

NOVEMBER 2022

EVALUATION OF THE CREATIVE COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME

Phase Three

INSPIRING SCOTLAND



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all of the projects who took part in this evaluation, during a busy and pressured time. This evaluation would not have been possible without you.



This report was produced by Katy MacMillan, Research Scotland.

CONTENTS

01	Introduction	1
02	Participants and activities	4
03	Impact on participants	11
04	Impact on sector	19
05	Ways of working	28
06	Conclusions	32

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

About this report

This report sets out findings from an evaluation of Phase Three of the Creative Communities Programme. It explores:

- who took part
- impact on participants
- impact on the sector
- what worked well and lessons learned.

Context

The Creative Communities Programme was launched in 2020 and forms a key part of the Culture Strategy for Scotland.

Creative Communities aims to support and empower communities to develop cultural activities. It seeks to extend high quality opportunities for people to take part in culture, including in areas with more limited opportunities and lower levels of cultural engagement. It also supports cultural projects that produce positive outcomes for young people at risk of re-offending.

Creative Communities is funded jointly by the Culture and Justice Directorates of the Scottish Government and managed by Inspiring Scotland. It forms a key part of the Culture Strategy for Scotland.

The Creative Communities programme ran in three phases:

- Phase One ran from November 2020 to July/ August 2021 and was evaluated in late 2021.
- Phase Two ran from March 2021 to March 2022, using an additional payment of £500,000 from the Scottish Government's Emergency Covid-19 budget.
- Phase Three ran from July 2021 to July 2022.

Within the programme there is a focus on:



The Creative Communities Programme is based on the belief that it is communities themselves who are best placed to articulate their needs and how to meet them. The Programme is therefore deliberately flexible, supporting a range of different initiatives and outcomes.

Participating projects

In the first phase of Creative Communities (2020/21) the programme funded 27 projects and provided 10 projects with development support and seed funding. Phase Three projects were selected from this initial batch of projects.

In Phase Three, Creative Communities worked with 33 projects:

- 18 organisations were fully funded
- 6 received development support with funding
- 3 received development support without funding
- 6 organisations took part as portfolio participants.

There were 26 applications for full funding, and 18 were approved. Of these, 6 received all of the funding they requested, and 12 received funding at approximately 70-80% of their requested amount. Fully funded organisations received amounts ranging from approximately £15,000 to £35,000.

There were 8 applications for development funding, and 5 were approved. Of these, 3 received all of the funding they requested, and two received 60-70% of their requested amount. Development funded organisations received just under £3,000 to £5,000. During Phase Three, one further organisation received development funding left over from Phase One – this was provided to a partner of the original applicant organisation, taking the total number of supported development organisations to six. The organisations which took part as portfolio participants benefited from connections with the programme and its networks, without receiving funding or development support.

Method

This evaluation focused on Phase Three of the Creative Communities programme. It involved:

- a desktop review of programme management information and reports from projects involved in Phase Three of Creative Communities
- four interviews with projects which received funding through the Creative Communities Programme.

The small sample of projects interviewed was independently selected, to ensure a reasonable mix of project types.

A full evaluation report on Phase One of Creative Communities has been produced separately, and is available online at:

<https://www.inspiringscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Research-Scotland-Evaluation-of-Creative-Communities-Phase-1-November-2021.pdf>



CHAPTER 2

PARTICIPANTS AND ACTIVITIES

Introduction

This chapter explores the number of participants, profile of participants and types of activity involved across the 18 fully funded projects during Phase Three of Creative Communities.

Participation numbers

Overall, through Phase Three of Creative Communities more than **8,900** participants took part in creative or cultural activities. This includes:

3,413

regular or repeat
participants

5,525

participants in
one-off events

56

volunteers

431

family members

Projects ranged in size, from 8 regular participants through to more than 1,700 regular participants. 13 projects held one-off events, with participant numbers ranging from 3 to more than 3,200.

Example: Templar Arts and Leisure Centre

The Create Growth: Seed Project run by Templar Arts and Leisure Centre had more than 3,200 participants in one-off events. Creative activities were tailored to the needs and interests of participants, and included self-led art packs, drop in workshops including silver-smithing and sculpture, dance workshops for young people and a collaboration with Campbeltown Grammar School and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra to create new sound work.

Participant profile

Projects were able to gather information on the profile of participants from many, but not all, of the participants they engaged with.

Age

During Phase Three, more than three quarters of all participants, for whom age was known, were children and young people. This compares with half of all participants being 0-18 during Phase One of the programme.



Example: An Lanntair

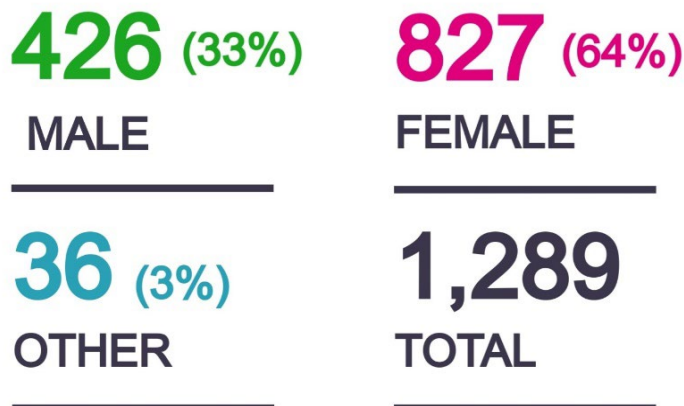
The Creative Connections Western Isles project run by An Lanntair involved 136 people aged 60 and over. It involved four blocks of workshops, each running for six weeks, which were open to anyone aged over 60 who felt isolated. The workshops ran in person and online, and explored activities such as exploring fabric, printmaking, ceramics, wildlife mapping, stories and jewellery making.

An additional series of four workshops was delivered, led by four Uist based artists, exploring cyanotype, ceramics, drawing and painting. The project also created a community art project – The Flock – through distributing knitting packs to enable people to knit sheep, to be exhibited at An Lanntair.

Gender

Gender was known for a small number of participants in Phase Three (1,289), and was not known for most (3,665). Where information is available, it indicates a similar pattern to Phase One participants. Almost two thirds of participants were female and a third were male.

A higher proportion of participants in Phase Three identified as another gender identity than in Phase 1 – 3% compared with 1%.



However, this information should be treated with caution due to the large proportion for whom gender information was not known or not gathered.

Almost all of the projects that had worked with participants had worked with both males and females, with the exception of one project which focused its activity on women.

**Example:
Stellar Quines
Theatre
Company**

The Stepping Up, Stepping Out project run by Stellar Quines Theatre Company worked with 22 regular attendees, all of whom were women living in an area of socio-economic deprivation. Participants included young mothers. The project supported women to get back to normal life after the pandemic, using techniques such as creative games, theatre making, creative writing and production of a short film titled 'Emergence'. The project also involved two trips – to a theatre and a family park.

**Example:
Glass
Performance**

The Women Talk project run by Glass Performance worked with 26 people involved in the justice system, predominantly women.

Artists from Glass Performance worked with participants, all serving sentences at HMP Polmont Prison, to research, produce, and record 12 episodes of 'Women Talk' for the prison radio. The 1.5 hour-long episodes included interviews, discussion, and music and were broadcast to the prison population daily via TV screens in rooms and communal areas.

Of a possible 100 participants in the women's wing of the prison, 26 took part by creating content for Women Talk. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 60. The artists and participants were supported by the Prison's Media Centre

to produce content for the show, while project partner Barnardo's supported the artists in ensuring a trauma-centred approach was adopted.

However, the title of the project was explored as some participants identified as trans or non-binary. The project provided a space to discuss matters which could be difficult to raise in the prison, for example providing a vehicle to raise awareness about the issues facing them as a trans-person in a women's wing.

Ethnic origin

Ethnic origin information was not available for most participants in Phase Three (4,441). Information was available for 1,292 participants.

93 (7%)

ASIAN

63 (5%)

BLACK

21 (2%)

MIXED

1,115 (86%)

WHITE

1,292

TOTAL

Overall the available data, for a small number of participants, indicates that 86% of participants were white and 14% were minority ethnic. This compares with 8% of participants being minority ethnic in Phase 1. For wider comparison, at the time of the 2011 Census, 96% of Scotland's population was white.

Example: Stronger Together Enterprise

The Now You See Me project run by Stronger Together Enterprise involved artist led drama and dance classes for minority ethnic children and young people. Activities were delivered in person, after starting online due to Covid restrictions. As well as a desire to provide structured opportunities for young people, a key aim was to change perceptions amongst parents, encouraging them to see the arts and creativity as important and valid subjects. At least 12 of the participants have progressed into college with the aim of following drama as a career.

Example: Maryhill

The Museum of Things project run by Maryhill Integration Network involved work with asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and settled inhabitants of Glasgow. Participants came together for creative sessions including drawing, photography, building canvases, painting, wire sculptures,

Integration Network

life drawing from museum artefacts, ceramic techniques animation and graphic design. The work was led by artists with refugee backgrounds, to encourage empathy and understanding with participants. The group won a competition to design the branding for the 2022 Refugee Festival.

Wider profile

In addition, projects gathered wider data which highlights that at least:

346

participants had mental health needs

248

participants were disabled

43

participants had experience of the justice system

15

participants had addiction issues

108

participants had other conditions

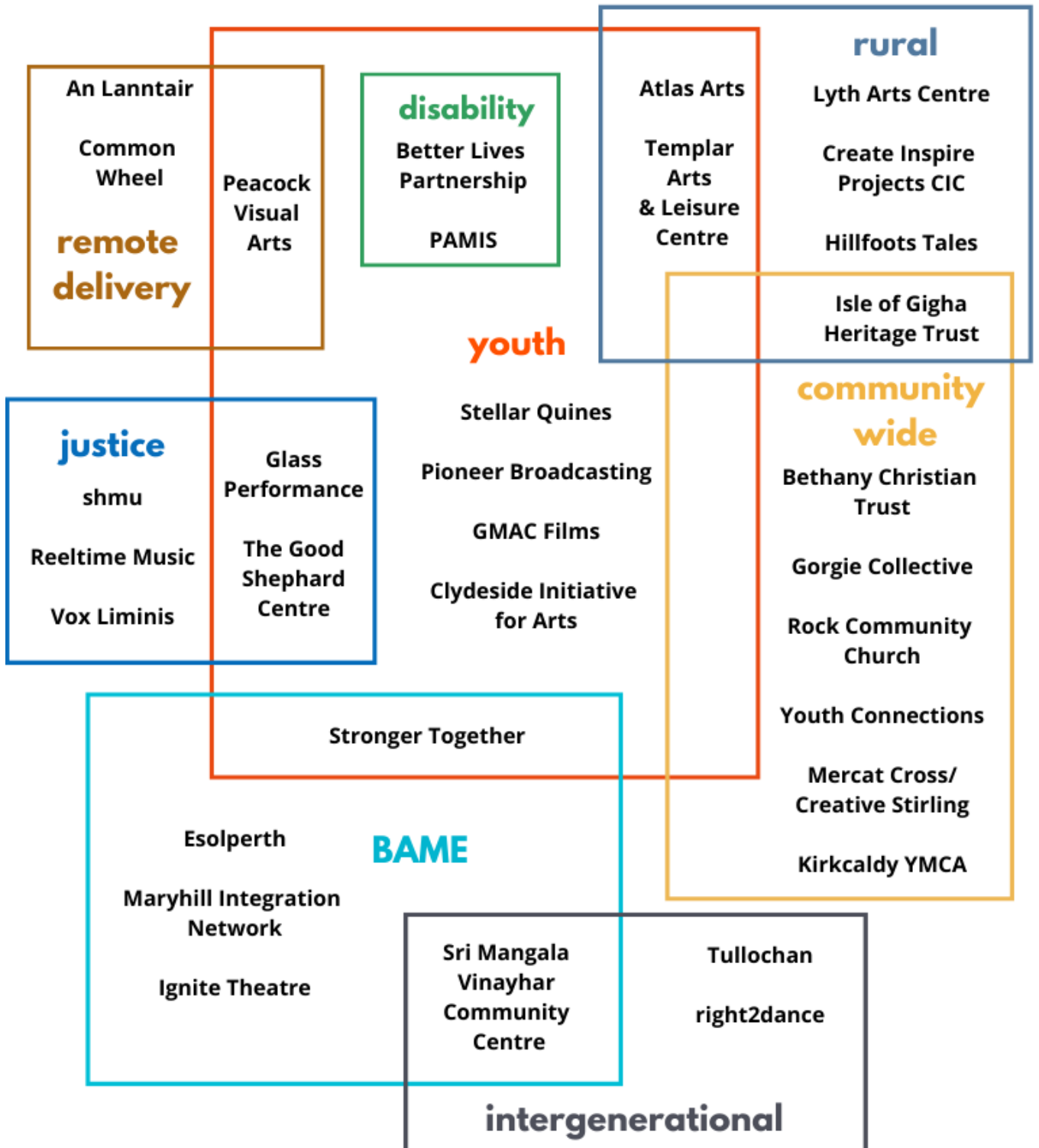
Example: Better Lives Partnership

The Bridge to Creative (B2C) project run by the Better Lives Partnership worked with 65 young people with autism or additional support needs. Young people are supported by workers to develop personal plans to set targets and outcomes, and creative activities designed and delivered to meet individual interests. Participants were able to try new things, find out for themselves what interested them and decide what they might take forward in further sessions.

Example: Promoting A More Inclusive Society (PAMIS)

PAMIS supports people with profound and multiple learning disabilities - their families, carers and professionals. This project involved delivery of workshops in which an artist worked with three family carers for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities in order to develop their creative storytelling and help them create self-directed resources for families in their care, as well as work with local schools.

Projects worked with a wide range of participants, with different experiences and needs. The analysis below, by Inspiring Scotland, demonstrates the reach of the projects (both funded and projects provided with development support).



Activities

Overall, the funded activity involved more than **3,700** hours of artist led classes workshops or tutorials.

Example: Tullochan

The Furniture Fix and Design Store project run by Tullochan involved 1,125 hours of artist led classes, workshops and tutorials. A wide range of hands-on creative activities were offered, including furniture and fashion upcycling, sewing and embroidery, photography, picture framing and art using natural materials. A 'fidget blanket' project to design and create patchwork blankets took place with young participants and older people living with dementia, allowing for inter-generational engagement.

Example: Youth Connections

The Power to Change project run by Youth Connections involved over 200 hours of artist led classes, workshops and tutorials. In collaboration with Larkfield Housing Association, the project involved artists working with a landscape artist and local residents to transform a neglected area of land into a community space. In addition, the project involved music and song-writing sessions, and production of songs about the community of Larkfield.

Example: Kirkcaldy YMCA

The Finely Tuned project run by Kirkcaldy YMCA involved more than 460 hours of artist led classes, workshops and tutorials. The project involved two creative groups – Finely Tuned music group, and Craft and Creative community craft group. The music group involved the writing of numerous original songs, while the craft group explored creativity with paint, watercolours and craft materials, along with new skills such as crocheting. The activities emerged through consultation with participants at the beginning, exploring what skills they wanted to develop and what activities they were interested in.



CHAPTER 3

IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS

Introduction

This chapter explores the impact on participants in Phase Three of the Creative Communities Programme.

This chapter explores impact around five key themes:

- Increased participation in culture
- Improved mental wellbeing
- Reduced loneliness
- Justice and communities
- Skills and aspirations.

Increased participation in culture

4,878 participants increased their participation in cultural acts and **5,389** increased their attendance at cultural events through Creative Communities Phase Three projects.

All projects indicated that they were providing an opportunity for people to engage in creative arts that they would not have had otherwise, allowing people to try something new and feel joy and pride in taking part.

“We’ve got a lot of young people who are now engaged in creative work who wouldn’t have been beforehand and wouldn’t even have aspired to be.” **Project lead**

“You spread joy and help folks get connected to their creativity - such a cool local project”. **Participant**

“The best thing was giving young people that passion and interest which helps them to get out bed in the morning and enjoy life.” **Project lead**

Example: Peacock Visual Arts

Peacock Visual Arts developed Boredom Boxes for young people aged 11 plus, providing self-directed inspiration, activities and resources. The boxes were distributed to young people via existing support networks, including social work teams, women’s groups, charities and schools. By working with trusted partners, Peacock Visual Arts were able to reach a much larger audience.

Removing physical and psychological barriers to engaging with artistic and creative activities has meant that many vulnerable young people who otherwise would not have access to high quality creative resources have been able to take part in artistic development. The activities within the boxes allow for free expression and encourage users to make their own interpretation of the instructions at a level suitable for their own abilities and competence, giving an avenue for expression and increased self esteem.

Children and families have commented that the boxes are amazing and that they would struggle to buy many of the materials due to limited finances.

Wellbeing

887 participants improved their mental wellbeing through Creative Communities projects.

There was evidence that activity was supporting participants to build their confidence and self-esteem, and feel happy and relaxed.

“ I feel more confident and relaxed.” **Participant**

“ This group makes me happier, I love my friends in the group, I love what I learn here.” **Participant**

This confidence also encouraged participants to try new activities more widely, and feel more confident in new environments. Projects highlighted that this was particularly important in recovering from the pandemic, through helping participants return to social and group activities, communicate, build positive relationships and alleviate their social anxiety.

“ I would typically have panic attacks in the morning before coming because my anxiety is so awful, and at times I'd be very internally panicked, but I always still managed to come because I loved learning here.” **Participant**

Participants also highlighted the impact that taking part had on their mental health. Some found the activities helped with relaxation, expression and emotional management.

“ Shutting out all your thoughts, cares etc and just creating, playing with crafts, with your hands.” **Participant**

**Example:
Common
Wheel**

The MultiStory project run by Common Wheel supported people with their mental health through providing artist led creative writing workshops and self directed activities using specially put together writing packs. The activity took place in the community, through psychiatric referral units, and on psychiatric wards. The pilot illustrated potential, with several participants reporting feeling that their quality of life and engagement with services improved following creative sessions. Some continued with creative writing activity after the sessions.

**Example: The
Good
Shepherd
Centre**

The Good Shepherd Centre (GSC) supports vulnerable young people aged 12 – 18 through providing secure residential care. Through its Creativity Hub project, it offered artist-led classes and workshops along with drama and sound creation workshops.

Periods of isolation from peers and family members during the pandemic detrimentally impacted young people's mental health and wellbeing, but as restrictions lifted young people began participating in activities. The activities allowed young people at GSC to participate in creative arts for the first time, learn new skills, express their feelings, and discover previously unknown talents through their willingness to be experimental, imaginative and creative.

Through the activities, young people developed strategies and tools to regulate their mood, behaviours and emotions. Evidence from the Good Shepherd Centre's evaluation scale shows that the sessions contributed to improvements in participant mental health and wellbeing, as well as pride in achievements, growing confidence and self-esteem.

Reduced loneliness and connections

806 participants reported reduced loneliness through Phase Three Creative Communities projects.

There was a good body of evidence from participants that the Creative Communities activities helped to build connections, friendships and relationships. Through taking part in creative activities together, it helped to build trust between participants, encourage natural social interaction, and support participants to learn and share with one another. Participants developed networks and bonds, bringing together people who had been isolated in a welcoming and supportive environment.

“ I connected with other people on the workshop who have similar to interests to me." **Participant**

“The friendship of the other participants was something to look forward to each week... For a few hours a week we could immerse ourselves in our projects and feel connected to each other through them.” **Participant**

Projects found that this was particularly important in supporting emergence and recovery from the pandemic. Through creativity, people developed their ability to re-engage and build social bonds and friendships.

“For the dance group this was the first thing they’d done together since lockdown so it was great for them to feel alive and free, and to move together.” **Project lead**

The activity also helped to bring together people who had many different cultural backgrounds and life experiences. It also helped people to explore and find their identities, and connect with others.

“When you are a refugee, it’s like you have lost your identity. By doing something collectively and making art together that will be shared with other people in Scotland, it’s given us back our sense of identity.” **Participant**

Projects also highlighted that through bringing people together and fostering interest in creative activity, they helped to establish communities of people who were interested to go on and do more creative activity collectively.

**Example:
Stellar Quines
Theatre
Company**

The Stepping Up, Stepping Out project run by Stellar Quines Theatre Company found that at the end of the project, all participants who attended regularly said they felt less isolated as a result of participation. Women were able to make time and space to be together, to be creative and to learn about one another.

“I definitely learnt a lot about all the people who I got to meet...it was so nice to meet new people.” **Participant**

**Example:
Templar Arts
and Leisure
Centre (TALC)**

The Create Growth: Seed project run by TALC involved a wide range of activity to bring people together. One example is sound creation workshops which involved a group of teenage boys and young men who had struggled with their mental health during lockdown. Some were managing ongoing needs around ADHD and autism. Through bringing people together online and then in person, the project was able to gradually re-introduce social contact and provide a way back from isolation.

Justice and community contribution

At least **27** people were diverted from criminal behaviour through Creative Communities projects. Seven projects worked with participants that were at risk of or who had been involved in criminal behaviour, as part of their work.

Example: Glass Performance

The Women Talk project run by Glass Performance in an offender's institute found that participants felt that the project provided a unique opportunity to leave their rooms, socialise with others, learn new skills and build confidence. It enabled prison residents to grow, explore their own interests and have an individual and collective voice. This was important for people whose daily lives are dominated by authority, regulations and established conventions. Many participants felt that there was a sense of belonging which was fostered through the nurturing and accepting environment created by the Glass Performance staff.

“It’s good to build women, you know? And that’s what I think you’ve done.” **Participant**

“I feel like I’m not stuck in jail, if that makes sense.”
Participant

More widely, a range of projects reported building more ownership and connection with communities, fostering an awareness of local issues and supporting people to feel involved in their local area or community.

Example: Lyth Arts Centre

The Caithness Artists in Residence project run by Lyth Arts Centre involved artists working closely with community organisations to co-design activities including music, creative writing, poetry, painting, mosaic and mural painting. Artists worked closely with a wide range of organisations including mental health groups, youth clubs, nurseries and schools, and organisations supporting people new to the area. Participants reported raised awareness of local issues and feeling they have more agency in their community and future. One participant has applied to join the steering group for participatory police budgeting in Caithness after feeling more empowered to speak out about mental health challenges facing older men in the area.

**Example:
Clydeside
Initiative for
Arts**

Clydeside Initiative for Arts project involved creative workshops with 132 residents of Govan, Yorkhill and Partick around the theme of street art and murals. Over the course of the project, 16 public art installations were created, including murals on gable ends, shop sides, public green spaces, playgrounds, underpasses and derelict buildings.

The concept of 'street art' was recognised as potentially controversial from the outset, and so consequently a significant element of the project involved engaging with the local community formally and informally in dialogue about the work. Participants, artists, staff and wider stakeholders felt that the activities had improved and brightened up the physical environment, making the area look cared for and less neglected.

**Example:
Youth
Connections**

The Power to Change project run by Youth Connections supported people to take positive action to improve their local environment, by collaboratively transforming a neglected site within Larkfield. There was a particular focus on engaging young people to encourage a sense of ownership and reduce the risk of future anti-social behaviour. The project has provided an opportunity to begin meaningful discussions about the regeneration and development of the local area.

**Example:
Stronger
Together
Enterprise**

The Now You See Me project run by Stronger Together Enterprise found that many of the children participating were feeling very isolated by Covid restrictions. As in-person classes re-commenced, children began to make friends and socialise outwith the creative programme. Participants have also got involved in volunteering in the community and helping out with other activities.

Five young people now regularly volunteer with Stronger Together Enterprise, including organising activities for younger children. The project feels that some young people may have been prevented from being drawn into anti-social behaviour as an outlet for frustration and inactivity.

Skills and aspirations

Across the projects, participants reported a range of improved skills.

Participants talked about learning skills around working together, communicating, expressing themselves, socialising with others and talking to peers. Projects highlighted that these skills would be of direct benefit to further learning and employment, through developing soft skills which participants need to fulfil their potential.

“Creative activities provide an opportunity to work on the soft skills our young people need to take part well in some of the other courses.” **Fully funded project**

Participants also developed arts specific skills relevant to their project, including performance, drawing, ceramics, jewellery making, tracing, dancing, spray painting and writing. In a few cases, participants gained recognised qualifications, for example in Creative Expression.

There were examples of participants developing aspirations to stay involved in arts through further learning or careers development.

Example: Studying Art

One young person attended multiple Creative Communities workshops and was then mentored by staff and supported to apply to Glasgow School of Art. The application was successful and the young person has deferred her entry for a year in order to participate in the project's young artist scheme and become a trainee in workshop delivery for children.

One project found that their work had positively changed the perceptions of young people and parents in relation to the value of the arts and creativity as a route for learning and career development.

“One young person said that before the classes their parents would never have paid for them to attend something similar or even let them attend for free, and that changed completely and she's now going on to study an arts subject.” **Fully funded project**



**Example:
Glasgow
Media Access
Centre (GMAC)**

The GMAC Action project involved nine young participants from across Glasgow, taking part in eight days of activity in May 2022. Participants were all young people not yet in full-time education or employment, with three quarters also reporting a mental health issue.

Participants were introduced to filmmaking and documentary techniques, interviewing for film, technical skills involved in camera and sound work, and reviewing/editing footage. Three short films were produced by young participants over the course of the project, working to briefs supplied by GMAC's established community partners. Finally, a 'next steps' workshop introduced participants to training, education, and career pathways in the screen industry.

As a result of the project:

- 85% of participants reported being more likely to engage in new creative and cultural opportunities
- 88% of participants reported feeling more connected and part of a community
- Two participants progressed on to GMAC's British Film Institute Film Academy programme, a 16-week industry-recognised qualification
- Two participants joined GMAC's Youth Team
- Three participants are now studying Film and Television at college
- All the participants said their confidence improved.

"I have benefited from being on GMAC action as it's given me the confidence to know what I can do and to start applying for jobs to start my career." **Participant**

**Example:
Promoting A
More Inclusive
Society
(PAMIS)**

PAMIS worked with three family carers of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities to develop their creative skills. The project has enabled family carers to gain and enhance their skills, gain confidence, support their well-being, ease isolation and loneliness and build friendships. Individual family carers each discovered new skills and potential in themselves and were able to pass on the benefits of the process to many more people in their own communities – for example delivering sessions in nurseries, online and to education professionals.

CHAPTER 4

IMPACT ON SECTOR

Introduction

This chapter explores the impact of Phase Three of Creative Communities on the creative and community sector. It explores:

- employment opportunities created
- impact on funded organisations
- Impact on organisations receiving development support.

Employment opportunities

Through Phase Three of the Creative Communities programme:

112

artists were employed for 8,397 hours

22

community support workers were employed for 9,402 hours

10

trainees or interns were employed for 1,454 hours

This is an average of:

75

hours for each artist

427

hours for each community support worker

145

hours for each trainee or intern

Example: Tullochan

The Furniture Fix and Design Store project run by Tulloch was delivered by 4 community support workers who collectively were employed for 7,280 hours. The community support workers used creative activities as a catalyst to build relationships with young people and develop their skills and confidence around other areas of their life, including positive mental health, wellbeing, training, education or employment.

**Example:
Gorgie
Collective**

The Gorgie: Our Creative Place project run by Gorgie Collective was delivered by 2 community support workers employed for 944 hours, and seven artists employed for 123 hours in total. The project involved the installation of five permanent public artworks in Gorgie – the start of a Street Art Sculpture Trail – along with nine free creative workshops for adults in the local community and a pop-up public art event. This raised the profile of Gorgie Collective, with almost 500 new followers on social platforms in the past year and more than 1,000 unique web visits following the launch of the sculpture trail.

**Example: Lyth
Arts Centre**

The Caithness Community Artists in Residence project run by Lyth Arts Centre involved seven artists who were employed collectively for 1,860 hours. Artists worked directly with community organisations to co-design and review activities, exploring who may benefit from the activity, what activity they would like to take part in, and co-designing sessions and activities.

In addition, funding provided to development organisations impacted on support for at least 2 employees, 10 volunteers, 7 freelance artists, 3 teaching staff and 1 camera person.

Views on support to funded organisations

As part of this evaluation, feedback was gathered from a small number of fully funded organisations in relation to the support they received from Inspiring Scotland as part of the Creative Communities programme. Project leads were very positive about the support available, and felt that the Creative Communities team was always available, approachable, happy to discuss challenges, and that the relationship with them was supportive and productive.

**Example:
Support for
organisations**

One organisation highlighted that Inspiring Scotland had been able to offer some support around planning and governance, and provided advice about where to learn more. As a result this organisation able to organise some training locally for trustees that they hadn't known was available.

“I have to say that Inspiring Scotland was the most amazing funder we've ever worked with. They supported us beyond just money throughout the whole life of the project.” **Project lead**

“I've never had a funder that's been quite that hands on! They put me through my paces.” **Project lead**

“Other funders could learn from this – how not to just give the money away but to stay connected with the funded organisation and give them ongoing support.” **Project lead**

Organisations felt that the support offered was very useful, and covered helpful topics such as fundraising and evaluation. Organisations also valued the opportunity to network with other projects, and highlighted that this led to further conversations and discussions about potential joint work and sharing learning. A few highlighted that support was particularly useful for organisations which operated in rural areas and did not have access to a peer support network locally.

“It was really helpful to be included in a network and to be able to have that exchange of knowledge and experience – we don’t usually get that in our small rural community.” **Project lead**

Funded organisations indicated that the support had a positive impact on their organisation. Some found out about funding and development opportunities that they wouldn’t otherwise have known about, and some found that their organisation became stronger, more sustainable or expanded as a result of support with governance, planning, fundraising and evaluation. A few said that the support helped them to realise where their strengths lay as an organisation, and when to seek support.

However, some smaller organisations or those working with freelance staff found that it could be hard to free up time to attend sessions, and that sometimes attendance was voluntary in staff members’ own unpaid time.



Views on development support

Within the Creative Communities Phase Three portfolio:

- 6 organisations received development support with funding
- 3 organisations received development support without funding
- 6 organisations took part as portfolio participants.

Development support with funding

The six organisations who received development funding used this to develop and test ideas, including undertaking community engagement activity and events, research and development and organisational development. During Phase Three of Creative Communities, organisations could build on what had been learned in earlier phases, implement activity in trial mode, and position organisations as ready to roll out larger scale work in the future. Organisations also worked to establish how to reach those who need support the most, and clarify what would benefit communities most effectively – better understand needs.

Together the development organisations worked with approximately 300 participants on a regular or one-off basis.

Example: Create Inspire

Create Inspire Projects was able to run creative outreach workshops through the Creative Communities programme. It used seed funding and development support to research the potential need for outreach theatre arts programmes for young people in the northwest Highlands. Workshops were delivered using new creative content tailored to the specific needs of young people, and delivered through strong relationships with schools and community groups.

Example: Creative Stirling

Creative Stirling used the development funding to run a number of facilitated events and workshops designed to stimulate dialogue and interest in the regeneration of under used green spaces in Stirling city centre. The organisation found that through taking part in Creative Communities, it was more experienced and better equipped to liaise with and consult the local community. In particular, they learned how to explain that resident's views and ideas would be used as a catalyst for further funding and change, without making specific promises about improvements to the area which were outwith their control.

Through the support and experience of trying out the approach, Creative Stirling has continued this work strand. Additional external funding has been accessed allowing for further activity, including an exhibition and den-building workshop.

Each of the six funded organisations took up the chance to have a bespoke GrantFinder search created for them by the Creative Communities Facilitator. This is sent directly to each organisation weekly, with funding opportunities specific to their location and needs. Specialist funding guidance from knowledgeable Inspiring Scotland staff was also provided to a few organisations for insights into the Adapt and Thrive Fund and Inspiring Communities Fund. Organisations highlighted that they felt much more knowledgeable about funding options, and how to tailor funding applications to the needs of each funder.

Four of the organisations have accessed the Specialist Volunteer Network (some on multiple occasions) in Phase Three for, legal advice, accountancy support, tax advice, crowdfunding guidance, property and leasing advice.

During Phase 3, the Creative Communities programme also connected participants with technical website support. Three of the six organisations were connected with Scottish Tech Army for website creation or development.

Development organisations indicated that they highly valued the role Inspiring Scotland played. They found Inspiring Scotland to be communicative, readily available and flexible.

“I have been really impressed by the freshness of approach from the Creative Communities team. They do things a little differently from other funders, and I believe this is a good thing.” **Development organisation**

“They really listened – we could let them know ideas we weren’t really sure about and they’d get back to us on whether they were good enough.” **Development organisation**

“They’ve been the most transparent, supportive, funders we’ve had. We’ve not received this level of engagement with another funder.” **Development organisation**

Development organisations highlighted that Inspiring Scotland helped them to build their organisational resilience, by offering more than just funding. Inspiring Scotland was there to support, not just to check up, and organisations felt comfortable asking questions, exploring ideas and issues, and felt this gave them the time and space to explore and develop important strands of work.

“They have encouraged us to think in new ways, explore new ideas and concepts, and have confidence and pride in our mission.” **Development organisation**

“Being part of the programme has given our organisation, and also community, great strength and resilience.” **Development organisation**

Organisations indicated that they felt supported, and could learn from one another in a positive and supportive community. They highly valued opportunities to connect and network with others in the portfolio, and felt part of a supportive community.

“It was so good to see what other communities were doing and to speak to them – that was really great, to see what works and the passion there is for this work.” **Development organisation**

“The ability to be part of the Creative Communities wider community cannot be understated for us.” **Development organisation**

Example: Hillfoots Tales

Hillfoots Tales used some of its development funding to develop into a Community Interest Company. It was matched with a facilitator and business coach, to help formalise the organisation and create more support for the lead volunteer. The facilitator ran two development days, and the support has resulted in designated roles for each of the volunteers, a commitment to engaging new volunteers, and a shared workload. The organisation now delivers professional storytelling workshops for wellbeing, and fortnightly storytelling sessions.

“Being part of the programme has helped us immensely to build the strength and resilience of Hillfoots Tales. It has given us the direction we needed so that we have now become a recognised Community Interest Company.”

Development organisation

Development support no funding

Three organisations accessed development support without funding. Projects indicated that they attended portfolio training sessions, attended one-to-one development support sessions with Creative Communities staff, were signposted to other organisations to work with and learn from, used the Resource Newsletter and used the bespoke GrantFinder Search offer and made connections and networked with the wider portfolio via Slack or at portfolio events.

All were found to be useful and informative. Training sessions were felt to be well planned, with the right balance between break-out time and more led sections. The portfolio sessions helped to provide information on areas such as digital support, funding and evaluation which have been useful. One organisation suggested it would be useful if wider members of their team could access these sessions too.

“It has helped to highlight new areas for support and funding and we have explored some of these areas and will look into others in the future.” **Development organisation**

Projects found the Inspiring Scotland team supportive, approachable and helpful, providing great advice, which could lead to potentially exciting new work in the future. A few also highlighted that being part of the Creative Communities programme helped to raise the profile of their organisation.

“Having Creative Communities shout about our work on social media and in newsletters definitely helped raise awareness and get the word out.” **Development organisation**

Portfolio participants

Portfolio participants also indicated that they accessed a wide range of sessions and resources. Projects attended training sessions and one-to-one development sessions. Portfolio participants also used the Resource newsletter, used the bespoke GrantFinder Search offer and connected and networked via Slack and at portfolio events. All were found to be very useful.

Portfolio participants found that training sessions helped them to hear from other partners about how they were approaching their work and managing challenges. Speakers on topics like evaluation and reporting were valued, and participants felt the sessions were well run. Portfolio participants enjoyed that the focus was on sharing experiences, issues and successes. At the sessions, organisations connected to organisations doing similar work. A few indicated that they had good conversations with other portfolio members outwith planned sessions, and had learned from them or planned to work with them in the future.

“I found the celebration event a great day to connect with organisations doing similar work to me.” **Portfolio participant**

“Being part of the Partner Portfolio allowed us to learn from others and build on our strengths and feel part of a wider community trying to navigate delivering creative projects during the pandemic.” **Portfolio participant**

Being part of the portfolio also gave participants confidence and reassurance.

“Knowing that the support is there should we need it has been very reassuring.” **Portfolio participant**

“I really value all the support of Inspiring Scotland and being part of the portfolio, and having access to all the opportunities that arise from that.” **Portfolio participant**

Portfolio participants felt that the one-to-one sessions were very useful, supportive and informative. Participants valued that the focus was on supporting them to plan and deliver, and felt that the Creative Communities team was a place they could go to for support and advice.

“We have found Creative Communities to be a very supportive and passionate funder.” **Portfolio participant**

Portfolio participants also mentioned that the Slack channel was useful for follow up conversation. Through this, participants looked at potential future collaboration with other members of the portfolio and shared advice with current projects.

Overall, portfolio participants felt that being part of the portfolio helped to build the strength and resilience of the project and the organisation.

“Being part of the programme has certainly helped us be more connected to the participatory arts sector and more aware of the support which is out there to deliver the work.” **Portfolio participant**

“...being part of the programme has certainly been hugely beneficial to me in my role and to the organisation more widely.” **Portfolio participant**

Ongoing impact

Through the Creative Communities programme, projects learned about delivery models, strengthened their approach and had the chance to try different things and explore what works. This learning was then applied to other projects and approaches within their organisations.

“There are so many things we’ve learnt from Inspiring Scotland that we are now applying to other projects.” **Project lead**

Some organisations felt that the Creative Communities work had strengthened their understanding of the value of the arts and creative approaches, and were now using creativity to achieve wider outcomes when working with their client groups.

“We’ve realised through this project the importance of creativity to everything that we do.” **Project lead**

A few projects mentioned that they found it challenging that the Creative Communities programme was not continuing, as it meant a loss of support and it was difficult to access funding through other routes. A few mentioned that it was often easier to get funding for new ideas, and it would be nice if they could access funding for their approaches that they tried out through Creative Communities, as there was evidence they worked well and got positive results.

“It would be nice not to have to re-invent the wheel every time and to be able to say ‘we have a formula that works really well and we get great results with it, can we have some more funding for it?’” **Project lead**

Example: Reeltime Music

Creative Communities funded an external evaluation of Reeltime’s music project for young people with care experience. Reeltime was part of the portfolio as a development organisation with a small amount of funding, and has now used this evaluation report on two occasions to apply for future funding.

Example: Better Lives Partnership

Better Lives Partnership has now embedded creative sessions in its core work, due to learning from the Creative Communities programme. It has also retained one creative practitioner on a permanent contract.

**Example:
Tullochan**

Through taking part in Creative Communities, Tullochan learned that the delivery of creative and practical activities were essential tools in their service delivery. Creative activities can enable youth workers to quickly engage with young people and act as a catalyst to effective provision of support.

**Example: Lyth
Arts Centre**

Lyth Arts Centre successfully brokered funding for further embedded arts activity from a local development trust and Highland Council, following on from its Creative Communities activities.

CHAPTER 5

WAYS OF WORKING

About this chapter

This chapter explores project planning and delivery, exploring success factors and lessons learned.

Success factors

Each project in the Creative Communities portfolio was different and experienced its own successes. However, some common themes are explored below.

Sociable activities

The social element of the activities was particularly valued by participants, particularly in the context of emerging from isolation as a result of Covid-19 related restrictions. Participants and project leads talked of bringing people together to undertake simple, sociable activities, with people progressing at their own pace, sharing and chatting. The social bonding which in-person activity brought about was felt to be a major benefit, and something which was very hard - if at all possible - to bring about in an online environment.

Projects also spoke of the value of inter-generational activity, and activity which brought together and supported whole families.

Person centred, flexible and co-producing approach

Most projects indicated that they took a person centred approach. This included:

- exploring needs and interests, and basing activity on these
- ensuring people could work at their own pace
- building project design on early learning and previous phases of work
- taking a creative, non-directive approach to enable participants to follow their own interests
- responding to participant needs, through flexing activity on an ongoing basis throughout delivery
- offering variety and choice so that participants can explore what is important to them, and make their own informed decisions about next stages of work.

Projects found that through offering people a say in the planning, design and delivery of activities, participants took ownership of the activities and felt empowered by the project.

Partnership

Some projects found that it was important to have a connection to particular community – a place of a community of interest.

A few projects found that it was important to have locally embedded organisations which are led and run by the communities they work with, particularly for getting people involved in activities and exploring needs. Trusted partners who were already working closely with target groups helped projects to reach a larger number of participants, and explore community needs. Working in partnership also meant that projects could link to and enhance existing community provision, in a complementary and collaborative way.

Wider success factors

A few projects felt that it was important to:

- get people outside, engaging with their communities or natural surroundings, their heritage and their place
- provide materials to help reduce barriers to participation.

Finally, projects felt that a key success factor was flexibility – among projects, Inspiring Scotland and Scottish Government – with projects being delivered during challenging and fast changing times.

“I think what we learned is just to be flexible with all these challenges, to make the best out of it and improve as we go.” **Project lead**

Example: Templar Arts and Leisure (TALC)

The Create Growth: Seed Project run by TALC involved young people in developing the concept of the Art Packs, as well as their development and distribution. The direction of the dance workshops was also led by a small group of participants, working with a professional teacher. Young people could also influence the project through their interests. For example, young people in the community expressed an interest in the environment and climate change and TALC’s Art Packs responded to this, with one featuring a solar-powered DIY artwork and another inspired by the environmentally-conscious work of Joseph Beuys.

Example: Tullochan

The Furniture Fix and Design Store project run by Tullochan involved regular engagement with young people to ensure the work was user-led. This involved regular one-to-one sessions with youth development workers, and the design of action plans which include personal goals. The shift to including a wider range of creative activities reflects the goals and interests of the young people involved.

**Example:
Clydeside
Initiative for
Arts**

Clydeside Initiative for Arts developed its activities based on consultation in the form of a survey which took place in three target communities – Govan, Yorkhill and Partick.

Residents were asked what they already knew and felt about SWG3, street art and graffiti, and what they wanted to see happen in their local area. This survey indicated murals were of most interest to the communities. Potential sites for murals were then identified in partnership with local residents. Time and pace were important factors in this project, requiring a flexible and responsive approach to allow communities to contribute on their own terms through both formal and informal methods.

Lessons learned

Overall, most projects felt that their Creative Communities Phase Three activity had been successful, and built a foundation of learning for their future activities.

The main learning during Phase Three related to emergence from the pandemic. Projects found that moving to introduce face-to-face and in-person work was hugely valuable, but created new challenges and adaptations to ways of working. Although participants were keen to take part in face to face activity, they were often much busier as the restrictions eased – and were juggling caring, school work and other priorities. Covid continued to affect attendance at groups, as people were ill or isolating. This was a particular issue in institutional settings such as prisons or hospitals – which were often still extremely stretched. Some people – particularly older people – remained cautious about mixing during 2021/22.

**Example:
Kirkcaldy
YMCA**

Kirkcaldy YMCA had planned to deliver a festival-style community event to reach more people within the community but ongoing Covid restrictions impacted their ability to deliver such an event this year.

Projects also noted that the needs of their participants had changed. They continued to see an impact on people's mental health and wellbeing, particularly among young people. Most felt that the support young people required to engage in activities had become more intensive, and support needed to be longer term in nature. The impact of isolation and increased anxiety meant that projects needed to work hard to get participants to a place where creative engagement could begin. As projects came to the end of their delivery, some were beginning to see an initial impact on the cost of living crisis on participants – for example in relation to travel, warmth and food.

Projects highlighted that through using remote and online approaches during the pandemic, they had used techniques that they would continue to use in the future. This included provision of resource boxes and activity packs, and blended online and face-to-face activities.

**Example:
Templar Arts
and Leisure
Centre (TALC)**

TALC continues to use a mix of remote, online and face-to-face approaches. It found that Art Packs were a very positive way of sustaining relationships and nurturing a creative journey for participants. It also found that a hybrid approach of online and face to face sessions meant that it could reach more remote communities. For example, now they might run a one-off in-person workshop in a more remote community but leave behind an Art Pack for further activity and stay in touch online once the relationship has been established.

“We can’t deliver workshops in-person every week somewhere like Islay for example, so we have to find ways of keeping in touch and working online or remotely.”

Project Lead

**Example:
Peacock
Visual Arts**

Though conceived as a lockdown project, the Boredom Boxes demonstrated that even during ‘normal’ conditions there is a demand and need for high quality creative resources for young people who face multiple barriers to participation.

**Example:
Stronger
Together
Enterprise**

Stronger Together Enterprise found that shifting from online to face-to-face delivery as restrictions reduced brought both benefits and challenges. Young people enjoyed the face-to-face sessions, but it was hard to accommodate all classes at the time participants wished. It also required more staff and volunteers than online delivery. Although it was not always possible for children who took part online to take part in person, due to logistics, the project did find that they engaged a much wider pool of young people from across Glasgow than they would have if they hadn’t used an online approach initially.

“Starting online allowed us to go wider as it meant we had kids from all over Glasgow taking part.” **Project Lead**

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Participants and activities

Phase Three of the Creative Communities programme ran from summer 2021 to summer 2022. More than **8,900** people took part in Phase Three of Creative Communities. Of these more than **3,400** were regular or repeat participants. Overall, the funded activity involved more than **3,700** hours of artist led classes, workshops or tutorials.

77%

of participants were 18 or under

almost

350

had mental health needs

64%

of participants were female

almost

250

were disabled

14%

of participants were minority ethnic

almost

60

had experience of justice or addiction

Impact on participants

4,878

participants increased their participation in cultural acts

887

participants improved their mental wellbeing

5,389

participants increased their attendance at cultural events

27

participants diverted from criminal behaviour

806

participants reduced their loneliness

“I feel more confident and relaxed.” **Participant**

“This group makes me happier, I love my friends in the group, I love what I learn here.” **Participant**

“The friendship of the other participants was something to look forward to each week... For a few hours a week we could immerse ourselves in our projects and feel connected to each other through them.” **Participant**

Impact on the sector

Through Phase Three of the Creative Communities programme:

112
artists
employed for
an average of

75
hours each

22
community support
workers employed for
an average of

427
hours each

10
trainees or interns
employed for an
average of

145
hours each

Organisations participating as fully funded organisations, development organisations with funding, development organisations without funding and portfolio participants were all very happy with the support they received from Inspiring Scotland as part of the Creative Communities programme. Projects felt that:

- help and advice was readily available from an approachable and supportive funder
- the support covered helpful topics and was delivered in an engaging way
- networking between portfolio members was helpful and enabled sharing of knowledge, experience or challenges.

Through the support, projects became stronger and more resilient including:

- trying out approaches, exploring what works and going on to apply this learning across the organisation
- feeling more confident about their use of creative approaches
- accessing support with governance, planning, fundraising and evaluation
- finding out about funding and development opportunities that they wouldn't otherwise have known about

- building the profile of their organisation, through being part of the Creative Communities programme
- connecting with others across the arts, creativity and third sectors.

“They have encouraged us to think in new ways, explore new ideas and concepts, and have confidence and pride in our mission.” **Development organisation**

“Being part of the programme has given our organisation, and also community, great strength and resilience.” **Development organisation**

Project delivery

Success factors

Key factors enabling successful project delivery included:

- providing sociable activities – as people emerge from the pandemic
- taking a person centred, flexible and co-produced approach
- strong partnerships to support connections to communities.

Lessons learned

Overall, most projects felt that their Creative Communities Phase Three activity had been successful, and built a foundation of learning for their future activities. The main learning during Phase Three related to emergence from the pandemic. Although participants were keen to take part in face to face activity, projects noted that:

- moving from online to face-to-face delivery required careful planning
- some participants remained cautious about mixing during 2021/22
- Covid-19 continued to affect attendance at groups.

Projects also noted that the needs of participants had changed, with a continued impact on mental health and wellbeing, particularly among young people. This created more need for intensive and longer term support. A few were beginning to see an initial impact of the cost of living crisis on participants, by summer 2022.

Many projects continued to use techniques that they had developed during the pandemic, using blended face-to-face, online and remote delivery.



INSPIRING SCOTLAND



creative
communities