Art Works Cymru in collaboration with ArtWorks London

Participant survey report

Produced with funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation as part of the ArtWorks special initiative

Eleanor Sellers

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Contents

Participant survey report

Artworks participant survey collaboration

As part of the third phase of the ArtWorks special initiative a collaborative project, led by ArtWorks Cymru and ArtWorks London, was established to further develop an understanding of the participant experience in participatory arts projects. The research drew from previous work undertaken by all those involved in the ArtWorks initiative particularly the Participation Consultation report undertaken by ArtWorks Cymru, ArtWorks London's Participant Report I (Unleashed), and research undertaken by ArtWorks Scotland on quality factors for artists in participatory settings[1].

Summary

All organisations involved in the ArtWorks special initiative, as well as other arts organisations, were invited to survey participant groups who had completed participatory arts projects. Participants across Scotland, Wales, and England were invited to complete the survey as a method of understanding the participants' perspective on quality factors for participatory arts.

A draft survey was completed by ArtWorks London in Spring/Summer 2013 with a revised survey being shared more widely in Summer/Autumn 2013. Data from both surveys have been included in the report here in order to develop a more rich understanding of the participants' experience. Where survey questions differ significantly the data will be handled separately [See appendix 1-3 for survey questions and variations].

In total 165 participants completed the survey which represented 14 participatory arts projects throughout England and Wales. Of these respondents 76 participants completed the final survey [Group 1], 62 participants completed the draft survey [Group 2], and a further 27 participants completed an edited version of the final survey [Group 3].

Quality Factors for artists[2]

All ArtWorks groups have undertaken research to develop an understanding of how artists in participatory settings approach their work, as well as researching what artists feel are needed to enable quality participatory arts projects to develop. The quality factors that were identified by ArtWorks Scotland were used as the basis for developing an understanding of quality factors for participants.

The factors for quality identified by artists working in participatory settings, that the researchers felt could be translated to a participant's experience, include:

- Time to reflect
- Feeling valued
- Building relationships with participants
- Suitable support and resources
- Realistic aims within time frame
- Developing skills

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[1] Sellers, E (March 2012) *ArtWorks Cymru Participant Consultation* Report; Dean, F (2012) *Artists in Participatory Settings… 8 out of 10 prefer*; Dean, F (2012) *Research Report: Learning from ArtWorks Scotland peer to peer networks*

[2] Based upon Dean, F (2012) *Artists in Participatory settings… 8 out of 10 prefer*

- Preferred working as collaborators/facilitators with participants.

Key Findings: Quality Factors for Participants

The quality factors for artists were used to identify the following key enquiry areas, with the following findings from participants involved in participatory projects:

- Realistic aims with suitable time frame and time to reflect
  - Although few participants reported directly that time to think and reflect was important, the pacing of the project was identified as significant for participants. Where participants were directly asked about the importance of time to reflect [Group 2] almost half of the sample group (42%) believed it was an essential part of a quality participatory arts project.
  - Of those that responded, 72% of participants felt that the pacing was right for them; however, participants were sensitive to their activities being rushed and not having enough time before a performance/exhibition. Lack of time was frequently reported as an issue that reduced the quality of the participants' experience.

- Feeling valued
  - The majority of participants felt that their ideas were valued during their participatory arts experience (up to 80%).
  - Those who felt that their ideas were valued, and that they felt part of the group, were more likely to report a positive participatory arts experience.

- Building relationships and feeling part of a group
  - Most participants (80% of Group 1 and 3, and 76% of Group 2) reported that they felt part of the group during the project. Participants in Group 2 also reported that they felt that they had built relationships with other participants.
  - When giving additional feedback participants frequently referred to the other participants, as well as the artists, as reasons for their enjoyment of the participatory arts project.

- Suitable support and resources
  - Almost all participants that responded to the question felt that they had received the support that they needed from the artists as well as being provided with good quality spaces.
  - Although participants from Group 2 reported that a professional environment was less important than other quality factors, participants still expect access to good resources and spaces.

- Developing skills
  - Most participants felt that they had been given the opportunity to develop both their artistic skills and personal/non-artistic skills. Both were seen as important aspects of a participatory arts project.
  - Those aged 16- 25 were more interested in developing skills – including artistic skills – that could be used to develop their careers.
  - Participants reported that experimentation and trying new things was an important part of a participatory arts project.

- Preferred artists working as collaborators with participants.

- Participants reported that the artists approach matched their desired approach, despite the fact that there was a great deal of variation in the reported approaches within the same participatory arts project.
- Despite many participants feeling valued, fewer participants felt that they had sufficient opportunities to feedback their views on the project. Of those that responded 66% of Group 1, and 67% of Group 2, felt that they had enough opportunities to feedback their views

- Enjoying the artistic activity and the approach of the artists was seen as particularly important for participants
  - Participants frequently reported that their enjoyment of specific activities enhanced the quality of their experience.
  - Participants frequently reported that the approach of the artists enhanced the quality of their experience. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to work with professional artists in a relaxed environment. Artists helped participants develop their skills in a non-pressurised environment and in a fun and engaging way.

- The most commonly reported aspects that reduced the quality of experience for participants included the organisation and timing of a project, as well as not enjoying some specific activities
  - The majority of participants reported that there was nothing that reduced their quality of experience, and that they would simply like more opportunities to undertake similar activities.
  - Organisational issues were the most commonly cited reason for a reduction in the quality of the participants' experience; these included a lack of time keeping, finding the age range too large, or a lack of evenly distributed activities.
  - Participants also commonly reported that they did not enjoy specific activities. This reason was only reported by those under the age of 20, particularly those under 16, which suggests that younger people felt less confident in their ability to change the direction of the project.

Other Findings
- There were more respondents from the 12 to 15 age group and few over 25. Organisations selected projects that fell within the time frame of the research and were felt to be most suitable for the survey..
- Older participants felt more confident in their ability to change direction of the project.
- Participants aged between 16 and 25 were more likely to report an interest in developing skills for potential future career aims. This age group also reported a greater interest in the professionalism of artists because they could help participants develop relevant skills.

Key learning

- The final survey does not ask participants what they felt was necessary for a good participatory arts project, but only what happened.
  - Although participants of the draft survey were asked what was necessary, as well as what happened in the project, the former question was removed to reduce confusion and prevent the survey becoming too unwieldy. To develop a deeper understanding of the participant experience, however, it may be useful to reconsider what participants feel is necessary for a good quality project.

Key learning: research process

- Small sample size (165 respondents)
    - Due to the small number of respondents more research would be required to develop a deeper and more significant understanding of the participant experience.

- Participant survey was not suitable for all groups
    - Some organisations that wanted to take part in the research reported that the survey was not suitable for all participant groups. The language was seen to be challenging for young people, those with limited English language skills, and other participant groups.
    - Survey required facilitation
      Due to the challenging nature of some of the language some organisations felt that the completion of the survey required facilitation which was more time consuming and expensive to implement. There was a higher proportion of non-response rates where participants had not been facilitated or supported when completing the survey.

- The scaling mechanism on the draft survey appears to have proved difficult for participants (question 4 and 5 in the draft survey. See appendix 2).
    - The draft survey had a larger non-response rate for question 4 (22%-30% non-response rate) which suggests that participants may not have understood the question. Where respondents did answer the questions the data spread is less clear which may suggest that the scaling was not suitable. The problems with the completion rate in the draft survey led to changes being made to the final survey, but it is important to be aware of the difficulties as the draft survey data set is included in the results here.

- Other minor adjustments to the survey could include:
    - Collating data on gender
      Understanding whether there are any patterns in gender preferences within participatory arts would be a useful area for further research
    - Where participants report an illness, disability or infirmity, it may be useful to assess whether participants felt that this had an impact on their opportunity to engage with a participatory arts project.

Data analysis

The survey asked all participants to rate the overall quality of their experience on the participatory arts project as well as asking them to reflect on whether certain quality factors had taken place as part of their experience on the project. Participants were also asked their age and ethnicity, although they were not asked to identify their gender.

Age of participants

The data suggests that participants aged between 12 and 15 were more likely to take part in participatory arts projects than other groups. Participants aged 26 and over, particularly those over 65, were under represented in the survey responses.

What is your age?	Number	Percentage
Aged 5-11	22	17%
Aged 12-15	45	35%
Aged 16-19	26	20%
Aged 20-25	20	16%
Aged 26-64	11	9%
Aged 65+	4	3%
Base:	**128**	**100%**

This may have been due to a lack of programming, or due to participants having to balance other responsibilities. Due to the release date of the survey – summer/autumn 2013 – the data may also show a seasonal bias; many projects aimed at young people break during the summer holidays, or are programmed specifically for the summer holidays; the survey time would capture both of these types of projects.

Ethnicity of participants

Just over half of all respondents identified as White British (52%). Individuals from other ethnic groups appeared significantly less likely to undertake participatory arts activities. More research would be required to establish whether this pattern continues across a larger sample.

What is your ethnicity?	Number	Percentage
White British	69	52%
White other	2	1%
Mixed	11	8%
Asian or Asian British	19	14%
Black or Black British	15	11%
Other	5	4%
Prefer not to say	13	10%
Base:	**134**	**100%**

Disability, illness, or infirmity

Participants were asked whether they had a long standing disability, illness, or infirmity; of those that responded almost 75% reported that they did not.

Do you have long standing disability, illness or infirmity?	Number	Percentage
No	98	75%
Yes	11	8%
I don't know	6	4%
Prefer not to say	18	13%
Base:	**133**	**100%**

Participants did not disclose whether any disability, illness, or infirmity had directly impacted on their experience of the project, however, the data suggests that a disability, infirmity, or long term illness had no effect on how participants reported the quality of their experience, or their enjoyment of the participatory arts projects:

| Rate overall quality of experience:	Do you have a long standing disability, illness, or infirmity?				
	No	**Yes**	**I don't know**	**Prefer not to say**	**Not asked**
No response	3%	0%	17%	21%	0%
Excellent	43%	64%	33%	63%	13%
Very Good	34%	27%	17%	16%	0%
Good	16%	9%	17%	0%	0%
Average	4%	0%	17%	0%	0%
Grand Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Quality Factors

1. Realistic aims within a suitable time frame and time to reflect

Not all groups of participants in the survey were asked directly whether 'time to reflect' had been built in to the project. Participants in Group 1, who completed the final survey, was asked if the pacing was right (question 4f) whilst those in Group 2, who completed the draft survey, was asked whether they had time to reflect (questions 4f). Group 3, who completed an edited version of the survey, was not asked this survey question. Participants in Group 2 were also asked if having time to reflect on the project was essential to a quality experience.

72% of participants that responded from Group 1 felt that the pacing was either 'definitely' or 'probably' right. Of those in Group 2 that responded 68% responded that they had time to reflect, whilst a similar number (67%) felt that it was essential or important (choosing 1 or 2 on the response scale) for participants to have time to reflect during a participatory arts project.

The responses from the two sets of questions presented to Group 2 suggest that participants' expectations, in terms of having time to reflect, were largely met.

Group 1: Was the pacing right for you?

- Yes definitely
- yes probably
- Mixed
- Probably not
- Definitely not
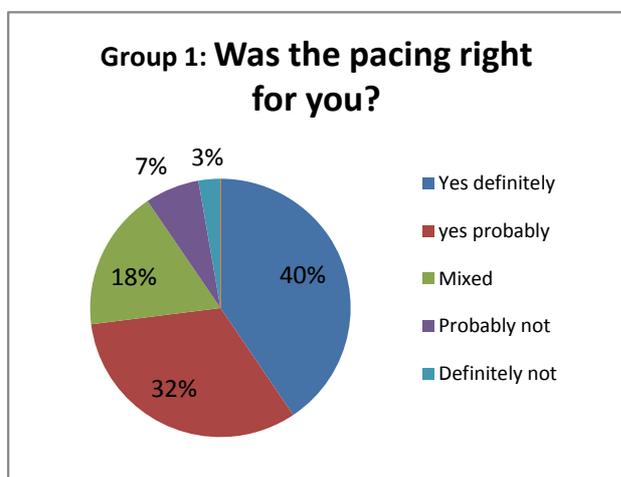
Group 1 Was the pacing right for you?		
	Number	**Percentage**
Yes definitely	30	40%
Yes probably	24	32%
Mixed	13	18%
Probably not	5	7%
Definitely not	2	3%
Not something I expected	0	
Base	**74**	**100%**

Group 2: Which of these happened: I had time to reflect
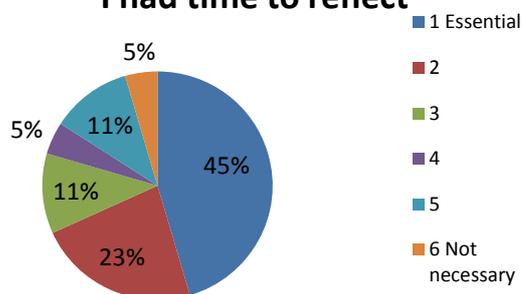
Group 2: I had time to reflect	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	20	45%
2	10	23%
3	5	11%
4	2	5%
5	5	11%
6 Not necessary	2	5%
Base	**44**	**100%**

Group 2: Which of these is necessary: having time to reflect necessary for a quality is experience
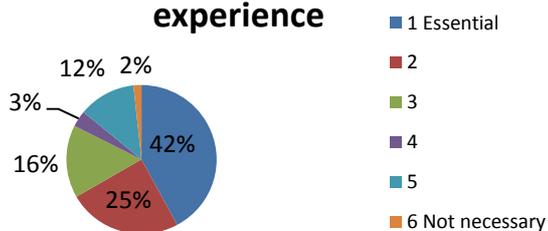
Group 2: Is having time to reflect necessary for a quality experience?	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	24	42%
2	14	25%
3	9	16%
4	2	3%
5	7	12%
6 Not necessary	1	2%
Base:	**57**	**100%**

The responses from Group 1 suggest that some participants struggled with the pacing of a project at some stage. Pacing the project well is clearly an important factor for quality in a participatory arts project. Participants frequently mentioned pacing as an aspect of the project that reduced the quality of their experience. Participants were sensitive to having to rush, especially if the participatory arts project involved a performance or an exhibition:

> "We could do with more time"
> "The music and drama should've been more evenly spaced"
> "The time was really short"
> "It's all one big rush"
> "We needed more weeks to rehearse and rehearsals were quite boring"
> "We didn't have much time to practice and we should have had more time"
> "A longer programme that could allow a few more workshop"

2. Feeling valued

All survey groups were asked different questions that assessed their feeling of value in different ways. Group 1 were asked if they felt their ideas were valued, Group 2 were asked whether they felt ownership of the ideas, and Group 3 were asked whether the ideas for the project came from the whole group. All variations of the questions assessed whether participants felt that they had been able to contribute to the project in a trusting and respecting environment.

## Group 1: Did you feel that your ideas were valued?

- Yes definitely
- Yes probably
- Mixed
- Probably not
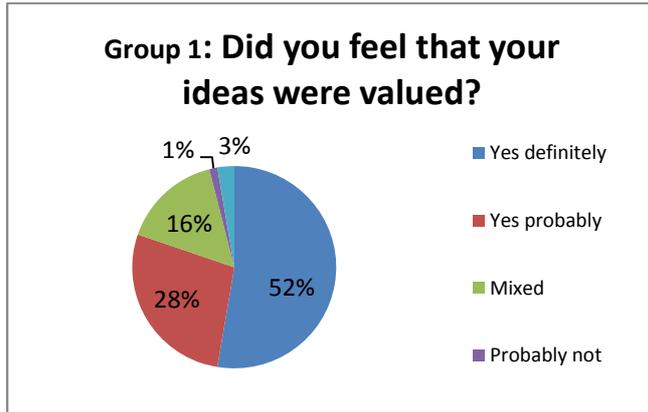
Group 1: Did you feel your ideas were valued?	Number	Percentage
Yes definitely	40	52%
Yes probably	21	28%
Mixed	12	16%
Probably not	1	1%
Not something I expected	2	3%
Base	**76**	**100%**

Of those surveyed 80% of respondents from Group 1 felt that their ideas were either 'definitely' or 'probably', valued whilst 55% of Group 3 responded that ideas for the project definitely or probably came from the whole group.

43% of those in Group 2 felt ownership over ideas, with 49% believing it to be essential or important (choosing 1 or 2 on the response scale). The variation in response rate, in comparison to Groups 1 and 3 may be due to differences in individual projects, however, it may also be due to participant difficulties with the language (see Key learning above). Some organisations reported that not all participants understood what was meant by "ownership of ideas".

Group 2: Which of these applied: Felt ownership of the ideas
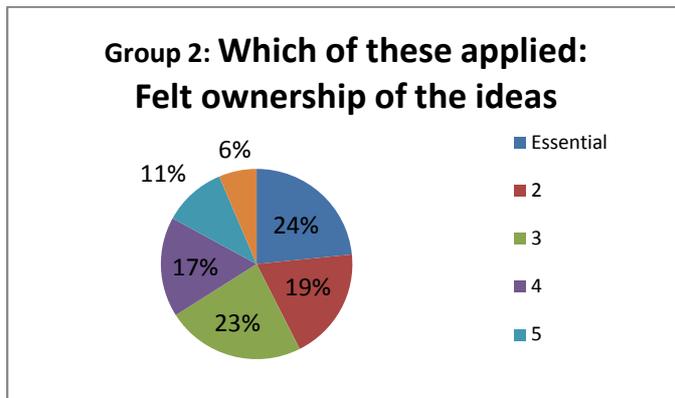
- Essential
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Group 2: Did you feel ownership of the ideas?	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	11	24%
2	9	19%
3	11	23%
4	8	17%
5	5	11%
6 Not necessary	3	6%
Base	**47**	**100%**

Group 2: Is it necessary to feel ownership over the project?

- 1 Essential
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6 Not necessary
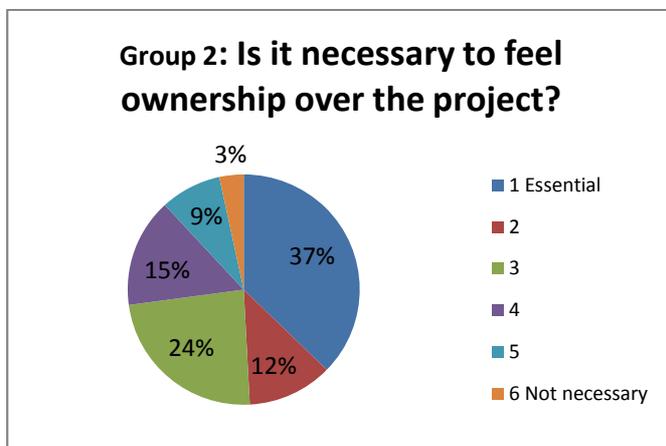
Group 2: Which of these are necessary for you to have a quality experience? Feeling ownership over the project?	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	22	37%
2	7	12%
3	14	24%
4	9	15%
5	5	9%
6 Not necessary	2	3%
Base	**59**	**100%**

Group 3: The ideas came from the whole group
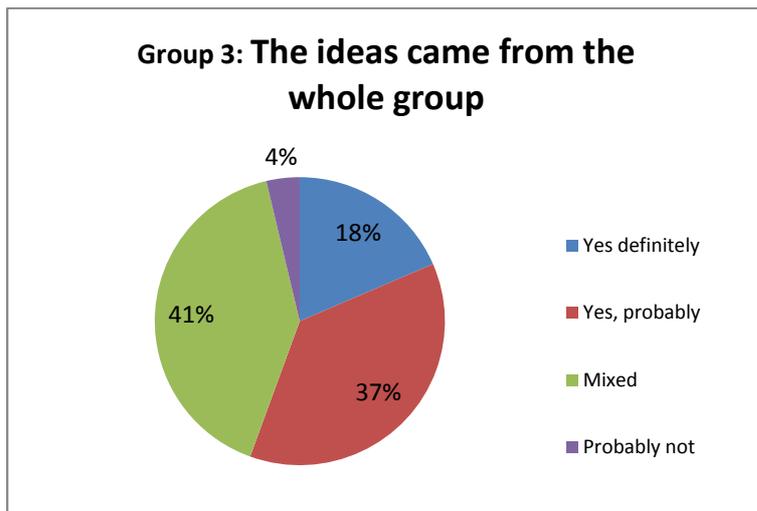
Group 3: The ideas came from the whole group		
	Number	**Percentage**
Yes definitely	5	18%
Yes, probably	10	37%
Mixed	11	41%
Probably not	1	4%
Base	**27**	**100%**

Participants who reported that they felt that their ideas were valued, and felt they were part of the group, were more likely to report a positive experience than those who did not. Feeling valued had a large impact on participants and how they experienced a participatory arts project.

3. Building relationships

Of those that responded, most participants reported that they felt part of the group during the project; 82% of those in Group 1 and 3 reported that they either 'definitely' or 'probably' felt part of the group whilst 76% of those in Group 2 responded with a 1 or 2 on the response scale. 73% of participants in Group 2 also reported that they felt that they had built relationships with other participants (responding with either 1 or 2 on the response scale).

Group 1 and 3: Did you feel as though you were part of a group?
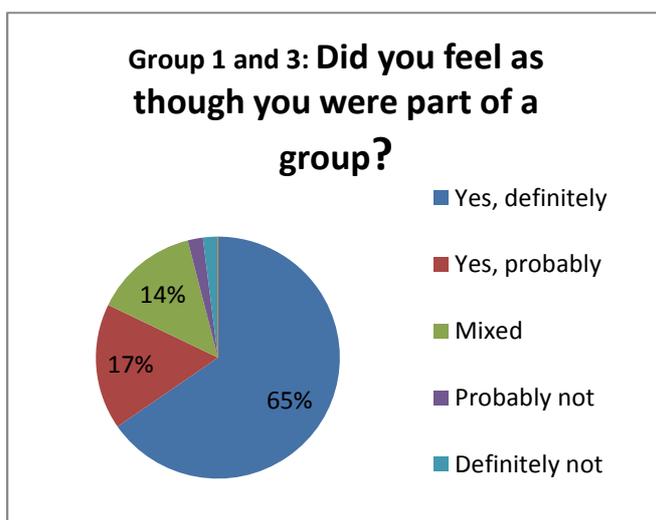
Group 1 and 3 Did you feel as though you were part of a group?		
	Number	**Percentage**
Yes, definitely	66	65%
Yes, probably	17	17%
Mixed	14	14%
Probably not	2	2%
Definitely not	2	2%
Not something I expected	0	0%
Base	**101**	**100%**

Group 2: Which of these applied for this project: I had a sense of belonging in the group

7% 2%
15%
22%
54%

- ■ 1 Essential
- ■ 2
- ■ 3
- ■ 4
- ■ 5
- ■ 6 Not necessary
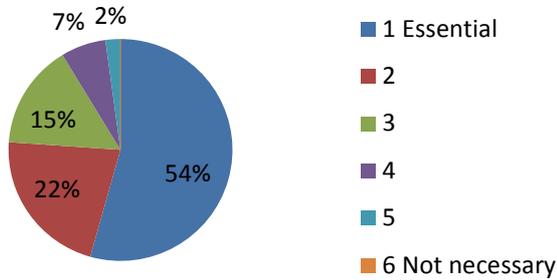
Group 2 Which of these applied: I had a sense of belonging in the group	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	25	54%
2	10	22%
3	7	15%
4	3	7%
5	1	2%
6 Not necessary	0	0%
Base	**46**	**100%**

Group 2: Which of these happened: I developed a relationship with other participants

4% 6% 2%
15%
13%
60%

- ■ Essential
- ■ 2
- ■ 3
- ■ 4
- ■ 5
- ■ Not necessary
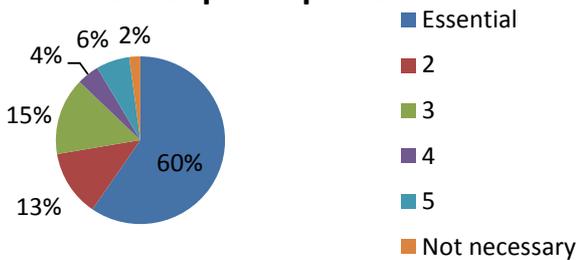
Group 2 I developed a relationship with other participants	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	28	60%
2	6	13%
3	7	15%
4	2	4%
5	3	6%
6 Not necessary	1	2%
Base	**47**	**100%**

The development of relationships with participants and artists was clearly important for those involved. 86% of those that responded from Group 2 felt that having a sense of belonging with other participants was essential or important (1 or 2 on the response scale) whilst 87% of respondents from Group 2 felt that that developing relationships with other participants was essential or important (1 or 2 on the response scale).

Group 2: Which of these is necessary: Having a sense of belonging in the group
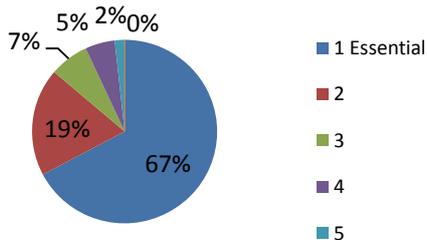
7% 5% 2% 0%
19%
67%

- ■ 1 Essential
- ■ 2
- ■ 3
- ■ 4
- ■ 5

Group 2 Which of these is necessary: Having a sense of belonging in the group	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	39	67%
2	11	19%
3	4	7%
4	3	5%
5	1	2%
6 Not something I expected	0	0%
Base	**58**	**100%**
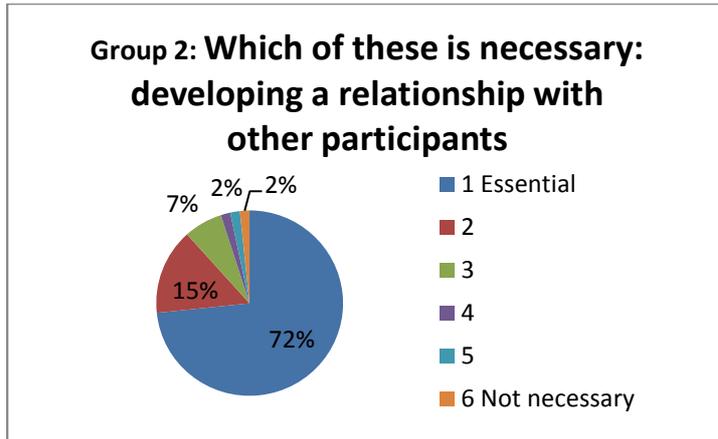
Group 2: Which of these is necessary: developing a relationship with other participants

Group 2 Which of these is necessary: developing a relationship with other participants		
	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	44	72%
2	9	15%
3	4	7%
4	1	2%
5	1	2%
6 Not necessary	1	2%
Base	**60**	**100%**

When giving additional feedback participants referred to the other participants, as well as the artists, as reasons for their enjoyment of the participatory arts project:

> "Diverse mix of people was inspirational"
> "Teamwork [enhanced the quality of my experience]"
> "Great people, great beats"
> "The people involved (participants and leaders)… [enhanced the quality of my experience]"
> "Meeting new people [enhanced the quality of my experience]"
> "The people leading it were nice…"
> "Wonderfully talented, funny and very charming people"
> "I feel privileged to have worked among such great people"
> "How friendly everyone was. We learned from them and them from us"
> "Sharing our work in a group. The atmosphere was really nice so sharing our work really enhanced my experience"

4. Suitable support and resources

Of those who responded 96% of Group 1 felt that they were either 'definitely' or 'probably' given the support that they needed from the artist. The data suggests that artists were either highly experienced, or specifically able, to understand and respond to participant needs.

Group 1: Did the artist leader give you the support you need?
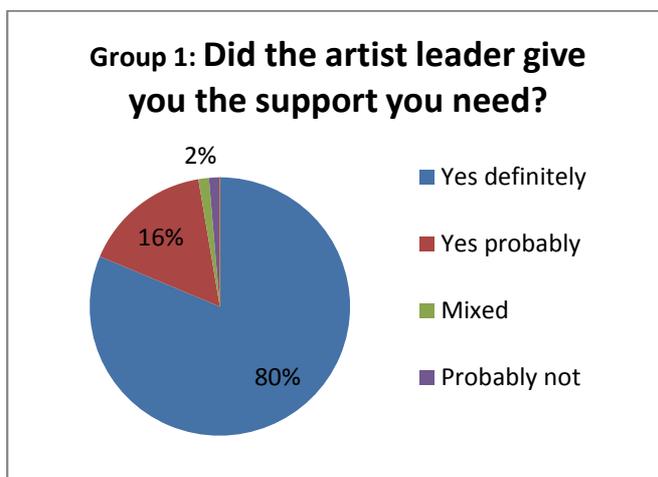
Group 1 Did the artist leader give you the support you needed?		
	Number	Percentage
Yes definitely	61	80%
Yes probably	12	16%
Mixed	1	2%
Probably not	1	2%
Definitely not	0	0%
Not something I expected	0	0%
Base	**75**	**100%**

67% of those in Group 3 responded that they either 'definitely' or 'probably' enjoyed working with the artists with a further 15% responding that they felt "mixed". Given the small sample size here,

further research would need to be done to assess whether participant enjoyment in this context is affected by the support that they receive from the artists.

Group 3: Did you enjoy working with the artist?

Group 3 Did you enjoy working with the artist?	Number	Percentage
Yes definitely	8	30%
Yes probably	10	37%
Mixed	4	15%
Probably not	3	11%
Definitely not	2	7%
Base	**27**	**100%**
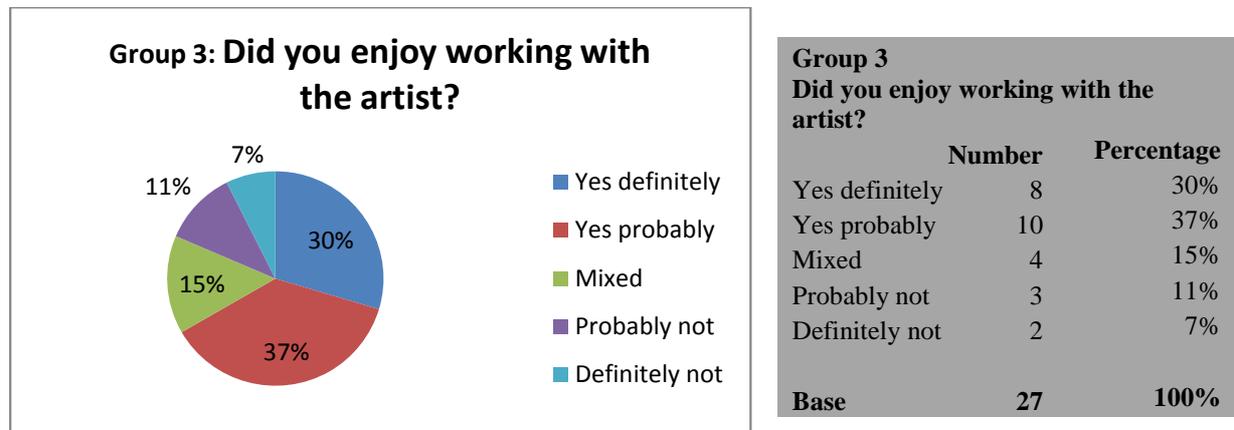
Feedback from participants suggests that support from artists was highly valued:

> "The support given [enhanced the quality of my experience]"
> "…The challenges set by my instructors and the performance opportunities [enhanced the quality of my experience]"
> "The one to one sessions were helpful as I've never received feedback on my work and it made me feel like more of a professional artist"

Group 2 were not surveyed on the support they received from artists.

Groups 1 and 2 were also asked about the spaces used during their participatory arts activity. Of those that responded from Group 1, 86% felt that the spaces were 'definitely' or 'probably' of high quality whilst 75% of those that responded from Group 2 responded with a 1 or 2 on the response scaling.
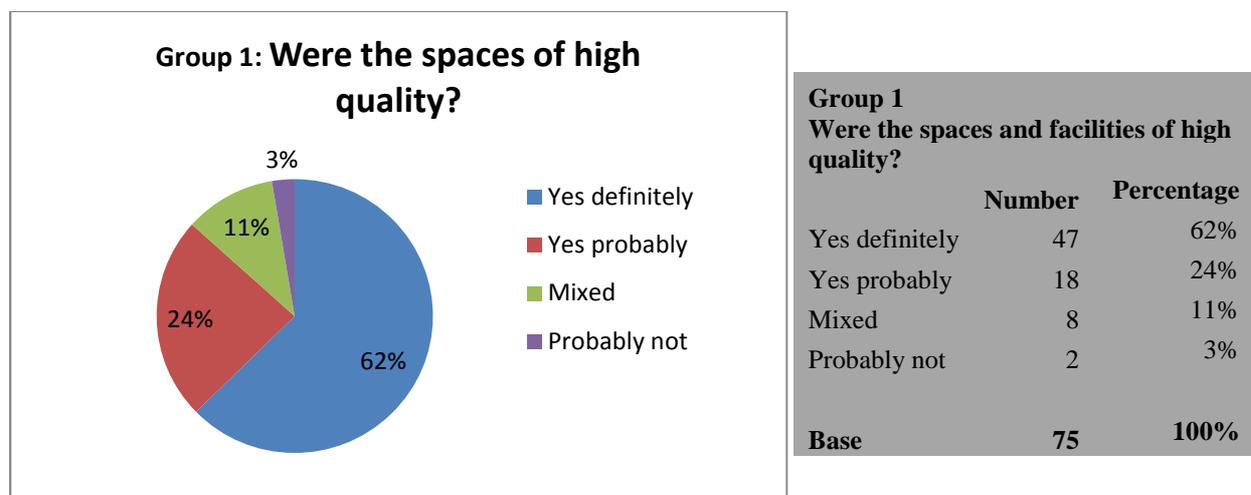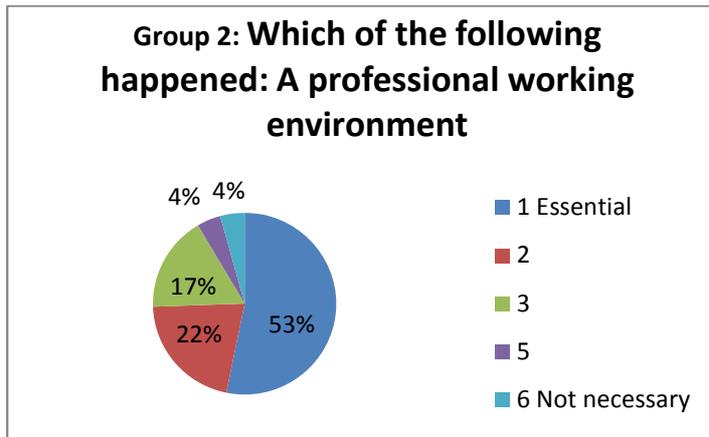
Group 1: Were the spaces of high quality?

Group 1 Were the spaces and facilities of high quality?	Number	Percentage
Yes definitely	47	62%
Yes probably	18	24%
Mixed	8	11%
Probably not	2	3%
Base	**75**	**100%**

Group 2: Which of the following happened: A professional working environment

Group 2 Which of the following happened: a professional working environment	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	25	53%
2	10	22%
3	8	17%
5	2	4%
6 Not necessary	2	4%
Base	**47**	**100%**

Although most participants felt that they had used high quality spaces, or a professional working environment, the data from Group 2 suggests that this was slightly less important to participants than the other identified quality factors.
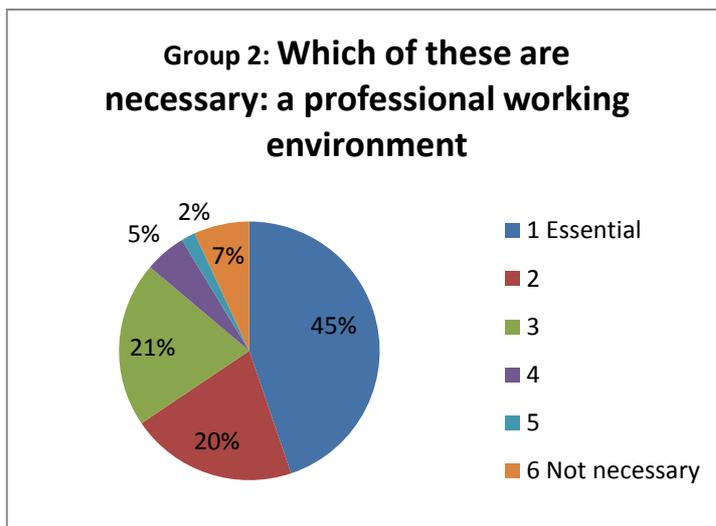
Group 2: Which of these are necessary: a professional working environment

Group 2 Which of these are necessary: a professional working environment	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	26	46%
2	12	20%
3	12	20%
4	3	5%
5	1	2%
6 Not necessary	4	7%
Base	**58**	**100%**

Whilst the responses suggest that a professional working environment may not be the top priority for participants it is clear that they do still expect good quality spaces, access to good quality resources, as well as equal access to materials and support from artists:

> "The space allocated was good although dark and often cold, so it was a drawback… albeit a minor one"
> "Resources and time were maybe spread thinly…"
> "Loved the food"
> "I didn't have any professional aspect"
> "Frequent and high quality workshops [enhanced the quality of my experience]"

5. Developing skills
Developing artistic skills

Most participants who responded to this question felt that they had been encouraged to achieve a high standard, or that their artistic skills had been developed. Of those that responded 87% of

participants in Group 1 felt that they had either 'definitely' or 'probably' been encouraged to achieve a high standard whilst 75% of those that had responded from Group 2 felt that they had developed their artistic skills (responding with a 1 or 2 on the response scale). Respondents from Group 2 also felt that developing artistic skills was important when taking part in a quality participatory arts project:

Group 2
Which of these is necessary: developing artistic skills

	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	35	59%
2	6	10%
3	11	19%
4	4	7%
5	2	3%
6 Not necessary	1	2%
Base	**59**	**100%**

Fewer participants in Group 3 (44%) responded that they had 'definitely' or 'probably' developed their artistic skills but this may be due confusion over language (the participatory arts activity was based around music).

Participants who felt they had developed their artistic skills, or felt encouraged to achieve a high standard, were also more likely to rate the participatory arts project as 'excellent' than those who had not.
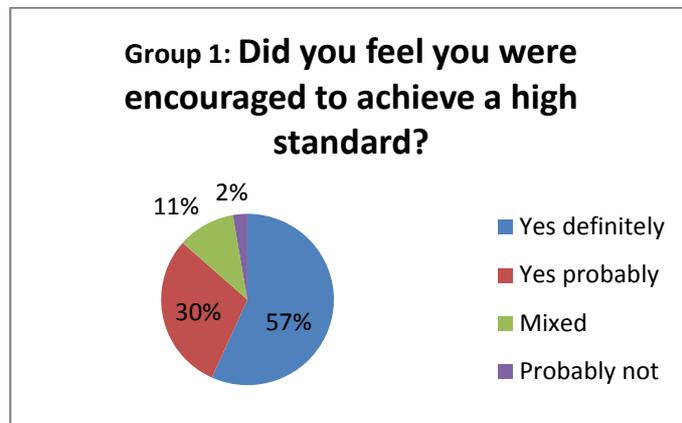
Group 1
Did you feel that you were encouraged to achieve a high standard?

	Number	Percentage
Yes definitely	42	57%
Yes probably	22	30%
Mixed	8	11%
Probably not	2	2%
Base	**74**	**100%**
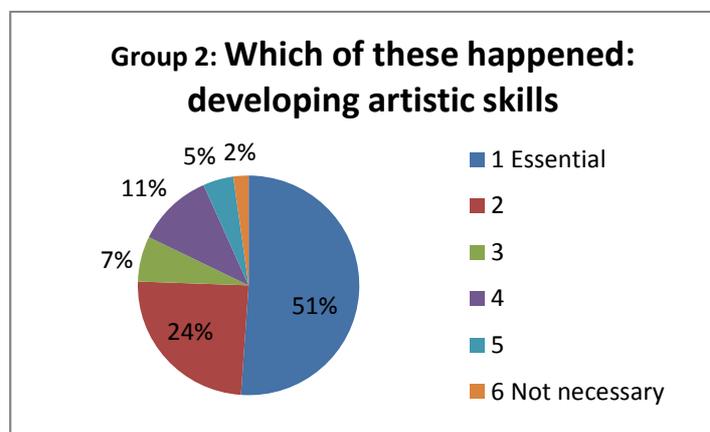
Group 2
Which of these happened: developing artistic skills

	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	23	51%
2	11	24%
3	3	7%
4	5	11%
5	2	5%
6 Not necessary	1	2%
Base	**45**	**100%**

Group 3: Did you develop your artistic skills
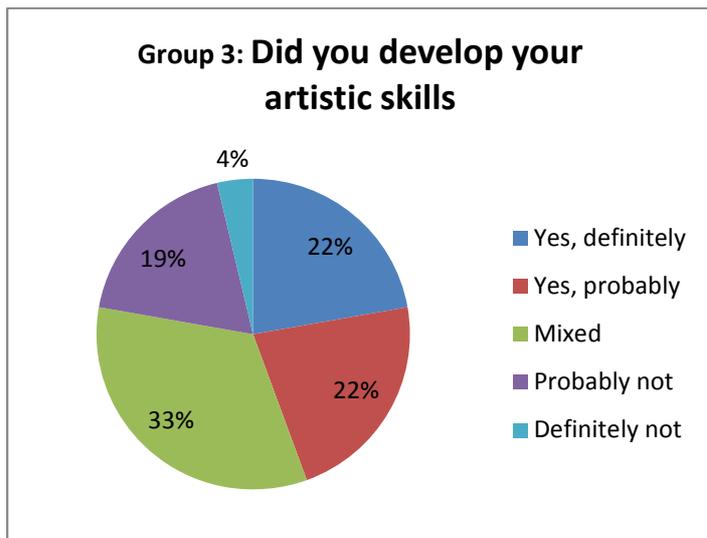
Group 3 Did you develop your artistic skills?	Number	Percentage
Yes, definitely	6	22%
Yes, probably	6	22%
Mixed	9	33%
Probably not	5	19%
Definitely not	1	4%
Base	**27**	**100%**

Developing non artistic skills

Participants completing this survey also felt that they were able to develop their non-artistic skills during the participatory arts project. Of those that responded 78% of participants from Groups 1 and 3 reported that they were either 'definitely' or 'probably' given enough scope to develop their personal skills/ non- artistic skills whilst 63% of those that responded from Group 2 also felt that they were able to develop their non-artistic skills (choosing 1 and 2 on the response scale).

Group 1 and 3: Were you given enough scope to develop personal/non artistic skills
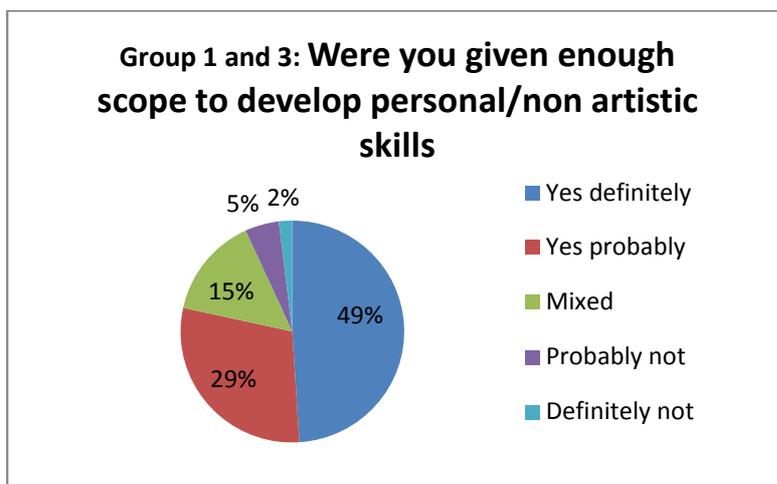
Group 1 and 3 Were you given enough scope to improve your personal skills?	Number	Percentage
Yes definitely	50	49%
Yes probably	30	29%
Mixed	15	15%
Probably not	5	5%
Definitely not	2	2%
Base	**102**	**100%**

Group 2: Did this happen: Developing non artistic skills
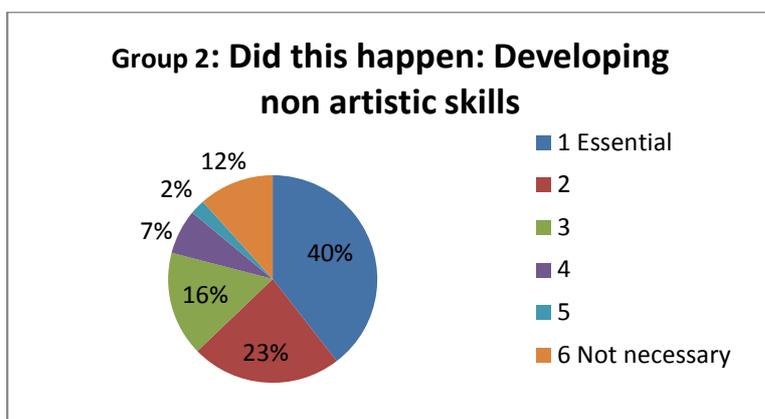
Did this happen: developing non-artistic skills	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	17	40%
2	10	23%
3	7	165
4	3	7%
5	1	2%
6 Not necessary	5	12%
Base	**43**	**100%**

The data also suggests that participants felt that developing non-artistic skills was an important part of a participatory arts project. Of those that responded to the question "Is the following necessary for a quality arts project: developing non artistic skills (asked to Group 2 participants only) over half of respondents (53%) reported that developing new skills was essential or important (answering 1 or 2 on the response scale)

Group 2
Is this necessary: developing non artistic skills

	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	20	37%
2	9	16%
3	10	18%
4	6	11%
5	4	7%
6 Not necessary	6	11%
Base	55	100%

Several participants felt that developing non-artistic skills had been particularly important for their enjoyment of the project as they had developed their confidence. This was particularly evident in performance based projects:

"The drama and acting enhanced it because of our energy and boosted our confidence"
"The drama was really fun and boosted up my confidence in performing"

Participants aged 16-25 also reported more interest in developing skills – both artistic and non-artistic skills – as a way of developing their employability skills. Whilst participants enjoyed working with artists, this age group was explicit about the desire to learn from professionals and discover further opportunities:

"Learning how to interview, review…"
"It has led to new opportunities and experiences with other people involving film making"
"I like because good for future plan [sic]"
"Meeting pro people so you can learn from them"
"Having access to industry professionals"

Experimentation and risk taking

Group 1: Were you encouraged to try new things and experiment?

8% 2%

■ Yes, definitely
■ Yes, probably
■ Mixed
■ Probably not

17%

73%
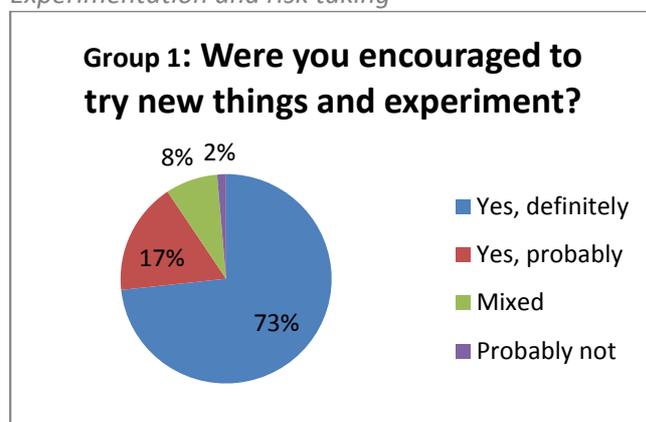
Group 1
Were you encouraged to try new things and experiment?

	Number	Percentage
Yes, definitely	55	73%
Yes, probably	13	17%
Mixed	6	8%
Probably not	1	2%
Definitely not	0	0%
Base	**75**	**100%**

Overall participants in the survey appear to have felt encouraged and able to try new things. Of those that responded 90% of Group 1 felt that they were either 'definitely' or 'probably' encouraged to try new things. Of those that responded from Group 2 75% felt that the atmosphere was open to experimentation and risk taking (1 and 2 on the response scale).
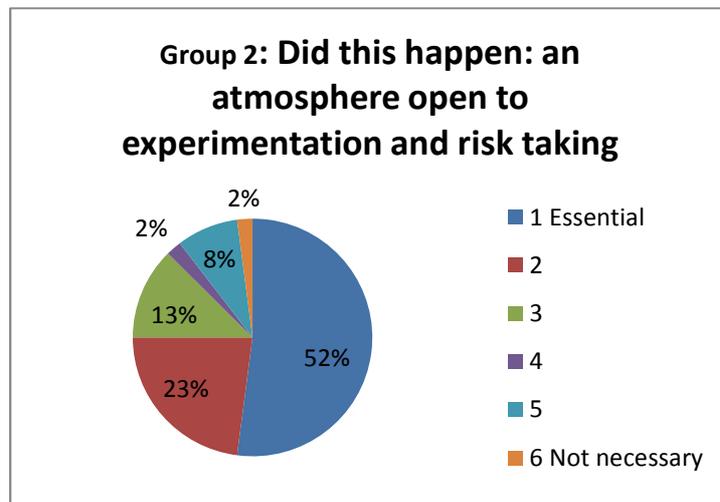
Group 2: Did this happen: an atmosphere open to experimentation and risk taking

Group 2 Did this happen - an atmosphere open to experimentation and risk taking	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	25	52%
2	11	23%
3	6	13%
4	1	2%
5	4	8%
6 Not necessary	1	2%
Base	48	100%

Over half of respondents in Group 3 (55%) also appeared comfortable trying new things, although more individuals than in other groups (23%) reported that they were 'probably' or 'definitely' not comfortable; this may be due to differences in the specific project; for example the age of the participants, the specific activities that were undertaken in the project, or the organisation of the project, may have impacted on the responses. Additional research would be valuable to develop more understanding of why some projects are able to establish an atmosphere that enables participants to try new things and experiment.

Group 3: I felt comfortable trying new things
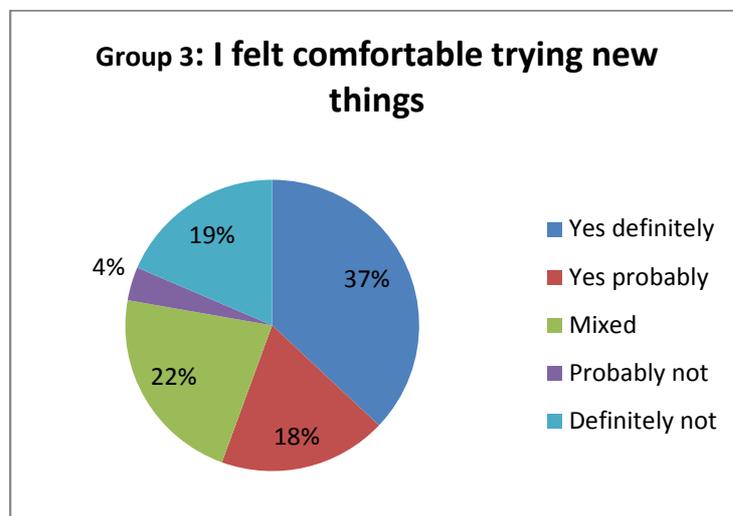
Group 3 I felt comfortable trying new things	Number	Percentage
Yes definitely	10	37%
Yes probably	5	18%
Mixed	6	22%
Probably not	1	4%
Definitely not	5	19%
Base	27	100%

Although not all participants were comfortable trying new things, or undertaking risk, some participants appear to have felt it was an important aspect of a participatory arts project. Participants in Group 2 were asked whether an atmosphere open to experimentation and risk taking was necessary for a quality arts project; of those that responded 76% felt that it was important that the atmosphere was open (responding with 1 or 2 on the response scale).
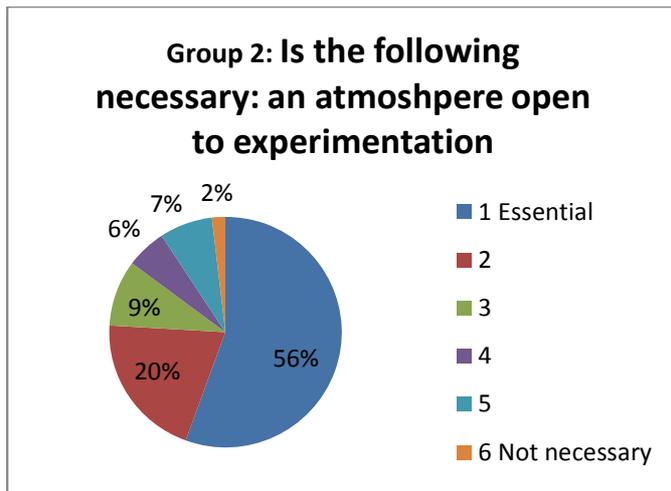
Group 2
Is the following necessary: an atmosphere open to experimentation and risk taking

	Number	Percentage
1 Essential	30	56%
2	11	20%
3	5	9%
4	3	6%
5	4	7%
6 Not necessary	1	2%
Base	**54**	**100%**

Other participants throughout the survey also specifically mentioned the open atmosphere and experimentation as aspects of the project that enhanced their experience:

> "When we could workshop and experiment with new moves etc."
> "Opportunities to try new techniques [enhanced the quality of my experience]"
> "Everything that was put in place created a very encouraging environment"

6. Artists as collaborators

The majority of participants appear to have experienced artists working with them in a collaborative way; 61% of participants felt that ideas for projects came equally from artists and participants/ were mixed, and a further 27% felt that ideas came from the artist with input from the participants. Given that artists working in participatory settings often appear to prefer working collaboratively with participants this is perhaps not surprising[3].
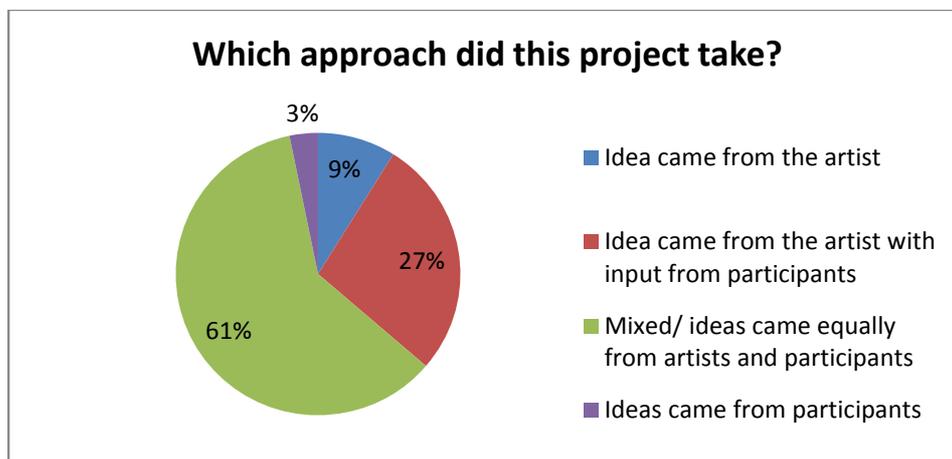
Which approach did this project take	Number:	Percentage
Idea came from the artist	11	9%
Idea came from the artist with input from participants	34	27%
Mixed/ ideas came equally from artists and participants	75	61%
Ideas came from participants	4	3%
Base	**124**	**100.0%**

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[3] Dean, F. (2012) *research Report: Learning From ArtWorks Scotland peer to peer networks.* P22

What is surprising – despite the variation in the approaches participants reported, even within the same project – is that participants frequently reported that the approach that artists took in the project matched the approach that they would have preferred (see appendix 5 for data):

- 74% of participants that reported that "ideas came from the artist with input from the participants" during their project also reported that their preferred approach was for "ideas to come from the artist with input from participants".
- 82% of those that responded that "ideas came equally from artists and participants" also reported that their preferred approach was for "ideas to come equally from the artists and participants".
- 75% of participants who responded that "ideas came from the participants" reported that this was also their preferred approach.
- Of those who responded that "ideas came from the artists" none wanted "ideas to come from participants" although 72% of those that reported that "ideas came from the artist" would have preferred either a "mixed" approach or for "ideas to come equally from the artist and participants".
- Participants who reported that they preferred a "mixed approach" reported that they either preferred a mixed approach (41%) or for ideas to come equally from the artist and participants (37%): the response rates suggest that participants were generally satisfied with the approach of the artist. The variation in response rate may be due to confusion with the language as distinction between the two choices is not clear.

This fact that participants report that the approach of the artists matched their desired approach may be due to several things:

- The skills of the participatory artist
    - Artists may be able to adapt their approaches within a participatory arts project to suit the individual style of participants.

- Experience of participants
    - Participants may not have experienced different artistic approaches. Although almost 68% of participants had undertaken a participatory arts project in the past it is not clear how many arts projects they had participated in previously. A significant number of respondents had either not taken part, or were unsure about whether they had taken part, in an arts project. Some participants may have had limited or no previous experience with which to compare artist approaches.

Have you previously taken part in an arts project?		
	Number	Percentage
No response	5	3%
No	31	19%
Not sure	17	10%
Yes	112	68%
Base	165	100.0%

- Effective programming by organisations
    - Organisations may be programming projects with a variety of artists and activities, as well as building in a sufficient amount of flexibility, to enable participants to experience different approaches.

- Limitations of the survey
  - The language used in this part of the survey may have caused confusion, particularly for participants where English was not their first language. Organisations reported that facilitation of this section was important.

What aspects of this project enhanced the quality of your experience?

For the majority of participants the arts activity itself was the main reason that was reported as enhancing the quality of their experience:

"The acting and music was fun"
"Singing, playing on trumpet, drum and many more"
"Being able to dance and do what I love doing"
"I liked playing the instruments"
"The experience of combining music and drama"

It is perhaps not surprising that many participants report that the activity itself was a key factor in their enjoyment when participants often take part in arts projects in their free time. Not only did participants enjoy the activity but some also reported that they enjoyed learning new skills, or developing, whilst undertaking the activity:

"Learning new beats and notes"
"The drama and acting enhanced it because of our energy and boosted our confidence"

What aspects of this project enhanced the quality of your experience?

Category	Value
Other	6
Working with people	14
Develop skills	5
Input/share ideas	8
Experimentation	2
Fun/enjoyable	19
Artist(s) approach	29
Exhibition/performance	3
Personal development	7
The activity	57
Trip/travel	5
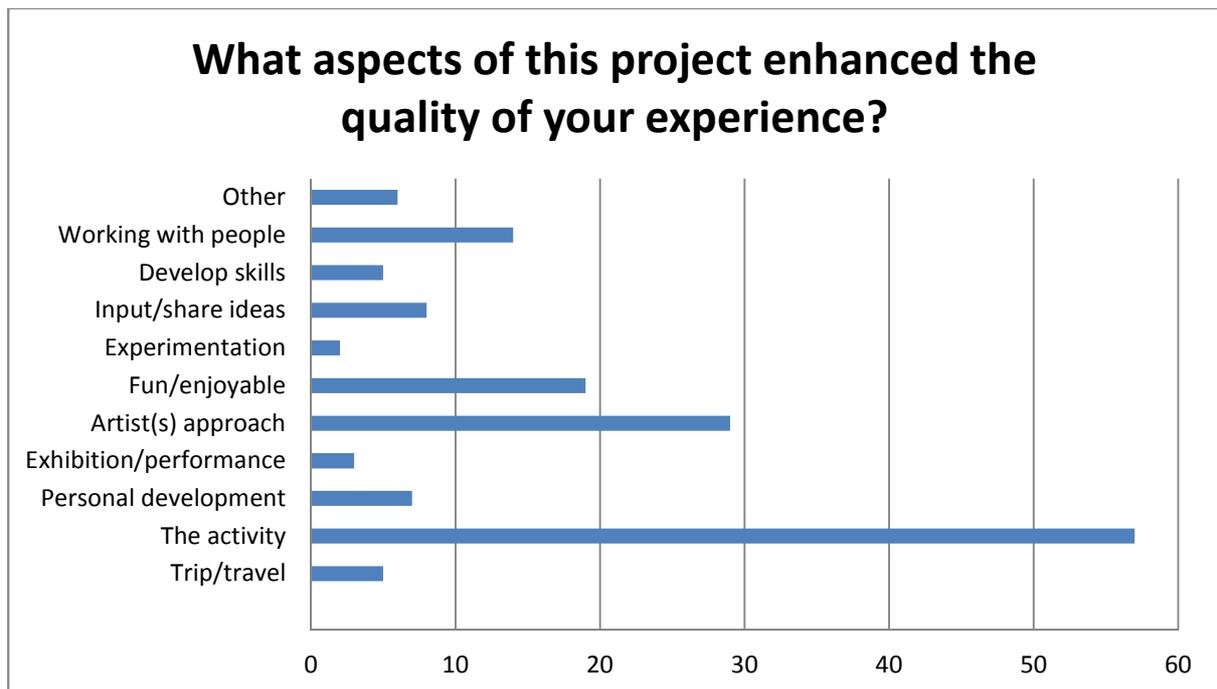
Participants also reported that the artists, and their approaches, were important in enhancing their experience of a participatory arts project:

"Great instructors"
"The help from [tutors] who were both extremely supportive and kind - giving their input but not at all being overpowering"
"High standard of teaching gave individuals enough pressure to develop and evolve but not so much it was a stressful experience"

"Excellent project leaders. Really passionate, funny, engaging, dedicated and inspiring"
"Tutor was a highlight providing necessary input and directing the team in a subtle and non-imposing manner"
"Professionalism of the leaders and their openness to participants' input"

Participants recognised that the artists ensured that the activities were presented in a fun and exciting way. Artists enabled ideas to be shared in an open and safe way, whilst also providing support and direction to help participants develop.

What aspects if this project reduced the quality of your experience?

Almost a quarter of participants who responded to this question (24 from a base of 93) replied that there was "nothing" that reduced the quality of their experience but that they would like more opportunities to undertake similar projects, or for the project to continue:

"Nothing really. I enjoyed every minute of the experience"
"Can't really complain but more projects and collaborations would be good"
"It was an excellent project and very inspiring. Hopefully will get the chance to do it again"
"Just I would jump at the opportunity to do it all over again"
"No, it's perfect"

What aspects reduced your quality of experience?

Category	Value
Organisation/logisitcs	22
Approach of artist(s)	7
Lack of input	1
Didn't like specific activities	18
Space	1
Location/time inconvenient	5
Timing (too long/too short	17
Nothing	33
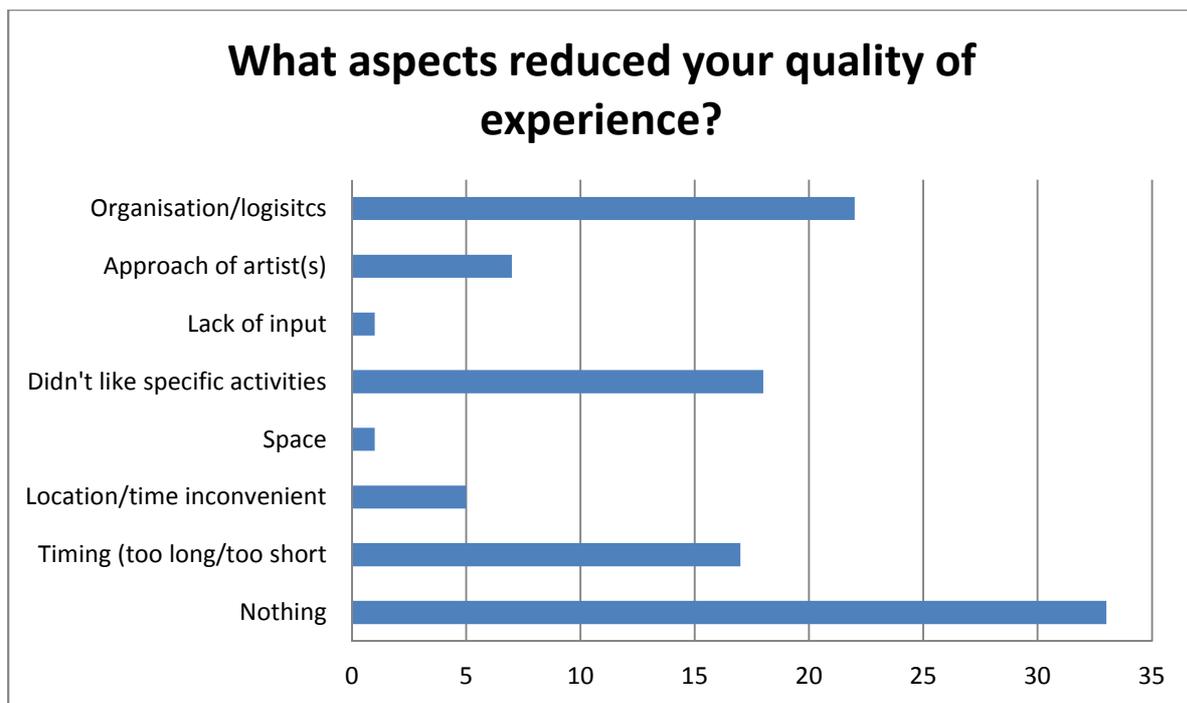
Even where participants did acknowledge aspects that reduced the quality of their experience there remained a high level of interest in continuing participation:

"Do it again!"
"I really hope this continues - it's an amazing opportunity"
"Keep doing it"
"Looking forward to next year!"
"Let's hope there will be more of these… events. They do wonders for the locality"

Where participants acknowledged aspects that reduced the quality of experience difficulties with organisation was the most commonly cited reason. These divided into three main categories:

- *Time management:*

  "Sometimes the lack of organisation - trying to get all participants to commit and meet at a certain time"

  "Time management..."

  "The way it often overran by half an hour - I'm happy for longer sessions but... just wanted to know when I would be home"

  "Lack of timekeeping, and people not turning up to rehearsals"

- *Group size:*

  "Group size may have been too large. In some sessions some of the group did not participate"

  "I think a few people felt crowded out by the number of people"

- *Organisation of activity:*

  "The music and drama should've been more evenly spaced"

  "Sometimes there was a lack of focus and we were unsure of what we were doing and the significance or input"

  "I found it slightly chaotic at times but all worked out in the end"

  "Annoying kids that just can't play. Send them away"

18 participants also reported that they did not enjoy specific activities within a participatory arts project:

  "Doing papier-mâché"

  "Being a percussionist"

  "I didn't like singing"

Although a high proportion of respondents cited specific activities as reducing quality it was only reported by those under the age of 20, particularly those under the age of 16, which suggests that older people may feel more confident in their ability to change the direction of the project. Due to the limitations in the sample size more research would be needed to understand whether age significantly affects participants' confidence in effecting change in a project:

Did you feel that you could change the direction on the project?	Age 5-11	Age 12-15	Age 16-19	Age 20-25	Age 25-64	Age 65+
Yes, Definitely/ 1 Essential	14%	11%	8%	30%	27%	50%
Yes, probably/ 2	32%	38%	23%	10%	18%	25%
Mixed/ 3	9%	13%	31%	20%	18%	0%
Probably not/ 4	27%	13%	19%	20%	0%	0%
Definitely not/ 5	14%	9%	12%	0%	9%	0%
Not something I expected/ Not necessary	5%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Grand Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Base: 128

Pacing, and timing, of a project also had a significant impact on participants. Participants were sensitive to their activities being rushed, although, they did not necessarily simply want longer projects. Realistic aims and well-paced projects was something that many participants expected:

  "It went on too long"

"Sessions started to drag"
"The time was really short"
"Next time we should get more time. I didn't like trying to fit in a lot in only a couple of weeks"

Conclusions

Of those who were asked, and responded, 96% of participants expressed a positive experience of the participatory arts project they were engaged in; many of whom felt that their ideas were valued and that they felt part of the group. Participants frequently referred to both the approach of the artist(s) and the feeling of "camaraderie" within the group as an aspect of the projects that was particularly important to them. Participants enjoyed collaborating with artists, and developing relationships with other participants, as well as inputting their own ideas into the project.

Participants expected access to good resources including suitable spaces, good food (if provided), materials, and time with artists. Contact time with professional artists was particularly important for those looking to develop their skills and knowledge base for use in the creative industries. Whilst participants aged 16-25 were more interested in developing suitable skills for careers, all participant groups felt that they had developed both artistic and personal skills. For some participants the development of skills was a key aspect of their enjoyment of the project.

Whilst the majority of respondents reported a positive experience, and would change nothing about their experience, there were common factors that reduced the quality of a project. Difficulties with organisation, participant group sizes, and not enjoying specific activities were frequently reported. Participants were also sensitive to projects being incorrectly paced (either feeling "rushed", or that the project was "dragging on"), particularly if there was a performance/ exhibition element.

The data here, however, only provides a small sample with which to hypothesise trends, rather than assess participants' experience across the UK. More research is needed, with developments made to the survey, in order to address some of the limitations of the data.

Appendix 1: Participant Survey: Final survey

1) Have you previously taken part in an arts project?	
Yes	
No	
Not Sure	

2) Which approach did this project take?	
Ideas for the project came from the artist	
Ideas for the project came from the artist, with input from the participants	
Mixed	
Ideas came equally from the artist and the participants	
Ideas for the project came from the participants	

3) Which approach would you prefer to have in an arts project?	
Ideas for the project came from the artist	
Ideas for the project came from the artist, with input from the participants	
Mixed	
Ideas came equally from the artist and the participants	
Ideas for the project came from the participants	

4) Which of the following did you feel were part of your experience of this project?	Yes, definitely	Yes, probably	mixed	Probably not	Definitely not	Not something I expected
a. Did you feel that your ideas were valued?						
b. Did you feel that you could change the direction on the project?						
c. Did you feel as though you were part of the group?						
d. Did the artist leader give you the support that you needed?						
e. Were you encouraged to try things out, experiment?						
f. Was the pacing of the project right for you? (not too slow or too fast)						
g. Did you feel that you were encouraged to						

achieve a high standard artistically?						
h. Were you given enough scope to improve your personal skills?						
i. Did you have enough opportunities to feedback your views on how the project was going?						
j. Were the spaces and facilities of high quality?						

5. What aspects of this project enhanced the quality of your experience?

6. What aspects of this project reduced the quality of your experience?

7. Overall how would you rate the quality of experience you had on this project?						
Excellent	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	Terrible

8. Any other comments?

9. What is your age?					
5-11	12 -15	16- 19	20- 25	26-64	65+

10. What is your ethnicity?							
White British	White other	Black or Black British	Asian or Asian British	Mixed	Other	Not known	Prefer not to say

11. Do you have a long standing disability, illness, or infirmity?	
No	
Yes	
Don't know	
Prefer not to say	

Appendix 2: Participant Draft survey

1) Have you previously taken part in an arts project?	
Yes	
No	
Not Sure	

2) Which approach did this project take?	
Ideas for the project came from the artist	
Ideas for the project came from the artist, with input from the participants	
Mixed	
Ideas came equally from the artist and the participants	
Ideas for the project came from the participants	

3) Which approach would you prefer to have in an arts project?	
Ideas for the project came from the artist	
Ideas for the project came from the artist, with input from the participants	
Mixed	
Ideas came equally from the artist and the participants	
Ideas for the project came from the participants	

4) Which of these applied for this project?	0 = not necessary	1	2	3	4	5	6 = essential
a. Felt ownership of ideas in the project							
b. Felt ownership over the way the ideas were presented within the group							
c. Had a sense of belonging in the group							
d. Developed a relationship with other participants							
e. Atmosphere open to experimentation and risk taking							
f. Had time to reflect							
g. Developed artistic skills							
h. Developed non artistic skills							
h. Developed non artistic skills							
j. A professional working environment							

5) Which of these are necessary for you to have a quality experience?							
	0 = not necessary	1	2	3	4	5	6 = essential
a. Felt ownership of ideas in the project							
b. Felt ownership over the way the ideas were presented within the group							
c. Had a sense of belonging in the group							
d. Developed a relationship with other participants							
e. Atmosphere open to experimentation and risk taking							
f. Had time to reflect							
g. Developed artistic skills							
h. Developed non artistic skills							
h. Developed non artistic skills							
j. A professional working environment							

6) What aspects of this project enhanced the quality of your experience?

7) What aspects of this project reduced the quality of your experience?

8) Overall how would you rate the quality of experience you had on this project?						
Excellent	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor	Terrible

9) Any other comments?

10) What is your age?					
5-11	12 -15	16- 19	20- 25	26-64	65+

11) What is your ethnicity?							
White British	White other	Black or Black British	Asian or Asian British	Mixed	Other	Not known	Prefer not to say

12) Do you have a long standing disability, illness, or infirmity?	
No	
Yes	
Don't know	
Prefer not to say	

Appendix 3: Participant Survey (edited for use in one project)

1) Have you previously taken part in an arts project?	
Yes	
No	
Not Sure	

2) In a box like this I prefer it when:	
All the ideas come from the artist	
Some of the ideas come from the artist and some of the ideas come from	
When all the ideas come from us	
I'm not sure	

3) Please tick one of the following to show how much you agree with each of the following statements

	Yes, definitely	Yes, probably	mixed	Probably not	Definitely not
a. The ideas for the project came from the whole group					
b. I felt part of the group					
c. I enjoyed working with the artists					
d. I developed my artistic skills					
e. I developed my other skills					
f. I felt comfortable trying new things					

What did you like most?

Was there anything you didn't like?

Is there anything else you would like to say?

Appendix 4: Comparing data from question 4a-j

Question 4 a Row Labels	Survey Groups Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
No response	0.0%	24.2%	0.0%	9.1%
1	52.6%	17.7%	18.5%	33.9%
2	27.6%	14.5%	37.0%	24.2%
3	15.8%	17.7%	40.7%	20.6%
4	1.3%	12.9%	3.7%	6.1%
5	0.0%	8.1%	0.0%	3.0%
6	2.6%	4.8%	0.0%	3.0%
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Question 4b Row Labels	Survey Groups Group 1	Group 2	Total
No response	1.32%	25.81%	10.30%
1	10.53%	25.81%	14.55%
2	36.84%	12.90%	21.82%
3	17.11%	16.13%	13.94%
4	26.32%	3.23%	13.33%
5	5.26%	12.90%	7.27%
6	2.63%	3.23%	2.42%
Total	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

Question 4c Row Labels	Survey Groups Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
No response	2.63%	25.81%	0.00%	10.91%
1	73.68%	40.32%	37.04%	55.15%
2	15.79%	16.13%	18.52%	16.36%
3	7.89%	11.29%	29.63%	12.73%
4	0.00%	0.00%	7.41%	1.21%
5	0.00%	4.84%	7.41%	3.03%
6	0.00%	1.61%	0.00%	0.61%
Total	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

Question 4d Row Labels	Survey Groups Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
No response	1.32%	24.19%	0.00%	9.70%
1	80.26%	45.16%	29.63%	58.79%
2	15.79%	9.68%	37.04%	16.97%
3	1.32%	11.29%	14.81%	7.27%
4	1.32%	3.23%	11.11%	3.64%
5	0.00%	4.84%	7.41%	3.03%
6	0.00%	1.61%	0.00%	0.61%
Total	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

Question 4e	Survey Groups			
Row Labels	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
No response	1.32%	22.58%	0.00%	9.09%
1	72.37%	40.32%	37.04%	54.55%
2	17.11%	17.74%	18.52%	17.58%
3	7.89%	9.68%	22.22%	10.91%
4	1.32%	1.61%	3.70%	1.82%
5	0.00%	6.45%	18.52%	5.45%
6	0.00%	1.61%	0.00%	0.61%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Question Q4f	Survey Groups		
Row Labels	Group 1	Group 2	Total
No response	2.63%	29.03%	12.12%
1	39.47%	32.26%	30.30%
2	31.58%	16.13%	20.61%
3	17.11%	8.06%	10.91%
4	6.58%	3.23%	4.24%
5	2.63%	8.06%	4.24%
6	0.00%	3.23%	1.21%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Question Q4g	Survey Groups			
Row Labels	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
No response	2.63%	27.42%	0.00%	11.52%
1	55.26%	37.10%	22.22%	43.03%
2	28.95%	17.74%	22.22%	23.64%
3	10.53%	4.84%	33.33%	12.12%
4	2.63%	8.06%	18.52%	7.27%
5	0.00%	3.23%	3.70%	1.82%
6	0.00%	1.61%	0.00%	0.61%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Question Q4h	Survey Groups			
Row Labels	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
No response	1.32%	30.65%	0.00%	12.12%
1	57.89%	27.42%	22.22%	40.61%
2	30.26%	16.13%	25.93%	24.24%
3	10.53%	11.29%	25.93%	13.33%
4	0.00%	4.84%	18.52%	4.85%
5	0.00%	1.61%	7.41%	1.82%
6	0.00%	8.06%	0.00%	3.03%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Count of Q4i	Column Labels		
Row Labels	1	2	Total
No response	1.32%	22.58%	9.09%
1	31.58%	37.10%	28.48%
2	34.21%	14.52%	21.21%
3	22.37%	12.90%	15.15%
4	7.89%	6.45%	6.06%
5	2.63%	4.84%	3.03%
6	0.00%	1.61%	0.61%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Count of Q4j	Column Labels		
Row Labels	**1**	**2**	**Total**
No response	1.32%	22.95%	9.15%
1	61.84%	40.98%	43.90%
2	23.68%	16.39%	17.07%
3	10.53%	13.11%	9.76%
4	2.63%	0.00%	1.22%
5	0.00%	3.28%	1.22%
6	0.00%	3.28%	1.22%
Total	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

Appendix 5: Data on the different approaches taken by artists

Approach of artists	Prefered approach ▾						
Which approach happened ▾	No response	Ideas come from artist	Ideas come from artist with input from participant	Mixed	Ideas come equally from the artist and participants	Ideas come from the participants	Grand Total
No response	50.0%	7.1%	0.0%	21.4%	21.4%	0.0%	100.0%
Ideas come from artist	0.0%	18.2%	9.1%	36.4%	36.4%	0.0%	100.0%
Ideas come from artist with input from participants	0.0%	2.9%	73.5%	11.8%	11.8%	0.0%	100.0%
Mixed	2.4%	4.9%	12.2%	41.5%	36.6%	2.4%	100.0%
Ideas come equally from artist and participants	0.0%	5.9%	5.9%	2.9%	82.4%	2.9%	100.0%
Ideas come from participants	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	75.0%	100.0%
Grand Total	**6.1%**	**5.5%**	**20.0%**	**30.3%**	**32.7%**	**5.5%**	**100.0%**