Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Art Works | Developing Practice in Participatory Settings

Reprising the Conversation:
Supporting artists to work in participatory settings

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1.   Introduction

1.1.   ArtWorks: Developing Practice in Participatory Settings is a Special Initiative of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation which was established in 2011 and continues to the end of March 2015.

The overall aim of ArtWorks is:

To support the initial education, training and continuous professional develop of artists working in participatory settings in order to enhance the quality of people's engagement in arts-led activity and the arts, and create a more professional and confident sector whose work is validated and valued and is seen as important.

Its key objectives are:

- *To support partnership working and pathfinder projects to develop, pilot and embed education, training and continuous professional development opportunities for artists working in participatory settings at all stages in their careers and develop the support infrastructure.*
- *To develop a better understanding of what constitutes quality in the work through sharing good practice across art forms and demonstrating positive outcomes for participants engaged in arts-led activity and the arts.*
- *To gather, document and disseminate compelling evidence of positive impact, as part of a wider strategy to achieve significant shifts nationwide, through the facilitation of shared thinking across agencies and settings about workforce development issues for artists working in participatory settings.*

Through the initiative, we are supporting five pathfinder programmes across the UK that are working collaboratively to help artists who work in participatory settings to access the training, education and development opportunities they need. We are piloting new models to create opportunities for artists at all stages of their careers.

Beyond this, we are working to transform radically the way we treat participatory art in the UK. We are bringing together arts organisations, training providers and artists - and nurturing new relationships across the sector - to inspire a culture in which the experience of people taking part, and the quality of engagement, sit at the heart of all participatory arts.

From the onset, the important role played by Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) providers was recognised by PHF and the intention was to work progressively through the ArtWorks programme to effect change in this provision. In order to do this the pathfinders have worked in various ways to develop new partnerships and new training provision. PHF has worked with the pathfinders to add value to this work.

1.2.   A significant early intervention was the commissioning of an audit of FE and HE provision from Consilium Research and Consultancy, in partnership with Transforming Culture and Culture Partners. The aims of the research were to provide a quantitative baseline audit of relevant HE and FE provision. This quantitative baseline is complemented by a qualitative sample of provision to inform models of practice and case study material to support the work of the ArtWorks pathfinders.

Mapping the Terrain: Higher Education and Further Education – Supporting Artists to Work in Participatory Settings was published in November 2012

The report provided a useful snapshot of the field and complements other research being published through the individual pathfinder programmes. For example, ArtWorks North East had published research into the perceptions of how academics within the region's HEIs see work in participatory settings. ArtWorks Scotland had also published research into skill sets and the ways in which provision might be developed across Scotland.

The mapping and qualitative research was also intended to inform plans for a major conference that would target HE and FE providers, artists and employers in order to challenge thinking, consider models of practice and begin to open the debate and influence change.

1.3.   This conference, *Changing the Conversation*, took place in Lancaster on 15 and 16 April 2013.

1.4.   Following *Changing the Conversation*, we were keen to extend the reach beyond the Pathfinders and offered support for a small number of new developmental projects that would:

- Seek to explore new ways of working
- Generate cross sector collaboration
- Test new models of collaboration
- Test new partnerships
- Explore new learning
- Explore quality issues
- Potentially generate case studies of how the conversation might be changed in practice.

Seven projects were commissioned and have been evaluated. We are holding a follow up symposium in April 2014 that will share the learning from these projects and provide opportunities for further cross sector dialogue and discussion that will help to keep our conversations moving forward.

1.5.   This report seeks to draw together these strands of work at a key stage in the evolution of ArtWorks. It contextualises the work within a wider policy context. It does not seek to replicate earlier research reports or published papers. Instead, it presents some themes that have emerged from the initiative and from the Changing the Conversation Conference, presents the seven pilot projects and outlines some considerations for the sector as we move forward collectively to evolve the practice.

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2.   Background and context

2.1.   We are living through extraordinary times. Significant and profound social, political, economic and cultural changes are occurring. The politics of 'austerity' and cuts in public sector spending, combined with restructuring of health and welfare policy, are generating major changes within our public institutions. Neither our arts and cultural organisations nor our FE and HE institutions are unaffected.

Collaborative working between the sectors is not new. There are many excellent examples of partnership working that can be identified and much ongoing research that is dealing with and supporting enhanced partnership working.[1] Collaboration and partnership working is now becoming more important to long term sustainability and even survival. We need each other more as times become tougher.

2.2.   Further and Higher Education are facing changes that will have long term consequences, potentially altering the shape and nature of the education system in the UK. Changes in funding models, trends in future domestic and global demand, and innovation in service design and delivery are all underpinning themes to this change process. As Universities UK stated in a report published in 2012:

"Higher education in the United Kingdom is undergoing a period of significant change. This is being driven by a number of factors: political, cultural, economic, and technological. The trends are global in their scope, and far reaching in their impact. They affect every aspect of university provision, the environment in which universities operate, what they will be required to deliver in future, and how they will be structured and funded."[2]

2.3.   At the same time, the arts and cultural sector is facing similar challenges. Together, our institutions co-exist in an overall ecology of interconnected and networked relationships that create a complex mesh of interdependency. No one organisation exists within a vacuum and the health of the overall ecology is more important than that of individual organisations. The collective requirements of the system require that we work together as a community. As a dynamic and complex whole, together we are capable of achieving significant and potent change. Systemic problems require systemic solutions and this way of viewing our interrelationships might generate different operating paradigms.

Fundamentally, this shift – towards a system where the collective whole is more important than the individual organisation – will hinge on the ability to generate new collaborative working models that will maximise impact beyond that possible within one individual organisation. The collective power of complementary organisations is arguably more potent than that of any one individual organisation. Coming together brings about things which individual constituents cannot and makes for a better experience for the user of the system.

2.4.   ArtWorks was initially conceived with this systemic approach in mind and the pathfinders have all worked as collaborative partnerships of arts employers, FE and HE providers and artists. Strategic support for artists working in participatory settings

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[1] http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/Marketing/MKG_ServiceTeam_Docs/The_Cultural_Knowledge_Ecology_-_working_paper.pdf
http://www.creative-campus.org.uk/ - "**Beyond the Campus: Connecting Knowledge and Creative Practice Communities Across Higher Education and the Creative Economy**".The research network aims to create a platform for discussion between academics, practitioners, artists, cultural organisations, business development managers and other university directors, about knowledge connections and collaboration between universities and the creative and cultural sector.
[2] http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/FuturesForHigherEducation.aspx#.UvzLpJyM_Y8

requires collaboration and could build a strong collective voice for improving collective practice.

2.5. There is rich opportunity for such collectivity in our working environments:

- Arts Council England recently led an event at Liverpool John Moores University, *The Cultural Knowledge Economy,* following a research project led by Sarah Fisher. The event shared many examples of partnership working that illustrated how our sectors can work better together for mutual benefit and highlighted, amongst other things, the need for mutual collaboration to maximise our shared assets.[3] There are opportunities for us to collaborate on new partnerships, underpinned by HEI public engagement strategies, on the development of innovation programmes and with an emphasis on work-ready graduates

- Funding for research has effected a shift in the debate around impact of research with:
  - The Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) knowledge exchange programmes supporting exchange between the sectors, and all grant applications now being expected to demonstrate pathways to impact
  - The Research Excellence Framework now requiring the demonstration of impact beyond the institution
  - The new major AHRC funded two-year 'Cultural Value Project' aiming to clarify how we value culture
  - The cross-research council Connected Communities programme seeking *"to mobilise the potential for increasingly inter-connected, culturally diverse, communities to enhance participation, prosperity, sustainability, health and well-being by better connecting research, stakeholders, and communities."[4]*

2.6. It is therefore clear that in our current working environment there is not only a need but an immense opportunity for conversation, dialogue and collaborative working that would work to mutual benefit. If we transfer this more general reading to the specific context of the ArtWorks agenda, the opportunity is apparent. As Professor Helen Nicholson, of the Department of Drama and Theatre at Royal Holloway University of London, stated in a provocation written in the lead up to Changing the Conversation:

"I am interested in teasing out the contribution universities might (and do) make to developing and sustaining high quality arts practices in participatory settings. This is not, of course, to suggest that universities are the only place to learn, but universities have a key role in the professionalisation of artists working in participatory settings, and it is important to understand what that role involves. This is urgent; the cultural and charitable sectors and the artists themselves are looking more and more to universities to provide high quality professional development. New graduates are increasingly expected to work as unpaid interns or to be ready for employment without the costly need for further mentoring or professional support. As artists develop their careers in participatory settings, reduced funding and changing employment patterns means their contracts are often short-term and employers have little money to invest in their professional development, leaving them isolated. At the same time, the conversation in universities is changing as an increasingly market-led economy and rising student fees has placed the purpose of university education under critical scrutiny. Beyond the arts and the academy, there is increasing youth unemployment and social deprivation. This twenty-first century climate suggests that there is an even great importance for multi-agency and cross-sector collaboration to ensure that practitioners are informed by the knowledge, skills and understanding

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[3] http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/PRS/127089.htm

[4] http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Research-funding/Connected-Communities/Pages/Introduction-and-vision.aspx

required to develop high quality artistic interventions with people living in complex settings."

2.7.   Early research and activity across the pathfinders explored current provision in relation to training and continuing professional development provision in the field of arts practice in participatory settings. In 2012, the *ArtWorks Evaluation Interim Report* noted that this was one of the most 'formal' clusters of research work. As well as recommending that overall learning is drawn out from across the research and other relevant ArtWorks activity, the report proposes it is important to share this learning, ensure that future solution design responds to it and to consider whether, why and how the research should be updated in the future (dha & the Institute for Cultural Practices, 2012: 56).

A working paper was commissioned from Mary Schwarz (2013), to draw together the research to date.[5]

Analysis of this research led to several conclusions and considerations for future development and this has informed the ArtWorks programme as it has evolved. Schwarz concludes:

" ....we know there is a challenging policy and funding landscape for FE and HE, as well as arts organisations, and in this context, more active consideration could be given to maximise connections between different policy agendas such as widening participation; enterprise and employability; knowledge exchange; research impact; and public engagement. This approach could also both contribute to the first issue of developing legitimacy for arts work in participatory settings and also the second issue of ensuring the continuing relevance of training and development opportunities."

2.8.   The challenges are many and there is a strong argument for collective solutions. ArtWorks research has highlighted just some of the key gaps that exist in preparing artists for work in participatory settings:

- Too few opportunities for early career artists to get hands-on participatory arts experience.
- Artists lack training on how to work with different participants and in different contexts.
- Mid-career artists want refresher opportunities.
- Mechanisms are needed to develop greater consistency in quality and rigour of artists' work.

The demand for training and learning opportunities from artists clearly exists. We know that artists view training opportunities as an important complement to the practical experience and reflection they gain in their careers and agree there is a set of skills and qualities which can be learnt and which are common to a wide range of circumstances. The gaps in training provision across artform and geographical area mean artists cannot always access the initial training they need to deliver the best possible participatory arts experiences. It was against this background and context that *Changing the Conversation* took place in April 2014.

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[5] http://api.ning.com/files/bH3TtQwMlzcw4HSMySkell*k0XdN5GZ9JiD9GRQG2ZEU2w6nJ6uIa9EoEKINidCJ1zvldK6jSIs-
NaeKChXWH681mXingNQz/WP5TrainingandDevelopmentProvidersandOpportunitiesFINAL.pdf

3.   *Changing the Conversation* conference, April 2013

3.1.   *Changing the Conversation* was envisaged as an event that would focus on the key issues and questions that underpin the ArtWorks initiative:

- How do we collectively develop enhanced infrastructure and opportunity for artists, and those who aspire to be artists, to develop skills and learning at different stages of their careers? We are working with our partners to develop, pilot and embed training and continuous professional development methods for artists working in participatory settings.
- How do we generate shared learning across the sector to include HEI's, policy makers, commissioners and employers as well as artists and arts organisations? We are working to create greater dialogue, more holistic policy and provision.
- How do we generate a paradigm shift in both quality and understanding of what is required from artists in generating successful participatory projects and in the way participatory work is viewed? We are working to share good practice across art forms and gather, document and disseminate compelling evidence of positive impact.

We sought to deliver a conference that addressed these issues and examined approaches to partnership and collaboration, a consideration of the needs of the demand side of the market, a consideration of pedagogical approaches and potential funding models while placing them in the context of student employability and an international environment. We envisaged an event that had activity and provocation leading up to it and partnership projects developing from it. We saw it as part of a journey rather than an isolated event.

The target audience for the conference included:

- FE/HE providers
- Commissioners
- Artists and arts organisations
- Policymakers

The conference took place in April 2013 and was residential. In line with the ethos of ArtWorks, the conference sought to be participatory and to 'share' rather than 'tell'. It focused on creating dialogue and collaboration and sought to encourage cross learning and partnership working.

3.2.   Evaluation

A full evaluation of the event was carried out. The following is a summary of our findings.

120 people attended the conference in total. The breakdown of delegates was as follows:

Speakers/staff	20
Artists	26

Employers/commissioners	35
HE/FE institutions	39

A survey carried out after the event elicited 45 responses and attendees responded positively to the event:

- When asked about the overall quality of the event and speakers, 89% rated the quality and relevance of the speakers as good, very good or excellent.
- 75% rated the range and relevance of the delegates to the conversation as good, very good or excellent.
- 100% of the respondents stated the organisation of the conference was good, very good or excellent.
- 91% of respondents rated the relevance of the conference content as good, very good or excellent.
- 84% rated the venue and catering as good, very good or excellent.
- Reasons for attending the conference included: to meet/hear delegates and speakers I haven't met/heard before (77%); to contribute to an important discussion (75%); to look for potential partners for future projects (45%); and to meet/hear delegates and speakers I know (40%).
- 84% agreed the conference met their expectations.

It was also clear that the conference stimulated delegates to take further action. We asked respondents about their follow up plans: 64% said they would follow up new contacts; 52% stated they would develop new initiatives; 75% said they would talk to colleagues and extend the conversation; and 59% said they would share good practice and knowledge within the ArtWorks community.

Delegates were also clear that they were taking something away from the event. 75% stated that they were taking away new learning; 69% said that they were taking away new contacts and potential partnerships for collaboration; 35% agreed they were taking away models of good practice; and 58% stated their intention to apply for a development award.

It was evident that the conference had motivated delegates to start a debate and that ArtWorks had an important role to play in taking this forward for the sector:

- *"I think this was a great start because it brought a range of interested sectors together, and ArtWorks has the clout to do this. It was striking that this felt like the start of a conversation with HEIs (and we need to continue to have it) so that the content of their practice-led courses reflects the portfolio approach which is the reality of many artists' careers, and perhaps even moves that on."*
- *"Help individual artists and small organisations to be more aware of the landscape of the participatory arts and create more opportunities for networking and information sharing. Discussions about training the commissioners could also be extended to helping artists become more adept at using business and marketing models in a positive and helpful way to develop their portfolio and increase opportunities for new work. This was a wonderful group of people and it would be productive to keep the dialogue moving and growing. ArtWorks have a unique position in being able to match artists and commissioners as well as working with artists in practically based research projects. I would be delighted to collaborate more in exploring how the best projects work and how to cascade/disseminate best practice.'*

The event was a success because it brought together artists, employers, HE and some FE providers with policymakers and funders and generated new conversations that are now being developed on a number of different levels:

- ArtWorks is now working more closely with both the HEA and Creative & Cultural Skills to further the agendas we share.
- The pathfinders have continued to develop relationships and partnerships that were consolidated or started at the conference.
- The development projects have taken place and are covered in the next section of the report.
- The messages emerging from the conference are informing an advocacy programme as we progress towards the end of the ArtWorks special initiative in March 2015.

3.3. Key themes emerging from the conference

3.3.1. Change

The concept of change underpinned the whole conference.

In introducing the event, Eric Booth – writer, educationalist and international education consultant – addressed these key themes. His call to surface beliefs and assumptions in order to change our actions challenged the gathering to bring our underlying assumptions into the open. His final challenge in setting the context was to ask that we *"don't get stuck in conversations that are stuck and where there is polarity look for the greater truth that underpins them both".*

Anna Cutler, Director of Learning, Tate, asked the question, *"how can we and why should we think differently?"* In an environment where the practice is changing, the context is changing and the economy is changing, she urged us to think about what the relevance of the work is and how we hold on to the ideological frames that underpin it in such a changing environment.

The notion of the refrain provided a metaphor for Cutler's provocation. Instead of trying to change conversations, she pressed the idea of changing the "refrain", "breaking open the song", sharing practice and changing the way we talk about it, being explicit about and accountable for our philosophy and thereby doing something differently.

"....we need to recognise and articulate the contingent nature of practice, that we shift from the refrain that implies a singular (or oppositional) conversation and embrace the greater and more complicated truth, which is that we require a different kind of conversation altogether that looks more like the practice it accounts for."

Steve Seidel, Programme Director of Arts in Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, introduced the concept of collectivity to this thinking when he talked about singing different songs together and asked the gathering, who needs to be in the room for conversations to take place that have the capacity to effect change?

This theme ran throughout the two days with delegates questioning precisely what it was that we needed to change.

- Language and messaging was one key area where delegates felt we needed to achieve shifts.

- The HE business model and the competition that now underpins this was felt to hamper change.
- Part-time practitioners in the institutions were felt to be a major opportunity to achieve change
- Opening up our practice to one another was discussed as a mechanism to support change and develop critique, debate and shared understanding. Self organisation with colleagues was suggested as a way in which this could be achieved.

Professor Helen Nicholson referred to needing to "take the long view" in her keynote speech and argued that the conversation has already changed as society, and the role that the arts play within it, has changed. She referred to the blurring between creator and participant and societal changes that have created greater emphasis on 'participation' in all aspects of society and on the 'experience economy'. This was supported by many contributions from the floor. She presented a potent vision of the artist in 2023 and argued that we need to think about what we do collectively to ensure we are developing these artists.

"So what skills will new graduates need to work as artists in participatory settings in 2023? What further challenges will they have faced by 2035, when today's first year undergraduates turn 40? The challenge for the cultural sector is to work with universities to address these questions and, in turn, be clear about what they can bring to this process. This requires cross-sector collaboration; emergent practitioners undoubtedly benefit from working alongside experienced artists, witnessing how they negotiate the specifics of context and setting, how they might adapt to work creatively with multiple agencies, how cultural policy is translated into practice. This takes time, and time costs."

3.3.2. The ecosystem

Throughout the conference the linked concepts of mutual dependency and collaboration recurred as 'refrains'. The notion that we cannot achieve alone what we can do together, and that partnership working, equity, mutual respect and understanding and the sharing of resources might enable us to bring this work to scale, both came up.

In this context there was much debate around leadership and who is responsible for it. How can funders and policy makers assume a greater leadership role? Is dispersed and distributed leadership our way forward?

It was suggested that new structures were needed as, with evaporating funding, we must not seek to reproduce or preserve the current systems but need to seek new ways of working that are more sustainable and create greater resilience.

Tamsin Cox, Head of Policy and Research at DHA Communications, (external evaluator for ArtWorks) suggested that one of the interesting dimensions of the ArtWorks initiative was what it might tell us about how partnerships work. The co-design and co-creation of solutions sits at the heart of the pathfinder programmes and could reveal some interesting learning.

Nicholson had stated in her provocation paper:

"Shocking though this sounds, there is rarely an obligation for subsidised or charitably funded creative learning programmes to support or mentor emergent artists. My suggestion is that sustaining high-quality arts practice over the long term requires a change in thinking from funders as well as universities and arts

organisations, recognising that small amounts of money can make a big difference to the quality of student experience in participatory settings. We need a clear understanding of what different partners across the educational, cultural and charitable sectors might bring to this process economically, conceptually and practically, and this is another reason why ArtWorks has such powerful potential."

3.3.3. Language

A recurring theme emerged around the language we use to describe the work and the different implications and meanings of such terminology. It was noted that in some art forms particular terminology dominated, meaning that we are not speaking with one voice about work that has a common set of values and principles even if it differs in process.

3.3.4. Quality

Steve Seidel addressed the conference on what constitutes quality, asking what it looks like and how we can achieve it together.

Seidel suggested looking at quality through four different lenses: the student experience; the teaching; the environment; and the dynamics. Although standards, curriculum frameworks, accreditation, assessment and evaluation are important, Seidel argued for the immediacy and importance of "being in the room", an experiential perspective.

He suggested that it was hard to talk about quality because it is multi dimensional, is a moving target and context specific with a high degree of subjectivity and sensitivity. This often makes it ephemeral and enigmatic.

The importance of decision making emerged throughout discussions surrounding quality. Who makes decisions and how do they make them? People making decisions about programmes of work with participants may not always end up 'in the room'. Those in the room – artists, participants – make decisions; those outside the room – project managers, administrators – help to make it happen and set the context, whilst those further away – policy makers, funders – may make decisions but are far removed from the actual experience. All are important to the achievement of quality. Dialogue, alignment and engagement are critical to making this work.

This theme reoccurred throughout the conference, pointing to the importance of the employer and commissioner to the process. The design of interventions, the intent and purpose behind the design, the ethics and the relative honesty in the 'brokerage' were all issues that were raised.

Seidel quoted Matisse in reflecting that quality is not an end but a process of continuous improvement:

"Each picture as I finish it seems like the best thing I have ever done…and yet after a while I am not so sure. It is like taking a train to Marseille. One knows where one wants to go. Each painting completed is like a station—just so much nearer the goal. The time comes when the painter is apt to feel he has at last arrived. Then, if he is honest, he realizes one of two things—either that he has not arrived after all or that Marseille…is not where he wanted to go anyway, and he must push farther on."

3.3.5. Ethics and values

The values that underpin the work were much debated throughout the conference. "Authenticity" and "integrity" were words that emerged often in the breakout groups and discussions.

Professor Helen Nicholson reminded the conference in her keynote that a vision of utopia has always underpinned participatory arts work – there is nothing new about the redemptive and restorative role of the arts or the utopian vision that the arts are important in changing lives and society. It was suggested by delegates that this political dimension to the work has become less dominant as more instrumental agendas have taken hold.

An interesting debate grew around the important role that HE institutions play in providing a space where ideology can be mined and contested and where radicalisation is possible.

It was suggested by several delegates that the ethics of the practice are multidimensional – they are personal to the artist, but it is also incumbent upon employers and commissioners to be honest brokers in making the work possible. There was a strong suggestion that there is an important power shift to be achieved between large organisations and smaller, more vulnerable ones.

There was discussion around leadership in this context and a suggestion that there is a gap in strategic leadership that needs to be filled if we are to take this work to scale.

3.3.6. Employability and employers

There was a lot of discussion around the evolving needs of employers. What does the market need? And who is the market? How can we future-proof the sector in times of such dramatic change? And how do we take the work to scale and grow the market? Some 'markets' are declining whilst others are emerging and it was suggested that we need more market intelligence on this as we move forward.

The notion of 'employability' is a key policy driver within HE and yet it was felt to be difficult to define employability in the arts where self employment and portfolio working is the norm. It was suggested that there was a redefinition of being an artist that was emerging as a result of such changes and trends.

There was a great deal of discussion around how artists create jobs themselves and often create the opportunities that generate the work for both themselves and other artists. Therefore is there a need to look at how we define 'employer' in this context and to consider how we collectively can grow the market for the work, thus making it economically more sustainable?

Pauline Tambling, Joint Chief Executive of Creative & Cultural Skills, built upon her provocation paper in her keynote speech stating that we need to drive up demand as well as improve supply:

"So what would it mean to take participatory arts practice 'to scale'? It would mean:

- *That we cannot rely on specific individuals with extraordinary artistic talent and natural inter-personal skills to do the work: we'll need to find ways to empower many more artists to deliver the work*
- *That we'll need to codify what we do so that we can impart the knowledge and skills to the next generation of practitioners to some agreed standards*

- *That we'll also need to work with those people who are in a position to 'buy' the practice: those in the youth offending teams, the care homes and the youth groups, for example will need to know what good looks like too*
- *That we'd need to put in place some training programmes for arts in participatory settings in mainstream artist training but also for ongoing professional development*
- *And we'll need some qualifications in place so people's 'investment' in training can be recognised and perhaps rewarded financially.*
- *And that we may need – anathema I know to many arts practitioners – to engage OfSted to inspect the work."*

She argued that we need as a sector to embrace the education and skills funding model where there is a buyer and a seller. We need to drive up demand for this work to such an extent that those running schools, hospitals, care homes and prisons will allocate their budgets to buying this work:

"The prize would be that there would be much more ongoing work for artists if we could, together, drive take-up, and the work would get to far more people in many more settings. And then we'd be speaking 'skills talk'. We'll be creating jobs for artists and contributing to economic growth. And along the way a lot more people will get to benefit from engaging with the arts. Could be a winner?"

Graham Jeffery, of the University of the West of Scotland, responded to this by stating that we live in a commodified world and that the increasingly complex relationships between employer and employee are both fluid and negotiated. There are challenges to the traditional hierarchy in our sector that we must consider and this raises questions around power and agency. Relatively stable organisations with revenue and physical infrastructure should be working in partnership with smaller organisations to support the whole ecology. He also pointed out that we need to recognise and remember that the UK has different political states and positions.

3.3.7. Artists' pathways

One of the recurring themes throughout the conference was the way in which we view pathways into participatory work.

Graduate career guidance was felt to be important and ArtWorks North East described some work they are doing with the careers service that could be scaled up.

However, the notion of a 'pathway' was consistently challenged by delegates as most artists' journeys are not perceived to be linear. Different routes exist within FE and HE, ranging from specialist to the modular, where modules may be compulsory or optional within degree programmes. Postgraduate provision tends to focus on specialist development and application of the art form skills and this led to debates around the best place for skills to be developed: in the workplace through situated learning or within FE/HE, and at what level? Delegates discussed the extent to which the core art form skills are essential to quality delivery and whether postgraduate provision is the most viable way of developing them.

There was also an interesting debate around the difficulty for young people who may be inspired and attracted to the work through high quality experiences of participation themselves but are then unable to find a way into the work themselves. As one delegate said, *"We often say to young people, you are not going to get into this place that inspired you in the first place."*

The importance of FE in this was emphasised as there is potential through apprenticeships, arts leadership initiatives and A level provision to develop programmes that can fill this gap. ArtWorks London outlined how it is working with FE partners to develop potential pathways.

Finally, there was a recurring challenge to the perceived notion that the work is seen as a secondary pathway for those not able to perform and that it was seen as inferior.

3.3.8. Artists as lecturers

The importance of the individual lecturer to the status of the practice was highlighted as a major barrier in FE/HE provision. When a particular lecturer 'gets' the work, they will include it within programmes and this was felt to be one of the most significant factors affecting the growth of provision for young artists in training and for CPD provision being developed. The many artists who work in HE as part of their portfolio careers were felt to be a major opportunity for growth and development.

3.3.9. Challenges

- **Systemic change:**
  Systemic change is hard for individuals and requires collaboration and open systems working that is premised on collectivity and shared responsibility. Dispersed leadership and a collective voice were felt to be critical as we move forward together to develop the practice.

- **Business models:**
  It was generally felt that new business models and new thinking was what was needed and that we needed to work together to generate the partnerships, share the learning and develop cross disciplinary working.

- **Sustainability:**
  There was a recurring emphasis on sustainability with delegates emphasising the need to think less about funding and more about structures if we wish to achieve sustainable provision. Partnerships between HE and employers and artists have rich potential to generate better infrastructure and this is likely to be a more effective focus than funding streams that might be less permanent.

- **Visibility:**
  How do we increase visibility? *"We do this work well and yet it only affects a particular kind of participatory work – usually that which is 'product orientated – that gets platforms."*

3.4. Follow up within ArtWorks

The immediate follow up was that we carried out an evaluation – summarised above – and commissioned the development projects which are the subject of the next section of this report.

Individual pathfinders have furthered their work taking into account many of the above discussions. For example:

- ArtWorks North East has piloted work with the graduate careers service.

- ArtWorks London is working on creating a cohesive set of pathways for artists at all stages of their careers.
- ArtWorks Scotland has piloted several different projects that involved FE/HE partners working with artists to develop provision.
- ArtWorks Navigator is developing codes for employers/commissioners and hirers.
- ArtWorks Cymru is working with Arts Council Wales to address the funding and policy side of the equation.

The overall ArtWorks initiative is seeking to address some of the issues around sustainability and the importance of policy makers and funders in its final stages of work.

Most importantly, a central advocacy programme has been developed, working with DHA Communications, which will seek to reach a wider constituency and communicate what we do through evidence and learning.

4. Changing the conversation – development awards overview

4.1. Introduction

This is an overview of learning from the development awards, and seeks to provide some basic information about the different projects, discuss different areas of focus and approach and identify where key areas of learning, challenge and future opportunity have emerged. A fuller report will also be available, including an evaluation and reflective case studies supplied by each of the projects.

Each of the projects discussed here applied through an open process to Paul Hamlyn Foundation for a maximum of £3,500 each. Applicants were asked to put forward proposals for researching particular questions and/or testing the feasibility of possible solutions to perceived issues which emerged from the *Changing the Conversation* conference, by the end of May 2013. 34 proposals were received (with a total request for £114,287.62), and seven projects were selected (funded to a total of £24,500).

Projects were initially asked to complete all activity by the end of November 2013 but for a variety of reasons (discussed further below) some extended beyond this period. Projects all attended a workshop in July 2013 in order to share their plans with each other and to be introduced to evaluation and reflection requirements.

Projects were asked to complete a simple logic model for their projects, providing a self-evaluation tool for identifying what they would need to know to determine whether their projects had progressed as expected. Guidelines were also put in place for the reflective case studies which projects would be required to produce at the end. Support, where required, was provided by the evaluator in completing and interrogating the logic model, in identifying approaches and methods to evidence gathering and in structuring and responding to the case study requirements. Finally, where appropriate, project leaders also supplied documentary and other evidence in addition to their case study and logic model to the evaluator, to support a better understanding of the projects.

4.2. Project snapshots

Anna Lopez

Anna developed and piloted a vocational course placing FE students in a local community setting, with the aim of undertaking a creative intervention. She collaborated with Newham Sixth Form College and South Plaistow Big Local (SPBL), a community group with a substantial lottery grant for undertaking local regeneration activities. Students were given some grounding in the context of practice of socially engaged creative activity, and then contributed to a project already set up by SPBL, called Mapping for Change. The students who took part in the pilot came from different courses, and participated in the project through Nrich, a programme of student development opportunities offered at Newham Sixth Form College.

B Arts Ltd

B Arts Ltd worked with Staffordshire University to look at how opportunities for experience of participatory arts practice could be embedded in the curriculum content of undergraduate courses which do not focus on participatory art. The project built on a previous pilot, Social Agents, which was funded through the University and offered a group of third-year students placement opportunities. In this pilot, it had proved

challenging to encourage students to complete placement opportunities when they sat outside the requirements of core courses, despite participating students reporting positive experiences. B Arts Ltd has held a number of discussions with key staff members running targeted courses at Staffordshire University, and has gained agreement for a small pilot to take place in Spring 2014 with students who will undertake a placement as part of their course.

Heads Together

Heads Together undertook a research project to investigate opportunities for initial training in community/participatory arts from a young person's point of view. It sought to understand what affects choices that young people might make and explore the link between available training and the competancies sought by employers in the field. A group of 11 young people, all at a stage of considering their post-16 training options, engaged in a series of discussions and group and individual interviews. Two members of this group undertook phone interviews with senior staff at five regional employers in the community arts sector. The young people then took part in group visits to Trinity College, Leeds, Manchester School of Art and Tate Liverpool. A group of 12 young people at an earlier stage of education hosted two radio programmes on East Leeds FM (the community radio arts project run by Heads Together).

PRiA Arts

'Participatory Arts Connect' (PAC) was a national network piloted by PRiA Arts. The network sought to link practice and training opportunities, with a focus on supporting 'trainee practitioners' (in the case of the pilot, undergraduate and postgraduate students) to network with practitioners and employers, and to access opportunities to visit and observe arts activity in participatory settings. The project included consultation with two HEIs (University of Brighton and University of South Wales) and five organisations undertaking arts activity in participatory settings (WNO, St Fagans National History Museum, Carousel, Greenhorn Short Film Festival and Helix Arts).The project has produced a website for the network, providing the capacity for visit opportunities to be advertised and searched. The website was viewed and feedback given by students, HEI staff and arts organisations. As part of the project, one student visited Welsh National Opera and provided feedback.

Royal Scottish National Orchestra

The RSNO worked with Tate Liverpool and Chrissie Tiller to develop 'Creative Retreat', a three-day retreat for artists working in participatory settings. Six artist participants, two facilitators and three practitioners/commissioners visited Crear in Argyll and Bute in October 2013, and took part in a process using Open Space Technology methods with provocations at key points. Areas of enquiry for the retreat included looking at different practices and contexts, the ethics and politics of practice, the role of participants and collaborators, and the development of artistic practice. The artists were required to apply to be part of the retreat, and their place on the retreat was funded through the grant. All those attending were involved in providing feedback, whether through a survey or facilitator's reflections, or through writing up the case study.

Trinity Laban

Trinity Laban commissioned an independent facilitator to undertake an enquiry-based research project looking at the role and skills of arts project managers, how they

relate to and engage with participatory artists, and what kind of professional development support they might benefit from. The key research question was: what skills do managers need and what do artists want from managers to ensure the facilitation of high quality participatory arts projects? The project worked with 14 project managers, who met twice for a day on each occasion, and with 10 participatory artists who met separately for a half-day. Responses from both groups to similar questions were elicited and explored. Amongst other material, the project used part of a provocation from the Changing the Conversation conference to prompt discussions. Among other learning, the project has produced some key areas of focus for future CPD development for arts project managers.

University of Hull

The University of Hull undertook a project to bring local artists in to become 'Associate Artists' of the University. Five artists selected by the university were required to participate in workshops, with each leading one of these workshops, sharing their practice and methods and identifying things which they wanted to explore and develop. The intention was to use the process both as a piece of research, to explore what kinds of relationships might be developed between participatory arts in the University context and in the city context, and to test a model for a professional development programme linking artists with the University environment. The University of Hull worked with a researcher, Jamie Beddard, who supported evaluation sessions and the process of reflection. The artists involved were encouraged to identify future activities (whether professional development, practice or other) which they might like to pursue in some collaboration with the University.

4.3. Project approaches and learning

This section looks at the different approaches taken by the seven projects with the relatively modest funding provided by Paul Hamlyn Foundation. What can be learnt about how such funding can be used, and what have the projects been able to test and learn?

Stage of career

Projects were encouraged, at the bidding stage, to think primarily about how artists can be supported – indeed, the overall ArtWorks programme was termed a 'workforce development' programme. All of the projects have focused very strongly upon a direct intervention with practitioners, though different projects have considered the practitioner at different career stages.

Pre-practitioners

Both Heads Together and Anna Lopez worked with young people up to the age of 19 who were making choices about training for future careers. Some came from disadvantaged backgrounds. Key learning from these projects includes:

- The degree to which things like parental support may affect a young person's confidence in making career and training choices, particularly if they are seen as risky or unclear
- The value of in-person introductions to projects, communities, students and practitioners working with arts in participatory settings

- The importance of supporting young people in exploring career opportunities through real experiences and through the space to discuss and consider issues and challenges

In the case of students from Newham Sixth Form College, the political and civic dimensions of some of this kind of work were not necessarily a motivation to get involved, raising some interesting questions about whether this might be true more widely for this age-group.

An implicit and outstanding question for both projects is the wider issue of whether practitioners currently working in participatory settings are sufficiently demographically diverse. Both projects worked with young people with whom they already had a relationship, but raised some issues which may be particularly acute for this demographic. In terms of a holistic view of workforce development, a workforce which is diverse, and more representative of the communities which it serves, might be an area for significant development and is one which it would be valuable to reflect upon more widely.

Trainee practitioners

The PAC project and B Arts Ltd both looked at projects for HEI students who might be considering moving into practice in participatory settings as a career, and who were already engaging in degrees with some disciplinary relevance. Both considered the ways in which 'real experience' – whether through visits, observation and networking in the case of PAC, or through a formal placement in the case of B Arts Ltd – could benefit students' skills and expose them to this kind of practice as a possible career choice. Key learning from these projects includes:

- Challenges with engaging students outside the curriculum, particularly in terms of timetabling, and the potential importance of connecting these 'real experiences' to course content and assessment
- The need for students, HEIs and arts organisations to be supported by clear guidelines and statements of expectation, to support all parties in getting the most out of a visit or student placement
- The sector itself is not closed to engaging with students at this stage, though the practicalities of engagement may be complex
- There are broader HE agendas (such as employability) which may make it easier going forwards to argue for the value of such 'real experiences' as part of the wider student experience, learning and assessment

Both projects reveal the absence of such 'real experiences' in the particular HEI courses which they sought to work with. The feedback from the preceding placement pilot undertaken by B Arts Ltd with Staffordshire University, and the feedback from students assessing the website and the single student visit which took place as part of the PAC project, suggest that students significantly value these experiences. The biggest potential challenge appears to be persuading and enabling HEIs to find the space to include such experiences.

Emerging, mid-career and established practitioners

The Creative Retreat, the University of Hull Associate Artists scheme and the research project by Trinity Laban all worked with artists who currently undertake work in participatory arts. Each added a different dimension, with the Creative Retreat bringing together artists and commissioners, the University of Hull bringing together

artists and researchers (and the university environs) and the research project focusing on how project managers might be better supported and developed, in order to support artists. Key learning from these projects includes:

- The value of bringing together practice and experiences from different art forms, and that practitioners working in this area are likely to share sufficient common ground beyond disciplines to enable valuable affinities to emerge
- The way in which bringing together a group of peers can help to validate the status of practitioners, and build a sense that the particular skills and experiences of those practitioners are recognised and valued
- That focused activity (such as a retreat, series of workshops or facilitated enquiry days) can help to build a network of peers who want to engage beyond that activity in the future
- This, in turn, suggests significant appetite for activities which can help to validate and develop a community or communities of practice in this area
- Significant appetite amongst practitioners for further professional development opportunities, and interest in activity which spans from complex conceptual enquiry about the motivation for the work and position of the artist and participant through to practical skills areas such as funding.

Influencing the system

As already noted, all the projects focused upon a direct intervention or engagement with individual practitioners. However, the projects were led by various individuals, organisations and institutions, and with a range of different partners engaging. The following discussion considers what the projects demonstrate about strategies and approaches for influencing the 'system' in which workforce development for artists working in participatory settings operates.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

Five projects worked with or were led by HEIs, and a sixth (the Creative Retreat) included a facilitator and course curator with a strong tie to an HEI. In terms of exercising influence on HEIs as training providers and, more generally, as knowledge and activity generators, it is worth noting the individuals within those institutions who have engaged with the different projects. The PAC project, led by PRiA Arts, involved an individual who is a practising artist working in participatory settings as well as a teaching and researching academic. The University of Hull project was led by two academics who have either current or past practitioner experience. The Trinity Laban project was led by a project manager based in learning and participation. The staff member in Staffordshire University who championed the project also had a background as a practitioner and arts officer. The importance of individuals who bridge different parts of the system is clear in these examples.

Key learning with regards to engaging HEIs from these projects includes:

- The process of changing or adding to course content – through placements, visits and other 'real experience' opportunities – is something which participating HEIs were positive about, but the practical process of embedding these is complex and requires significant work and lead-in time
- There are broader agendas within the HEI environment – such as employability – which may be useful to those seeking to develop course content which involves greater engagement with practical experiences and encompasses current knowledge of careers opportunities

- There is also an appetite for HEIs exploring connections outside undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, such as associate/affiliation schemes, co-creation, short courses and other kinds of potential CPD. It is worth noting that the extent of this appetite beyond those individuals who understand the area of practice, particularly where resources are concerned, is yet to be tested. Whether institutions will require a significant market in order to respond to apparent need and desire from practising artists, or whether other kinds of collaborations might prove more sustainable, is still to be explored.
- On the whole, it appears that course content specific to artists working in participatory settings is still available only in a relatively limited way, and that it could be difficult for young people seeking a career in this area to identify what the 'right' course might be, with limited clear links between training pathways and areas of employment.

Further Education (FE)

One project (Anna Lopez) worked with a FE college. Key learning includes:

- As with HEIs, the value of some broader agendas within FE, such as developing community relations and the wider educational experience of the student, proved useful in developing the pilot and particularly in securing the second phase, both in terms of political leverage and in terms of staff and resource support;
- Potentially, the strong connections between FE colleges and their local areas, through the origin of their students, may prove a useful opportunity for further work to be developed in this area.

Arts organisations, employers and commissioners

None of the projects worked directly with public agencies who fund and commission arts activity in participatory settings, but five worked with arts organisations who commission and employ artists undertaking work in participatory settings. The key learning from these projects in respect of arts organisations, employers and commissioners is:

- Arts organisations are not averse to engaging with trainee practitioners through placements or visits, and understand the value to both the practitioner and (perhaps in the longer run) to the organisation. However, careful preparation and organisation are considered important, as are clear guidance and a statement of expectation for all parties. There are potentially some costs involved in supporting this kind of opportunity from the perspective of the arts organisations, and individual organisational capacity to absorb these may vary significantly.
- Opportunities to share experiences from the artist practitioner and employer/commissioner side seem to be particularly valuable. Two projects succeeded in doing so: one through a separated process in which the two groups did not meet and the other through a format in which the commissioners appeared as 'peers' and the discussion space was specifically separated from any day-to-day working context. Potentially, such approaches benefit both sides, and may affect both individual professional development as well as policy development within organisations.
- The skills and experiences of individuals working regularly within arts organisations and employing/commissioning artists to undertake work in participatory settings is an important area of potential focus when considering what could improve the experiences and development of artists and, ultimately, of participants.

- On the whole, employers do not appear to have clear views on the specific qualifications and training routes which they may prefer artists working in participatory settings to demonstrate. This seems to reflect the multiple and complex routes through which many artists come to this practice. However, specific courses and training routes do exist, and more are emerging in this area. There are interesting questions about what arts organisations should know about training and qualification pathways, and about what this absence of a clear view might mean for young people interested in pursuing a career in this area.

Communities

One project (Anna Lopez) included work with a community group as part of their activity. The key findings from this project in respect of communities are:

- A positive experience for a group of 'pre-practitioners' could also be a positive experience for the community group, which has committed resources to a second stage of the pilot project with a local artist and engaged further with the FE partner.

4.4. Opportunities and challenges

This section briefly discusses some of the assets which have emerged from the development grants, and some of the issues and challenges which these projects have prompted.

Project outputs

The seven projects have all, to some extent, been research and development projects. Individual projects began at different points in the process of testing their propositions, and therefore have produced different outputs and assets which could be further explored or developed.

Research projects

Both Heads Together and Trinity Laban undertook research projects, with a clear research question and a methodology which sought primarily to gain an answer but not necessarily test a solution to a perceived problem. The Trinity Laban project did elicit some indications of areas in which arts project managers might benefit from professional development support in the future, as the Heads Together project revealed how valuable the opportunity to talk about careers and visit institutions was for the participating young people. Neither project has sought to offer a particular model for future CPD or careers development. Rather, they have tested the proposition that there is a *need* which should be addressed.

Testing the feasibility of a solution

Both B Arts Ltd (with Staffordshire University) and the PAC project began with a solution in mind (placements and a network providing visit opportunities) and focused primarily on discussions and consultation to develop a workable version of that solution. The PAC project has, in part, tested the enthusiasm and need for the solution it proposes; B Arts Ltd had, to some extent, already done this with its previous pilot. Both projects are effectively produced models which are tested in theory, and which – at a next stage – could be tested in practice.

Testing a solution in practice

The Creative Retreat project, the University of Hull Associate Artist scheme and Anna Lopez's project with FE students, Create 4 Change, all test a solution with 'real' participants. Each offers a model of delivery and a relationship with the participants, and has sought feedback on that model from both delivery partners and those participating. In the case of the Creative Retreat, the delivery model is quite precise, and is the primary output of the project. For the University of Hull, while the model remained important, the building of a relationship with and between a group of artists within the context of a research environment was the primary output being considered and tested. This is reflected in the University's plans for taking the learning forward. For Anna Lopez, similarly there may be other delivery models which could be considered in the future, but the principle of connecting students, creative practice and a community group is the model which primarily has been tested here.

4.5. Questions for the future

The project outputs discussed here include evidence of need and gaps in provision, solutions tested in principle and in practice, as well as some new relationships and partnerships. Organisations and individuals who have led projects report changes in their knowledge and understanding, in some cases prompting them to consider what they might change about existing activities they run or the way in which they respond to artists or other groups.

There remain two significant issues for most of the projects in terms of the capacity to apply new knowledge and understanding: scale a model up or take a solution from theory to practice.

Resources

All of the projects demonstrated that a relatively small grant can be enough to explore a focused issue or pilot a solution. However, it is worth noting that several reported that the grant did not cover the full resource costs of undertaking the work – organisations and individuals put in time and, in some cases, other resources to enable projects to be undertaken (for example, both the Creative Retreat and Anna Lopez's project required some significant staff time in development and support). At this level, this is a reasonable expectation; but if projects are to be 'scaled up' or rolled out more widely, then this can put pressure on the allocation of existing resources as well as requiring additional investment for capital or other dedicated support. In some cases, projects are using this pilot to make the case internally for attention and response (for example, in the case of the University of Hull's project, which is being used to influence the development of courses). In others, the potential costs and business models for resourcing bigger or wider versions of pilot activity were not explored in detail through the project.

Responsibility

Included in the question of where future resource comes from is the issue of whose responsibility it is to take forward the learning, models and partnerships which have emerged from these seven projects. As already noted, in most cases projects have generated learning which they will put to use within their organisations, and some already note specific plans for taking forward both learning and models (such as the University of Hull, the B Arts Ltd project which has a second phase of the pilot to run, Anna Lopez's project which has secured funding from a community group for a

second phase). Others are able to identify clear recommendations for the future but, as yet, do not have the resources to pursue them. In some examples, such as for Heads Together's learning on career pathways and guidance for young people, some of the learning extends beyond what could be influenced or effected by that organisation.

In taking the learning forward, it will be crucial for individual projects to engage in dissemination amongst their own networks, and to be prepared to consider and act upon areas of their own organisation and immediate networks where they are able to influence change or bring about new opportunities. Some projects may specifically seek additional resources to pursue the development of models tested in these development awards.

More widely, it is important that the ArtWorks initiative recognises and supports the dissemination of the learning, considers the ramifications of this learning for its own planned activities, and takes on (where possible) the broader role of raising and leading discussions about responsibility for action in different parts of the system.

5.   Reprising the conversation

5.1.   This report seeks to summarise some of the learning to date from the Changing the Conversation conference and the Development Awards, and to share this with a wider community of interest in order to further debate and encourage adoption of some of the learning.

5.2.   This work is of crucial importance as we enter our final year. As noted in the learning from the Development Awards, it is important that the ArtWorks initiative recognises and supports the dissemination of the learning, considers the ramifications of this learning for its own planned activities, and takes on (where possible) the broader role of raising and leading discussions about responsibility for action in different parts of the system.

5.3.   The key themes emerging from Changing the Conversation, and from the Development Awards described, appear to suggest a series of challenges and opportunities that we can address together:

- Systemic change is hard for individuals and requires collaboration and open systems working that is premised on collectivity and shared responsibility. Dispersed leadership and a collective voice will be critical as we move forward together to develop the practice. The importance of artists and individuals who bridge different parts of the system is clear and is potentially one of the keys to the changes we are seeking.

- Finding new ways of doing things and new thinking is possible, as the projects demonstrate. But this is resource intensive and requires us to work together to generate the partnerships, share the learning and develop cross disciplinary working. There are also challenges around the process of changing or adding to course content – through placements, visits and other 'real experience' opportunities. This is something which participating HEIs were positive about, but the practical process of embedding these is complex and requires significant work and lead-in time.

- The sustainability of initiatives is a particular issue and we need to think beyond special/project funding, and think about the way the current system and structure deals with the investment it already has. Focusing more on how we can maximise resources in a cross sector way may help us to future proof the interventions and generate better infrastructure.

5.4.   The findings from the development projects raise questions that can be further debated at the sharing event on 1 April 2014, specifically:

- ***Resources:*** *Where can the resources come from to support the 'scaling up' and roll out of models?*
- ***Responsibility:*** *Whose responsibility it is to take forward the learning, models and partnerships which have emerged from these seven projects?*