativity Portal, “You can have good and bad opera programmes ... as you can good or bad rap projects” (Bamford 2010, p1)

[I]n many instances low cost or free options may be considered high quality if they meet a market need and are fit for purpose and contain certain attributes proven to be associated with quality. Conversely, expensive projects can fail to be either fit for purpose and first time ready (Bamford 2010, p1).

In the context of participatory arts – as opposed to, say, performing arts – it can be argued that an even more nuanced approach must be taken to establishing notions of excellence. Community work isn’t low quality because it is ‘amateur’ (Scott 2013). A youth theatre performance with special needs participants could very well score low on aesthetic responses of artistic excellence, but nevertheless be a great quality project due to what has been achieved by these performers and the effect the project has had on them (May 2013). It is therefore necessary when considering quality to separate values of the process and product from the aesthetic. This is what Bamford is attempting through her distinctions of quality in terms of *merit* and *worth* (*follows below*).

Furthermore, it is inadvisable to attempt to apply generic standards and benchmarks on ‘excellence’ without recognising that different forms and scales of art organisation can have very different expectations placed on their work i.e. the National Theatre of Scotland’s output will be quantitatively and qualitatively different from that of a small youth theatre (Petrie 2013). This is reinforced by views from the music sector:

“It is increasingly recognised in the professional arts community that no single immutable standard of excellence can exist. Any valid view of excellence has to be defined in relation to context and fitness for purpose. All musical activities must strive for excellence, but the criteria used to judge this will vary depending on the aim and context” (Renshaw 2013 p50, citing Youth Music 2002).

Lowe’s findings confirm that excellent practice means different things according to the type of activity being undertaken. “One thing that is clear from the diversity of answers around excellence, and from explicit points raised by some interviewees, is that any shared sense of

a framework for understanding excellent practice needs to understand that there is a broad spectrum of participatory practice, encompassing different intentions, motivations and roles. Any common understanding must not conflate different practices and needs to be able to differentiate between different aspects of the work” (Lowe 2011 p49)

Overriding principles for determining quality

Renshaw proposes two overriding principles for determining quality of a project:

- Fitness for purpose, and
- Relevance to context (Downie 2011).

For organisations this implies a clear idea and continuous review of their purpose and mission and the community and cultural contexts in which they find themselves.

This aligns closely with Ann Bamford’s premise, presented in her report *Quality Assurance for the Creativity Portal*, that quality is defined by a mix of:

- Merit, i.e. the intrinsic beauty or artistry of the project and
- Worth, i.e. its applicability, usefulness, contribution and desirability to a given school or educational context (Bamford 2010, p13)

It is therefore vital that any set of principles underpinning a quality framework take into account these different aspects of quality. The approach must be a holistic one that enables different ‘qualities’ of each piece of work to be acknowledged, as well as recognising that experiences and expectations of quality will vary according to different stakeholders in the project. This brings us on to the vital concept of ‘lenses’ of quality.

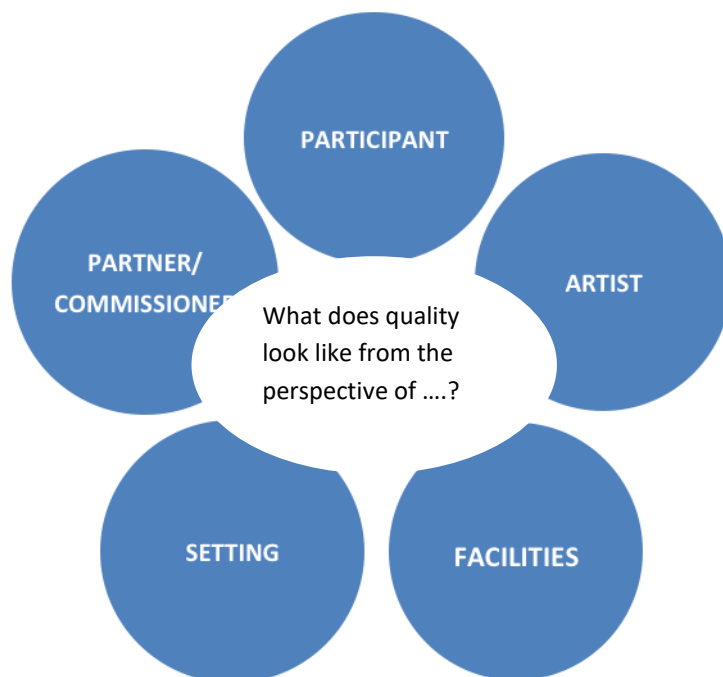
RECOGNISING DIFFERENT LENSES ON QUALITY

When looking for patterns and themes in a vast set of responses from their research on “what quality looks like”, Seidel et al realised that respondents were approaching the question from a variety of different stakeholder perspectives, and commenting on different elements of quality. From this they identified four predominant dimensions of quality, which were characterised as different ‘lenses’ through which to view quality. Consistent with the educational setting for this study, these lenses were articulated as: *student learning, teacher pedagogy, community dynamics, and environment* (Seidel et al 2010 p29).

Likewise in 2010, Bamford’s study on quality for the Scottish Arts Council drew out concepts of quality from the perspectives of: *The Consumer; The Commissioner or Partner; and the Professional Artist* (Bamford 2010 pp12-13).

For the purposes of this study, these perspectives have been conflated and characterised as ***participant experience, artist intentions and practice, the commissioner or partner’s intentions, setting/group dynamic, and project facilities.***

Figure 8: Quality Lenses in Participatory Arts



Each lens helps to bring focus on a number of particular, observable elements that give a holistic indication of quality arts learning experiences. Consistent with the findings of Artworks, that “attention to aspects of work in participatory settings is crucial to achieving a holistic approach to quality” (Schwarz 2014, p26), Seidel et al emphasise that that the quality of any of these elements cannot stand alone; they all contribute to the quality of the experience. Seidel et al also caution that they should not be considered as a check list but as a framework for recognising what elements matter the most (Seidel et al 2010, p29).

We are asked to imagine that we have opened the door onto a room where participants are engaged in a powerful arts experience and consider what is happening through each of the lenses:

THE PARTICIPANT LENS

The *Participant Experience* brings into focus the quality of engagement and of the experience:

i.e.

- what participants are actually doing in the room
- the kinds of projects and tasks they’re involved in,
- the focus and character of their engagement,
- the intrinsic quality and individual meaning of the experience,
- the attitudes and mindsets they bring to the experience.

(Adapted from Seidel et al 2010, p29 and Bamford 2010, p12))

Bamford sees participants' views on quality as being focused on the intrinsic, with three key components...

1. Feelings of well-being
2. Connections (between the artists and the children)
3. Meaning Making (making senses and encouraging questioning and inquiry)

... as well as the following extrinsic components:

4. Acquisition of new skills
5. Capacity of trying new creative and cultural experiences
6. Increased confidence and self-esteem
7. Changed or challenged attitudes
8. Development of creativity and cultural awareness and memory

(Bamford 2010 p7-8)

In this sense, quality for participants is very much about the depth of engagement and the impacts arising from that.

More insights on participants' views may be found in Artworks Working Paper 6 *Understanding Participants' Views*, drafted to "consider and synthesise" all Artworks research on participants' perspectives on "quality and excellence in participatory arts projects" (Salamon 2013c p3). Key questions in this paper included: *What qualities do participants feel contribute to an outstanding participatory arts project?* and *What are the qualities that participants feel bring out the best in them?*

Key themes for participants were found to centre on:

- Importance of effective planning
- Importance of organisations' reputation
- Expectations (participants often not aware they have them, but they know if they've been met)
- Importance of artist's active engagement in project – makes people feel important and connected to the project.
- The final product
- Sufficient time
- Safe environments in which to experiment
- Artists skills and qualities

(Salamon 2013c p14)

The ArtWorks Evaluation Interim Report highlights that relatively little work about quality has been undertaken with participants (dha 2012b). Yet several commentators on the subject see participants' involvement in setting standards and measures of quality as absolutely key to the process (Bamford (2010), Artworks (2012a), Schwarz 2014).

THE ARTIST LENS

The *Artist's Intentions and Practice* prompt us to look at:

- The importance of quality in process, reported as a high priority for artists working in participatory settings especially considering that participants may be taking part for different reasons (i.e. pleasure, growth, artistic development). (Leighton-Kelly 2012 p14)
- A positive impact on participants, seen as a key marker of quality amongst artists (Leighton-Kelly 2012, p14).

Lowe's *Audit of Participatory Practice* for Artworks captures what artists see as artistic quality or 'excellence' in terms of the artform and their practice. Key themes emerging correlate closely with what might be considered overall Principles for quality participatory arts practice (as outlined in detail in Chapter 4). These include:

- Artistic ambition, challenge and risk taking
- Participatory practice as a shared creative and developmental journey between artist and participants
- Situated practice that is participant-centred
- Enabling people who are unheard to find their voice
- Professionalism and integrity

(Lowe 2011, p49)

THE PARTNER LENS

The *Commissioner or Partner Intentions for the Activity* tend to focus on:

- The professionalism or 'quality' of the artists and arts organisations providing the project in terms of their experience, preparation and practice, aligning to Bamford's definition of work being "right first time" for the setting and the participants (Bamford 2010, p13).
- How partners or hosts in different settings conceive of the activity, what impacts they hope to observe in the participants and what outcomes they are focused on (developed from Seidel et al 2010, p29).
- How the attributes of the project interplay with the culture of the host organisation: key quality principles revolve around communication and partnership building (Bamford 2010, p13).

Demonstrating the potential divergence in fundamental quality viewpoints, Matarasso questions how important artistic concerns (paramount in the ARTIST lens) would be to, for example, a homelessness organisation partnering a project? "Would it matter to them if the artwork were bad, provided people's lives were changed through the process?" (Matarasso 2013 pp9-10)

This category would also include funder perspectives on quality. As can be seen from a detailed examination of Creative Scotland's approaches (Chapter 7), the tendency of a funding body is to focus quality concerns around organisational accountability, good management and evaluated outcomes (as exemplified by SAC's *Quality Framework 2009*) and on artistic merits (exemplified by the SAC Specialist Advisors' *Artistic Evaluation Template*).

THE SETTING LENS

The *Setting and Group Dynamic* show us:

- The ways in which people treat each other, learn with and from each other, and feel about being together. Seidel et al cite quality factors such as respect and trust among all participants, emotional honesty and openness, collaboration and open communication (Seidel et al 2010 p29) and Bamford cites building a positive social atmosphere (Bamford 2010 p13).
- Whether the project is appropriate for its setting, be it healthcare, education, community, etc. (Seidel et al 2010 p38).

THE FACILITIES LENS

And regarding *Project Facilities* the focus is on:

- Elements of the physical environment, including the actual space in which the learning takes place
- The materials that are available, and the visible display of artworks and art-making materials
- The temporal dimension for the work and experience, i.e. the time available, including the length of individual sessions and the full term of the participants' involvement in a project. (Seidel et al 2010, p42)

The next section of this report presents quality principles, based on recognised quality attributes of participatory arts work arising from a variety of different settings and contexts in the participatory arts.

CHAPTER FOUR: ARTICULATING QUALITY PRINCIPLES FOR PARTICIPATORY ARTS

4

As shown in the preceding chapter, defined principles are considered essential to establish a common understanding of what is desired before being able to judge whether quality has been achieved. It is vital to be clear about the purpose of establishing quality principles in order to know whether the work has met its purpose and how it can be further improved.

This is a generic requirement, regardless of context or industry. It follows that any quality principles need to stem from what is trying to be achieved, which makes it important to have recognised *purpose*, *objectives* and *aspirational values* for doing the work.

Much space has been given in papers, studies and commentaries from the sector about the values and impacts of participatory arts, and it is not within the remit of this report to enter that territory beyond stating that having an agreed vision or objectives for any project is fundamental to being able to make any form of meaningful quality judgement. As highlighted earlier in this report from Matarasso (2013), good practice would be for project aims, objectives and desired outcomes to be agreed by all project partners at the very outset during the *Conception* phase.

ASPIRATIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR PARTICIPATORY ARTS

The inspirational educator and choreographer Liz Lerman manages to simplify *purpose* into three fundamental principles, that ...

1. People are 100% committed to what they're doing;
2. They know why they're doing what they're doing;
3. Something is revealed

... and asserts that with a focus on the integrity of *involvement*, *intent* and *expression*, these quality standards can be applied to any arts practice and either met or not met (Schwarz 2014 p18).

For Helix Arts, a participatory arts organisation at the forefront of the discussion about quality, the *values* which underpin participatory work arising from sector consultation can be articulated as:

- Artistic ambition, challenge and risk taking;
- Participatory practice as a shared creative and developmental journey between artist and participants;
- A desire to enable people who are unheard to explore and share their stories and find their voice;

- Professionalism and integrity;
- An understanding of context. (Lowe 2011)

Similarly, from the perspective of participatory arts in healthcare, concepts of what represents good practice are encapsulated by the following *objectives*:

- 1) Putting participants first
- 2) A responsive approach
- 3) Upholding values
- 4) Feedback and evaluation
- 5) Good management and governance

(White, 2010 pp147-8 cited in Schwarz 2014, p23)

Such overriding values or principles may be seen as aspirational; indeed White (2010) qualifies the above list as guidelines rather than regulations, to meet “practitioners’ aspirations to do their best and not just ... to regularize their work” (Schwarz 2014, p23).

ARTICULATING QUALITY PRINCIPLES

Aside from reflecting aspirational values, quality principles tend to be built upon recognised good practice. To be effective, a quality framework needs to articulate what high quality work ‘looks like’ i.e. its characteristics.

The learning from this study, validated by a major review by Artworks on quality concepts and principles which was undertaken in parallel with this study, is that there is a **general consensus on the elements that characterise quality** participatory arts experiences (Schwarz 2014, p27). Schwarz’s paper presents in some detail the quality approaches taken in quality frameworks constructed in recent years by sector agencies including Arts Council England. Many of the same frameworks also informed this research study.

A useful launching point for this investigation was a comprehensive study from 2012 by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) for Arts Council England (ACE), which gathered an extremely large dataset to capture perspectives from across the sector and from previous studies on what constitutes quality in an educational arts setting (Lord et al 2012). Indeed, the list of seven quality principles on arts education generated by the report has since been adopted by ACE as the foundation for its Priorities 2011-2015. This study uses NFER’s seven quality principles for arts education as a foundation for mapping quality characteristics in a broader *participatory arts* context from more than 30 sources relating to participatory arts and arts education.

This research has found that the seven quality principles defined by NFER in the context of arts education are consistent with concepts of quality in the participatory arts more broadly, requiring only minimal nuancing as demonstrated in Figure 9 below. This study has identified two additional quality considerations (items 8 and 9 below), based on evidence and insights from stakeholders in participatory arts work.

Figure 9: Summary Quality Principles

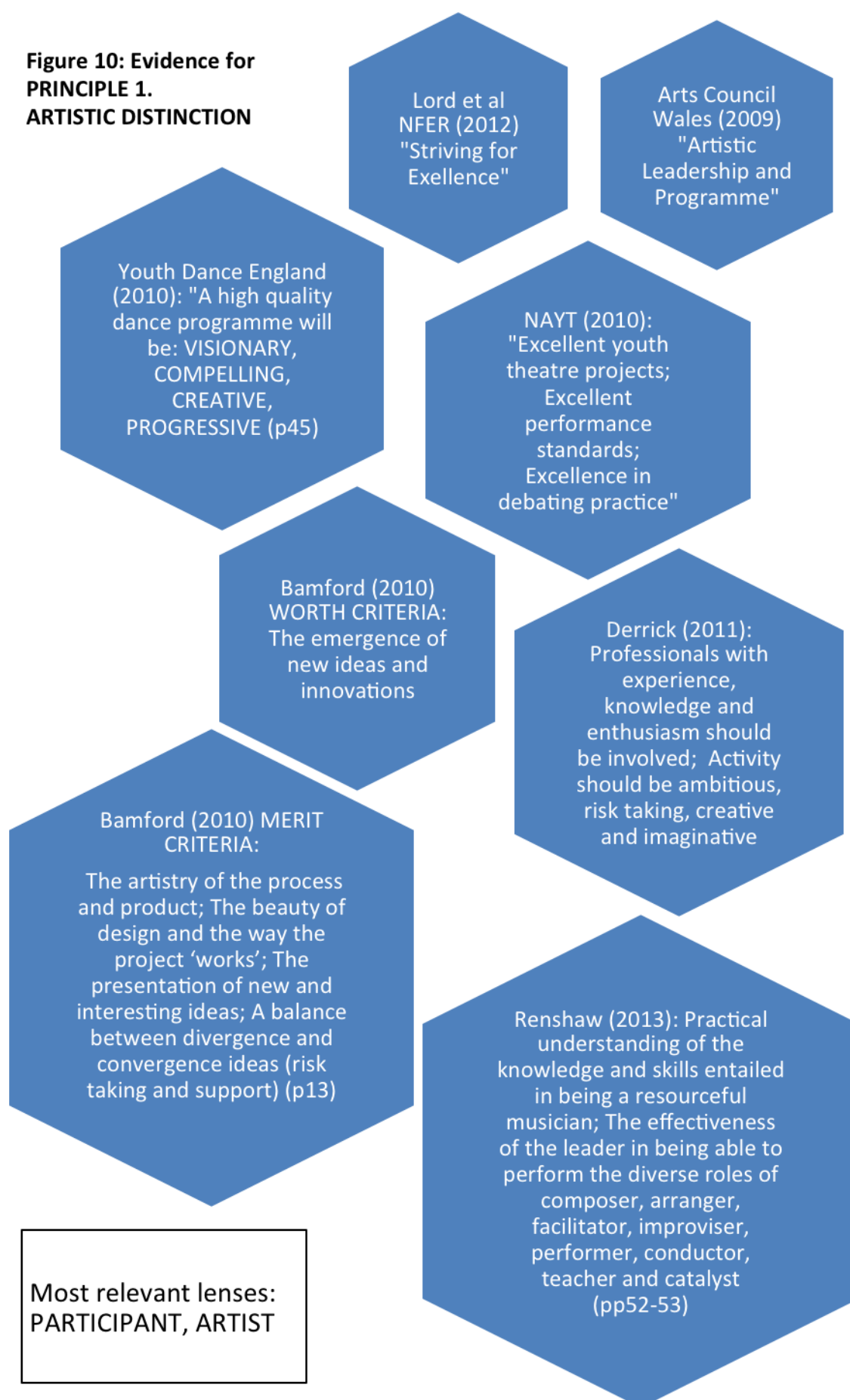
NFER Principles adopted by ACE <i>... in context of children, young people and arts education</i>	Common quality principles synthesised through this research <i>... in context of participatory arts</i>
8. Striving for Excellence	20. Artistic distinction and professionalism
9. Emphasising authenticity	21. Authenticity and social relevance
10. Being inspiring and engaging	22. Inspiring, engaging
11. Ensuring a positive child-centred experience	23. Participant-centred
12. Actively involving children and young people	24. Purposeful, active and hands-on
13. Providing a sense of personal progression	25. Progression for participants
14. Developing a sense of ownership and belonging	26. Participant ownership
	27. Suitably situated and resourced
	28. Properly planned, evaluated and safe
Lord et al (2012); ACE (undated)	

Figures 10 to 18 below map out the nine quality principles that emerged from, and indeed correlated across, the different frameworks and studies we looked at.

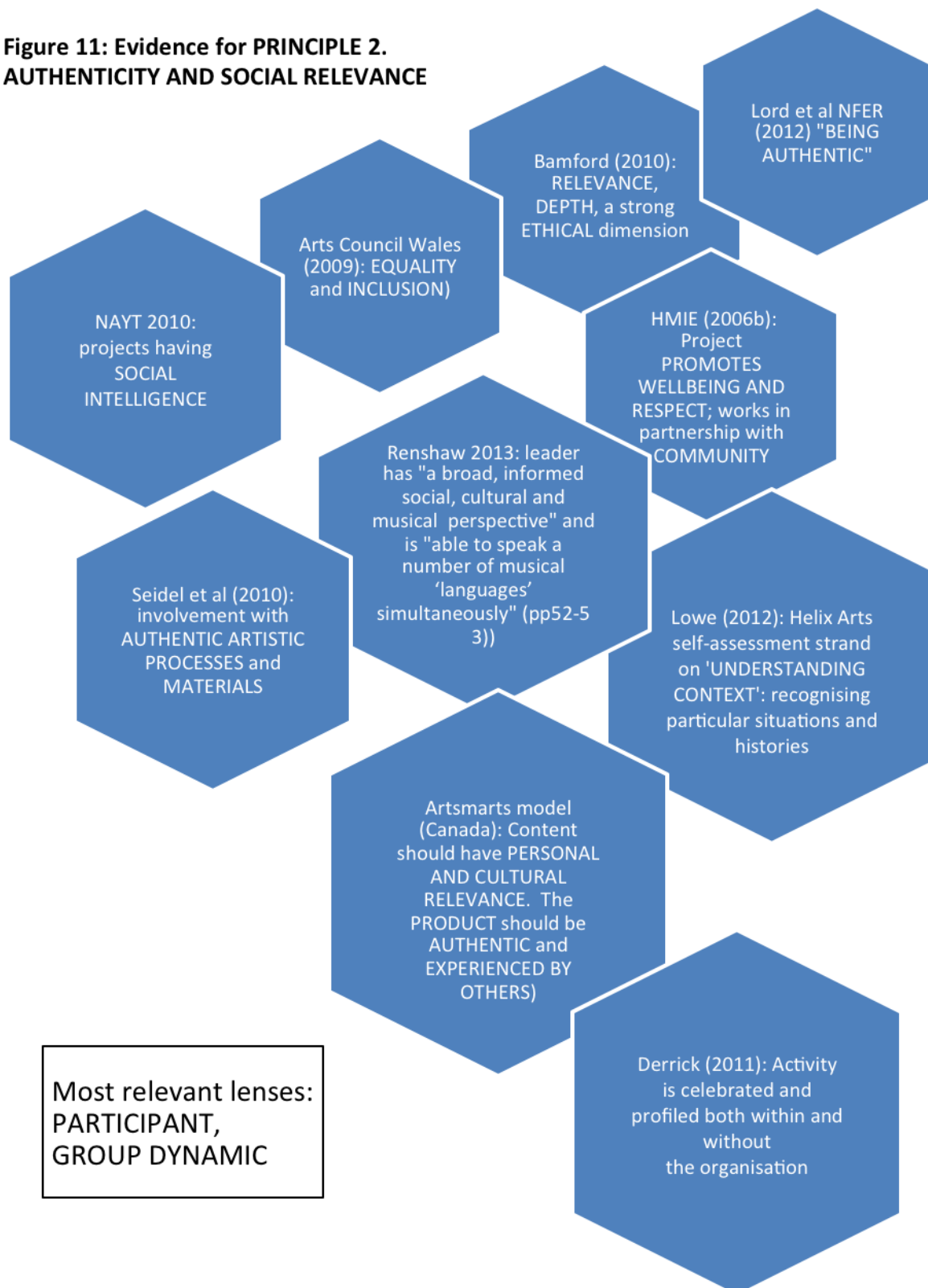
From each source, characteristics or attributes of quality work were extracted and assimilated to enable a number of themes to emerge, forming the set of generic quality principles presented here. The Figures below present some of the detail from the different sources reviewed, and show how these synthesise into the headings.

Appendix 5 (*available in electronic copy only*) contains the full dataset and assessment of the frameworks and resources reviewed.

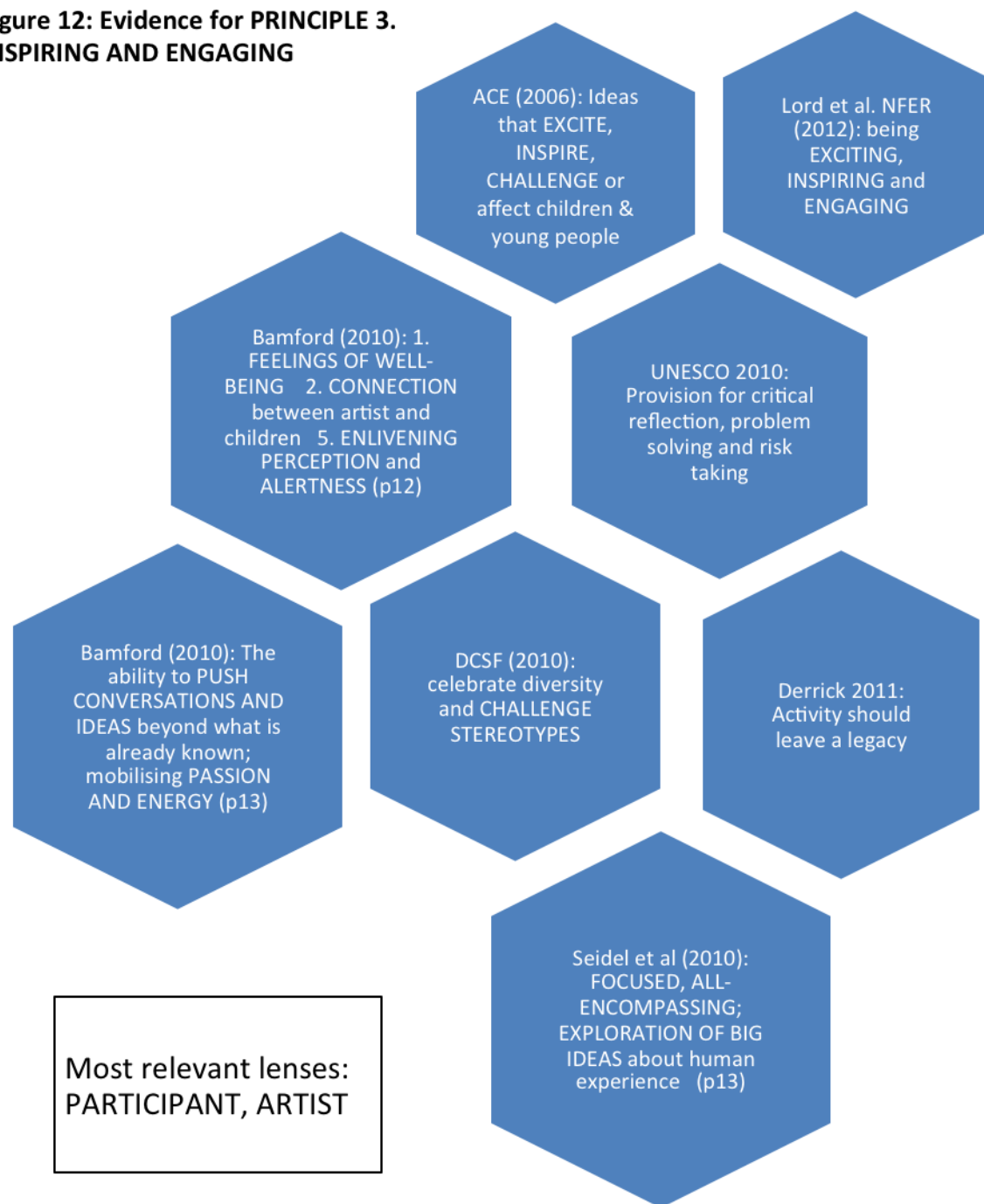
**Figure 10: Evidence for
PRINCIPLE 1.
ARTISTIC DISTINCTION**



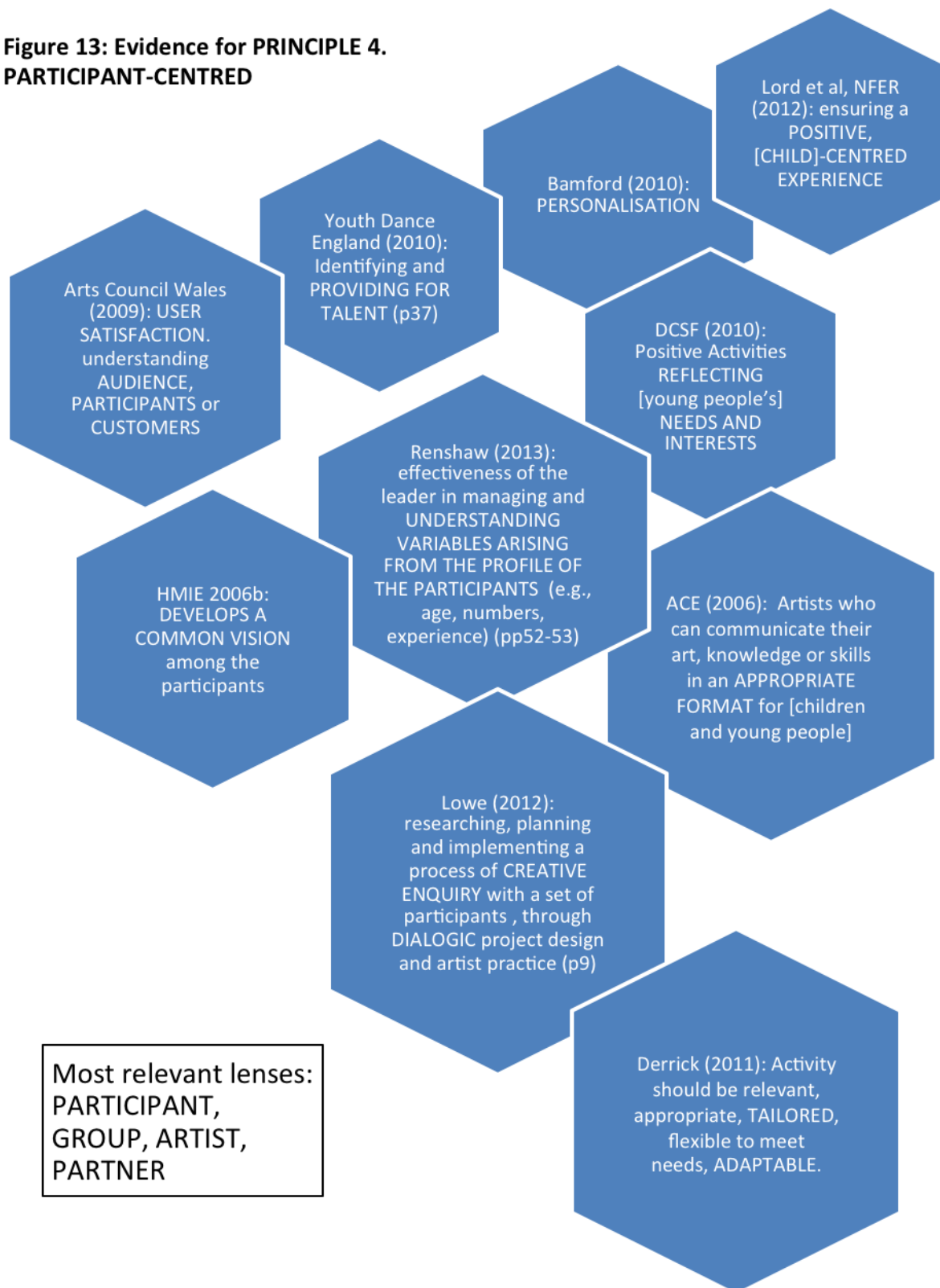
**Figure 11: Evidence for PRINCIPLE 2.
AUTHENTICITY AND SOCIAL RELEVANCE**



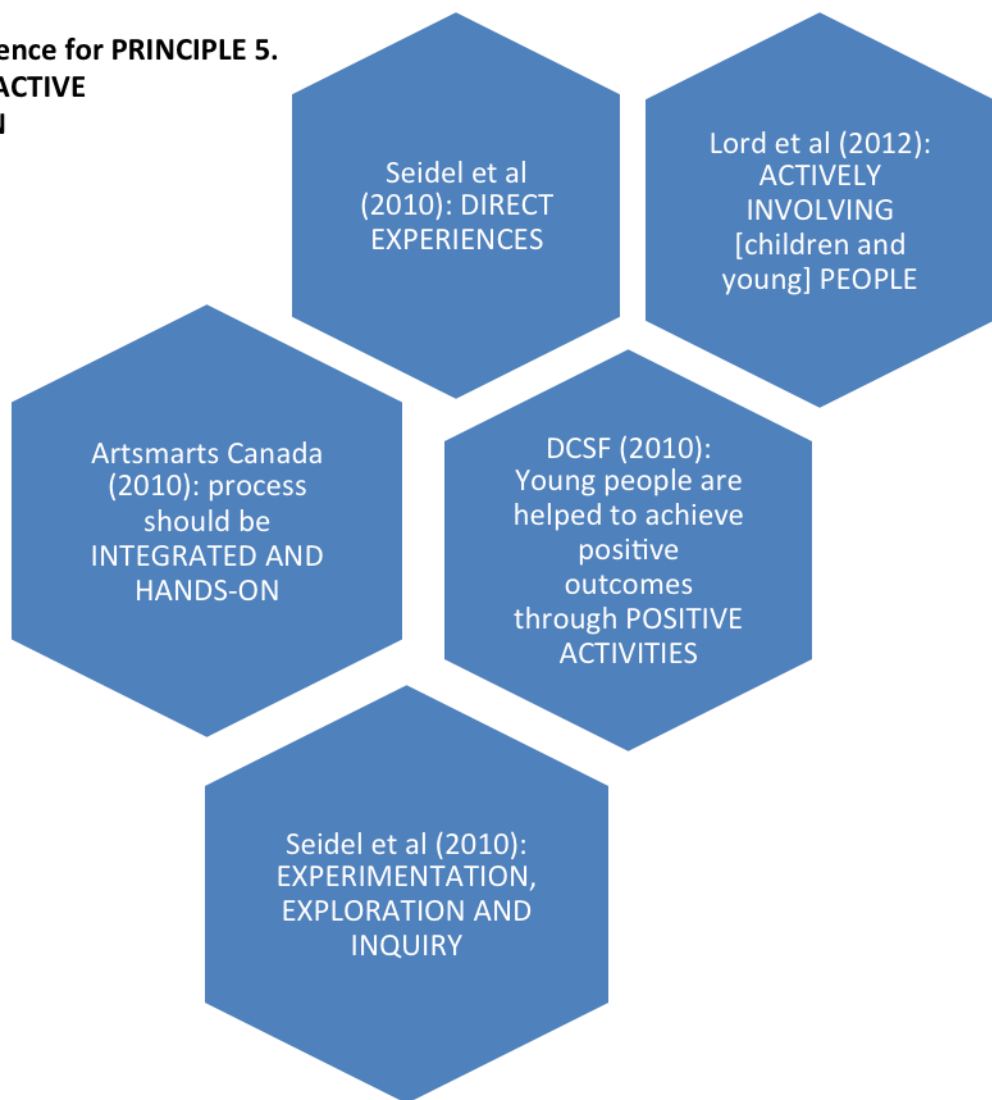
**Figure 12: Evidence for PRINCIPLE 3.
INSPIRING AND ENGAGING**



**Figure 13: Evidence for PRINCIPLE 4.
PARTICIPANT-CENTRED**



**Figure 14: Evidence for PRINCIPLE 5.
PURPOSEFUL, ACTIVE
and HANDS-ON**

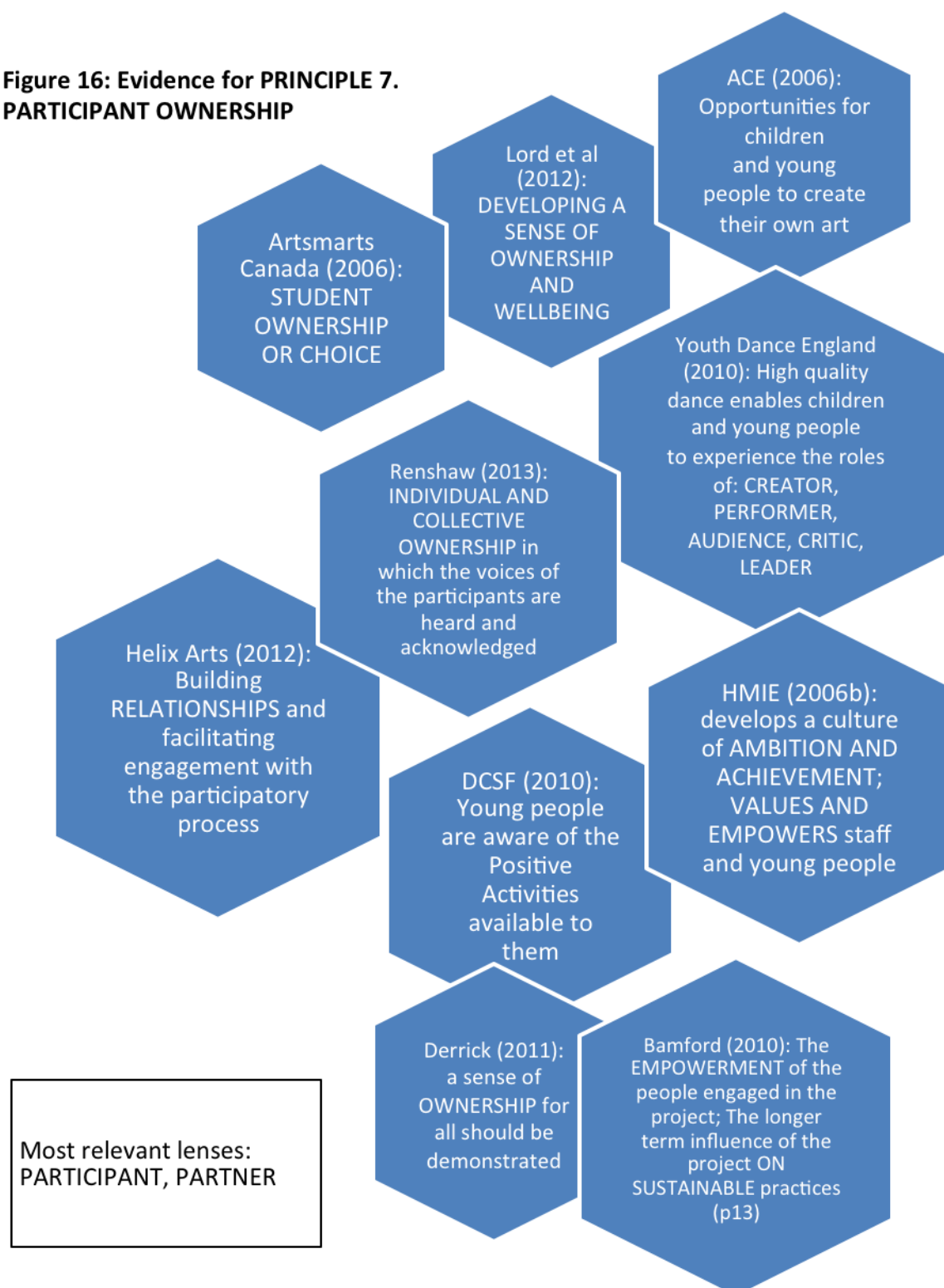


Most relevant lenses:
PARTICIPANT, ARTIST,
PARTNER

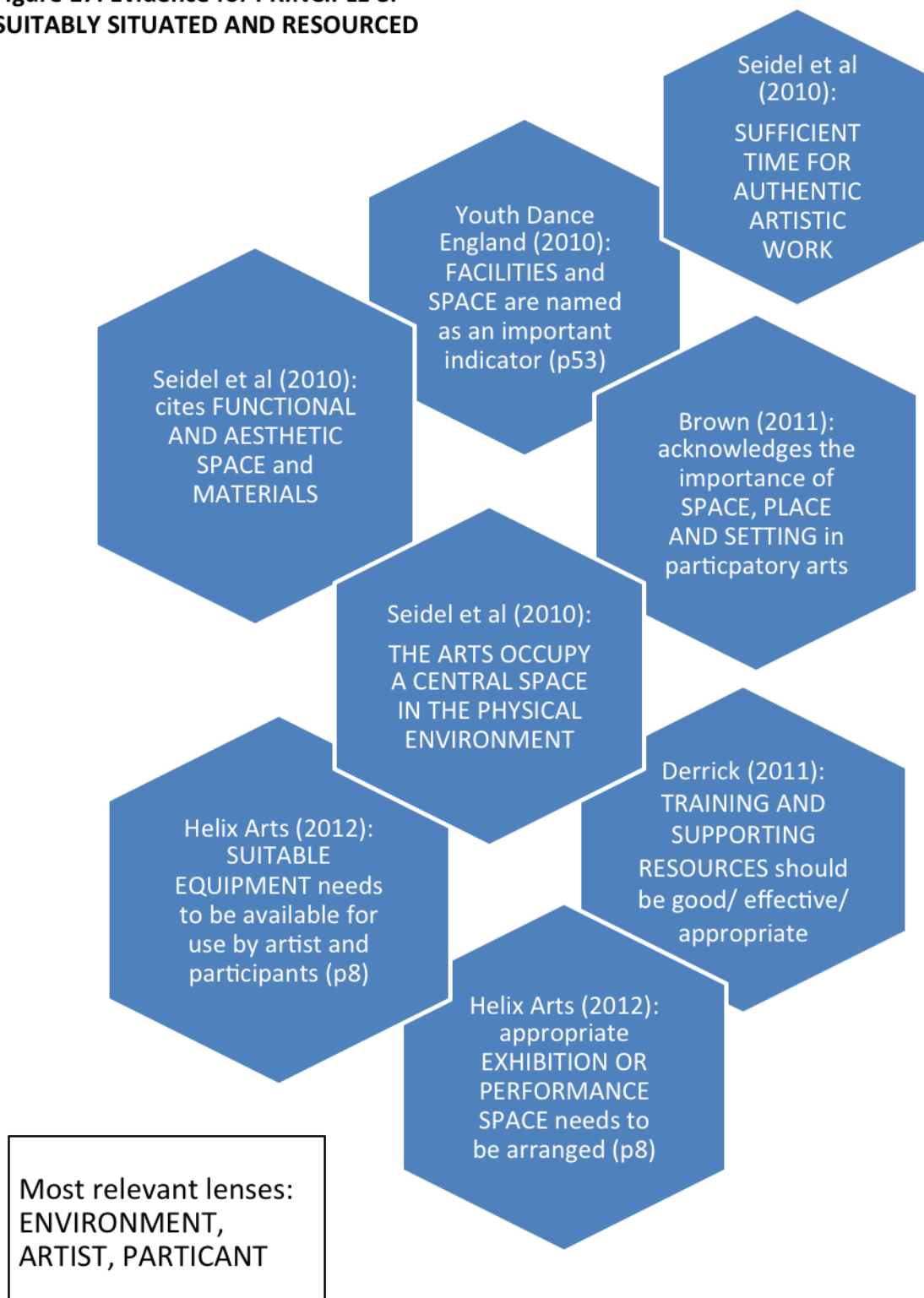
**Figure 15: Evidence for PRINCIPLE 6.
PROGRESSION FOR PARTICIPANTS
(and LEGACY)**



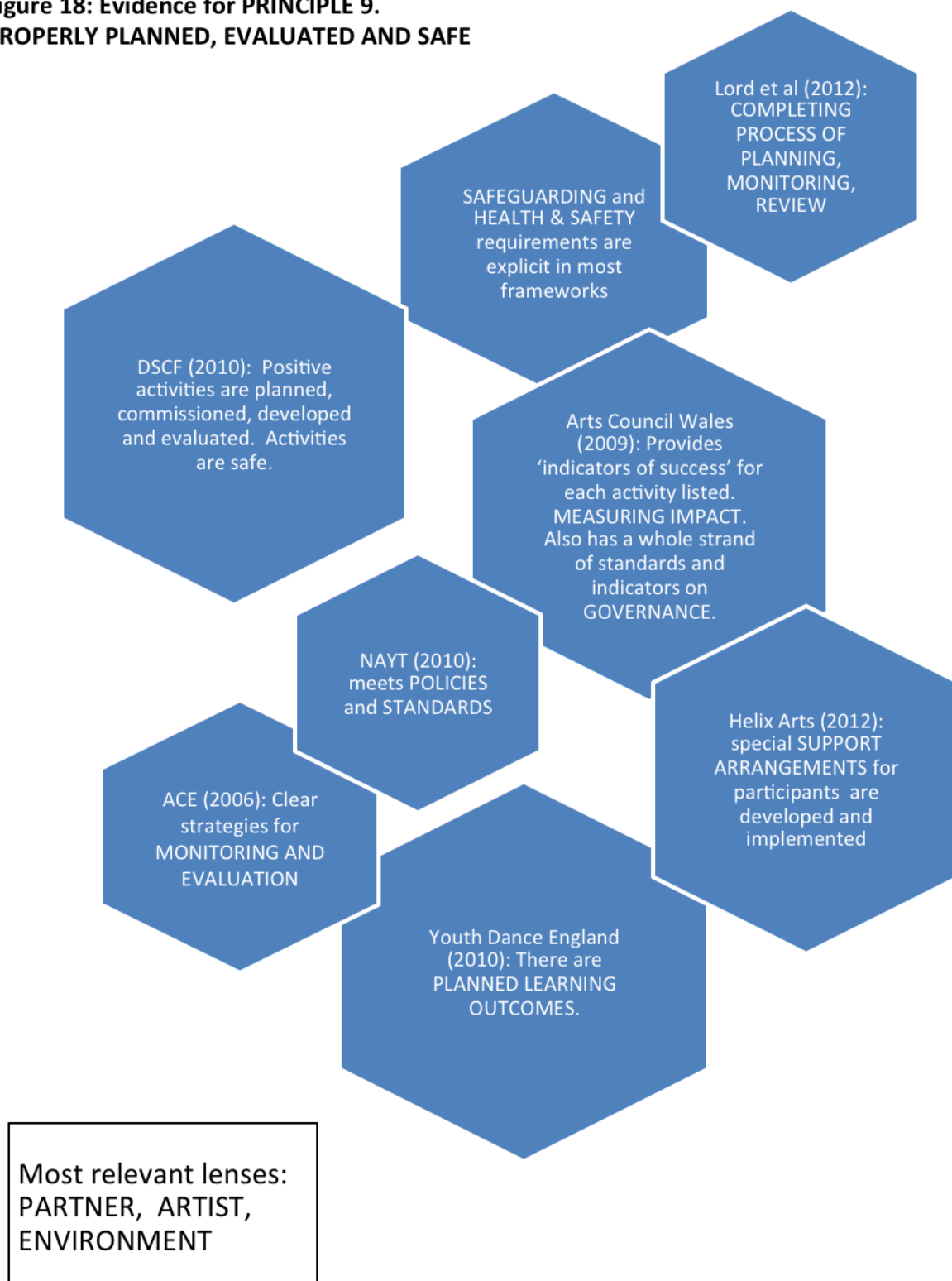
**Figure 16: Evidence for PRINCIPLE 7.
PARTICIPANT OWNERSHIP**



**Figure 17: Evidence for PRINCIPLE 8.
SUITABLY SITUATED AND RESOURCED**



**Figure 18: Evidence for PRINCIPLE 9.
PROPERLY PLANNED, EVALUATED AND SAFE**



APPROACHES TO MEASURING QUALITY AGAINST PRINCIPLES

The Artworks Evaluation Literature Review concludes that *there is no existing single framework for understanding and introducing measures for quality*. Despite strong motivation by funders and the sector to devise metrics (for performance management, for evaluation, for measurement on ‘social returns on investment’ and for advocacy purposes), “there remains a lack of methodology and framework with rigour by which these valuations are conducted” (dha 2012a p7, Schwarz 2014 p10). The problem seems to centre on identifying appropriate indicators for quality that may be measured.

Nevertheless by looking at existing frameworks and literature, it is possible to identify distinct approaches that have been used to date in measuring quality, and useful to outline these below.

Based on their extensive review of quality frameworks in 2012, NFER observe that many frameworks have **outcomes-focused** measurements, such as the MLA’s *Inspiring Learning* framework (2006) which groups outcomes around five domains (knowledge and understanding; skills; attitudes and values; inspiration and creativity; and activity, behaviour and progression). Others concentrate on **learning-focused** principles. But NFER highlight as a gap the lack of standard guidance on measuring outcomes robustly, and on demonstrating quality, stating that “there is a range of tools and approaches for evaluating outcomes, but explicitly linking this to evidence of ‘quality’ is a gap in the frameworks” (Lord et al 2012 p34).

In frameworks based around **performance-focused principles** (for example the NAYT *Excellent Youth Theatre* guidance of 2010), there is a strong emphasis on **user satisfaction**. This focuses on participants’ immediate responses, such as their enjoyment, captivation, or confidence to engage. Some also refer to a longer-term impact on further engagement, participation levels and audience numbers (Lord et al 2012, p19).

This is exemplified by Lowe in the *Audit of Participatory Arts Practice* for Artworks, which proposes three main categories under which excellence in participatory arts can be measured and understood:

	Possible Indicators
<i>Elements of excellence in the participatory process</i>	The artist’s practice – ability to build and facilitate relationships; understanding of own art form practice; ability to inspire and release creativity, challenge world views, enable reflection, and continually develop and challenge their own practice
<i>Excellence in the work produced/product</i>	Satisfaction of the artist and organisation with the work; participant satisfaction; whether the work was challenging to participants and audiences; critical reaction to the work; audience reaction to the work
<i>Excellence in the impact of the work</i>	Personal development of participants (skills, confidence,

self - expression, seeing the world differently...); impact on culture (hearing untold stories and unheard voices, helping to develop collective identities); policy impact (social and cultural); practice impact (impact on practice of artists and other professionals)

(Lowe 2011 pp50-51)

Essential ways to capture this would be by gauging:

- The satisfaction of the artist and organisation with the work – is the artist proud of it?
- The satisfaction of participants
- Whether the work was challenging to participants and audiences
- Critical reaction to the work
- Audience reaction to the work

(Lowe 2011 p51)

For Bamford, in the context of developing the Creativity Portal in 2010 and citing research from 2006 for UNESCO, quality assessment of arts and education partnerships is recommended to include measurement of:

Levels of risk taking
Partnerships
Flexibility of organisational structures
Responsiveness of personal and organisational boundaries;
Levels of shared and collaborative planning;
Detailed reflection and evaluation practices;
Accessibility and equality frameworks
Awareness of and reaction to local contexts
Opportunities for presentation/publication and public communication
Professional development provisions

(Bamford 2010 p3)

These indicators map closely to the quality principles presented above in this chapter, and also reflect key conditions for quality that are outlined in Chapter Five.

It is worth looking also at the HMIE framework for *How Good Is Our [School / Community Learning and Development / Sport]*? This detailed and thorough framework is designed around what NFER classify as **Service Outcomes**, **Intermediate Outcomes** (i.e. impacts) and **Overarching Strategic Outcomes** (i.e. longer-term policy developments) (Lord et al 2012, p23).

The key indicators developed by HMIE are structured as follows:
(See also Appendix 3 for a chart summarising the whole framework)

WHAT KEY OUTCOMES HAVE WE ACHIEVED?	1. Key performance outcomes
HOW WELL DO WE MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR STAKEHOLDERS?	2. Impact on service users; 2.1 Impact on participants; 3. Impact on staff and volunteers; 3.1 Impact on paid and voluntary staff; 4. Impact on the community; 4.1 Impact on the local community; 4.2 Impact on the wider community
HOW GOOD IS OUR DELIVERY OF KEY PROCESSES?	5. Processes and Delivery
HOW GOOD IS OUR MANAGEMENT?	6. Policy development and planning; 7. Management and support of paid and voluntary staff; 8. Partnerships and resources
HOW GOOD IS OUR LEADERSHIP?	
WHAT IS OUR CAPACITY FOR IMPROVEMENT?	

(HMIE 2006a)

The close attention to detail achieved by HMIE in specifying indicators and mapping possible measures of each of the ‘key performance outcomes’ can provide a very useful template for the development of possible quality measures for participatory arts. The information is contained in a document entitled *Self Evaluation for Quality Improvement* published by HMIE in 2006 to support its *How Good is our Community Learning and Development?* framework.

Indeed, it will be necessary to develop indicators specific to participatory arts practice and settings, engaging the sector as far as possible. Artists participating in Artworks Labs during 2013 believed that new ways need to be developed to evaluate and measure participatory arts practice and projects, to define what constitutes success, and define notions of quality and excellence (Salamon 2013a p5).

Arts Council England is currently working with the arts and cultural sector to develop a set of metrics which will allow it to measure the “value and impact” of its funding investments with regard to its goals for excellence and work “by, with and for children and young people” (ACE 2014). Schwarz qualifies that the nature of this work is focused on measurement and assessment and does not indicate a quality improvement approach. Furthermore, while ‘experience’ and ‘engagement’ are included as ‘dimensions’ in the outline framework, it makes no direct reference to ‘participation’ (Schwarz 2014 p31).

CHAPTER FIVE: KEY QUALITY CONDITIONS AND HOW STAKEHOLDERS INFLUENCE THEM

5

It is clear from preceding chapters that quality can't be prescribed or even guaranteed through quality assurance or control mechanisms, it can only be planned for and 'built in' early in the process. The only rational way to manage quality is to focus attention on fulfilling the conditions required for quality to occur.

This chapter presents evidence from studies and sector consultations to identify what these conditions are considered to be. Crucially, the evidence shows that pre-conditions for quality are often NOT met in existing systems of participatory arts provision. The crucial influence of external stakeholders (i.e. beyond the artist and the participants) on whether or not quality can be achieved is revealed, underlining the importance of making sure that partnerships function and communicate well.

QUALITY CONDITIONS

A number of resources were available for this study, generated from Artworks platforms and other research emerging from the sector. Three studies in particular offer useful insights into the conditions for quality in participatory arts: Lowe's Audit of Practice for Artworks (2011), Dean's Peer-to-Peer Networks study for Artworks Scotland (2012) and Salamon's Artist Labs Report for Artworks (2013). This section presents the key findings from these important pieces of research, and synthesises them into what might be considered a list of preconditions for quality participatory arts work.

Artist responses on 'elements' enabling good practice

On the basis of sector consultation, Lowe (2011) offers a detailed list of 'elements' that enable excellence or good practice.

Sufficient financial resources to involve the necessary people and give them the equipment and materials they need

Sufficient development **time to build relationships**, and the creation of partnerships which bring expertise about context into the project

Elements to develop and manage quality

Having **realistic aims** for the work (in relation to budgets)

participatory processes

The **duration of activity** and **artist/participant ratios**, ensuring that artists have the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with participants

The practical and emotional **support offered to participants** to enable them to engage effectively

The **clarity of roles** for artists, participants and others involved

Participant involvement in the decision-making processes throughout the project and the work that is produced

Systematic thinking about **progression opportunities** for participants

Space, skills and resources for **reflection and learning**

Providing spaces for **experimentation**

Artist attributes for quality include the ability to:

- Build relationships with people, and help people build relationships with one another
- Deeply understand their artform
- Inspire and release creativity in others, and engage people in artform
- Challenge participants to see the world differently
- Enable people to convey new meaning from their experiences
- Continually challenge and develop their own practice

(Lowe 2011)

Employing **highly skilled, professional artists** *¹ (see text box and footnote)

Elements needed for participatory arts processes to function well are defined in Lowe's study as:

¹ Much attention has been paid by Artworks to developing understanding of core competencies and attributes of artists in participatory settings. Useful sources on this include Bartlett (2010); Buttrick (2012); Consilium (2012a) and (2012b); Consortium for Participatory Arts Learning (2011); Creative & Cultural Skills (2013); Creativity, Culture and Education (2009); Lowe (2011); Salamon (2013b); Schwarz (2013b); Sellers (2011).

- Making use of places which provide accessible, **fit for purpose environments** in which to work
- Providing **equipment and materials** which enables artists and participants to produce the work they want, to the standard they want
- Ensuring that **processes are recorded** or documented
- Ensuring that questions of **authorship, credit and ownership** are discussed and agreed between artist and participants
- Enabling participants to share their work as widely as appropriate, and engage others in **dialogue about the work**.
- Enabling participants to **progress** onto further self-directed creative activity
- Setting a **vision, aims and objectives**, and monitoring and reporting progress
- **Risk assessed**: ensuring that people have considered and mitigated the dangers of activity
- Managing budgets effectively
- Addressing and **solving logistical problems** – making sure people are in the right places at the right times, with all that they need
- Maintaining **effective communication** between everyone involved (Lowe 2011).

These issues emerging from Lowe’s consultation essentially allow projects to be delivered in a professional manner, delivering on intended aims and objectives, and taking into account the needs and behaviours of the participants in specific target groups or settings. These elements are mirrored almost exactly by a second consultation undertaken by Artworks Scotland in 2012.

Quality factors identified by Artworks Scotland

Research undertaken in 2012 by Artworks Scotland to evaluate the *Artworks Peer to Peer Networks* programme generated a great deal of insight from the artists’ point of view on what preconditions are required for them to deliver quality work. As can be seen below, they align very closely with the results from Lowe’s study the previous year. The data has been reported in a way that enables us to identify which conditions are the most crucial.

Essential and important factors

Factors deemed *essential preconditions* for quality were those mentioned by over 70% of the 25 artists consulted in the Artworks Scotland study. These were reported as:

- Having **time to think and reflect** as part of a project;
- Feeling **professionally valued** within the project;
- Having Adequate **resources** - financial and other - to support planning, delivery and evaluation
- **Realistic expectations** of what can be achieved in the time and resource;
- Having **‘buy in’ and trust** between all partners/participants;
- A brief that allows **creative input**; and
- A contract that makes clear everyone’s roles, tasks and **expectations**.

(Dean 2012, p24)

Other *important factors* agreed by artists were:

- All partners/participants being involved in **joint research, planning and development**;
- **Professional Development** opportunities as part of project;
- **Time to build relations** with all partners/participants;
- **Realistic numbers of participants** in terms of time, budget and aims;
- **Understanding** between all partners of what each can offer one another.

(Dean 2012, pp25-26)

The report of Artworks Labs consultations in 2013 (Salamon 2013a) outlines *key ambitions* of artists and commissioners in participatory arts projects. These correlate with the factors emerging from the other studies, that:

- There is **enough planning time** to consult with potential and active participants of the project;
 - There is **open and honest communication** between the artist and the commissioner;
 - The project is **well planned, well-managed and administered**;
 - There **are opportunities to reflect, build on good practice** and create a legacy;
 - The project is **delivered on time** and within budget;
 - **Employers understand the artist's role** in their setting and do not have unrealistic expectations;
 - The **artist understands the expectations of partners/ stakeholders** – commissioner, artists, collaborators, audience, funders, participants - and is able to work with these;
 - **Sufficient funds** are raised before a project begins;
 - The artist is provided with (i) **ongoing support**, (ii) clear expectations;
 - The **artist's skills** and ideas are used creatively;
 - The project retains **flexibility** and is able to accommodate and adapt to unexpected changes;
 - Artists are able, willing and understand how to **collaborate and communicate with the host organisation's** staff;
 - **Artists and commissioners work together** to attract ("market") participants to the project;
 - Artists are able to **build relationships with participants** and engage them in the project;
 - Artists will "be paid well and have all the information to do [their] job properly".
- (Salamon 2013a)

Some 82% of artists, 82% of employers and 72% of commissioners believed that their projects would have benefited from a **better understanding of participants' needs**.
(Salamon 2013, p14)

Summary of Generally-Acknowledged Quality Conditions

What the Artworks Scotland research signals is that the value of reflection time is a critical element, alongside the importance of buy in and trust between all partners (Dean 2012). As

evidenced by Lowe's findings, there are key PROCESSES that need to be in place (Lowe 2011) that are seen as essential and important to support quality.

Partnerships and stakeholder dedication emerge as a crucial theme in Dean's study with "having 'buy in' and trust between all partners/participants", "feeling valued" by each other, "shared processes of working together across planning and evaluation" and clear and realistic expectations all being *essential* preconditions.

The same factors also arise in HMIE's understanding of conditions for quality as expressed in *A Journey to Excellence: Part 4 Planning for Excellence*:

"The capacity to improve is linked to a range of factors, such as: effective self-evaluation; a richness of data and intelligence that is well used, for example, to track the progress of individual learners; an agreed and shared vision; an open, collegiate climate that makes professional thinking and learning explicit; close and supportive monitoring of initiatives; and creative thinking in reaching solutions that help improve learning experiences and achievement for all." (HMIE 2007b, Appendix 2, p27)

Drawing these sources together, **key quality conditions** may be understood as:
(*in no order of importance*)

- **Sufficient resources, including fit for purpose environment**
- **Sufficient time, for planning, building relationships and implementing project**
- **Designed and resourced for participants' needs and support**
- **Opportunities to reflect, adapt, evaluate**
- **Realistic aims**
- **Understanding of artist and partner roles**
- **Buy-in and Trust by all parties**
- **Clear and realistic expectations**
- **Democratic decision-making (artist-partner-participant)**

To What Extent are these Conditions in Place?

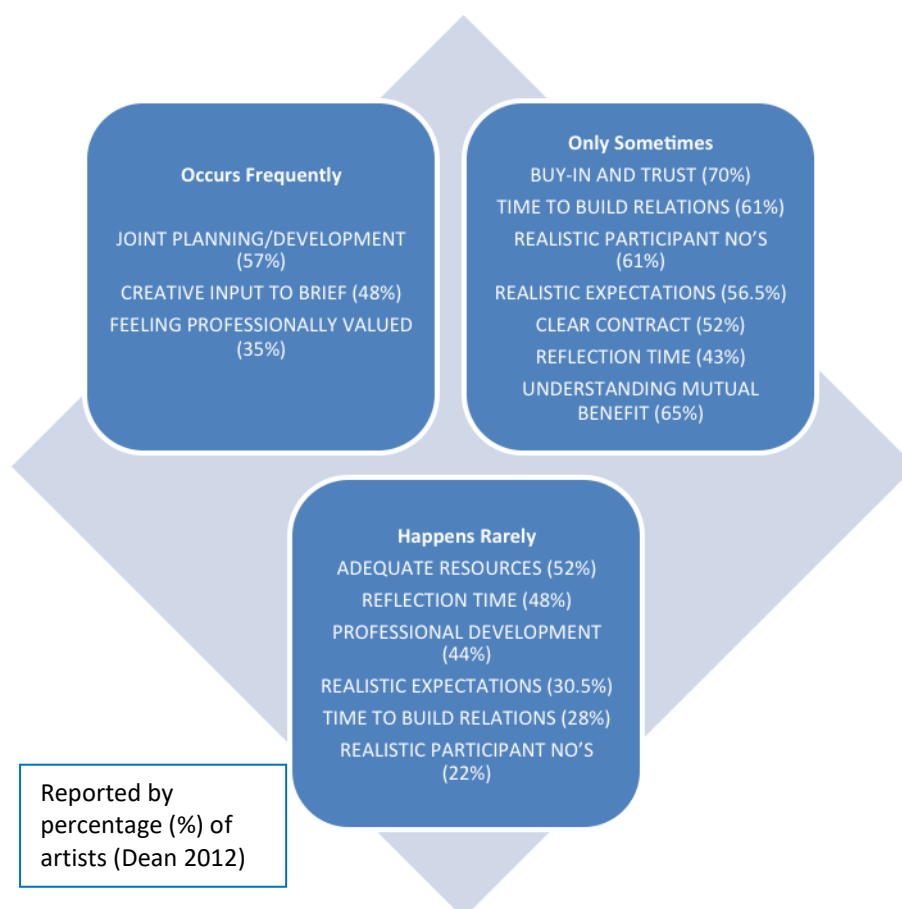
While several of these conditions may seem plainly obvious (for instance having sufficient time, resources and appropriate content), *the significant insight gained by Artworks and through this research is that these preconditions for quality are not always in place* for participatory arts projects, meaning that expectations of quality outputs and outcomes are heavily undermined.

The next question in addressing issues of quality for a designing quality framework therefore has to be: to what extent do existing structures and practices facilitate these quality conditions?

When Dean's study investigated how often these quality factors occur from artists' point of view, it found that *many of the essential and important factors occur only sometimes, and many happen rarely* (Dean 2012, pp27-28), indicating that there is much more that can be done to enable quality in participatory arts. Figure 19 overleaf presents Dean's key findings as a chart.

/ Figure 19: Occurrence of Essential and Important Factors, from artists' viewpoint

Figure 19: Occurrence of Essential and Important Factors, from Artists' viewpoint



This data was tested further in 2013 by Artworks Scotland to gain perspective from project partners, defined as people who work with artists as employers, managers, commissioners or co-ordinators such as teachers, healthcare staff, prison officers, but who are not artists themselves (Dean 2013a, p1). The 2013 Partners' survey repeated the same questions about quality posed to artists and again participants were asked to rate these quality factors in terms of importance and how often they happened in projects they have been involved in (Dean 2013a, p1).

While the study found general consensus on the importance of the factors, there was quite a significant variation² in how often partners perceived these actually happening, with partners reporting greater incidence of key factors practice than the artists.

For example, in terms of *buy in and trust*, around 26% of artists indicated that this happened often, with just over 56% of partners suggesting that this happened often (Dean 2013a p3).

On the issue of *Adequate resources - financial and other - to support planning, delivery and evaluation*: this was indicated as rarely happening by over 51% of artists and sometimes, by 43%, while over 30% of partners indicated that having adequate resources happened often, over 56% sometimes (Dean 2013a p4).

With *Artists having time to think and reflect as part of a project*, less than 9% of artists felt this happened often and almost 48% felt this rarely happened, with 43% citing this sometimes. However, 43.5% of partners suggested this happened often, 43.5% that this happened sometimes and just less than 9% felt this rarely happened (Dean 2013a p4).

In terms of *Realistic expectations of what can be achieved in the time and resource*, over 30% artists indicated this rarely happened, sometimes, just over 56% and often 13%. For partners just under 9% felt that this rarely happened, almost 48% sometimes and 43.5% felt this happened often (Dean 2013a p4).

Where *Numbers of participants are realistic in terms of time, budget and aims*, less than 9% of artists felt this happened often, and almost 22% rarely, while with partners just over 52% indicated this often happened, and only a little over 4% rarely (Dean 2013a p4).

And with *Artists feeling professionally valued within the project*: a little under 35% of artists often felt *professionally valued* in projects, while almost 74% of partners indicated that this did happen often (Dean 2013a, p3).

The full findings of the Artworks Scotland study may be viewed in a handy infographic format in Appendix 2.

There appears to be significant dissonance between perspectives, which underlines the importance of clear expectations and strong communication in partnerships. Dean suggests that the results might be potentially skewed by the possibility that “partners involved in this research do put these factors in place often and that the artists involved may be referring to experiences of working with different partners, hence the distinction” (Dean 2013a, p4), but *these results nevertheless indicate a significant disconnect on the ground that has potential implications for quality work to occur.*

² It should be noted that the partners consulted in the second Artworks Scotland study were not directly related to the projects of the artists consulted in the first study. Furthermore, the respondents in the partners’ survey were predominantly high level officials and not those directly engaged in the participatory arts projects. These factors do affect the validity of the findings, although the existence of disconnect remains significant and worthy of further investigation.

If we value the view of the Chartered Institute of Quality that “*when someone is assigned responsibility for quality ... with this right should be delegated the authority to control the processes which deliver the output*” (CQI 2013b) then it is clear that *these findings highlight a significant issue that must be resolved if a quality framework is to be meaningful and effective.*

Key to this is engaging external stakeholders in participatory arts work (namely partners and commissioners/co-funders) in recognising overarching quality principles and enabling quality conditions.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR ROLE IN ENABLING QUALITY

The results of Dean’s research revealing divergent artist and partner perspectives assume still greater significance once we appreciate the influence that partners in participatory arts projects can have over the delivery of such work.

Who are Stakeholders?

Stakeholders can be considered as any organisation or individual involved in a project or upon whom the artists or deliverers depend for support (CQI 2013d). In the broadest context these could include:

- Project manager and project staff;
- Participants, beneficiaries, end users;
- Partners: be they Staff from a host organisation (i.e. in the setting)
Or Investors and funders;
- Suppliers of products and services upon which the organisation depends to produce its outputs i.e. venues, materials
- Society, including people in the local community

For the purposes of this study, we shall consider the main stakeholders to be the **artist**, **participants**, and **partners** in line with the lenses that were discussed earlier. In the context of participatory arts, it is these three stakeholder groups that have the strongest connection with the work and vested interests in its quality.

According to the Chartered Institute for Quality (CQI)’s global approach to the issue of quality, there are a number of key factors that are critical in managing stakeholder expectations (CQI 2013d):

Stakeholder needs and expectations

What these parties will expect in return for their contribution

Stakeholder success measures

What these parties will look for to judge performance

Critical success factors

The factors affecting the organisation's

Corporate values	ability to achieve these goals The principles that will guide the organisation in achieving these goals
Business outputs	The outputs that will deliver successful outcomes for all stakeholders
Business process capability	The capability of the processes that will deliver these outputs
Managerial competence	The ability of those who will design, resource, measure, review and improve these processes

It is interesting to note that the last three on this list align with historical focus in Scottish Arts Council's previous Quality Framework (see Chapter Seven), but this global approach to quality cites stakeholder perspectives as important, as well as the Conditions that need to be in place (Critical Success Factors).

Stakeholder Theory and the Interconnectedness of Decision Makers

The significance of stakeholders, particularly the Partners, has been outlined by Seidel et al (2010) in terms of the *interconnectedness of decision makers* and the impacts that they have on whether quality outcomes are possible.

Seidel et al characterise "three groups of decision makers ... who are able to influence the quality of arts learning experiences" (see Figure 20 overleaf). Put simply, these are:

Those in the "room" (participants, artists and occasionally others, such as carers, support aides, parents)

Those just outside the room, who "may interact with those in the outer-most circle and who may visit the room in which arts learning experiences occur". Examples offered by Seidel et al are: supervisors, programme administrators, arts coordinators, parents, mentors, evaluators, and site liaisons.

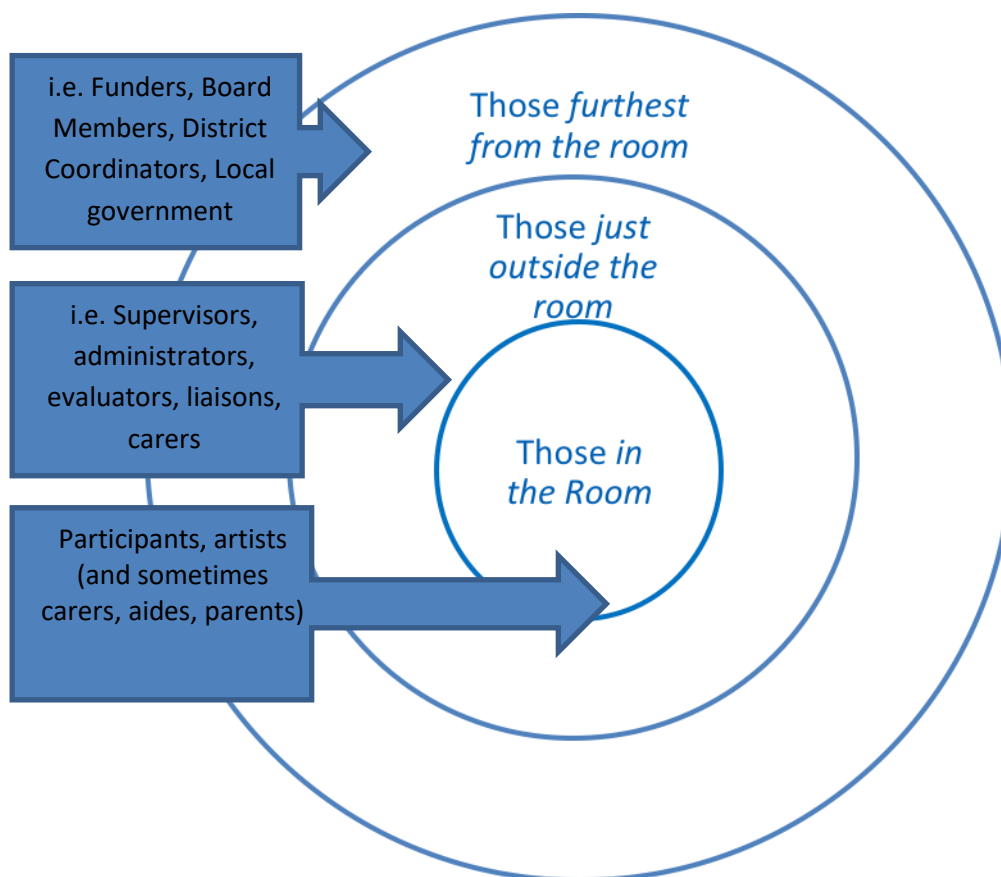
Those furthest from the room who may rarely, if ever, enter the room (funders, district arts coordinators, committee or board members, civic leaders, representatives from local government)

(Seidel et al 2010, p61)

The findings of Seidel et al's research is **that those just outside the room and those even further away who may never, or only rarely, enter the room, have powerful influences on the likelihood that those in the room will have a high quality arts learning experience.** Their decisions are also critical to whether that quality can be achieved and sustained consistently over time and across classrooms (Seidel et al 2010 p62).

There are countless decisions that influence the delivery of a participatory arts project and the likelihood that participants will have a high quality experience. Because of the nature of participatory arts and the variety of settings in which they take place, there are often multiple decision makers as well. Some of these decisions are most likely made by people outside the room in which the experience takes place, and who have very different relationships to that of the artist interacting creatively with the participant (Seidel et al 2010, p64). Within challenging settings with special needs participants, it is easy to appreciate the veracity of this observation.

Figure 20: Decision Makers who Impact the Quality of Participatory Arts Experiences (adapted from Seidel et al 2010, p62)



The impact of Outer Circle decision makers

Decisions made by those in the two outer circles (i.e. outside the room) are considered to be the most influential and far-reaching. *Organizational* or *programmatic decisions* are generally made by those just outside the room and people who rarely, if ever, enter the room itself. Decisions relating to what Seidel et al term '*Instructional design*' are also most often made by the project deliverers with, or in alignment with decisions made by, at least some of the people just outside the room (Seidel et al 2010, p64).

As Seidel et al state: "in many cases, these [outer] decision makers, who generally don't know the names of the people in the actual classrooms that they influence, are more concerned with issues of access and, sometimes, equity than of quality. *They expect those in the inner circles to deal with the challenges of quality* and feel that they've done their job in relation to quality by establishing hiring criteria, curriculum frameworks, and access to resources. *If, however, there isn't genuine dialogue of some sort across the circles about what the real needs are and what the priorities should be in a specific setting, there is a good chance that the efforts to create quality by those in the outer circle are just so much wishful thinking.*" (Seidel et al 2010, p62)

The reality is that those farthest away from the room often make important decisions determining the allocation and use of funding. The danger highlighted by Seidel et al is that "when those making decisions about the allocations of funds are also most removed from the immediate lives and experiences of those to be served by the funds, there is room for false assumptions, misunderstandings, and, potentially, wasteful or even harmful decisions" (Seidel et al 2010 p63).

Timing and flexibility of decisions

As well as the issue of proximity, there is also a temporal dimension to this scenario. Those in and closest to the room make their decisions just before and also "in the moment" of the experience (Seidel et al 2010, p62). Critical *delivery decisions* may be made by artists in moments of interaction with participants, enabling an important element of flexibility and adaptability in the project (Seidel et al 2010, p64). It will be remembered that flexibility is one of the recognised preconditions for quality identified earlier in this report.

Those further away from the room most often make their decisions long before delivery phase of the project and, depending how high-level the edict is, it can affect the experiences of many participants and artists in multiple settings over significant periods of time (Seidel et al 2010, p62).

The vital importance of communion across the circles

In such an integrated system, it is clear that decisions in each circle affect decisions in the others and, ultimately, the quality of the experiences "in the room." Seidel et al characterise successful systems of decision making as able to "*recognize the delicacy and likelihood of mistakes made in the outer circle and provide frequent, open, and dynamic channels of communication with the explicit purpose of informing the outer circle decision makers*" (Seidel et al 2010 p63) In other words: educating partners on what is needed to achieve quality and which decisions need to be in the control of those in the room.

Regardless of the degree to which decision makers in each of Seidel's circles are out of alignment in their approaches, *the achievement of quality hinges on good lines of communication*: "Clearly, when decision makers are engaged in genuine dialogue, not only within the circles, but across roles, responsibilities, and proximity to "the room," they increase the likelihood that they will work in harmony, not discord" (Seidel et al 2010 p68).

This brings us back to an important insight gained from a global view of quality (true equally for industry and the arts), that: *once quality has been built in, subsequent “deployment, operation, and maintenance processes must not degrade it”* (Marino 2007 p21).

This also reinforces with renewed significance the view of the Chartered Quality Institute that when someone is assigned responsibility for quality, this means giving that person **the right to cause things to happen and to control the processes** which deliver the output they are responsible for (CQI 2013b).

EVIDENCE FROM THE SECTOR ON THE REALITIES OF PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Artworks has done a great deal to investigate the realities of working with partners in participatory arts settings, from the point of view of artists. The *Artist Lab Reports* describe the role of partners in creating a safe environment for participants:

Creating an environment that was safe on the one hand, yet encouraged experimentation and risk-taking on the other, would ideally be developed in collaboration with the commissioner/host organisation so as not to breach organisational procedures. This active involvement with the commissioner creates a deeper understanding of the project and the artist’s work with participants, which also provides the artist and the project with a ‘champion’ and support.

(Salamon 2013a p19)

Likewise, recent research undertaken by the Institute for Research in Innovation and Social Services (IRISS) brings together learning points for both artists and social care practitioners developing and delivering participatory arts projects [outlined later in this chapter].

Problematic Issues experienced by Artists and Partners

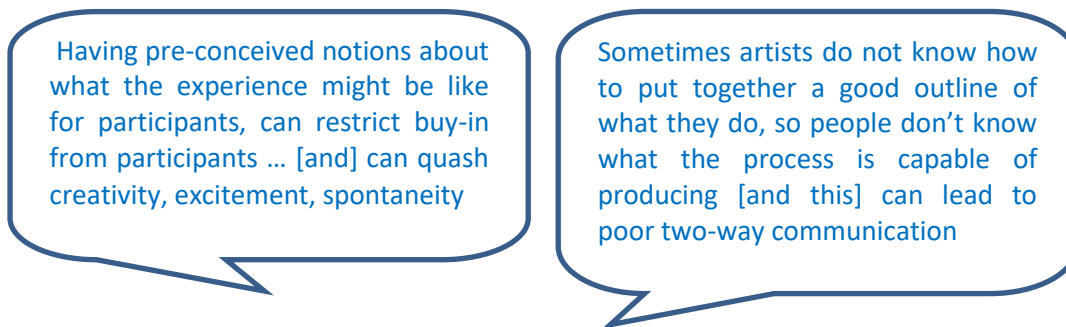
A report by Artworks North-East (Pheby 2012) captures discussions of a number of artist focus groups, Pheby 2012. Responses to the specific question ‘How does the range of stakeholders’ views and perceptions influence artist engagement with participatory practice?’ include the following:

Tensions arise when... there are conflicts between artist’s creative agenda and what the stakeholders may be nervous of. Artists have to ‘manage tension’ ‘You have to have the option of failure.

Some stakeholders can police, tick boxes on a form or intervene

Sometimes the commissioner sees the product as more important than the process, and this influences the outcome. [This] can stem from managers not being clear what is expected so staff working with the musicians can’t pass this on clearly.

The most interesting things are unplanned and you need the flexibility to change.



(Pheby 2012, p8, p17, p22, p25)

Key findings from the artist focus groups are summarised by Pheby as:

- Stakeholders can influence outcomes in ways that practitioners (who are typically less prescriptively goal centred) find unsatisfactory
- Practitioners are often discouraged from participating by the culture of outcomes and evidence
- Stakeholders are often reluctant to fund projects that cannot outline achievable outcomes
- Stakeholders often enforce content control where practitioners don't believe this is suitable (Pheby, 2012 p2).

A further Artworks report of *Artist Consultations* (Taylor 2013) reveals that artists believe that commissioners have a different understanding and expectations of art in participatory settings.

Results from artist consultations by ArtWorks Scotland highlight similar problems in partnership working in participatory arts, specifically:

Under-developed relationships between artists and host/commissioners;

Unrealistic commissioner expectations; and

Absence of a common language across different sectors/stakeholders

(Consilium 2012a, p22)

Another Artworks report, *Learning from the Research* (Kay 2012), cites perspectives from commissioning partners (e.g. NHS, prison service, schools and local authorities). It reports 'issues of quality assurance related to skills, knowledge and experience, and the identification of appropriate interventions by artists' and states: "it was felt that by establishing a core set of values or minimum standards, both the quality of experience and outcomes for the artist and the employer will be enhanced" (Kay 2012, p18).

Further testimony from the points of view of both artists and partners is offered by IRISS in a report investigating *The Arts in Scottish Social Services* (Pattoni 2013). The report discusses what is considered quality work, and how crucial partnerships are to delivering it. The evidence from IRISS's survey of 105 respondents from 'arts delivery organisations' and 'social care delivery organisations' suggested that "effective arts interventions depend on the quality of partnership, joint working and co-operation between statutory agencies and a wide range of voluntary and community groups" (Pattoni 2013, p9).

The IRISS research reports difficulties experienced by artists in achieving sufficient 'buy in' by social services staff for participatory arts projects:

"Often there is the reliance on social services staff to access participants – their enthusiasm and willingness can be a strength or a barrier depending on how committed people are. As such, arts deliverers talked about the lack of commitment and interest from other practitioners/ key workers that may be working with an individual as one of the key factors hindering participation" (Pattoni 2013 p12).

Such 'buy in' is one of the essential preconditions highlighted above in this chapter. The IRISS report goes on to suggest that increasing training opportunities for social care staff may improve understanding of the value of the arts amongst the workforce (Pattoni 2013 p12).

Key lessons generated
from the IRISS report
are that:

Pre-training for artists is essential when working with new groups with specific needs

Reflective reporting and support from peers is essential to development of practice

Arts activities are most effective when social care practitioners are actively involved and jointly working with the artist; assigning clear roles can assist this process

Social care practitioners may need time/space for reflection to adapt what they learn to new areas

Flexibility and letting go of control are key features for social care practitioners that will need to be developed

(Pattoni 2013, pp13-14)

For enhancing work between artists and social care practitioners, the report offers a number of 'general lessons' that can provide useful insights for this study:

- Successful partnerships and working together can support the sharing of ideas, good practice and knowledge
- People who use services and their carers should be involved in arts activities as peer support
- The evidence base around arts practice in social care settings should be formalised so the value is understood
- Mentoring between artists and social care practitioners can be an effective way to support a change in practice
- Shared reflection can support greater understanding between artists and social care practitioners (Pattoni 2013 p14).

As a final word on the subject of partnerships, Seidel et al state that from their observations during their extensive research study in the US, the challenge of creating a meaningful dialogue among partners is profound, and it doesn't happen without intentionality and serious effort (Seidel et al 2010, p69).

The goal should be to achieve alignment between all stakeholders on what constitutes quality, what quality experiences look like and how best to create these experiences in a specific setting. "In this regard, everyone across the three circles of decision makers becomes engaged in a learning experience, negotiating with each other, examining practice and products together, considering both process and effects, and developing both individual and collective principles that can guide decision making" (Seidel et al 2010 p69).

CHAPTER SIX: SUPPORTING THE SECTOR THROUGH A QUALITY FRAMEWORK

6

It is clear that a quality framework is needed by the sector. As noted in the Artworks Evaluation Literature Review, “there isn’t a shared understanding of what quality outcomes might be, and definitions for excellence remain elusive” (dha 2012 p10).

Lowe’s research for Artworks reports the absence of “a shared sense of excellence – a framework for understanding what goes into making excellent practice” - and this lack in itself represents an “impediment to effective discussion and communication within the sector”.

According to Lowe, a common framework would provide a starting point for “beginning to understand how to talk about and reference excellence across people who work in this area” (Lowe 2011 p48).

In her recent Artworks review, Schwarz notes that the sector is fragmented and there is a lack of both a robust evidence base and recognised training routes for artists: factors which have contributed to variable experiences for participants (Schwarz 2014, p6). Furthermore, Artworks research and activity to date confirms that a shared understanding of quality between artists and commissioners is crucially important and will offer a means to address the lack of clarity concerning quality in participatory arts (Schwarz 2014 p18).

Chapter Four of this report outlines suitable principles to form the basis of a quality framework for participatory arts. Chapter Five highlights conditions making the achievement of quality more likely. This chapter collates evidence from the sector of what support and guidance artists are likely to need to implement a quality framework.

THE NEED FOR ‘SCAFFOLDING’

This study has presented a set of possible principles, and highlighted necessary conditions for quality. But any framework will also require ‘scaffolding’ in order to provide support for practitioners in engaging with the framework and developing it through a process of continual quality improvement.

The term ‘scaffolding’ is borrowed from an educational context, where it can involve:

- modelling a task
- giving advice and explanations
- inviting [learners] to participate
- verifying understanding

- gathering new insights from [learners]

(based on the *Five Methods of Educational Scaffolding* by Hogan and Presley 1997, cited by Open Colleges 2014).

The benefits of providing support for the sector would be to: ensure that the quality framework is understood and can be achieved; to facilitate reflective practice; and to gather evidence of good practice to enable continual quality improvement.

WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DO ARTISTS NEED?

A study from Artworks Navigator (Killick 2012) identifies two forms of support required by artists working in dementia care settings: these are contextual and personal support.

Contextual support includes: good project management; knowledge and training; and appreciation of the contexts in which work takes place (Killick 2012 p77). This kind of support overlaps somewhat with what have been framed as *conditions* in this study, although training needs also emerge from other sources as support that could enhance the sector's ability to deliver quality outputs.

Personal support includes: supervision and reflective practice; professional networks; artistic support; resources (not only materials but also payment that reflects the time and effort put in), events and conferences. (Killick 2012 p77). These sector needs are corroborated by a number of other studies, and are outlined below.

It is clear that a balance of contextual and personal support is needed, and consultations by Artworks Scotland in 2012 also highlight the need for balance in terms of *the modes* of personal support offered for participatory artists:

“Whilst toolkits are useful to support artist preparation and delivery processes, they cannot replace the experience and learning derived from hands-on delivery within participatory settings. [Any skills development support for artists needs to achieve a balance between the provision of toolkits/resources and the provision of placement and mentoring opportunities.](#) Opportunities for reflection, self-evaluation and peer review were also regarded as useful mechanisms to support artists in acquiring the skills and confidence needed to work in participatory settings” (Consilium 2012a, p18).

A review of research across the participatory arts sector by Artworks generates valuable insights into what artists feel would enhance their practice and capacity to achieve quality; these are outlined in detail below.

Key artist support needs highlighted from sector consultations are:

- Guidance on what is being aimed for
- Resources and tools for delivery
- Self-reflection tools
- Peer review and support

- Mentoring
- Networks
- Training and CPD

Guidance on what is being aimed for

Artworks Navigator reports an understandable need for guidelines issued for artists, and also for commissioners (Killick 2012 pp78-79). The more information provided for all parties on the overarching aims and principles of participatory arts work, and indications of what success looks like, the greater the possibility for attaining quality outputs and outcomes.

Resources and tools for delivery

Artworks Navigator consultations with artists found a need for research to establish tools for evaluation for artists to use. There should also be advocacy materials available centrally for work in participatory settings (Killick 2012 pp78-79).

Artworks' Artist Consultation Report highlights the fact that practitioners in participatory arts tend to develop their own 'tool kits' of personal skills, workshop based skills, and project management skills throughout their careers (Sellers 2012b p12). It could therefore be feasible to draw upon sector expertise to develop tools and resources for specific settings and artforms.

In addition, self-directed learning is highlighted as an area of need for artists. Artworks reports that many of their respondents confirmed that "self-directed and supported learning through tailored and accessible resources would have helped them carry out their role more effectively – 69% of artist commissioners, 64.13% of artists and nearly 60% of employers believing this to be so". The participants of artist consultation discussions believed that access to informative material, resources and books should be made readily available and accessible (Salamon 2012b, pp18-19).

Self reflection tools

Artworks report that artists believe it is **hugely important to review and reflect** upon their participatory practice because "even if you do it wrong, you reflect to make it better". Although the ability to reflect upon practice is viewed as very important by artists this may be an ideal, rather than a reality, for some artists. Artists frequently say that time constraints hinder meaningful reflection of their practice: (Sellers 2012b p13).

Parallel consultation through Artworks *Connecting Conversations* shows that artists would welcome more "space away from the coal face" to consider their practice. Methods of reflection listed by artists include seeking feedback, keeping a blog, peer discussion, peer observation and comparisons (Leighton-Kelly, 2012 p13).

Peer review and support

A key support for reflective practice is the idea of peer review. In an overview of the Artworks artist consultations, Taylor states that “in keeping with artists’ interest in reflection it was suggested that projects include a ‘peer-to-peer/artists-to-artist review process/framework, which is built on trust, is confidential and private’”. The review should provide time for reflection, a review of performance, the opportunity for artists to watch each other in action, and joint mentoring and support opportunities (Taylor 2013 p15).

Indeed, artists engaged in Artworks consultations felt that a peer review processes, built on trust, openness and confidentiality, would benefit all parties involved as it would:

- (i) Improve and enhance practice and mutual understanding
- (ii) Provide time for reflection
- (iii) Be an effective vehicle to review performance
- (iv) Be a valuable opportunity to develop both individual’s practice (Salamon 2012b p18)

Evidence from Artworks Scotland’s *Peer to Peer Networks* reveals ways in which artists’ **confidence was positively affected** through peer review and support:

By ‘sharing learning with others in a safe environment’ (91%)

By allowing them to ‘see their practice in relation to others’ (87%);

By helping to ‘validate what I’m doing as an artist in participatory settings’ (78%);

By ‘feeding their own creative development’ (just over 65%);

By allowing individuals to ‘contribute to strategic development though links with AWS’ (56.5%, the lowest response)

(Dean 2012 p34)

Professional isolation emerges as a strong reason for artists’ interest in peer support, which is significant for many and particularly for those in rural locations.

- Many artists feel isolated and although they recognise this is partly due to the nature of the job (particularly for freelance artists), they would welcome more opportunities to network and share learning (Taylor 2012 p19).
- Many artists working in the field report high levels of professional isolation, and value training that helps them to contextualise their own practice within a broader community (Killick, 2012, p9).
- Peer support is particularly important in challenging settings. ArtWorks Navigator, in the context of dementia settings, recommends “that regular meetings of writers and artists working in the field should take place to combat isolation and promote innovative practices” (Killick, 2012 p6).

Mentoring

Artworks *Artist Consultation* research in Wales highlights a need for a “safe space” in which participatory artists can learn and develop their craft, and make and learn from mistakes. Most learning takes place “on the job” or “as you go” and artists value support from individuals or organisations as particularly helpful. The Artworks report suggests that creating more **mentoring opportunities** to enable early career artists to develop a ‘tool kit’ as a useful intervention (Sellers 2012b p12).

This is mirrored in reporting from Artworks London, where mentoring (ideally in the form of a relationship between “people who have gone through different things to learn at different stages”), with a strong steer towards peer and group mentoring, emerges as an important mode of support for participatory artists (Leighton-Kelly 2012 p13).

Reporting for Artworks Navigator, in the context of artists working in a dementia setting, also recommends that opportunities should be created for writers and artists in that field to collaborate with, shadow and mentor each other (Killick 2012 pp78-79).

Data from the Artworks *Artists Lab* in April 2013 shows a distinction between different sources of mentoring in terms of support from experienced *artists* and support from experienced *employers*:

“Many participants of the round table discussions strongly believed that being mentored by experienced artists and/or experienced employers would benefit artists/employers working on participatory projects.”

Interestingly, slightly greater value was attributed to support from employers:

- When asked whether being mentored by an experienced artist would have helped them, 69.25% of artists, 63.21% of artist commissioners and 52.45% of employers thought that it would have.
- When asked whether being mentored by an experienced employer would have helped them, 70.96% of employers, 69.32% of artist commissioners and 60.39% of artists believed it would have.

(Salamon 2013a p18)

Networks

Research and consultation undertaken by Artworks across the UK has revealed a need and desire in the participatory arts sector for networks and fora for promoting innovative practice and sharing learning.

Artist consultations in Wales report that artists feel that there are **no safe online ‘spaces’ to share** learning:

“Lots of ‘spaces’ are competitive and have other agendas. There isn’t a forum”
(Sellers 2012b p9).

Some participatory artists admit that their sector tends to be guarded about sharing, because of competition for work and opportunities. However, overall the evidence suggests that artists want to – and feel they *should* - share their learning. Artists would welcome more opportunities to share learning online, at conferences, and during artist led sessions, if barriers of trust could be overcome (Sellers 2012b p9).

Killick, reporting for Artworks Navigator, points out that regular meetings of artists working in the field would help to combat isolation and promote innovative practice (Killick 2012 pp78-79).

Writing from within a specialised dementia setting, Killick also recommends the formation of a **support body** for artists working in this field, to raise the profile of the work, set standards, and provide training opportunities (Killick 2012 pp78-79).

Training and CPD

Various Artworks pathfinders have undertaken much consultation and thinking on training systems and continuous professional development (CPD) requirements of artists working in participatory arts. This work has made significant headway in developing concepts of *professional occupational standards, qualifications and training support needs* of artists.

Key reports include:

- Schwarz (2013b) **Training and Professional Development Providers and Opportunities**, Artworks
- Sellers (2011) **Participatory arts training audit**, Artworks Cymru
- Salamon (2013b) **Qualifications, Codes of Practice and Standards**, Working Paper 7, Artworks
- Bartlett (2010) **Developing National Occupations Standards for Dance Leadership**, Foundation for Community Dance.
- Buttrick (2012) **Mapping the Terrain: Higher Education and Further Education – Supporting Artists to work in Participatory Settings**
- Consilium (2012) **Skillset Research and Gap Analysis for Artists Working in Participatory Settings**, reporting for Creative Scotland

This study does not report in depth on this area. However a common theme emerges from the research: a gap between training and the realities of the workplace. Leighton-Kelly (2012) reports that artist training often does not address real world issues and calls for ongoing training throughout artist careers.

Likewise, Dean (2012) captures data on training perceptions and needs of artists in Scotland. The majority of artists consulted affirm that specialist art form training to practice in participatory settings is important (71%), and 84% of artists consulted had undertaken some form of specialist training in their artform. Dean raises questions that still need to be explored: what are the missing qualities, skills or knowledge areas for participatory arts that artform training doesn't provide? (Dean 2012 p30).

Artworks' *Artist Lab* consultations showed that a majority of artists, employers and artist commissioners "believed that their most recent project would have benefited from training

in facilitation, project management, managing difficult situations, safeguarding, negotiation and communicating effectively” (Salamon 2012b p14).

The Artworks Scotland research usefully highlights differing training and support needs for early, mid and late career artists, as captured in Figure 21 below.

Figure 21: Support needs for artist confidence, by career stage

Early Career	Mid Career	Established Artists
• A framework to protect arts freelancers. • Opportunities to participate in others’ projects • Being supported to reflect and evaluate practice • Peer to peer support and external evaluation • More work opportunities and funding for training and development opportunities • Recognition that the work has a significant impact	• Further opportunities to exchange practice experiences through peer sharing • Networking platform • Educating partners and building respect for what artists can and do achieve • Opportunities to shadow unusual work in settings • Umbrella body to champion participatory arts • More training courses on i.e. workshop techniques, technology, and specific working environments	• Sustained support to develop networks • Opportunities for CPD, both in terms of learning/ sharing techniques for participatory art and keeping up to date in practice • Continuing development of practice • Supportive mentor relationships • Direct assessment with clients as a learning tool

(Dean 2012 p35)

A CROSS ARTFORM APPROACH OR SETTING-SPECIFIC?

The findings from a range of Artworks consultations are that there would be great value in facilitating *cross artform* dialogue around issues of quality and good practice.

This is supported by evidence from:

Artworks Navigator
Artist Labs ...

Artists from a range of art forms affirm that there is no perceptible difference between the type and range of activities engaged in by practitioners from different art forms (Leatherdale 2013, p13)

Artists welcome the idea of CPD across art forms as this has the potential to stimulate discussions and lead to possible cross-artform collaboration (Leatherdale 2012, p13)

Artworks *Connecting Conversations* evaluation ...

89% of artists report that being in groups with artists from different art forms definitely or probably enhanced their experience (Leighton-Kelly 2012 p4)

Working across art forms ‘broadens horizons and deepens perspectives’ and is particularly valuable when it affects artists’ practice. (Leighton-Kelly 2012 p14)

Artworks Cymru Artist
Consultations ...

Artists would welcome more opportunities to share learning, particularly across different art forms (Sellers 2012 p9)

Artists would like more connections between artforms, which could be used to develop a network (Sellers 2012 p6)

While artistic practice can benefit from cross art form dialogue, it is equally important to recognise the *need for specialist knowledge* and experience for work in certain settings (i.e. dementia, people with mental health issues), as highlighted by artists and commissioners and reported by Taylor 2012 (p20).

EXISTING RESOURCES AND MODELS

Existing resources and toolkits lean heavily towards schools and education settings, the legacy of previous investment programmes aimed at the arts and education sector. Far fewer resources and toolkits are available that focus on other settings such as prisons or hospitals (Consilium 2012a p18).

It is not the intention or purpose of this study to present an exhaustive list of existing resources and toolkit models, although it is able to point to previous studies that have collated and itemised scores of examples. As Schwarz comments in her 2014 Artworks review, there is no shortage of existing guidance out there to be accessed (Schwarz 2014 p10).

Some 50 texts are listed as ‘Practical handbooks/Articles’ within the *Bibliography for Artists Working in Participatory Settings*, compiled by Artworks Navigator, covering both general and art form specific practices (Community Dance, Community Music, Creative Writing, Drama, Visual and Applied Arts) (Artworks Navigator 2012).

The Artworks *Evaluation Literature Review*, which presents detailed listings of guides, tools and other resources, reports that there are “numerous guides to good practice, which include tools and approaches to measurement... and no shortage [of] research-informed resources which are concerned with influencing the quality of the processes for delivering and providing access to participatory arts” (dha 2012 p10).

As an indicative illustration of the volume and nature of materials available, the following is a synopsis of the kinds of resources reported in the *Artworks Evaluation Literature Review*, which uses the following categories:

Professionalization

Texts which offer guidance, information and advice on different aspects of work,

education, training, standards and work in arts which take place in participatory settings and/or which have a particular focus on developing engagement and participation in the arts by specific groups.

Examples:

- Creative Scotland & Children in Scotland (2011) *Creating Safety: Child Protection Guidelines for Scotland's Arts, Screen and Creative Industries*.
- Jones, R. (2004) *Get Sorted - how to get organised, sort the budget and go for funding for your youtharts project!* Artworks
- McCarthy, K. & Jinnet, K. (2001) *A New Framework for Building Participation in the Arts*. RAND Corporation. Pittsburgh.

Quality and Models of Practice

Texts exploring how measures and standards of quality are understood and outlining benchmarking processes and competencies aiming to ensure quality standards

Examples:

- Arts Council England (2006) *Positive Pointers for Artists: using the arts to engage young people at risk*. ACE: London.
- Arts Council England (2006) *Providing the best*. ACE: London
- White, M. & Robson, M. (2009) *Participatory Arts Practice in Healthcare Contexts: Guidelines for Good Practice*. Centre for Medical Humanities, Durham. Waterford Healing Arts. Arts Council Ireland
- Woolf, F. (2003) *Partnerships for Learning: A guide to evaluating arts education projects*. ACE: London. 2nd edition.

Settings

Texts focusing on particular contexts and settings for participatory arts practice (i.e. communities, health and social care, criminal justice) and types of delivery

Examples:

- Hillman, G. (1996) *Artists in the Community: Training Artists to Work in Alternative Settings*. Americans for the Arts
- Denmead, T. (2011) *Meeting and extending participants: exploratory case studies of community artist pedagogy*. Journal of Arts and Communities. Vol. 1. Issue 3, July 2011. pp 235 – 246.
- Simon, N. (2010) *The Participatory Museum*. Museum 2.0.

Valuing Socially Engaged Practices

Texts articulating the value of arts practice specifically designed to produce social benefit, and approaches to evaluating impacts

Examples:

- Arts Council England (2010) *Adult Participatory Arts: Thinking it through*. A review commissioned by 509 Arts. Arts Council England, London.
- Cutler, D. (2009) *Ageing Artfully: Older People and Professional Participatory Arts in the UK*. The Baring Foundation, London.

Skills, Training and Written Handbooks

Skills audits, guides and handbooks and occupational standards frameworks for training and professional development for artists.

Examples:

- Bessette, G. (2004) *Involving the Community: A Guide to Participatory Development Communication*.

- Creative & Cultural Skills (2008) *National Occupational Standards for Community Arts* (March, 2008)
- Jones, C. (1999) *Working in Schools: A Practical Guide to the Partnership*. Independent Theatre Council.
- Voluntary Arts Network (2007) *Older People and Voluntary Arts – Steps to Meaningful Participation*. Briefing 104.

Networks and Infrastructure mapping

List of professional networks and membership organisations whose role includes supporting the continuing professional development of artists working in participatory settings.

Examples:

- Earlyarts (A membership network for ‘people working creatively with children and families in the arts, cultural and early years sectors’)
- Full Circle Arts.co.uk (offering resources and training for artists working in participatory arts)

(dha 2012)

It is worth noting that a key recommendation offered to Artworks by dha on the basis of their literature review is that:

The large number of existing toolkits, guides to good practice and project set-up and the proliferation of professional and self-organised networks suggest *a basis to work from and a baseline to work with*, rather than a clean slate to build on (dha 2012 p10).

EXISTING FRAMEWORKS AND TOOLS OF POTENTIAL INTEREST TO CREATIVE SCOTLAND

The NFER review of quality frameworks observed that the sector varies in the way it addresses quality and that there is variation in the degree of formality and sophistication in the ways practitioners apply quality principles.

“We found that some practitioners use frameworks and toolkits, although some are more akin to statements of organisational values. Some practitioners are using frameworks they have developed themselves; whereas others have adopted other organisations’ frameworks. Often the degree of formality relates to the size of their organisation; smaller organisations having less formal processes because they operate on a shoestring. Such variation is also seen in the frameworks – some present lists of evidence criteria, some more fulsome cyclical models, some self-reflection questions” (Lord et al 2012 pp 35-36).

Bearing this in mind, in the course of this research, a number of interesting and inspiring resources have been selected which offer potential for adaptation or imitation by Creative Scotland in support of a bespoke participatory arts framework.

HMIE: HOW GOOD IS OUR COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT?

Since 2006 the education inspectorate HMIE has been developing a continuous quality improvement framework called *How Good Is...*, endorsed by the Scottish Government and implemented nationally. This generic framework has been adapted for evaluating schools, culture and sport, and also Community Development and Learning. The same framework is used by youth workers, by social workers and by teams of professionals working in children's services (HMIE 2007a Appendix 4 p55). **Therefore this offers a good example of a successful generic structure that can be used in different settings.** According to HMIE, using the same framework "provides a common language about quality which makes it much easier for everyone who works with children and young people to share their findings and to support each other in improving the experiences" of their participants (HMIE 2007a Appendix 4 p6).

The basis of these tools is identifying what constitutes high quality, top standards and excellence in each setting. In the case of community learning and development, quality provision has good delivery, management, leadership, meets stakeholders' needs, leads to good outcomes and identifies areas for improvement.

HMIE says:

"Self-evaluation is not a bureaucratic or mechanistic process. It is a reflective professional process through which schools get to know themselves well and identify the best way forward for their pupils. It will, therefore, promote well-considered innovation. The framework of quality indicators will guide you in that process. The illustrations are not designed to be used as checklists or recipes." (HMIE 2007a, p6)

Part 1 outlines the rationale for self-evaluation by the sector and provides overview of a structured framework. Part 2 details dimensions of key performance and quality indicators, including self-evaluation questions and measures. Part 3 gives examples of what the quality looks like for each of the indicators. An overview of the structure of the self-assessment framework can be seen in Appendix 3.

The framework focuses on identifying "levers" for continuous improvement and sees the capacity to improve as linked to a range of factors including:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Factors for improvement: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Effective self-evaluation● A richness of data and intelligence● An agreed and shared vision |
| (HMIE 2007b Appendix 2, p27) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● An open, collegiate climate for professional thinking● Close and supportive monitoring● Creative thinking in reaching solutions |

This is a highly developed and detailed framework containing targeted guidance, reflection tools and examples of quality in action. For the context of participatory arts, this framework is perhaps too comprehensive, and could be perceived as overly prescriptive given the nature of participatory arts. However, **this framework clearly demonstrates how a system**

of self-reflection can be built upon a set of identified quality principles, and as such provides a useful model for Creative Scotland in going forward.

YOUTH MUSIC: DO, REVIEW, IMPROVE...

Another framework which displays elements of thoughtful scaffolding for its sector is Youth Music's recent quality framework entitled *Do, Review, Improve* (November 2013). It is intended as a tool for peer assessment and self-reflection. The purpose of the framework is to help identify training and development needs. The framework comprises 23 criteria considered "desirable for a high quality music-making session" (Youth Music 2013a).

The framework is accompanied by a report of *Examples to support selected criteria* (Youth Music 2013b), which gives illustrative examples from projects, as well as resources to enable peer review through *observation worksheets* (Youth Music 2013c).

Self-Reflection Tools

ARTISTIC VIBRANCY SELF-REFLECTION TOOL (AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS)

The Artistic Reflection Kit outlines a framework for self-assessing artistic 'vibrancy'. The definition of 'Artistic Vibrancy' includes artistic excellence, audience stimulation, innovation, development of artists and community relevance. This self-reflection tool was developed using input from performing arts companies and the available research on performance measurement in the arts (Australia Council for the Arts 2009).

The kit includes a simple one-page flow chart posing questions that arts organisations and their boards can ask themselves, and methods to help answer these questions (See Appendix 1).

Also in the kit is a report for the sector profiling companies that have made artistic self-assessment a meaningful and useful process, and how they did it. The report is entitled *Tell me Honestly: Good practice case studies of artistic self-assessment in performing arts organisations*.

HELIX ARTS QUALITY FRAMEWORK

This framework and thinking piece includes a list of questions to help artists reflect on their practice and specific projects. These questions, presented as 'Dialogic Participatory Practice Conversations', focus on Research and Working processes, Artwork, and Critical Reflections (Lowe 2012 pp11-12).

/Figure 22: Excerpt from Helix Arts' Dialogic Participatory Practice Conversations

Figure 22: Excerpt from Helix Arts’ Dialogic Participatory Practice Conversations

A sample of the provocation questions for the artists include:

Research and working processes

- What was or is the nature of your research into relevant contexts/ environment/ histories?
 - What strategies do you use to develop dialogue, involvement and relationships with participants and how do you help participants to talk and think about the project/s?
 - What roles did you play in developing the creative vision for the project?
 - How did you challenge both participants and yourself?
 - How were decisions made about what is created/performed?
 - How did you enable people to explore their own stories?
 - How was the on-going direction of the project negotiated between artist and participants?
- How was the power relationship between various actors in the project (artist(s), participants, support staff) explored – both between and among these categories of people?

(Lowe 2012 p11)

ARTS COUNCIL OF ENGLAND SELF-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

This tool on ACE’s website is designed to help artists “consider the impact of external factors, monitor performance against their own ambition and targets, and identify appropriate ways to improve and develop” (ACE 2006a). The framework is not intended to be prescriptive but rather as “a tool to encourage a spirit of enquiry and robust analysis”. The questions are intended as prompts, to be changed to suit individual organisations, to be as useful and challenging as possible (ACE 2006a).

Under a number of different headings (including Quality of Experience) this resource lists: Questions You Might Ask Yourself and offers guidelines on What Success Looks Like (see excerpt in Figure 23 overleaf).

This resource provides a model for an effective and clear structure and approach, *though the content could be more profound* and detailed, in particular the measures of success.

/Figure 23: ACE Self Evaluation Framework sample page: Quality of Experience (ACE 2006a)

Figure 23: ACE Self Evaluation Framework sample page: Quality of Experience (ACE 2006a)

Quality of experience

See also : [Artistic Programme](#), [Artistic Achievements](#), [Communication](#)

? **Questions you might ask yourself**

- Do our participants have a good quality of experience? Do we understand how they experience the work we do?
- Do we pay proper attention to the diversity of our audience/participants, ensuring that they all have equally good experiences?
- What do our audiences tell us about the quality of experience that we provide?
- How do we evaluate our audience's/participants' view of the quality of experience that we have provided to them?
- Does the environment within which we present our work add to or detract from the quality of experience?
- Do we make sure that we reflect on and learn from any feedback we collect?

★ **What success looks like**

- We have an established process for gathering audience feedback and incorporating it in the overall artistic evaluation of our work.
- The feedback that we get is largely positive.
- The quality of experience is equally high for all sectors of our audience.

SEIDEL ET AL (2010): PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR REFLECTION

As part of their report *The Qualities of Quality*, Seidel et al offer a number of worksheets and toolkits for use by practitioners to ensure quality planning and implementation processes. These include:

A Tool For Reflection On Visions And Actions, with step-by-step questions and tasks to perform the exercise. This tool includes a worksheet (Seidel et al 2010, pp74-76).

The Four Lenses of Quality: A Tool for Identifying Specific Elements of Quality in an Arts Learning Setting, intended to provide a structure for the various people involved in developing and participating in an arts education programme to talk together about what constitutes quality. The tool provides step-by-step suggestions for a facilitator to guide a discussion, with specific tasks and questions and worksheets (Seidel et al 2010, pp77-79).

Managing Partnerships

The importance of constructive partnerships based on good communication has been underlined in chapter four. Seidel et al provide a tool in their report to help partners and decision makers to rationalise their roles and influence appropriately in a shared exercise.

THREE CIRCLES OF DECISION MAKERS: A TOOL FOR ANALYSING ALIGNMENT AND MISALIGNMENT ACROSS LEVELS OF DECISION MAKERS

This tool provides a step-by-step agenda for a facilitator to lead a discussion exploring who makes decisions that influence quality, and how these decision makers work together. (Seidel et al 2010 p83). In the process of using this tool, participants are asked to consider:

Who: Who are the relevant decision makers and where do they fit in relation to the participants and “Those in the Room”?

Communication: Among these many decision makers, what are the patterns and formats for communication about substantive aspects of those decisions and their impact? Where might the communication be inadequate?

Critical Decisions: Which decisions are having most impact – positive or negative – on the quality of participants’ arts learning experiences?

Ideas about Quality: Are there significant differences in ideas about what constitutes a high quality experience among any of these decision makers? How do we know? Have these been discussed explicitly?

The next section of this report evaluates Creative Scotland’s approaches to date concerning quality management and Creative Scotland’s existing toolkit infrastructure, before summarising key learning points from this research in Chapter Eight and offering recommendations for developing a quality framework for the participatory arts.

CHAPTER SEVEN: QUALITY AND CREATIVE SCOTLAND

7

A REVIEW OF EXISTING CREATIVE SCOTLAND QUALITY APPROACHES TO IDENTIFY AREAS OF STRENGTH AND GAPS

- This section examines:*
- The SAC Quality Framework 2009 in the context of current understanding of quality
 - Notions of Artistic Quality inherent in the Specialist Advisor evaluation system
 - Quality criteria stated in Creative Scotland funding programmes
 - Work to develop the Online Creativity Portal
 - Notions of quality in the Youth Arts Strategy 2013
 - How a new quality framework for participatory arts might relate across Creative Scotland

Creative Scotland has inherited from Scottish Arts Council a number of documents and toolkits in relation to the 2009 Quality Framework and the Creativity Portal. Supporting documentation also exists in Creative Scotland addressing notions of quality in the delivery of experiences and projects within these contexts.

In 2012 as part of a Skillset review for artists working in participatory settings an internal review was undertaken of existing training toolkits and resources at Creative Scotland, to identify what resources had the potential support artists working in participatory settings. The report does not detail existing toolkits but focuses on funding streams that might be accessed by artists in participatory settings. Regarding toolkits, it was noted that most of them predate the establishment of Creative Scotland, they are available on an archived SAC website, and none of them are specifically focused on participatory arts. However, some of them do provide relevant learning points and practical examples that can inform artist's practice (Consilium 2012a, p18).

This chapter provides an overview of quality approaches manifest across Creative Scotland at present, in order to map areas of strength – and gaps – against the holistic view of quality developed through this study.

REVIEW OF QUALITY FRAMEWORK (2009) IN CONTEXT OF CURRENT PERSPECTIVES

The second edition of SAC's Quality Framework was issued in 2009 to update the 2007 document. As the last statement on quality issued by SAC/Creative Scotland, it remains in place as the *de facto* resource for the sector.

The Framework has different requirements for organisations in receipt of *Flexible and Foundation* funding. It is structured around the pillars of:

1. ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP
2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
3. GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE
4. COMPLIANCE

The Quality Framework essentially outlines what an effective and strategic organisation looks like rather than what might constitute a quality piece of work. It is important to appreciate that it is written through the lens of a public funding body, and indeed the document states quite clearly that its purpose is for: a) setting expectations (standards); b) helping SAC determine where to distribute funds; and c) helping SAC to report on value for public funds (SAC 2009a p1). We must also remember that this document is not specific to participatory arts, but offers general guidance for its funded organisations.

As noted by Bamford in her review of the Quality Framework, the forms of quality evidence called for emphasise documents of procedure rather than process or outcomes. For example documents include board reports, business plans, evaluations, policies, annual reports, budget and education and learning programmes. Apart from these documents, organisations should gather evidence in relation to media coverage (reviews and communication activity reports), professional development programmes and compliance documents related to legislations and regulations (Bamford 2010 p7). However the document provides almost no information on what Creative Scotland, or the sector, might conceive as characteristics of quality work.

Specifically:

Artistic Leadership

- This is strongly tied to a business-plan style Vision, how it is communicated and how it is focused logistically. The framework makes no reference to the art itself, though the Programme is required to be "of high artistic quality" (1.2). There are no guidelines on what "high artistic quality" comprises or might be expected to look like, or what qualities are desirable i.e. "inspiring", "engaging", "relevant" or what experience is sought.
- Section (1.3) states that stakeholders' views should inform programme planning which implies a user-centred approach, although a lot would depend on who stakeholders are recognised to be.

What is missing are overarching principles or ideals for the art, and what experience is intended for the audience or participant.

Public Engagement

- This section is most relevant to participatory arts. The Framework takes a rather broad approach to Public Engagement (broader than the current Creative Scotland definition), incorporating participation, audience development, marketing, education and learning work under this heading.
- It states that "Artistic objectives demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that an audience is meaningfully engaged in work of the highest artistic quality" and "social objectives demonstrate your commitment to ... broadening the range of people who engage with the work, and ensuring that audiences enjoy a high quality arts experience in the fullest sense" (SAC 2009a p7). This expresses appropriate ideals, but again, guidelines are missing on what comprises quality in this context.
- A core requirement (2.1) is that audience information be "used to inform overall planning and decision-making", which is similar to (1.3) above. This could be marketing approach, business planning, but more important from a quality viewpoint would be how much the users' needs inform the "programming" and "education"(2.3) strands of this stated requirement.
- The artistic programme is designed to engage and develop audiences and/or participants successfully" (SAC 2009a p9-10) Problems with this are that the evidence required is one-dimensional requiring only that qualitative data is collected, not how it is used to reflect and develop. There are no qualifying criteria offered for determining "success".
- Finally (2.5), the requirement on education and learning is broad and focuses only on the existence of an education plan as evidence of a planned approach (SAC 2009a p11-12). Ideally this would go further into what would constitute a quality approach to education work: the kind of experiences and qualities contained in it.
What is missing are guidelines on what comprises quality engagement in terms of the experiences and impacts on participants.

Governance, Management and Finance and Compliance

These criteria and requirements set a basis or benchmark for what would be considered professional board functionality and management, and this is a clear requirement to receive SAC funds. Organisations need to show themselves to be accountable by demonstrating the practices outlined in the Quality Framework. Essentially this focus on accountability is measure of professionalism, but it doesn't necessarily guarantee high quality artistic output.

The **overall strengths** of the 2009 Quality Framework are that:

- It is intended as a "developmental (continuous improvement) tool" (SAC 2009a p1)
- The 2nd Edition "builds on the evaluation and feedback from officers and organisations that use it" (SAC 2009a p1)
- The document outlines core requirements, gives some indications of what is required and presents a series of questions to prompt discussion and reflection within organisations

The **weaknesses or gaps** in the approach are that it:

- Focuses entirely on procedure rather than processes of quality or quality outcomes

- Offers no vision on quality in terms of what Creative Scotland and the sector are aiming for, beyond “high quality art”.

Internal SAC Rationale and Scaffolding for Quality Framework

It is clear from internal documentation from Scottish Arts Council during the drafting of the 2009 Quality Framework that thought was given to how “high quality” might be defined within the context of arts education.

Advice from a report by Ann Bamford (*The Wow Factor*, 2006) was referenced, particularly: principles of active **partnerships** between education and arts organisations, with an emphasis on collaboration; **shared responsibility** for planning, delivery, assessment and evaluation; opportunities built in for participants to **present outcomes to public**; provision for critical **reflection** and **risk taking**; ongoing **CPD and learning progression** planned in; detailed strategies for reporting on and evaluating **participants’ learning, experience** and **impact** of the activity (SAC internal document July 2009).

In referencing Bamford's work, this approach incorporates many key principles associated with quality in arts education/participatory arts. However, this is not articulated within the actual Quality Framework; ***it is vital that quality principles be communicated to the sector.***

A *Project Aims, Objectives and Evaluation Table* authored in SAC in November 2009 maps out a structure of actions for how SAC can fulfil its project aim within the LEARN Fund to support funded organisations to deliver 'high quality education work'. These include:

Providing case studies (as material evidence) that will share quality practice and benefit the sector, ie.

- Gathering appropriate materials/information that can be shared online;
- Sector use of good practice examples as indicators of quality work;
- Inviting online / written feedback comments on each web / event presentation;
- Supporting each Learn project to provide these materials via guidance on evaluation and documentation;
- Delivering an event/representing the case studies at a number of arts and education sector events or conferences

Offering a route into the Quality Framework processes

- Information is included in organisation Board papers;
- "Staff responsible for education and learning within each organisation feel more confident in talking about QF and using it as a self-assessment tool"

(SAC internal document November 2009)

This represents useful thinking in terms of kinds of scaffolding that can be provided for a quality framework in terms of organisation support and guidance.

SPECIALIST ADVISERS AND ARTISTIC QUALITY

A mechanism used by SAC to evaluate artistic quality – and one that is very visible to the sector – is the evaluation of funded work by Specialist Advisers. The *Artistic Evaluation Template* (updated in March 2009) can provide insights into what quality indicators have been used to date.

The *Artistic Evaluation* form was created to generate “evidence for the Artistic Leadership and Public Engagement sections of the Quality Framework to be taken into account in assessing the work of the producing company in relation to future applications for funding to the Scottish Arts Council” (SAC 2009b p1). It makes assessments on the Artistic merits and Management of funded work.

The ARTISTIC ASSESSMENT is based on: VISION AND IMAGINATION
PROGRAMMING SELECTION
SUCCESS OF EVENT
PERFORMERS; CHOREOGRAPHY/SCRIPT;
DIRECTION; MUSIC/DESIGN;
and
'QUALITY OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT':
(For Productions, criteria include words ENGAGED, INSPIRED, ENHANCED)
(For education, criteria include words CHILD CENTRED, DEVELOPMENT/LEARNING SKILLS, QUALITY OF ART PRODUCED BY PARTICIPANTS, PARTICIPANTS' VIEWS AND CHOICES)

(SAC 2009b)

This *Artistic Evaluation* framework offers a useful approach to what might be considered quality indicators for public engagement/education/participatory work. It aligns reasonably closely with more recently conceived principles of quality work with participants, like *engagement*, *participant-centred*, *participant ownership*, etc. (as presented in Chapter 3 of this report).

The MANAGEMENT OF THE EVENT is assessed on: Location and Suitability of VENUE;
interpretive material/info at venue;
publicity, EASE OF BOOKING and payment;
TIMING OF THE EVENT;
SIGNAGE and signposting;
ACCESS and provision for disabled people;
CUSTOMER SERVICE

(SAC 2009b)

As highlighted in Chapter Five (Conditions for Quality) of this report, many criteria for quality management of an event listed above *may be outside the direct control of the artist*, i.e. ease of booking, signage or access. This underlines the importance of recognising that partners have a responsibility for quality outputs as well as the artist.

QUALITY CRITERIA INHERENT IN FUNDING PROGRAMMES

Public Engagement Application Form and Guidelines 2013-2014

"Public Engagement funding is for projects that seek to remove barriers to engagement with high quality artistic work, encourage participation and enable communities and individuals to explore and develop their creative and cultural lives. Proposals that tackle inequality, are sustainable and long-term will receive priority." [Public Engagement funding webpage]
Applications are expected to demonstrate:

- Strong **artistic quality** which clearly demonstrates routes for participation
- A track record of delivery in participatory or community settings
- A clear evidence-based approach to identifying the participant group and the barriers to participation
- That the project **reflects the needs, desires and views** of the proposed participant group
- Effective **partnerships**, especially between artists and organisations, responsible for creative delivery, and organisations and individuals working with the target groups
- That projects are **open to all** who want to be involved.

The application form asks for a description of the project/activity, "clearly demonstrating routes for participation";

Question 1 is about intended immediate effects and benefits, and what difference it makes in the long term;

Question 3 is about identifying target participant group and any barriers;

Question 4 "Demonstrate how the project reflects the needs, desires and views of the proposed participant group";

Question 5 is about the partners including those who work with target groups;

Remaining questions define the scope of the project and costs etc.

Commentary:

The public engagement programme is one of the main funding routes for participatory arts

"Strong artistic quality" is named as a criterion, but no guidelines are given on what would characterise this in a participatory arts context.

The principle of participant-centred projects exists in this programme, and likewise the importance of effective partnership working.

Questions in the application form are closely aligned with the criteria above.

The funding assessment focuses on instrumental outcomes and quality of engagement.

Consultation with Creative Scotland staff overseeing the Public Engagement programme confirms that development of a formal quality framework for participatory arts would help to define and capture important elements for work, and to define fair and achievable measures underpinning the work (Scott 2013).

In the case of Public Art (which is not included in the scope of this study due to the low level of critical engagement of participants – see Chapter 2), it is worth noting that applications are usually prompted and led by the commissioning partner, and it is considered by the officer overseeing that funding programme that a partnership framework would be enormously valuable (Petrie 2014). Any quality framework for participatory arts is seen as useful for developing a common language for and understanding of what Creative Scotland means by quality and seeks from projects (Petrie 2014).

YMI Access to Music Making Application Form and Guidelines 2013-2014

The purpose of the Youth Music Initiative: Access to Music Making fund, is “to create access to high quality music making opportunities for young people aged 0-25yrs outwith school time.” It prioritises work with vulnerable, hard to engage, BME or disabled young people.

The three intended outcomes of Access to Music Making are:

1. Young people engage in learning activities that develop **music making skills** or music-centred skills (music-centred skills may include sound engineering, tour management and record production) 2. Young people build their confidence, self-esteem and **develop positive behaviours** 3. Young people **progress** onto further learning and/or personal development opportunities (not restricted to music).

Funding CRITERIA are that: deliverers must be highly skilled and experienced (i.e. QUALITY ARTIST); trainees must be involved; staff must have CPD; no barriers for participation (i.e. INCLUSIVE); there must be demand for activity from young people, local stakeholders and partners (i.e. NEEDS and STAKEHOLDER-CENTRED); monitoring and evaluation of outcomes; PVG certification (i.e. SAFE).

Commentary:

YMI is another programme that relates closely to participatory arts, focusing on music education.

The focus on developing skills, on engendering confidence and self-esteem, and on personal progression for participants resonates with key principles identified for participatory arts.

These map across to several key characteristics of quality in participatory projects: inclusion; participant and stakeholder-centred; professional development for artists; safe.

Quality Production Application Form and Guidelines 2013-2014

The Quality Production funding stream has two strands:

- i) Project Development
- ii) Production and Presentation

(i) Project Development:

Question 1 asks what the project aims to achieve, what are the “immediate **effects and benefits** ... and what difference the project or activity will make in the longer term.”

Question 2 explains the background for the idea. Question 3 asks “How are you **ensuring the quality** of

While not specific to participatory arts, this programme makes judgements based on “quality”

For both streams, applicants are asked to demonstrate quality without guidelines on what quality looks like, or what Creative Scotland is aiming for.

this research, development or commissioning phase?" Question 4 relates to partners and how they will be involved Question 5 outlines plans for evaluation. (ii) Production and Presentation Question 1 outlines aims, effects, benefits. Question 2 asks "How are you ensuring the quality of this project?" Question 3 describes partnerships. Question 4 defines the target audience and plans to reach them? Question 5. Details of evaluation plans.	Aspects of quality include the nature of partnerships, evaluation, and imply some aspirational qualities in the form of "aims, effects and benefits."
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Consultation with the Creative Scotland staff overseeing the Quality Productions programme affirms that there is a need for "a map" and agreed principles to enable a common understand between all parties (the applicants and the funder) on what is being aimed for. In order for a quality framework to be effective, artists must perceive a real need to use it and to engage with the quality improvement process (Lumsden 2014).

FOUNDATIONS OF THE ONLINE CREATIVITY PORTAL

A report for Scottish Arts Council in 2010 by Ann Bamford, *Quality Assurance for the Creativity Portal*, was used by Creative Scotland as the basis for developing the Online Creativity Portal in 2012 in partnership with Learning Teaching Scotland (now Education Scotland). Bamford's report makes important distinctions about quality and how best to manage it, and insights from it have contributed in large part to this study. In this respect, the Creativity Portal is based on solid foundations.

Intended function of the Creativity Portal

The purpose of the Creativity Portal is to "provide invaluable information to schools and the cultural community by supporting and promoting quality engagement between these sectors. Ideally, the portal should provide a user-friendly, 'one stop shop' for bringing education and culture closer around concepts of excellence in learning and teaching" (Bamford 2010 p4).

In order to function appropriately, the intention behind the Portal is to provide reliable, quality assured, cultural resources for education:

"The users of the portal - and broader stakeholders - need to have confidence in the resources available on the portal. To this end, Creative Scotland is keen to include a quality assurance framework in the process by which organisations submit their information to the portal. *The fact that cultural organisations and venues are on the Creativity Portal will be taken as an indication that the quality of their activity is endorsed by both LTS and Creative Scotland*" (Bamford 2010 p5).

A distinction must be made about the Creativity Portal in relation to this study: the Creativity Portal is a quality assurance mechanism, establishing a benchmark for quality in arts education and providing a tool for commissioners to source quality assured artists. A quality framework for participatory arts in general would not necessarily be intended as a quality assurance mechanism, but rather as a platform for setting a vision for best practice and an environment engendering continuous quality improvement in the sector.

Quality Principles underpinning Creativity Portal

According to an internal document drafted in Creative Scotland in April 2011, the Quality Principles underpinning the Creativity Portal, entitled *Quality in Creative Learning with an Artist*, are articulated as:

1. The work has a quality of beauty/ artistry and ‘works’ creatively;
2. Innovation and new and interesting ideas – going beyond what is already known;
3. Project development and planning in partnership – negotiation and collaboration;
4. The ability to inspire and empower, working with energy and passion;
5. The longer term impact of the work – sustainable practices;
6. A balance between risk taking and support;
7. Value and relevance to participants and partner organisations;
8. An ethical dimension;
9. Education/ learning work is highly valued and backed up by sound processes and principles

These map across several of the generic quality principles identified through this research and presented in Chapter 3.

Use of different Lenses of Quality

On the basis of suggestions from Bamford that quality be determined through the eyes of children and from the perspective of teachers and schools (Bamford 2010 p12), Creative Scotland sought advice from the University of Edinburgh Child and Adolescent Health Research Unit (CAHRU). In April 2011 CAHRU provided a briefing document to Creative Scotland containing specialist advice on measures to engage children in rating the creativity of practitioners visiting their schools (Muldoon 2011). It articulated Bamford’s key indicators into questions that children would understand and be able to respond to meaningfully.

The questionnaires created by CAHRU could be useful material for a practitioners' evaluation toolkit; indeed, the material from CAHRU is included as an appendix to a draft report circulated internally at Creative Scotland in May 2011. Appendix 2 of that draft report lays out suggested evaluation approaches that would vary according to the perspective of Teachers, Children and Practitioners, with teachers judging EXTRINSIC worth, children expressing INTRINSIC merits, and practitioners reporting on both EXTRINSIC AND

Determining **quality through the eyes of the child** involves intrinsic quality assessment and focuses on dimensions such as captivation, pleasure, imagination and the building of social bonds.

Determining **quality from the perspective of the teacher or the school** is likely to focus more on EXTRINSIC worth the personal and social attributes of the artists or arts organization and the interplay of these with the culture of the school.

(Bamford pp12-13)

INTRINSIC aspects. Considerable thought has been given to framing the questions for young children and using picture cards to enhance the intended focus of the question.

In this sense there are elements of the Creativity Portal that align with Seidel's Lenses of Quality (2012), and the thinking contained in the 2011 document could provide a useful platform for laying a new quality framework for the participatory arts.

Furthermore, the advice from CAHU Offers a useful reference point for considering *how to translate the language* of research findings on quality, and the strategic considerations inherent in the approach recommended in this study, into an easily-understood framework that practitioners, partners and participants can relate to and work with realistically.

YOUTH ARTS STRATEGY

Time to Shine, Scotland's Youth Arts Strategy for Ages 0-25 was published in December 2013 as a long term strategy. It has been developed on the basis of extensive in-depth research and consultation with youth arts stakeholders (Creative Scotland 2013b).

- The themes that underpin the strategy are:
- Participation - creating and sustaining engagement
 - Progression - nurturing creativity and talent
 - Provision – developing infrastructure and quality

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

The strategy presents “seven key principles [which] emerged during the national discussion [and] which will guide us to achieving success”. These are listed below. They do not correlate with the definition of ‘principles’ (as guiding aspirations for quality) used in this study; rather they represent a list of objectives for the strategy (Creative Scotland 2013a pp17-19).

One. Place young people at the centre of the strategy's aims and ambitions, but also at the centre of plans to deliver the strategy.

Two. Work within the context of *Curriculum for Excellence* and the other policy frameworks that support young people.

Three. Work collaboratively; create mechanisms for better information sharing, peer support and networking.

Four. Be proactive in using digital technology.

Five. Work with national and local government.

Six. Tackle inequalities.

Seven. Continually strive for quality improvement.

However the aim "to create and develop infrastructure for the children and young people's arts sector and ensure *continuous quality improvement*" is a significant one in respect of this study (Creative Scotland 2013b p25). The *Time to Shine* strategy document pledges the following mechanisms for enabling CQI:

- Build on existing expertise
- Create a framework for self-evaluation and continuous improvement for sector professionals
- Define and support the professional skills needed to deliver work in participatory settings
- Define and support the factors that enable quality
- Improve professional connectivity
- Evaluate progress of the strategy every two years to learn from experience and inform future strategic development.

(Creative Scotland 2013a p19)

The supporting document for the strategy further discusses the roles of local authority partners, the need for a network of facilities, a call for Creative Learning Networks, access for the sector to information, valuing the "workforce", and importance of measuring the impact.

In this respect, the Youth Arts Strategy aligns very closely with key quality themes and conditions highlighted through this research: recognising the needs of artists, focusing on conditions for quality, providing a range of support tools including networks and information, and creating a framework for CQI through self-reflection. The only thing missing from the formula are explicit guidelines about what quality youth arts is.

Consultation with Creative Scotland staff responsible for youth arts and the youth music initiative revealed that there is readiness in the sector to *shift the focus of evaluation* from solely processes and outcomes, and to capture and lend weight to evidence about the *journey* experienced by participants. Another key consideration on quality is that practitioners can learn much from peers if given the opportunity to *engage beyond their own artform* (Bradie & May 2013).

The Youth Arts strategy firmly embodies the concept of CQI, and recognises the need for clear quality framework and platform for sharing good practice. As a result, the outcomes of this research to develop a pathway for Creative Scotland to create a constructive and meaningful quality framework will benefit implementation of the Youth Arts Strategy.

In Summary

Various elements of the quality themes and principles identified through the research for this report are visible in existing Creative Scotland approaches to establishing quality work in the arts. This can be recognised in the Online Creativity Portal, the Youth Arts Strategy, the 2009 Quality Framework, and in the criteria for various relevant funding streams, and it is also evident from the internal thinking at SAC/Creative Scotland that underpins these apparatus.

However, **the overriding factor that appears to be missing from all of the apparatus reviewed is clear and detailed guidance for the sector and for applicants on what constitutes “high artistic quality”** and what it is that Creative Scotland would like to aim for, in whatever context (arts education, youth music, public engagement, etc). This could be expressed through a statement of formal Principles that would overarch all development and funding routes for participatory arts (or indeed, other areas of Creative Scotland’s work).

The next chapter summarises the key learning points from this study, and in the context of this review of Creative Scotland’s existing approaches, offers recommendations for developing a cohesive quality framework for participatory arts and practical next steps.

CHAPTER EIGHT: KEY LEARNING POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8

The aim of this report is to rationalise, synthesise and condense learning from the body of knowledge extant in the sector and emerging from the Artworks programme, to provide a foundation for the development of a quality framework for participatory arts and to inform the development of a guidance toolkit. This report is intended to provide for Creative Scotland a “useful stepping stone to developing a framework which supports quality both in terms of organisational practices and project planning and development” (Creative Scotland brief, August 2013).

The requirement for this study was to generate key learning points and recommendations for Creative Scotland “addressing the optimum nature, components and format of a robust and relevant quality framework,” including measures needed to ensure that a toolkit functions properly, can be easily understood and used, and is valued (Creative Scotland brief August 2013). These are outlined below under the following headings:

- A. The Nature, Components and Format of Quality Framework
- B. Engaging the Sector in a Quality Process
- C. Proposed Next Steps for Creative Scotland
- D. Moving Forward: What Else is Happening

A. THE NATURE, COMPONENTS AND FORMAT OF A QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Key learning point 1:

Be clear and transparent about the purpose of a quality framework

Before devising a quality framework for Participatory Arts, Creative Scotland needs first to determine: Who is it for? What is the purpose? How is it to be used?

As reinforced in 2012 advice to ACE from NFER, it is vital to be clear about the purpose of establishing quality principles in order to know whether the work has met its purpose and how it can be further improved (Lord et al 2012).

Evidence from Artworks, and expressed by Lowe (2013), the most effective purpose for a quality framework is to help organisations learn and develop for the sake of excellence in the sector. A new quality framework should therefore be used as a tool for artists to develop best practice and build capacity in their sector. The quality framework should be driven by a desire to learn rather than function as a compliance tool, for measurement and control.

Who is the Quality Framework for? Is it directed mainly at Creative Scotland-funded organisations, or is it for anyone working in the sector? What aims does Creative Scotland have for each of these groupings? The parts of the sector not funded by Creative Scotland would nevertheless benefit from recognised good practice, a set of principles to work with, etc. Creative Scotland is in a position to foster the concept of continuous quality improvement in the sector and to encourage information sharing. It can encourage and support reflection by artists and support partnership communication.

While a Quality Framework used by Creative Scotland will directly affect those who engage with the organisation for funding, Creative Scotland can create a platform and a resource for the whole sector, the whole of which falls into its constituency as potential applicants for funding.

- Recommendations*
- 10. Focus the Quality Framework as a development tool. Align it to funding streams, but in a manner than enables artists to access funding for professional development, project development and networks as well as for delivering projects.
 - 11. Publish the outputs of this research and related useful materials to enhance transparency.

Key learning point 2:

Any framework should focus on Continuous Quality Improvement

The optimum approach to managing quality is a cycle of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). This is the model adopted most commonly at the present time, as organisations realise that if quality standards and expectations don't evolve and become raised over time, then notions of quality will quickly become outdated as a sector's capacity to provide excellent arts experiences increases (Seidel et al 2010 p45). A good example of this in action is HMIE's *How Good Is Our* model. It is *not* suggested that this model is fit for purpose for participatory arts, but it can serve as a useful reference point on CQI.

A quality framework therefore has to allow for artists to develop continually, and build capacity and excellence in the sector. Concepts of quality can evolve through dissemination of best practice, self-monitoring and self-renewing. Documented data should be produced by the sector for the purpose for collective learning, to build a critical mass of understanding from which themes can be pulled out, which can then be used to inform evolving concepts of quality (Lowe 2013)

CQI is not just about self-reflection by artists, but also relates to learning by all partners: quality improvement is the responsibility of all. It's about constantly considering if the conditions are right for each kind of project or context. Generic knowledge will arise and can be shared and recognition of Good practice will be possible. In seeking continuous

improvement it is important to focus on known levers for improvement: these would include recognised preconditions for quality and partner relationships.

Schwarz articulates core quality improvement questions as:

‘Am I doing this well? How do I know? Can I improve on what I am doing?’ – and, because of the nature of our practice, ‘Are we doing this well? How do we know? Can we improve on what we are doing’ – with the participant voice key. (Schwarz 2014 p37)

Quality improvement is more than a process; it is a CYCLE. This is what has been missing from funder approaches in the past. A cycle allows for development in individual artist practices and sector approaches, and for continuous change.

If a CQI approach is adopted then a key artist attribute will be reflection, and it is recommended that efforts are made to communicate the purpose of this to the sector in order to remove barriers and perceived threat.

Recommendation 3. To achieve CQI, Creative Scotland needs to foster a system that supports honest evaluation and freedom to acknowledge things that don’t go right first time, as part of an important learning process. Artists need to feel that they can highlight negative issues without prejudice.

This role of the funding body is reinforced by the Australia Arts Council in the report *Meaningful Measurement*:

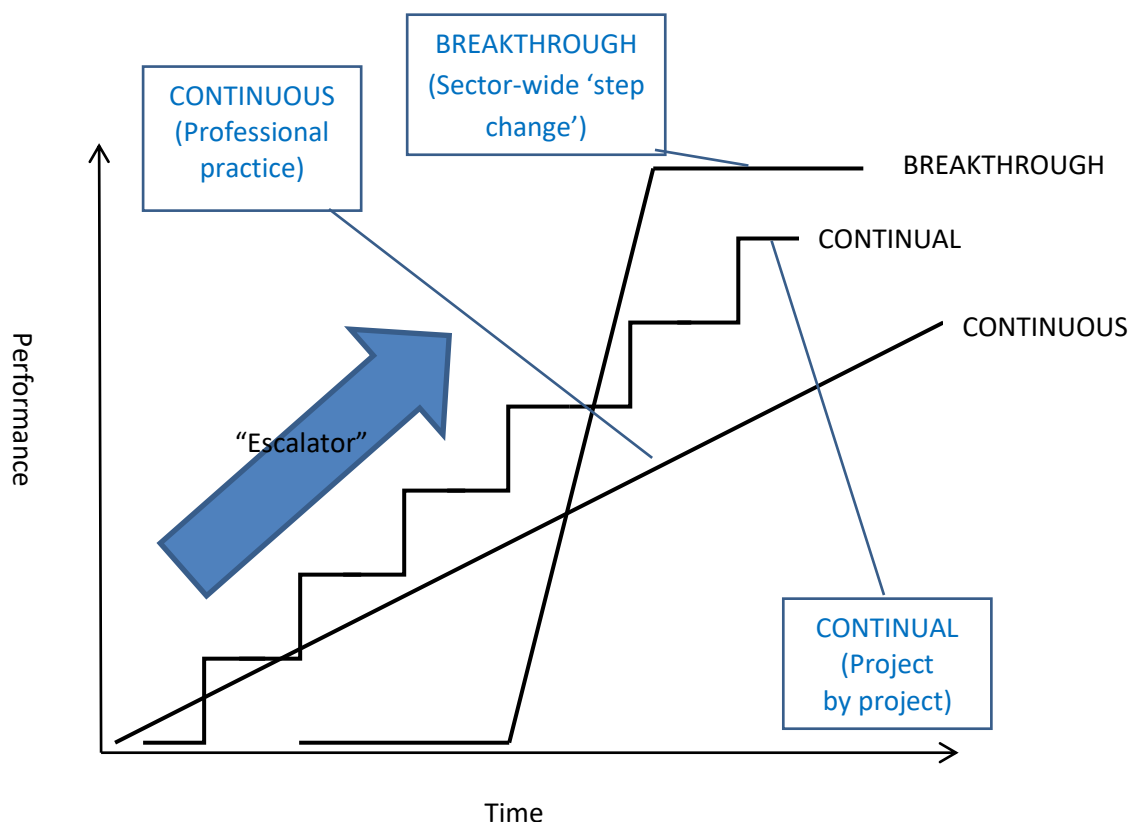
Funding bodies have a key role in influencing the focus of arts organisations’ self-assessments. Arts companies currently focus on financial assessments of performance, or quantitative measures such as audience numbers, largely because these are easy to measure. Funders have a role in shifting the current emphasis in reporting to encourage frankness about artistic aspirations, lessons learned and future plans. (Bailey 2009 p8)

Vital to CQI is a continuous process of monitoring, reviewing and reflecting on the impact and success of the work – i.e. *moving up the improvement spiral* (Lord et al 2012 p36) The process hinges on turning reflection into forward action/change/development (Lowe 2013).

Recommendation 4. Enthuse the sector to embrace a CQI approach for themselves, aided by resources and leadership from Creative Scotland.

Figure 24 overleaf promotes the concept of a Quality Improvement ‘Escalator’, continually moving the practice and the artists upward and onward.

Figure 24: A Quality Improvement 'Escalator' in Constant Upward Motion
(adapted from CQI 2013c)



Recommendation 5. Work with the sector to identify constructive and non-constrictive modes of evaluation to aid a process of CQI. Purposeful evaluation geared at CQI will include self-reflection but also ways to record impacts and outcomes for participants.

Any financial assessment should address to what extent funding and partnership enabled conditions to be met. As a multifaceted evaluation framework, the HMIE *How Good Is Our* structure can provide a helpful point for exploration. See Appendix 3.

Key learning point 3:

Base everything on agreed Principles

With good participatory practice in place, quality outputs and outcomes are more likely. It is recognised that any assessment of quality must stem from a set of overarching aims or principles for the work. Defined principles are considered essential to establish a common understanding of what is desired before being able to judge whether quality has been achieved. This has been shown to be true in any quality process.

Since some indicators won't be appropriate in all settings, it is necessary to hold to basic Principles of work to see if they have been met. These will differ for each organisation (Lowe 2013; Seidel et al 2010 p16). Ideas about what constitutes quality can and should [vary across settings](#), depending on the purposes and values (Seidel et al 2010 p45).

It is also necessary when considering quality principles, to recognise and account for different lenses of quality, in particular those of the artist, the participant, the partner as well as the funder.

Recommendation 6. [Develop a set of guiding principles/aspirations for quality participatory work, and identify indicators for what success looks like against each of the principles, so that all parties to projects know what is being aimed for, why and how.](#)

The following list of principles has been identified through this study; it should be used as a basis for development with the sector:

Common quality principles
synthesised through this
research

1. **Artistic distinction and professionalism**
2. **Authenticity, social relevance**
3. **Inspiring, engaging**
4. **Participant-centred**
5. **Purposeful, active and hands-on**
6. **Participant Progression**
7. **Participant ownership**
8. **Suitably situated, resourced**
9. **Planned, evaluated & safe**

Recommendation 7. [Engage with practitioners to develop and test the quality principles and develop success indicators through a series of workshops or roundtables, fine-tuning if needed the list generated by this study and rationalising it within different settings.](#)

It will be important to recognise that one project might not meet all nine principles, and to allow flexibility within the application Principles so that they may be appropriate for individual projects in different settings.

Key learning point 4:

Focus management approach on facilitating optimum quality conditions

Artworks reports that “it is not always clear how direct inquiries into ‘quality’ will relate to the development and design of support solutions further down the line (Schwarz 2014 p5). The reality of this fact, that it is not possible to” assure, audit or test quality into an entity” (Marino 2007, p35) shows that efforts need to focus on understanding what might improve the participant experience (Schwarz 2014 p5) and *build in* those elements.

This strengthens the rationale for the focus to be on ensuring that conditions are in place for quality to be able to occur, bearing in mind that outcomes will be subject to active variables including the artist and the individual participants (Matarraso 2013).

One of the only aspects about quality that can be managed is the conditions, and these have to be managed with all partners/stakeholders who have an influence over what happens “in the room” (Seidel et al 2010).

- | | |
|--|--|
| Key quality conditions
apparent from
the sector: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sufficient resources, including fit for purpose environment• Sufficient time, for planning, building relationships and implementing project• Designed and resourced for participants’ needs and support• Opportunities to reflect, adapt, evaluate• Realistic aims• Understanding of artist and partner roles• Buy-in and Trust by all parties• Clear and realistic expectations• Democratic decision-making (artist-partner-participant) |
|--|--|

Fundamental to this point is the view of the Chartered Quality Institute, that when someone is assigned responsibility for quality then they should have the right to control the processes which deliver the output they are responsible for (CQI 2013b). Given the evidence from Artworks Scotland that many of the recognised preconditions for quality (“quality factors”) lie outside the direct control of the artists delivering projects, and that frequently these factors are not present (Dean 2012), [any quality framework for participatory arts needs to recognise this reality and enable as much as possible for the artist to control the conditions in which the project is taking place.](#)

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| <i>Recommendations</i> | <ol style="list-style-type: none">8. Set the focus on ensuring that conditions for quality are in place, recognising the impact of these conditions on likely outcomes, and recognising that the responsibility for quality is shared by partners as well as the artist.
9. Provide guidance for artists and partners on building constructive partnerships for quality, identifying optimum conditions for quality experiences and outcomes from all stakeholder perspectives, and setting realistic aims and expectations for projects. |
|------------------------|--|

Ascertaining the optimum conditions for a particular project and setting would logically be performed during the pre-application/application stage, because the artist as the deliverer will be the main authority on what conditions/resources are needed. However it is important to remember that expertise and specialised knowledge about needs of participants in certain settings may reside with the partner organisation, which is why solid partnerships based on dialogue and mutual recognition are important.

Many of the conditions identified through research and consultation relate to resources, which have implications for project budgets and costs. [The costs for creating appropriate conditions \(for instance sufficient planning and reflection time\) will need to be rationalised by Creative Scotland and other funders.](#)

Key learning point 5:

Recognise stakeholder roles in the quality process

Contemporary commentators on the subject of quality (Seidel et al, Matarasso, Schwarz) consistently highlight the need to take a [holistic view](#) of quality in terms of the entire project process and all those involved with it.

The learning from Artworks captured in Schwarz's summary of January 2014 includes the statement that: "the achievement of quality depends on planning, shared responsibility between artists and commissioners, and a focus on content, context, process and product that includes participants' perspectives" (Schwarz 2014 p28). This validates the key learning points and recommendations above, but also highlights the importance of other stakeholders – chiefly participants and partners – when dealing with quality.

An important insight gained from a global view of quality is that: [once quality has been built in, subsequent "deployment, operation, and maintenance processes must not degrade it"](#) (Marino 2007 p21). The reality reported from the sector is that external processes and environments often do undermine the optimum conditions for quality (see evidence from Pheby 2012 and Dean 2012 presented in Chapter Five).

The potential impacts of stakeholders, particularly partners, on quality outputs have been outlined by Seidel et al (2010). Seidel et al's theory on the *interconnectedness of decision makers* is extremely significant for this study. The three groups of decisionmakers are:

[Those in the "room"](#) i.e. participants, artists and occasionally others, such as carers, support aides, parents

[Those just outside the room](#), who "may interact with those in the outer-most circle and who may visit the room in which arts learning experiences occur" i.e. supervisors, programme administrators, arts coordinators, parents, mentors, evaluators, and site liaisons.

[Those furthest from the room](#) who may rarely, if ever, enter the room i.e funders, district coordinators, board members

(Seidel et al 2010, p61)

The findings of Seidel et al's research is [that those just outside the room and those even further away who may never, or only rarely, enter the room, have powerful influences on the likelihood that those in the room will have a high quality arts learning experience.](#) The goal should be to achieve alignment between all stakeholders on what constitutes quality, what quality experiences look like and how best to create these experiences in a specific setting.

- Recommendations*
10. Recognise partner's roles and influences in the delivery of participatory arts projects for quality product and outcomes. Funders and partners together need to help fulfil the conditions that enable the artist to reach for high quality experiences.
 11. Create mechanisms to foster understanding between project partners/stakeholders to articulate shared aims (Principles), understand any varying expectations, and identify mutual benefits for the project.

Advice to Artworks Scotland in 2012 was that production of a “guidance toolkit specifically to support commissioners” could improve the quality of engagement in arts-led activity (Consilium 2012 p4). Seidel et al (2010) present in their report a number of resources to facilitate stronger communication and understanding between partners in projects (two of which are profiled in Chapter Six of this report). [Guidance from Creative Scotland might usefully map out project development timelines \(drawing potentially on Matarasso's *Five Stages of the Participatory Arts process* in Chapter Two of this study\) highlighting points of engagement and necessary dialogue at critical stages in the project development.](#)

Key learning point 6:

Avoid a prescriptive approach

All commentators on quality in participatory arts agree that the quality impacts cannot and should not be prescribed. Not only is it futile to try to inspect quality into something, but the experience and conditions for quality will always be different depending on the nature of the project and the participants. It stands to reason that National Theatre of Scotland and a small youth arts project are going to be working from a different starting point and to very different expectations.

Any quality framework needs to allow artists less experienced and with smaller budgets to feel they can achieve quality (Petrie 2013), and this should be possible with a set of aspirational principles that articulate generic characteristics of the best kind of experiences intended for participants. Expectations need to be set according to the resource level and expertise. A check list approach to quality should be avoided.

Indeed, research from Artworks notes that there is a “[danger of creating a curriculum for working in participatory settings which could potentially stifle creativity](#), diversity and the ability of artists to respond to the specific context of the setting that they are working within” (Taylor 2012 p21). Likewise the Traditional Music Forum recommends that “[Development needs to be carried out in ways which are sympathetic and sensitive to the friendly, creative, positive, learning environment found in organisations and projects](#)” (Downie 2011, p14).

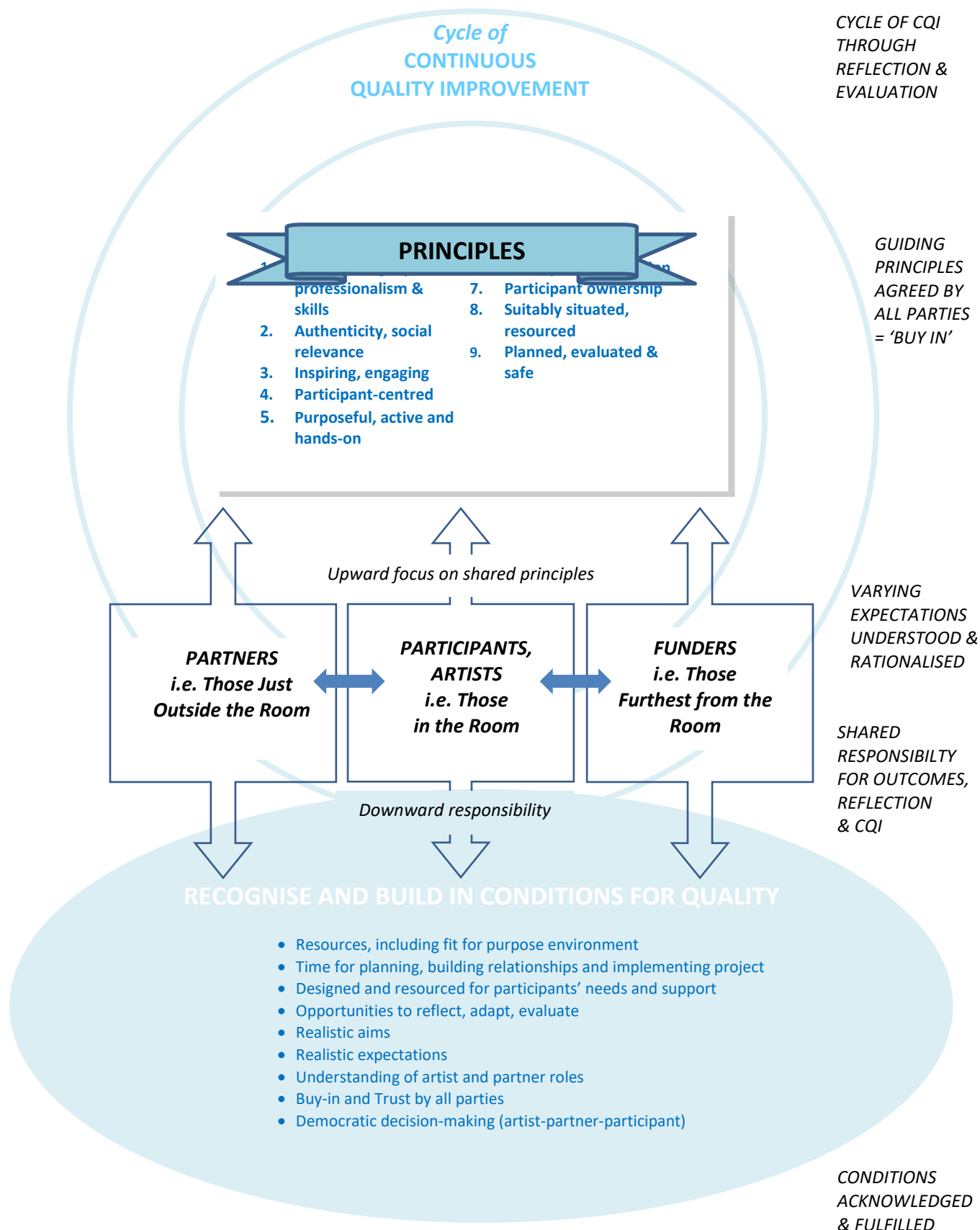
Recommendation 12. Don't prescribe: allow flexibility for principles to be applied as appropriate in different projects and different settings, and with different emphasis.

For example, in one context communication might be the major quality criterion, whereas in another context artistic merit may be considered to be of primary importance. As Bamford recommended to Scottish Arts Council in 2010, for the Creativity Portal:

While criteria need to be explicit, the tools and methods for applying these should allow for subjectivity and personal variations in the criteria used to judge the output items. Similarly, the criteria should encourage application of relativity, by providing opportunity to define criteria in a manner relative to the particular learners and learning context (Bamford 2010 p3).

Figure 25 overleaf provides a visual representation of a quality system incorporating key stakeholders, based on guiding principles agreed by all parties, with shared responsibility for enabling conditions and reflecting on outcomes, as part of a cycle of continuous quality improvement.

Figure 25: Integrated Quality System Model



B. ENGAGING THE SECTOR IN A QUALITY PROCESS

Key learning point 7:

It will be crucial to engage the sector in the development of a quality framework to make sure it is valued, understood and used

To ensure that a Quality Framework is received as relevant to the sector, it will be necessary to engage artists and partners (and ideally participants) in its formation and implementation. This links back to recommendations 4, 5 and 7 above involving consultation with the sector on key components of the framework.

Furthermore, and consistent with the concept of Continuous Quality Improvement, the Quality Framework itself will be subject to evolution and improvement over time; ongoing engagement with the sector will be crucial for this.

Research shows that there are big gaps in existing recognition and support for participatory arts work. Creative Scotland is in a position firstly to formulate generic principles against which the sector can demonstrate the quality of its work, and also to provide a platform for a sector network for sharing artist experiences, ideas, questions and developments and building a strong and visible community of practice. Creative Scotland can lead the way in a new, informed understanding of quality and how best to foster it.

Findings from Artworks are that “we need to support an understanding of the work and also to demonstrate our active commitment to its enhancement” (Schwarz 2014 p38). Creative Scotland can demonstrate its commitment to CQI in the way it uses it to inform policy and funding, and by working with the sector to inspire continuous improvement.

But in order to engage with the participatory arts sector, a platform will be needed. At present it could be argued that there is no cohesive ‘sector’ spanning artforms and settings in participatory arts practice. The first task therefore will be to establish a forum or a body to represent artists working in participatory arts settings. This forum can then engage other stakeholders as appropriate, including participants and partners.

This recommendation echoes advice to Artworks Scotland in 2012 from Consilium for:

Creative Scotland to take a lead role in raising the profile of work in participatory settings and opening up future opportunities through effective engagement of strategic partners and potential commissioners,

and

Proposed options to be considered for investment either through ArtWorks Scotland or a strategic commission via Creative Scotland include establishing an annual conference and developing an online community of practice.

(Consilium 2012b p5 and p56).

The need for a national platform to represent the sector is also highlighted by ArtWorks North East:

Space exists for the [establishment of a sympathetic and informative umbrella organisation for participatory arts](#) which this project could seek to fill, and a role for universities and partner institutions in providing recognised training and qualifications in participatory arts. Development of framework/benchmark documents around participatory arts practice might be a necessary precondition for such an organisation to be workable. ... Accessible dissemination (probably web-based) of information would be helpful for both participants and practitioners (Phelby, 2012: 2).

To support its sector consultations and research, Artworks Scotland funded 4 setting-specific peer networks, three of which formed for the first time as a result of funding from Artworks (Dean 2014). The networks are: Scottish Prison Arts Network (SPAN); North East Participatory Artists Network (NEPAN); TRiGGER (based in Dundee and Angus); and Patter (Edinburgh) (Creative Scotland 2014). With the first phase of Artworks Scotland having drawn to a close in February 2014, these funded networks are reporting on their experiences. In addition, Artworks Scotland gathered what was informally called “The Umbrella Group” to act as an advisory group.

- Recommendations*
13. [Establish a forum or body to represent artists working in participatory arts settings, with which to engage. Utilise precedents formed by Artworks Scotland and build on their experience as basis for developing a more permanent and cohesive platform for participatory artists](#)
 14. [Practitioners and partners who have already engaged in discussions around quality through Artworks Scotland be further mobilised as sector advocates or champions for quality and a culture of CQI.](#)
 15. [Documented data should be sourced from the sector for the purpose for collective learning, to build a critical mass of understanding from which themes can be pulled out, which can then be used to inform evolving concepts of quality \(Lowe 2013\).](#)

Key learning point 8:

It will be necessary to support for the sector in a Continuous Quality Improvement process

Guidance and resources will be necessary to support the sector in managing quality and developing a culture of CQI. These would span support for:

- Artists in self-reflection and improvement;
- Commissioners in developing projects;
- Funders in grant making (Schwarz 2014 p35).

Indeed, advice to Artworks Scotland in 2012 contains a recommendation that [a guidance toolkit specifically to support commissioners employing artists to work in participatory settings should be produced and disseminated](#) through relevant associations or representative bodies. (Consilium 2012b p58)

As Schwarz notes in her review of Artworks research, there is no need to invent new tools or to recommend the adoption of any one approach, but rather to generate an awareness of what exists and use this to ensure greater shared understanding and then action (Schwarz 2014 p35).

A review of research across the participatory arts sector by Artworks generates valuable insights into what artists feel would enhance their practice and capacity to achieve quality.

Key artist support needs highlighted from sector consultations are:

- Guidance on what is being aimed for
- Resources and tools for delivery
- Self-reflection tools
- Peer review and support
- Mentoring
- Networks
- Training and CPD

These support needs are discussed in detail in Chapter Six of this report.

Findings from this study are that [any skills development support for artists needs to achieve a balance between the provision of toolkits/resources and the provision of placement and mentoring opportunities.](#)

Recommendations [16. Scaffolding is needed for a quality framework to support artist needs outlined above. This can draw together existing resources but new materials will need to be produced that relate directly to the quality principles underpinning the new framework.](#)

[17. This research should inform work with the sector to produce toolkits most fit for purpose.](#)

It is possible to provide generic cross-artform guidance on what characterises a high quality project, but this needs to be complemented by setting-specific resources and tools taking into account special requirements or approaches needed when working with certain participants.

With a view to linking with existing Creative Scotland funding streams, it is noted by Consilium (2012a) that several programmes fund CPD and mentoring opportunities for artists (i.e. Artists Bursaries, Professional Development). The recommendation to Artworks Scotland in 2012 is that [“whilst a number of the programmes are focused on providing more experienced artists with opportunities to work within participatory settings, is it possible that these programmes could be reshaped to provide space for placement and mentoring](#)

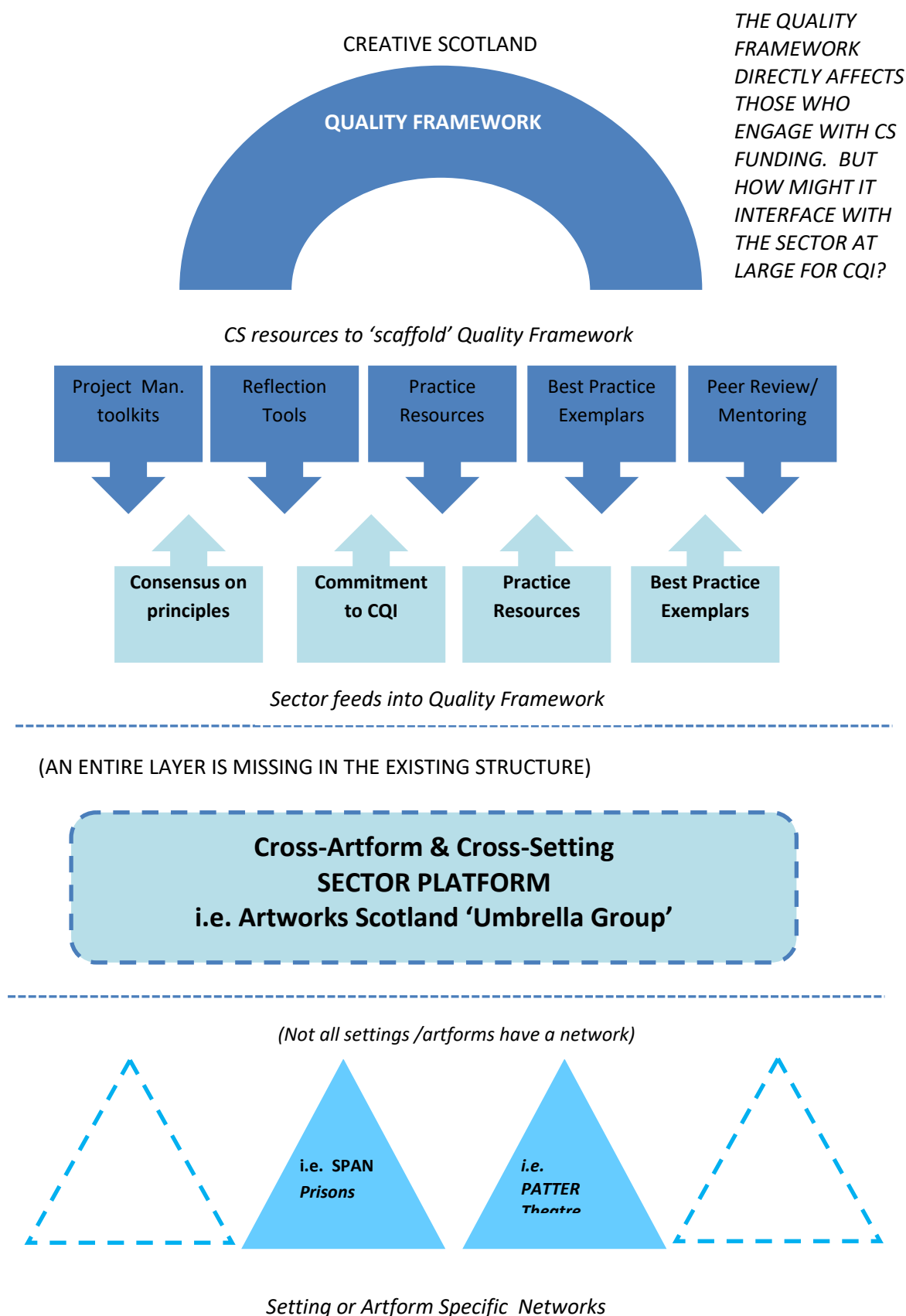
opportunities for less experienced artists to work alongside more experienced practitioners.” (Consilium 2012a p20)

A key part of a coordinated approach to building artists’ skills and confidence working in participatory settings needs to be [expanding the number of high quality placement and mentoring opportunities](#) available for artists across a range of settings (Consilium 2012a p20). The Federation of Scottish Theatre (FST) Mentoring Programme is a significant resource in the arts sector. This existing model could be built upon and broadened to facilitate participatory artists. In addition, the Voluntary Arts Network (VAN) contains considerable overlap with the participatory arts sector. It is likely that VAN has existing programmes that can be built from.

- Recommendation*
- 18. Promote existing Creative Scotland CPD and mentoring funding opportunities to the participatory arts sector, and broaden the promotion and scope of existing mentoring programmes like the FST’s.
 - 19. Support knowledge-sharing among practitioners in participatory arts. Gather evidence of best practice through reflection/evaluation of Creative Scotland-funded projects and share this (anonymising the material).

Figure 26 overleaf depicts how a Quality Framework/Creative Scotland might interface with a diverse participatory arts sector, illustrating gaps in sector networks and highlighting a missing layer needed at an intermediate level.

Figure 26: How a Quality Framework might Interface with the Sector



C. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED NEXT STEPS FOR CREATIVE SCOTLAND

4. Creative Scotland devises a preliminary Quality Framework for Participatory Arts, articulating clear principles and purpose, to engage with the sector for rationalisation and testing.
5. Creative Scotland facilitates the formation of a cross-artform, cross-setting platform through which to engage people working in participatory arts, continuing the pattern of sector engagement which Artworks Scotland has begun to establish.
6. Creative Scotland generates and engages with a wider community of *people interested in quality in participatory arts*, enabling all stakeholder groups to engage in this conversation. It will be important that participant and partner perspectives are included. This engagement can be online, in small discussions, or in further large debates and conferences (as recommended by NFER to ACE in 2012) (Lord et al 2012 p37).

D. MOVING FORWARD: WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING

It is also constructive to note what else is happening to develop thinking around quality and frameworks going forward from this point.

Artworks Scotland

Consideration is being given to the next phase of Artworks Scotland and its focus. It is recommended that Artworks Scotland be employed as a platform for engaging the sector in the tasks for developing a quality framework as outlined above.

Artworks Cymru and London

ArtWorks Cymru and ArtWorks London are currently working together to undertake more research with participants, which will provide further understanding of their views on quality factors (Schwarz 2014 p22).

With funding from the ArtWorks *Changing the Conversation* development fund, Trinity Laban is consulting on quality factors with artists and project managers and producers. Findings to date have emphasised the importance of everyone in a project agreeing at the start 'what quality looks like', recognising this may vary according to context. Other key factors are achieving clarity about the dual responsibility and complementary roles between artists and project managers/producers in supporting quality and ensuring that regular reflection time is built into projects (Schwarz 2014 p22). Consequently, this work is of high relevance to the recommendations in this report relating to stakeholder relationships.

The Artworks Navigator document *Good Practice Gets Better* (dated May 2013) maps out the next phase of its work which will provide further insights and resources for Creative

Scotland. In particular, its proposed activities relating to Artist Learning include a focus on peer learning and supporting reflection (Artworks 2013 p9).

Arts Council of England

From November 2012 through to February 2014 Arts Council England has worked with arts and cultural organisations to develop its quality principles for work with Children and Young People. It is testing integration of the principles in order to support its goal of raising the standard of work being produced by, with and for children and young people (ACE 2013).

ACE has commissioned NFER to explore four further research questions:

- I. Are the quality principles of benefit to arts and cultural organisations and practitioners and if so how?
- II. Do they impact on the quality of arts and cultural experiences?
- III. Do the principles change organisational/practitioner culture and practice and how?
- IV. How do the CYP principles relate to the metrics pilot work?

ACE will deploy pilot projects to test the principles in Spring 2014 and plans a sector conference to disseminate findings (ACE 2013).

In parallel to this, ACE has also commissioned work to establish a Peer Review Network for participatory arts activity with Children & Young People. The purpose of this project is to test out ways to implement the quality principles for work made by Children and Young People. The project will report in July 2014.

The intentions of the project are to:

- Establish an embryonic Quality Network
- Publish a framework for Peer Review of Participatory Arts work with Children & Young People
- Test a Peer Review process as a means to improve participatory practice with Children & Young People
- Produce a set of online resources to help others to develop their practice (Lowe

...and as such it will be of high interest to Creative Scotland. A representative from Creative Scotland (Chrissie Ruckley) is represented in the network for this project.

Helix Arts

Finally, Toby Lowe of Helix Arts is currently undertaking research to identify what are the attributes of a good partner in participatory arts work, and how to advance their understanding of the value of the arts in their setting? The study is consulting across a range of settings i.e. schools, young offenders units, prisons (Lowe 2013).

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