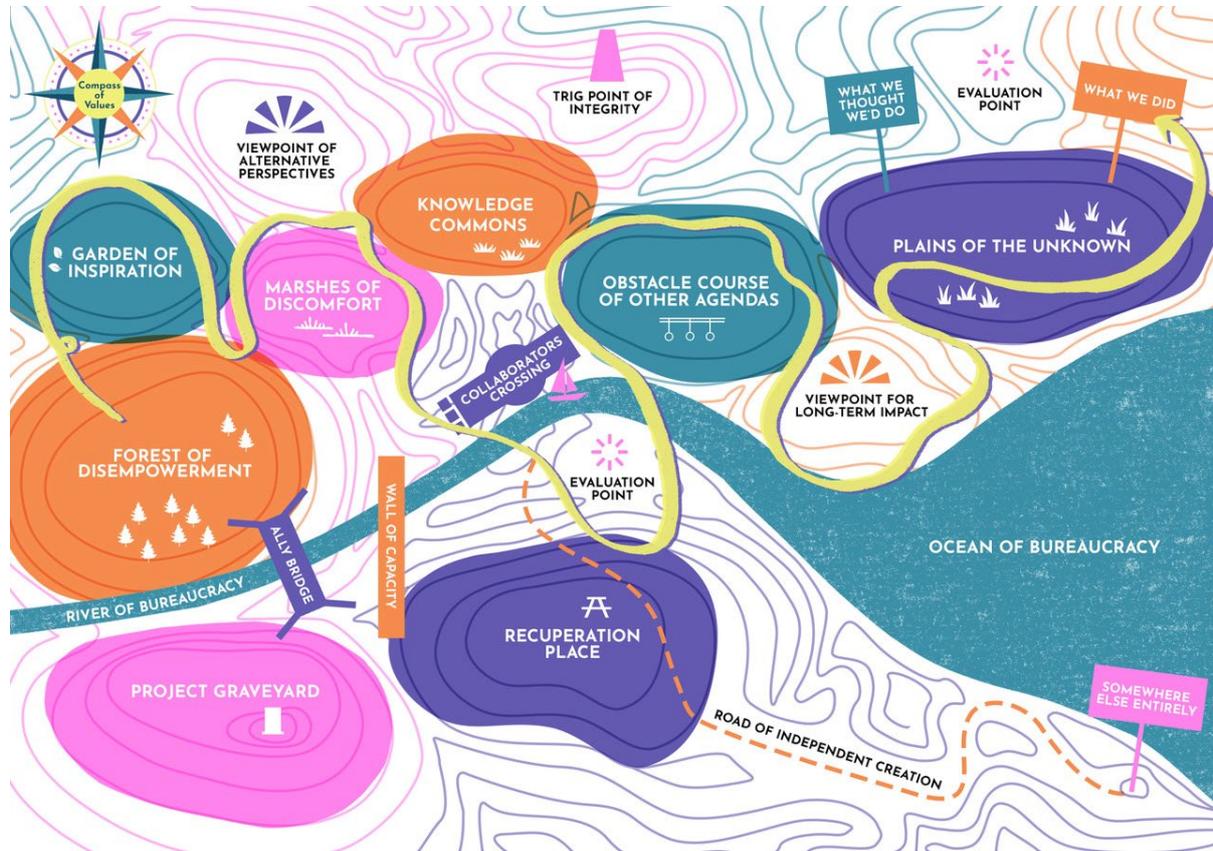


# ArtWorks Alliance Gathering Report – Creative Placemaking

Facilitated by Katharine Wheeler and Adrian Sinclair, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

Summary by Dr Rob Watson, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2024.



## Contents

1	Introduction .....	3
1.1	Facilitators .....	3
2	Participants Locations.....	5
3	Embers Handbook Summary .....	6
4	Using Creativity to Foster Community Development.....	7
5	Gathering Format .....	9
5.1	Breakout Session Format.....	9
5.2	Use of Technology .....	9
6	Breakout Sessions .....	11
7	Breakout Responses .....	12
7.1	Roles and Perspectives.....	12
7.2	Definition and Meaning of Creative Placemaking .....	14
7.3	Individual Contributions to Creative Placemaking.....	16
7.4	Collaborators and Networks .....	19
7.5	Boundary Crossing in Work .....	22
7.6	Revised Understanding of Creative Placemaking .....	25
8	Summary and Recommendations .....	28
8.1	Enhance Capacity Building .....	28
8.2	Strengthen Community Networks .....	28
8.3	Foster Inclusive Participation.....	28
8.4	Support Emergent Participatory Arts Practices .....	28
8.5	Recognition and Validation .....	28
8.6	Leverage Technology .....	29
8.7	Policy Advocacy .....	29
8.8	Support for Members .....	29
8.9	Recognition of Emergent Participatory Arts Practices.....	29
9	Resources.....	30
9.1	Embers Handbook by Katharine Wheeler.....	30
9.2	Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats: .....	30
9.3	"The Placemaker's Guide to Building Community" by Nabeel Hamdi .....	30
9.4	Various Websites and Online Tools .....	30
9.5	Academic Institutions and Publications .....	30
9.6	Local Government and Policy Frameworks .....	30
9.7	Digital Platforms for Collaboration .....	30
9.8	Articles and Online Discussions.....	30

## 1 Introduction

This document summarises the online Gathering meeting held by the ArtWorks Alliance, focusing on thinking as a creative placemaker, and the challenges of promoting collaborations between participatory artists, public authorities and socially engaged stakeholders. The principal matter of discussion at the [ArtWorks Alliance Gathering in April 2024](#) focused on the concept and practice of Creative Placemaking, as outlined in Katharine Wheeler's [Embers Handbook](#). The gathering served as a platform to explore how creative activities and community engagement can be effectively used and developed to re-imagine and transform an understanding of place and the community spaces we share together. Key themes included the integration of diverse perspectives to enrich placemaking initiatives, the roles individuals and networks play in these processes, and the challenges and opportunities of working across various boundaries—be they cultural, geographical, or institutional.

Participants discussed the importance of community-led initiatives, ensuring that projects are responsive to local needs and aspirations, and highlighted the need for collaboration among a wide range of stakeholders, including artists, community leaders, and organisations from different sectors. The sessions aimed to deepen understanding of Creative Placemaking as a transformative tool for community development, emphasising sustainability, inclusivity, and the power of creative expression to foster a shared sense of identity and belonging in community spaces.

### 1.1 Facilitators

[Katharine Wheeler](#) played a key role in the development of the Embers Handbook, on Creative Placemaking, that formed the basis for the discussion at the ArtWorks Alliance Gathering in April 2024. As a Visual and Social Practice Artist affiliated with The Stove Network in Dumfries, Katharine's contributions drew from her direct experience in leading and coordinating projects that utilise creative activities to engage and transform communities. Katharine's involvement in Creative Placemaking includes facilitating partnerships and projects that focus on community collaboration and sustainable development. Katharine's expertise helped shape the discussions at the gathering, bringing practical insights into the effective application of creative strategies to foster community building and cultural enrichment.

Adrian Sinclair from Union Arts facilitated the ArtWorks Alliance Gathering. His role involved supporting the discussions and activities centered around the evolving landscape of

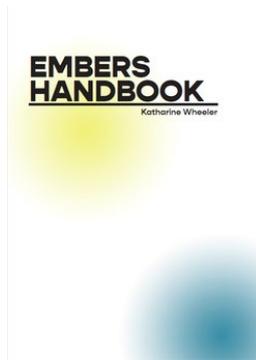
participatory arts, particularly focusing on Creative Placemaking. His facilitation helped participants explore and expand their understanding of participatory practices in the arts sector.

Adrian is the Director of Development at Union Arts, where he focuses on developing arts projects that engage communities and support cultural development. His role involves facilitating collaborations that connect artistic expression with community needs, aiming to have a positive impact on local cultural environments. Through his work, Adrian seeks to integrate the arts more deeply into community life, promoting inclusivity and participation.

Dr Rob Watson supported the ArtWorks Alliance Gathering by managing the logistical aspects of the event. He provided access to Zoom for the virtual gathering, facilitated communications about the event in advance, and ensured that the meeting was recorded, making it available for subsequent review and analysis. His contributions were crucial in ensuring the smooth execution and extended accessibility of the gathering, enabling a broader analysis of the discussions that took place.



### 3 Embers Handbook Summary



The Embers Handbook by Katharine Wheeler focuses on the practice and philosophy of creative placemaking. It serves as a guide for individuals and groups interested in fostering positive changes within their communities through creative activities. The handbook outlines methods for leveraging creative actions to unite people and collectively shape the future of their environments in ways that benefit all involved.

Here are the main emerging themes from the handbook:

- i. **Community-Led Initiatives:** The importance of initiatives being driven from within the community, rather than imposed from outside, ensuring that actions are relevant and directly responsive to the local context.
- ii. **Integration of Diverse Perspectives:** Emphasises including a variety of community voices and perspectives in the creative placemaking process to enrich outcomes and ensure inclusivity.
- iii. **Role of Creativity in Social Change:** Creative activities are portrayed not just as aesthetic or recreational endeavours but as crucial tools for social engagement and transformation.
- iv. **Collaborative Practices:** Discusses the dynamics of collaborative work, involving artists, community members, and other stakeholders working together to foster social cohesion and address community issues.
- v. **Challenges and Adaptability:** Recognises the challenges inherent in creative placemaking and the need for adaptability in approaches, highlighting the importance of flexibility and resilience in community projects.
- vi. **Empowerment through Participation:** The handbook stresses the empowerment that comes from active participation, allowing community members to contribute to and steer the development processes affecting them.
- vii. **Sustainable and Ethical Practices:** It advocates for practices that are sustainable and ethically sound, urging practitioners to consider the long-term impacts and ethical implications of their work.

These themes encapsulate a comprehensive approach to creative placemaking that values community input, creativity, collaboration, and ethical practices in building vibrant, resilient communities.

## 4 Using Creativity to Foster Community Development



The ArtWorks Alliance Gathering focused on Creative Placemaking as explored by Katharine in the Embers Handbook and explored various facets of using creativity to foster community development and engagement. The discussion was rich with insights into how diverse roles and collaborative efforts can enhance local environments and promote social change. Here is a summary of the emerging themes from the meeting:

- **Integration of Global and Local Needs:** Emphasis was placed on balancing global perspectives with local actions, acknowledging the importance of international collaborations while nurturing local capacities and resources.
- **Role of Creative Placemaking in Community Development:** Participants explored the impact of creative placemaking on community development, particularly how artistic and creative processes can be leveraged to build stronger, more resilient communities.
- **Importance of Diverse Perspectives:** The discussions highlighted the significance of incorporating diverse viewpoints in creative projects. This includes recognising and integrating the contributions of artists, community leaders, and advocates to enrich the placemaking process.
- **Use of Technology and AI:** The potential benefits and challenges of using advanced technologies and AI in capturing discussions, managing projects, and fostering engagement were deliberated. The conversations touched on balancing technology use with maintaining personal connections and community values.
- **Challenges of Place-Based Collaboration:** The complexities and challenges of conducting meaningful collaborations in physical spaces were discussed, including issues related to connectivity and participant engagement.

- **Strategies for Effective Collaboration:** Strategies for fostering effective collaboration were a key focus, including the use of breakout rooms for detailed discussions, managing group dynamics, and ensuring productive outcomes from online meetings.
- **Empowerment through Creative Engagement:** There was a strong theme of empowering local voices and communities through creative engagement, emphasising the role of creativity in societal change and development.

These themes encapsulate the rich dialogue that took place during the gathering, setting the stage for further exploration and development of creative placemaking strategies within community contexts.

## 5 Gathering Format

The discussion during the ArtWorks Alliance online meeting was managed through structured breakout sessions, which facilitated focused discussions on specific aspects of creative place-making. Here's a summary of how the discussion was organised:

### 5.1 Breakout Session Format

- The facilitators opted for a streamlined introduction process. Instead of a full round-table introduction, participants were asked to provide a brief introduction in the meeting chat panel as part of their initial contribution to the discussion.
- Questions for discussion were read out loud and posted in the chat to ensure clarity and accessibility for all participants.
- Each breakout session lasted twenty minutes, after which participants were automatically returned to the central meeting space.
- Efforts were made to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to speak if they wished, fostering inclusivity.

### 5.2 Use of Technology



During the ArtWorks Alliance Gathering, Soom's AI features were used to enhance the accessibility of the discussion. The platform's automatic transcription service provided live text summaries, allowing participants with hearing impairments or those in noisy environments to keep up with the conversation. This transcription also served as a useful record for later review or for

those who couldn't attend the entire session. These AI tools ensured that all participants could access and engage with the meeting's content effectively.

[Mentimeter](#), an interactive presentation tool, was also used to facilitate input from participants. While in breakout sessions, participants could focus on the discussion without the need to input data into Menti. Contributions to Menti were made once everyone returned to the central space. An open Q&A feature on Menti allowed for ongoing submission of questions throughout the session, enhancing the interactive aspect of the meeting.

## 6 Breakout Sessions

The facilitators opted for breakout sessions during their gathering to foster a more inclusive and participatory environment, aligning with their ethos of valuing diverse contributions. Unlike panel Q&As or roundtable discussions, which often limit the number of active speakers, and can be dominated by a few voices, breakout sessions allowed for a more equitable distribution of speaking opportunities. This format ensured that participants could more freely express their views and share their experiences in smaller, more intimate groups.

Additionally, breakout sessions facilitated a deeper exchange of ideas, as participants were more likely to engage in meaningful dialogue and listen to different perspectives within the smaller group setting. This approach not only supported the Alliance's commitment to inclusivity but also enriched the collaborative experience by drawing on the wide array of insights and backgrounds present among the participants.

- **Breakout One:** Focused on individual contributions to creative placemaking, asking participants to reflect on their personal roles and what they bring to the work. Participants were asked: what do you as an individual bring to Creative Placemaking, what role(s) can you play in this work? This question aimed to encourage participants to reflect on their unique skills, experiences, and perspectives that they could contribute to Creative Placemaking initiatives.
- **Breakout Two:** Centred on collaboration, encouraging participants to think about the networks and collaborators they could draw upon or bring into creative placemaking efforts. Participants were asked: what collaborators/networks can you draw on or bring into this work? This question sought to identify the resources, networks, and partnerships participants could leverage to enhance the impact of their Creative Placemaking projects.
- **Breakout Three:** Aimed at exploring the requirements for crossing boundaries into new or unknown areas of work, encouraging thoughts on what is needed for effective collaboration across diverse sectors. Participants were asked: What does 'boundary crossing' into new or unknown areas of work require from us, or others? This question was designed to explore the challenges and requirements of stepping into unfamiliar territories or disciplines, which is often a crucial aspect of innovative Creative Placemaking.

This format allowed for targeted discussions that were simultaneously personal, collaborative, and exploratory, supporting a dynamic exchange of ideas and fostering a deeper understanding of creative placemaking challenges and opportunities. These questions were intended to prime the participants for deeper discussions in their breakout groups, focusing on personal contributions, collaborative potentials, and innovative approaches to Creative Placemaking.



### 7.1.1 Creative and Artistic Roles

- **Artists and Producers:** Participants identified themselves as artists, producers, festival organisers, and arts curators, indicating a strong presence of creative practitioners who lead and facilitate community arts projects.
- **Community Artists and Arts Managers:** These roles focus on bridging the gap between arts initiatives and community needs, facilitating engagement through various artistic mediums.

### 7.1.2 Facilitative and Organisational Roles

- **Facilitators and Project Managers:** Many attendees serve as facilitators, who guide creative processes and manage the logistics of projects to ensure they align with community interests.
- **Engagement Designers and Drama Practitioners:** These participants focus on designing engagement strategies and using theatre and performance as tools for community involvement and dialogue.

### 7.1.3 Supportive and Advisory Roles

- **Consultants and Mentors:** Providing expertise and guidance to help shape and steer projects, these roles are crucial for nurturing the growth and sustainability of community arts practices.
- **Community Development Workers and Activists:** These individuals are integral in advocating for and implementing changes that benefit communities, often focusing on enhancing cultural and social infrastructure.

### 7.1.4 Educational and Research Roles

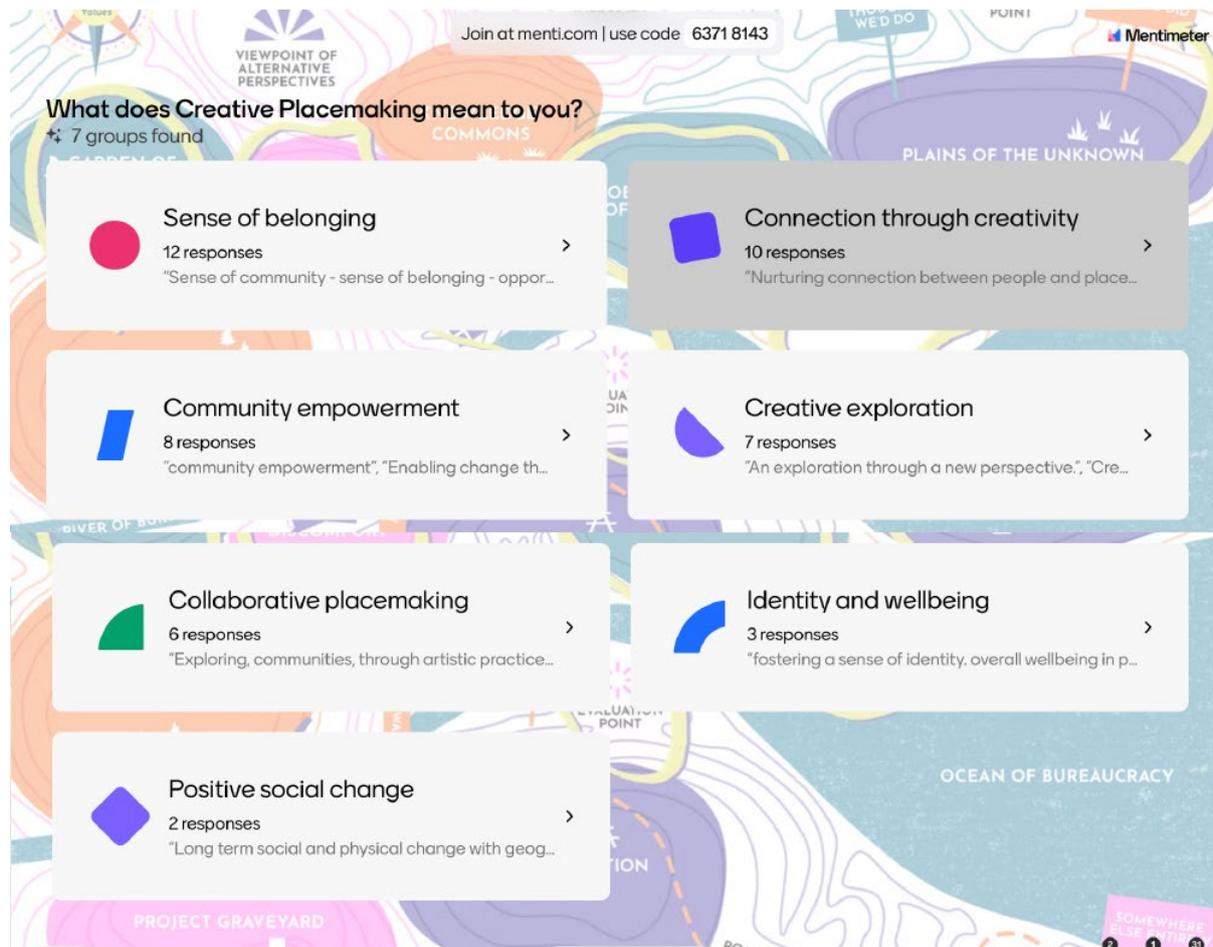
- **Researchers and Academics:** Engaging in studies and analyses that inform practices and policies in Creative Placemaking, these participants help in understanding impacts and evolving methodologies.
- **Educators and Trainers:** Focused on developing skills and knowledge among community members and practitioners, they play a critical role in capacity building within the field.

### 7.1.5 Perspectives on Participatory Arts

- **Inclusivity and Accessibility:** Many responses highlighted a commitment to creating accessible spaces where diverse community members can engage with and be represented in the arts.
- **Community Empowerment and Connection:** Participants view their work to empower communities, foster a sense of belonging, and facilitate connections through shared creative experiences.
- **Innovation and Adaptability:** Emphasising the need for innovative approaches that adapt to community needs and cultural shifts, reflecting a dynamic view of participatory arts as evolving with its context.

Overall, the gathering showcased a wide spectrum of roles filled by individuals dedicated to practicing participatory arts as a powerful tool for community engagement, social change, and cultural enrichment. The roles and perspectives shared underscore the collective effort to make Creative Placemaking an inclusive and impactful practice.

## 7.2 Definition and Meaning of Creative Placemaking



The participants then shared their varied and insightful definitions of Creative Placemaking, reflecting a broad spectrum of interpretations and applications of the concept. Here's a summary of the key themes and definitions highlighted by the participants during their discussions:

### 7.2.1 Community Empowerment and Engagement

Many participants defined Creative Placemaking as a process that empowers communities by actively involving them in shaping their environments. This includes fostering a sense of connection, belonging, and ownership among community members. It was also seen as a means to promote community visibility and energy, bringing attention to often overlooked areas or groups.

### **7.2.2 Cultural and Social Impact**

Definitions often emphasised the role of Creative Placemaking in enhancing the cultural and social fabric of a place. This includes creating a legacy of vibrant, welcoming, and inclusive public spaces that reflect and celebrate the diversity of the community. Some responses highlighted Creative Placemaking as a tool for generating long-term social and physical changes that positively impact geographical communities.

### **7.2.3 Integration of Arts and Creativity**

Participants described Creative Placemaking as using arts-based practices to explore and enhance the way different people engage with and are represented in the art world. This perspective views the arts as a vital element in interpreting and celebrating community identity and heritage. The creative process itself was noted as a means for community members to connect with one another, fostering collaborative and innovative approaches to common challenges.

### **7.2.4 Building and Sustaining Relationships**

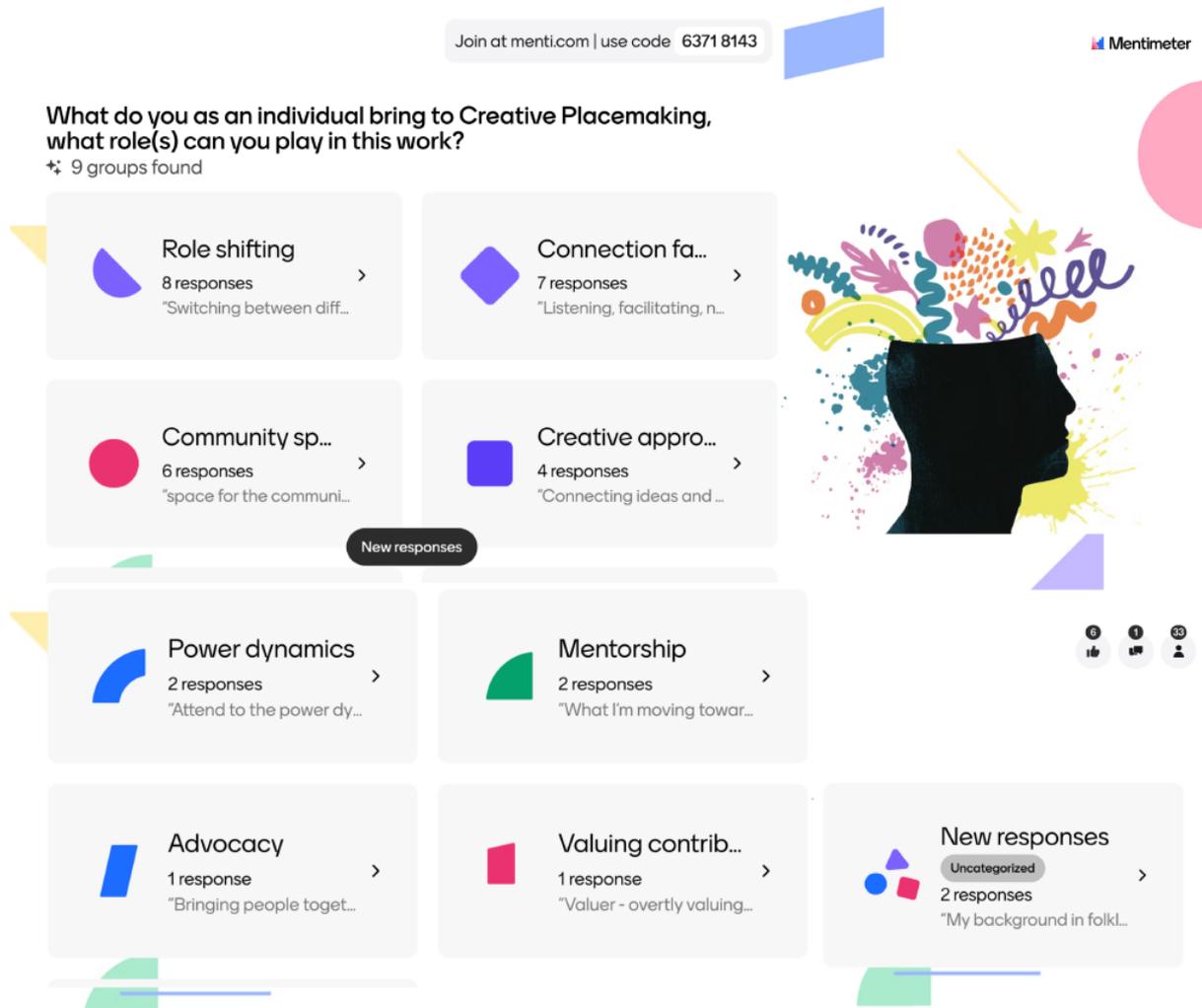
Creative Placemaking was often related to building connections between people, their environments, and their collective histories. This involves not just physical spaces but also the relationships and interactions that define a community's character and dynamics. The approach was also tied to creating "places of creative comfort," where safety, fun, and friendliness are paramount to nurturing positive community interactions.

### **7.2.5 Challenges and Opportunities**

Some participants expressed uncertainty about the full scope of Creative Placemaking, indicating a desire to explore and understand its potential more deeply during the gathering. Others focused on the opportunities Creative Placemaking offers for fostering a sense of pride, shared stories, and experiences that contribute to a community's unique cultural landscape.

Overall, the reported definitions underscore Creative Placemaking as a multifaceted approach to community development through creativity and participation, aiming to enhance both the aesthetic and functional aspects of communal spaces while promoting a deeper, more connected community experience.

## 7.3 Individual Contributions to Creative Placemaking



During the first breakout discussions participants shared a diverse array of individual contributions to placemaking, illustrating a rich variety of roles and expertise brought into the field of Creative Placemaking. Here's a summary of these contributions:

### 7.3.1 Creative and Artistic Leadership

Many participants identified themselves as artists, producers, or creators who actively initiate and lead placemaking projects. Their contributions involve using artistic skills to design and implement projects that engage and inspire communities.

### 7.3.2 Facilitation and Coordination

Several attendees serve as facilitators and coordinators, playing key roles in organising community meetings, workshops, and discussions that underpin placemaking efforts. They focus on ensuring that projects are well-organised and that all community voices are heard and integrated.

### **7.3.3 Community Engagement and Empowerment**

Contributions from community arts managers and engagement designers emphasised creating inclusive and accessible spaces for all community members to participate in placemaking activities. This includes reaching out to marginalised groups and ensuring their perspectives and needs are addressed.

### **7.3.4 Consultation and Advisory**

Some participants contribute by offering expert advice and consultancy, helping to shape placemaking strategies that are culturally sensitive, sustainable, and impactful. Their roles often involve strategic planning and advising on best practices for community development.

### **7.3.5 Research and Development**

Researchers and academics in the group contribute by studying the impacts of placemaking activities and disseminating findings that help refine practices and approaches. They bring a critical eye to the evaluation of placemaking outcomes.

### **7.3.6 Advocacy and Representation**

Advocates in the group focus on promoting the importance of placemaking within broader cultural and policy contexts. They work to ensure that placemaking is recognised as a vital component of urban development and community welfare.

### **7.3.7 Resource Mobilisation**

Some participants contribute by mobilising resources—whether financial, material, or human—to support placemaking projects. They play crucial roles in fundraising, resource allocation, and building partnerships that sustain placemaking initiatives.

### **7.3.8 Capacity Building and Education**

Educators and trainers contribute by developing and delivering training programs that build local capacity for placemaking. They focus on teaching skills that empower community members to take active roles in shaping their environments.

### **7.3.9 Participants Comments**

Participants shared a variety of comments reflecting their roles and perspectives in Creative Placemaking, emphasising their individual contributions and collaborative spirit. Here's a summary of the key comments made by respondents during this section of the gathering:

- **Versatile Engagement:** One participant described their capability to "shift between all those roles like a tightrope walker according to what is happening," illustrating the dynamic and adaptable nature of their involvement in placemaking projects.
- **Community and Communication Facilitators:** Several respondents identified themselves as facilitators and connectors. For example, one mentioned their role in "connecting ideas and people," while another focused on creating spaces for conversation and facilitating difficult discussions.
- **Empowering and Advocacy Roles:** Respondents also highlighted their roles in empowering communities and advocating for inclusive and sustainable practices. One noted their transition towards being "the mentor and advocate and supporter for others," aiming to empower them to recognise and use their talents in placemaking.
- **Creative and Organisational Contributions:** Participants mentioned their creative inputs as well as organisational skills. For instance, one respondent discussed their involvement in "holding space and steering" discussions and projects, which are essential for structured yet flexible placemaking.
- **Responsiveness to Community Needs:** Highlighting the sensitivity to community dynamics and politics, one participant described themselves as "the ignorer of the community politics," suggesting a focus on neutrality and the broader goals of the projects rather than getting entangled in local disputes.

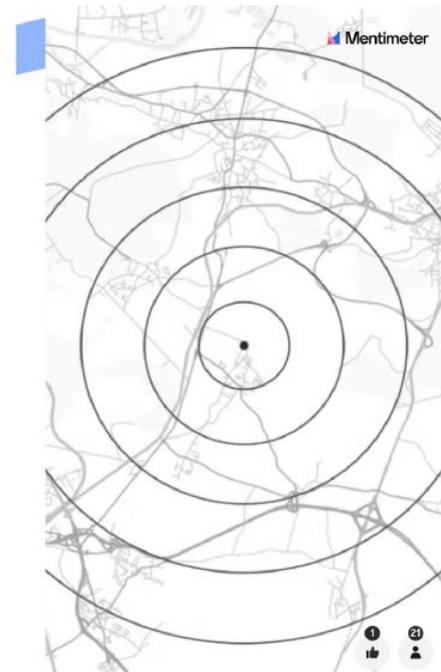
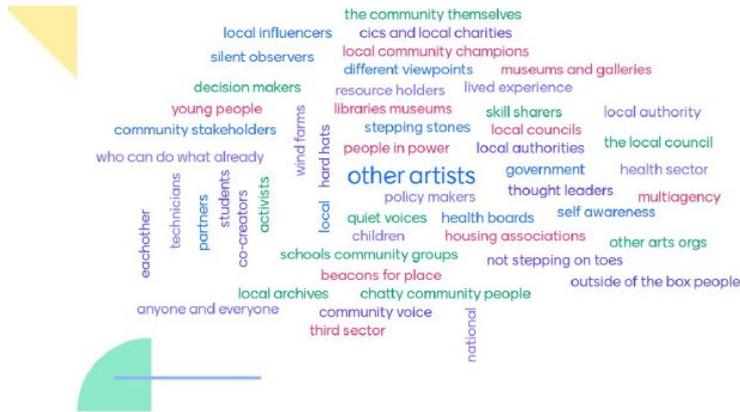
These comments from the gathering participants demonstrate a broad understanding of the various roles played in Creative Placemaking, emphasising their commitment to adaptive, responsive, and inclusive approaches in their work.

These contributions collectively underscore the multifaceted nature of placemaking, where diverse skills and perspectives converge to create meaningful and lasting impacts on community spaces. Each participant brings unique strengths and experiences, contributing to a collaborative effort that enriches and transforms public spaces in culturally resonant ways.

## 7.4 Collaborators and Networks

### What collaborators or networks can be drawn on or brought into this work?

53 responses



During the second breakout group discussions participants shared valuable insights into the networks and resources they rely on to facilitate their creative placemaking work. The summary of their responses highlights a diverse and interconnected web of support that underscores the collaborative nature of creative placemaking:

### 7.4.1 Local and Community Networks

Participants frequently mentioned drawing on local community networks, including neighbourhood associations, local councils, and community groups. These networks are crucial for grounding placemaking projects in local needs and aspirations, ensuring that initiatives are relevant and responsive to the community.

### 7.4.2 Arts and Cultural Organisations

Many rely on partnerships with other arts organisations, galleries, and cultural institutions. These collaborations bring additional artistic perspectives and resources to placemaking projects, enhancing their scope and impact.

### 7.4.3 Educational Institutions

Universities, colleges, and schools are often tapped for their research capabilities, student involvement, and educational resources. These institutions serve as hubs for innovation and provide a steady stream of fresh ideas and energetic volunteers.

#### **7.4.4 Private Sector Partnerships**

Some participants draw on relationships with businesses and private sector stakeholders who can provide funding, expertise, and in-kind support. These partnerships are often essential for the sustainability of placemaking efforts.

#### **7.4.5 Non-Profit and Advocacy Groups**

Non-profit organisations, especially those focused on community development, urban planning, and social services, are key allies. These organisations often share similar goals and can provide both logistical and substantive support.

#### **7.4.6 Government and Public Agencies**

Collaboration with local, regional, and sometimes national government bodies is crucial for securing permissions, accessing public spaces, and tapping into governmental funding streams.

#### **7.4.7 Interdisciplinary Collaborators**

Participants also highlighted the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration that spans beyond typical artistic or cultural boundaries, involving environmentalists, architects, urban planners, and social workers. These collaborators bring diverse expertise that enriches the placemaking process.

#### **7.4.8 Online and Digital Networks**

Digital tools and online platforms are increasingly important, particularly for networking, sharing best practices, and engaging wider communities in the placemaking process.

#### **7.4.9 Participants Comments**

Participants discussed their involvement in Creative Placemaking, specifically focusing on the collaborations and networks they engage in to enrich their projects. Here's a summary of how they described their collaborative efforts and the networks they leverage:

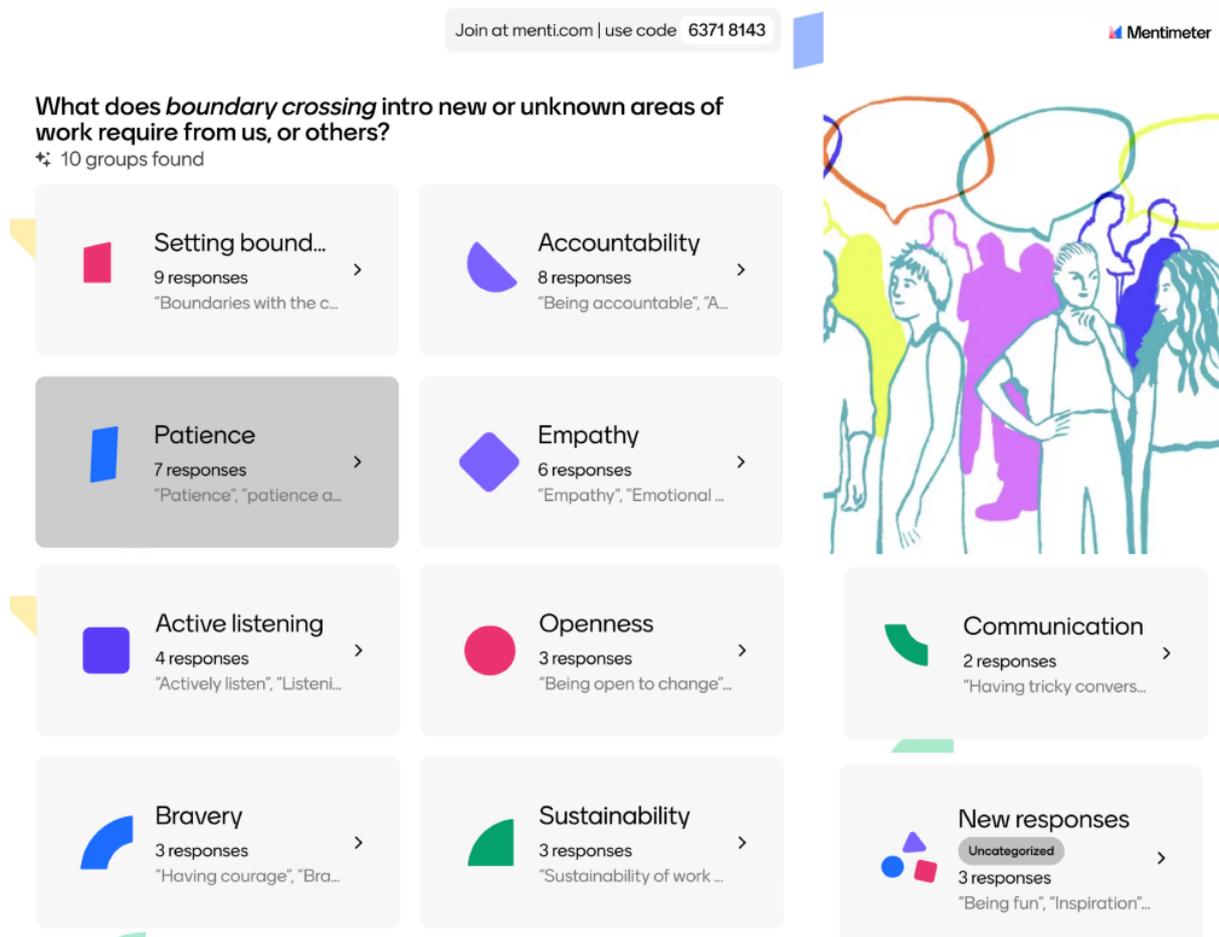
- **Diverse Collaborative Networks:** Participants emphasised their connections with a wide range of collaborators, including "local authority, third sector, other arts orgs" and more specialised groups like "health boards, wind farms, housing associations." This shows the breadth and diversity of partnerships that participants consider crucial for effective placemaking.
- **Community-Centric Networks:** Many responses highlighted deep engagements with community-based networks. For example, one participant mentioned working with "Libraries, museums, schools, community groups, local authorities," indicating a strong focus on grassroots collaboration that taps into existing community structures.

- **Inclusive and Expansive Networking:** Participants expressed an ethos of inclusivity and openness in their networking, as captured by the comment "Anyone and everyone." This inclusive approach signifies a broad, welcoming attitude towards potential collaborators, regardless of their conventional relevance to arts or community projects.
- **Role of Personal and Professional Networks:** Some participants detailed more personalised networking strategies, involving "other artists, silent observers, local influencers" which reflects a strategic approach to collaboration, tapping both visible and less obvious contributors to foster a rich, multidimensional creative environment.
- **Engagement Across Sectors:** The importance of cross-sector collaboration was also a recurring theme, with participants noting the value of engaging with varied stakeholders like "activists, thought leaders, government," and "technicians, young people, local archives." These comments underscore a holistic view of placemaking that integrates insights and resources from across societal and professional spectra.

These reflections illustrate that the participants at the Gathering view their networks not just as support mechanisms, but as integral parts of the creative placemaking process, essential for ensuring the projects are as comprehensive, diverse, and community aligned as possible.

These varied networks and resources show the complex environment where creative placemakers work. By using these different links, participants can improve the impact, scope, and durability of their placemaking efforts, making sure they connect strongly with their communities.

## 7.5 Boundary Crossing in Work



In the final breakout group discussions participants shared their experiences and strategies for 'boundary crossing'—a key aspect of their engagement in new or unfamiliar areas of work within creative placemaking. Their responses provided a rich overview of how they navigate the challenges and opportunities of stepping out of comfort zones and engaging with unfamiliar disciplines or communities. Here's a synthesis of their key strategies and experiences:

### 7.5.1 Embracing Interdisciplinary Approaches

Many participants highlighted the importance of embracing interdisciplinary methods, integrating insights and practices from fields such as urban planning, social sciences, and environmental studies. This approach allows them to address complex community issues more holistically.

### 7.5.2 Building Diverse Partnerships

Engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including those from different cultural, economic, and professional backgrounds, was emphasised as crucial. Participants noted that these partnerships help in understanding and integrating multiple perspectives, thus enriching the placemaking process.

### **7.5.3 Fostering Inclusivity and Openness**

A recurring theme was the need for inclusivity and openness in placemaking practices. Participants discussed actively seeking to include voices that are often marginalised or overlooked, ensuring that the placemaking process is truly representative and community centric.

### **7.5.4 Adapting to New Cultural Contexts**

Engaging with new communities often requires a sensitive adaptation to different cultural contexts. Participants spoke about the necessity of cultural humility and the willingness to learn from the community, rather than imposing preconceived ideas.

### **7.5.5 Utilising Technology and New Media**

Leveraging digital tools and platforms to bridge gaps between different communities and disciplines was also identified as a key strategy. Technology not only facilitates broader engagement but also supports innovative methods of collaboration and creativity.

### **7.5.6 Capacity Building and Continuous Learning**

Continuous learning and capacity building emerged as essential for successfully navigating unfamiliar territories. Workshops, training sessions, and collaborative learning experiences were cited as valuable for acquiring new skills and knowledge.

### **7.5.7 Risk-Taking and Experimentation**

Participants acknowledged the importance of being open to risks and willing to experiment. Stepping into unknown areas often requires a trial-and-error approach, where learning from failures is as important as celebrating successes.

### **7.5.8 Practicing Patience and Persistence**

Effective boundary crossing was described as often requiring patience and persistence. Developing trust and understanding within new communities or disciplines takes time and sustained effort.

### **7.5.9 Participants Comments**

Participants discussed the concept of "boundary crossing" in their roles within Creative Placemaking, highlighting how they navigate and integrate across different sectors, disciplines, and community interests. Here's a summary of the key reflections and experiences shared by participants:

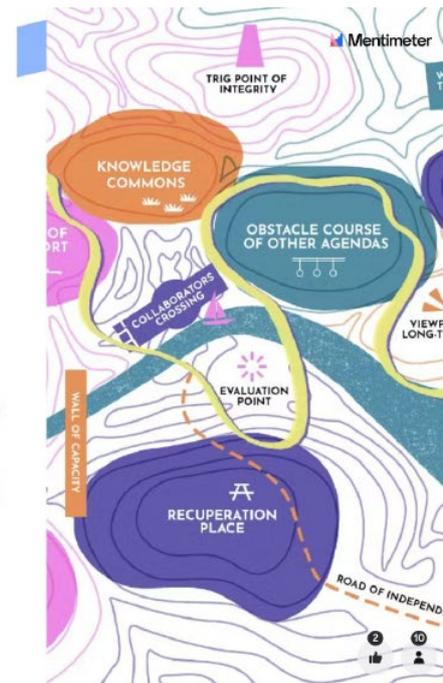
- **Embracing Change and Challenges:** The participants expressed that boundary crossing often requires an openness to change and a readiness to tackle new challenges. One noted the importance of "Being open to change" and another spoke on the necessity of having "patience and perseverance," indicating the mental and emotional readiness needed to step into unfamiliar territories.
- **Navigating Complex Dynamics:** Respondents discussed the complexity of engaging with different community and professional boundaries. One participant highlighted the need for "patience," "resilience," and "clarity" in their communications, which are crucial when interacting across diverse groups and settings.
- **Cultivating Relationships and Building Trust:** Building new relationships and maintaining trust was a recurring theme. One response emphasised the approach of going "at the pace of trust," suggesting that successful boundary crossing is dependent on developing trustful relationships over time.
- **Learning and Adapting:** The necessity for continuous learning and adaptation was acknowledged, with one participant noting the importance of "not being neutral" but rather being "assertive," which reflects the proactive attitude required to navigate and integrate across different boundaries effectively.
- **Maintaining Personal Wellbeing:** The need to keep personal wellbeing in check while managing high expectations and various roles was mentioned, indicating the personal challenges that come with boundary crossing. This includes managing one's own expectations and mental health in demanding, cross-disciplinary environments.
- **Practical Challenges:** Participants also spoke about the practical aspects of boundary crossing, such as "understanding different rules" and "making the imaginative leap to understand how others might see us." These comments reflect the cognitive and empathetic efforts required to align different perspectives and work effectively across various domains.

These comments from the gathering participants demonstrate their awareness of the complexities involved in boundary crossing within Creative Placemaking. They highlight both the challenges and strategies for effectively navigating and integrating diverse perspectives and disciplines to enrich their projects and achieve broader community impacts. Furthermore, these strategies illustrate the dynamic and adaptive nature of creative placemaking, highlighting how practitioners are continually evolving their approaches to meet new challenges and seize opportunities in their work. By stepping beyond traditional boundaries and embracing the unfamiliar, they can innovate and drive meaningful change within communities.

## 7.6 Revised Understanding of Creative Placemaking

### What does Creative Placemaking mean to you now?

24 responses



Following the breakout group discussions participants reported significant shifts in their understanding and perspective on what Creative Placemaking entails. These changes in viewpoint were largely influenced by the rich exchanges and shared experiences during the sessions. Here's a summary of how their views on Creative Placemaking evolved:

### 7.6.1 Expanded Definition of Creative Placemaking

Participants noted that their understanding of Creative Placemaking broadened to include not just the physical transformation of spaces but also the cultivation of community relationships and identities. This expanded view incorporates the idea of placemaking as a dynamic process that goes beyond aesthetics to include social cohesion and cultural inclusivity.

### 7.6.2 Increased Emphasis on Community Engagement

Many participants expressed a renewed emphasis on the importance of deep, genuine community engagement in placemaking efforts. They recognised that successful Creative Placemaking must be driven by the community's own aspirations and needs, rather than being top-down or artist-led only.

### 7.6.3 Appreciation for Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Conversations highlighted the value of interdisciplinary approaches, leading to a greater appreciation for the contributions of various fields such as environmental science, urban planning, and social work. This interdisciplinary perspective helps address complex community challenges more effectively and sustainably.

#### **7.6.4 Awareness of the Challenges and Complexities**

Participants gained a clearer understanding of the complexities involved in placemaking, including navigating political landscapes, addressing funding challenges, and managing diverse stakeholder expectations. These insights underscored the need for resilience and adaptability in their approaches.

#### **7.6.5 Recognition of the Role of Technology**

Discussions also led to an increased recognition of the role that technology can play in Creative Placemaking. Digital tools and platforms were seen as valuable for facilitating wider participation, enhancing communication, and enabling creative expressions in new and accessible ways.

#### **7.6.6 Shift Towards Inclusivity and Accessibility**

There was a notable shift towards prioritising inclusivity and accessibility within Creative Placemaking projects. Participants reflected on the necessity of making spaces not only physically accessible but also culturally welcoming to all community members, regardless of their background or abilities.

#### **7.6.7 Re-evaluation of Personal Roles**

Lastly, many attendees left the discussions with a re-evaluation of their personal roles within Creative Placemaking. They expressed a desire to act more as facilitators or enablers rather than as directors, emphasising collaboration over leadership.

#### **7.6.8 Participants Comments**

Finally, participants shared how their perspectives on Creative Placemaking evolved as a result of the discussion during the breakout sessions and the Gathering more generally. Their reflections indicate a deepened understanding and a broadened view of what Creative Placemaking entails. Here's a summary of their revised views and insights:

- **Enhanced Community Connection:** Participants noted an enhanced appreciation for how Creative Placemaking fosters community connections. For instance, one reflected that Creative Placemaking is about "Creating connections and sparking conversations," emphasising the role of Creative Placemaking in building more cohesive communities.
- **Broader Impact Recognition:** There was a recurring theme that Creative Placemaking has a broader societal impact than previously recognised. One participant mentioned it supports "our sense of connection and belonging," which shows a recognition of the emotional and social benefits that extend beyond physical space improvements.
- **Empowerment and Inclusivity:** Many responses highlighted a renewed focus on empowerment and inclusivity. Creative Placemaking was described to "empower and unite in a

creative shared experience," suggesting a shift towards more participatory and inclusive approaches.

- **Sustainability and Ethical Practices:** Participants also expressed a greater awareness of the importance of sustainability and ethical practices within Creative Placemaking. One mentioned the need for "sustainable and ethically sound" practices, indicating a shift towards more responsible and long-term planning.
- **Complexity and Challenges Acknowledgment:** There was an acknowledgment of the complexities and challenges involved in Creative Placemaking. Comments reflected an understanding that navigating these complexities requires resilience and adaptability, with one participant noting the importance of being "open and willing to learn."
- **Value of Artistic and Cultural Contributions:** Finally, there was a heightened recognition of the value of artistic and cultural contributions to community development. Participants spoke about Creative Placemaking as a process that brings "energy and visibility to places and people," showcasing the transformative power of the arts.

These reflections illustrate that the participants left the gathering with a more nuanced understanding of Creative Placemaking, seeing it not just as a physical transformation tool but as a multifaceted approach to community development that involves emotional, social, and cultural dimensions. They recognised its potential to foster a more connected, empowered, and ethically engaged community. These shifts in understanding reflect a deepened and more nuanced appreciation of Creative Placemaking, influenced by the collective wisdom and diverse experiences shared during the breakout groups. Participants recognised that Creative Placemaking is an ever-evolving field that requires continuous learning, adaptation, and a strong commitment to community values and participation.

## **8 Summary and Recommendations**

This discussion on Creative Placemaking focused on harnessing artistic and cultural practices to enhance community engagement and development. The discussions highlighted the critical role of creative placemaking in fostering community-led initiatives, integrating diverse perspectives, and overcoming the challenges associated with virtual collaborations. Strategic Steps for ArtWorks Alliance might include:

### **8.1 Enhance Capacity Building**

- Developing training programs and workshops to enhance the skills of members in effective placemaking strategies in alignment with the Artwork Alliance community of practice objectives.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange through webinars and collaborative projects to share best practices and innovative approaches within the multifaceted and multimodal community represented by ArtWorks Alliance and its partners.

### **8.2 Strengthen Community Networks**

- Establish stronger connections between members across different regions to foster collaboration on a wider scale.
- Create a directory of members' skills and projects to facilitate easier matchmaking for collaborative projects.

### **8.3 Foster Inclusive Participation**

- Ensure that projects and discussions continue to prioritise inclusivity, actively seeking out and involving underrepresented voices in the community.
- Implement mechanisms to gather feedback from diverse community segments to ensure that placemaking activities are responsive to a wide range of needs and aspirations.

### **8.4 Support Emergent Participatory Arts Practices**

- Identify and promote emerging trends and innovative practices in participatory arts within the alliance.
- Provide platforms for showcasing and testing new ideas, such as pilot projects or community labs, which can serve as testing grounds for innovative concepts.

### **8.5 Recognition and Validation**

- Establish awards or recognition programs to highlight exemplary practices and achievements in creative placemaking.
- Develop a peer review process within the alliance to validate and critique emerging practices, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and learning.

## **8.6 Leverage Technology**

- Utilise digital tools to enhance participation and manage projects more effectively, especially in overcoming the limitations of virtual collaborations.
- Explore and integrate new technologies that can support creative engagement and data collection about the impact of placemaking activities.

## **8.7 Policy Advocacy**

- Engage in advocacy to influence local and national policies that support creative placemaking initiatives.
- Work towards securing funding and support from governmental and private entities to sustain and expand placemaking activities.

## **8.8 Support for Members**

To support the members of the ArtWorks Alliance in taking these ideas forward, the following initiatives could be implemented:

- Regular training sessions and resources on the latest research and methodologies in creative placemaking.
- A mentorship program linking newer members with experienced practitioners.
- A collaborative platform for members to share challenges, solutions, and successes in a supportive environment.

## **8.9 Recognition of Emergent Participatory Arts Practices**

In recognising different forms of emergent participatory arts practices:

- Implement a featured projects showcase on the alliance's website and at annual meetings.
- Provide a forum for members to present innovative projects to their peers for feedback and further development.
- Establish partnerships with academic institutions and journals to publish case studies and research on successful placemaking projects spearheaded by members.

By addressing these strategic areas, the ArtWorks Alliance can not only enhance the effectiveness of its Creative Placemaking initiatives but also support its members in contributing to vibrant, resilient communities through the arts.

## **9 Resources**

During the ArtWorks Alliance Gathering, participants referenced a variety of resources and citations that enriched their discussions on Creative Placemaking. Here is a list of some of the key resources and citations mentioned:

### **9.1 Embers Handbook by Katharine Wheeler**

Frequently cited as a foundational text providing practical insights into the philosophy and practice of Creative Placemaking.

### **9.2 Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats:**

Mentioned as a useful framework for thinking and discussion, helping participants explore different perspectives during the gathering.

### **9.3 "The Placemaker's Guide to Building Community" by Nabeel Hamdi**

Cited for its insights into community-building and placemaking strategies.

### **9.4 Various Websites and Online Tools**

KatharineWheeler.com for accessing the Embers Handbook and other related materials.  
Menti.com, used during the gathering for interactive presentations and gathering participant feedback.

### **9.5 Academic Institutions and Publications**

Participants noted the value of collaborations with academic institutions that could provide research support and validation for Creative Placemaking practices.

### **9.6 Local Government and Policy Frameworks**

Discussions about how local government policies can support or hinder Creative Placemaking efforts, emphasising the need for advocacy and policy engagement.

### **9.7 Digital Platforms for Collaboration**

The use of Zoom for virtual gatherings and its features like breakout rooms and AI transcription services that facilitated the discussions.

### **9.8 Articles and Online Discussions**

References to online articles and forums discussing current trends and challenges in Creative Placemaking and participatory arts.

These resources and citations reflect the diverse sources of knowledge and tools utilised by participants to deepen their understanding and practice of Creative Placemaking. They underscore the multidisciplinary and collaborative approach embraced by the ArtWorks Alliance in exploring and advancing Creative Placemaking initiatives.