

Be Creative Be Well

Arts, wellbeing and local communities

An evaluation



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Well London

The Well London Alliance Partnership has been awarded a Health Promotion and Community Wellbeing award from the Royal Society for Public Health. This award recognises the partnership's achievements and innovative approach to promoting community health and wellbeing in 20 of London's most disadvantaged areas.

‘If we are to reduce health inequities it is essential to take action on the social determinants of health – the ‘causes of the causes’ of ill health. That means working in partnership at local level to improve the social conditions in which we are born, live, grow, work and age. The Well London Alliance Partnership does just that. Empowering individuals and communities, and giving people a voice is integral to addressing health inequalities. I am delighted the Partnership has achieved well-deserved recognition for its work.’

Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Director, UCL Institute of Health Equity

Be Creative Be Well

‘I have no problem with what people call ‘instrumentalism’. So what if artists want to change the world through their practice? What’s so terrible about that?’

Karen Taylor, Programme Manager, Be Creative Be Well

Cover image: A local resident begins to dig out an Angel in Edmonton as part of the 100 Angels project (see page 51)

Photos: Bethany Clarke (unless otherwise stated)

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Foreword

This is an important report that describes and evaluates the Be Creative Be Well project and the key role it has played within the integrated, community-led Well London programme. The influence of Be Creative Be Well has been significant: not only in the direct impact it has had on working with communities over the three-and-a-half years of the project, but also in the contribution it has made, as a key theme, to the success of the overall Well London approach. The emerging evaluation of the Well London programme suggests that it has been highly effective in increasing community engagement and in improving health and wellbeing, in even the most deprived communities; this report highlights that the quality of the arts and cultural activity has an important relationship with the quality of that engagement.

This contribution continues to be highly relevant, perhaps even more so, in the current financial and economic climate and in the context of ongoing policy and organisational changes in the arts, health and related policy areas. This context has changed significantly since Well London and Be Creative Be Well were conceived. The rise in unemployment, the growth of personal debt, reductions in income and the problem of homelessness risk seriously undermining wellbeing, threaten community cohesion and are highly likely to lead to an increased demand for health, social and other public services. In this context, initiatives like this which increase local communities' engagement and ability to improve their individual and community's wellbeing and develop resilience, are all the more important.

Looking to the future, local government will have new responsibilities for public health and for commissioning for health improvement. We believe that this offers even greater opportunities for more integrated, local, community-focused interventions bringing together all aspects of wellbeing, from good health, community cohesion and resilience, to strong social networks, culture, arts and local economies. The learning detailed here will be even more important as a result.

In the words of the authors of this report: 'Be Creative Be Well represents a significant step forward in a growing dialogue between the arts and health professions, each having taken its own path to a common goal of promoting wellbeing.' As Well London moves into its second

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phase of development and Be Creative Be Well continues to be a key theme, we commend this report to all professionals and organisations that are concerned with the health and wellbeing of communities, including local government, NHS trusts, GPs, housing associations, organisations in the voluntary and private sectors, and artists and arts organisations. All of us have a commitment to reach out to and support communities – this work offers real inspiration about how we might do that with energy, with creativity and with a sense of shared purpose.

Moira Sinclair

Arts Council England
Area Executive Director, London

Gail Findlay

London Health Commission
Coordinator (until October 2011)

The report at a glance

An executive summary

What is it for?

Policy makers and academics are taking renewed interest in how people feel about themselves and their neighbours. For example, there is ongoing work into how to measure wellbeing and represent this in official statistics and debate continues on the factors that contribute to – and jeopardise – community cohesion. In many areas, local communities themselves are making clear their desire to be involved in opening up opportunities for a fuller life.

There is a growing body of evidence that creativity and the arts can make a significant difference to people's health and wellbeing – and also to how they feel about, and interact with, their neighbours. This report tells the story of Be Creative Be Well, one of the most ambitious grassroots arts and health programmes ever delivered in the UK. Written by independent evaluators, the report aims to:

- explore the range and depth of benefits potentially associated with artists working in close collaboration with local communities
- share new learning about factors that help – and hinder – successful collaboration of this kind
- contribute to the growing dialogue between arts and health professionals
- offer recommendations on how to ensure that the commissioning process is most likely to give rise to work that will result in a sustainable legacy

Who is it for?

The report will be of particular interest to:

- agencies at regional and local levels concerned with improving the health and wellbeing of disadvantaged communities and reducing health inequalities, such as public health departments, health and wellbeing boards, local authorities, mental health trusts and clinical commissioning groups
- agencies at national level that have an interest in empowering local communities and promoting community cohesion, such as Arts Council England, the Department of Health,

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the Department for Communities and Local Government, Public Health England and the National Mental Health Development Unit

- community arts practitioners and other artists who are interested in working with local communities
- public health professionals and GP practices interested in developing innovative ways of engaging and working with local people

Where did it come from?

In July 2007, the Big Lottery Fund announced that it was giving just under £9.5 million to finance a new four-year health and mental wellbeing programme called Well London. The successful application had come from the Well London Alliance, a group of agencies from different sectors across the capital that shared a vision of 'a world city of engaged local people and groups with the skills and confidence to improve their own physical health and mental wellbeing'.

The Well London programme included 14 projects. Some focused on support for community engagement and capacity building while others were based around five themes: culture and tradition, healthy eating, mental health and wellbeing, open spaces and physical activity. The culture and tradition theme was delivered through Be Creative Be Well, an ambitious programme developed by Arts Council England. However, creativity in the Well London programme was not confined to Be Creative Be Well – creative approaches were embedded throughout.

In 2010, Arts Council England commissioned an independent team to carry out an evaluation of Be Creative Be Well. This report describes the team's findings.

What is the key learning?

Be Creative Be Well was a wide-ranging innovative programme that, at its most effective, was shaped by local conditions and local people. Even when projects involved comparatively few residents, there were individual breakthroughs – people who were inspired to try new things, change jobs, refresh their outlook on life and gain useful creative skills. In nearly all the projects visited, there was a new sense of possibility evident in the neighbourhood – a hint of what could be.

This report analyses the achievements of Be Creative Be Well by combining evidence-based research into 'ways to wellbeing', developed by the new economics foundation, with published evidence of typical outcomes from good participatory arts practice. This gave the

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authors a robust framework for assessing how successful the programme was in encouraging behavioural change into healthier lifestyle choices and what particular contribution creativity and the arts had made to this process.

The experiences, challenges and achievements of the programme also reveal a great deal about how to make an arts intervention successful and sustainable. The following emerged as key learning points:

Defining the community

Do

Commissioners Aim to select a self-defining community

Artists Where possible, build on existing community resources

Don't

Commissioners Set up projects across split sites

Selecting the artist

Do

Commissioners Ensure that artist teams have skills in community development as well as their specific practice

Don't

Artists Set up an opposition between quality of artistic product and deep engagement with the community – the best projects seem to combine the two

Preparing the ground

Do

Commissioners Ensure that artist teams are briefed as fully as possible on how decisions are made locally, or outside of the community, and who holds the power

Commissioners/artists Make practical acknowledgement of the fact that it takes time to develop relationships and trust, and to establish what kind of activities local people would like to see and support

Artists Pay careful attention to finding a venue that local people will be happy to attend

Don't

Commissioners/artists Assume statistical demographic information will provide a clear picture of the communities involved

Commissioners/artists Raise unrealistic expectations of the project among local people

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Demystifying the artistic process

Do

Artists Begin by exploring participants' thoughts and feelings about their community and environment and focus on building on these

Artists Reflect on the questions: 'What difference do I hope to make?' and 'Why do I think what I'm planning to do will make that difference?'

Don't

Artists Set out an agenda of 'we are going to make art'

Working with local structures

Do

Commissioners/artists Make every effort to enlist the active support of local organisations – the 'familiar face on the estate' is often an invaluable aid to marketing the project

Commissioners/artists Think through the role that project partners are expected to play and use that analysis to identify the most appropriate partners

Artists Form mutually respectful and productive relationships with representatives of the local authority and other major agencies

Don't

Artists Try to set up activities without the support of local organisations, programme sponsors or project partners

Collaborative programming

Do

Commissioners/artists Make every effort to create good conditions for collaboration and joint working

Commissioners/artists Aim to develop opportunities for active and equal partnership

Artists Be clear about your own contribution to the collaborative work – including the nature of the energy you bring – and be explicit about your aspirations for joint working

Don't

Commissioners/artists Underestimate the challenges of bringing together very different discourses and approaches

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Building levels of engagement

Do

Artists In recruiting to the project, find good reasons for people to step out of their comfort zone on a cold night

Artists Prioritise face-to-face encounters with local people and use 'ambassadors' where you can

Don't

Artists Give in to the temptation of relying on conventional promotional approaches like flyers, posters and newsletters – they are rarely effective for community arts projects

Using evaluation

Do

Commissioners Structure programmes in such a way that projects are allowed to set their own tempo and find their own sense of direction and purpose

Artists Take opportunities to turn evaluation into a creative learning activity that has the potential to enhance your practice as well as the specific project

Don't

Commissioners/artists Over-consult local people so that gaining feedback gets in the way of developing the work

Leaving a legacy

Do

Commissioners Give priority to working with artists to identify how initiatives can be embedded systematically

Artists Throughout the project, build on opportunities to pass on skills – including fundraising and advocacy skills

Don't

Commissioners/artists Leave thinking about legacy until the last few months of the project

Introducing Be Creative Be Well

Good art and the social good

In January 2007, Arts Council England tendered to join Well London, an alliance of agencies brought together by the London Health Commission to explore new ways of improving the health and wellbeing of some of the poorest communities in the capital. By March 2011, a total of nearly £1.3 million from the Well London programme budget had been spent on implementing the Arts Council's Be Creative Be Well programme, which it had also helped to coordinate in several London boroughs.

Twenty of London's most disadvantaged areas were chosen to participate in the Well London programme. Here, the Be Creative Be Well leaders originated and developed a wide range of arts and cultural activities – around 100 different creative projects – in consultation with local residents and agencies. This programme aimed to engage communities and individuals in a process of change to improve health and environments, to increase community cohesion through intercultural and intergenerational projects, and to provide accessible, enjoyable, whole community activities. A 'one size fits all' approach was not taken. No artform was left untouched across the programme and local activities ranged from painting workshops to dance classes, parades to musicals, personal poetry to communal sculpture – and some way beyond.

Those leading the projects were equally various – individual artists from numerous professional disciplines, Arts Council-funded arts organisations, groups that had formed within the neighbourhood itself and even local enthusiasts with a strong creative streak. Each project developed in its own way – and did its own thing – but all of them shared a vision of how participatory arts could help people achieve greater wellbeing.

Be Creative Be Well represents a significant step forward in a growing dialogue between the arts and health professions. Each has taken its own path here to a common goal of promoting wellbeing. In health terms, when people are happy or fulfilled in themselves, keep fit and active and are actively engaged with others, they are less likely to present symptoms of poor

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mental health and, thus, may require fewer medical or institutional interventions. Although the Well London programme was predicated on medical research into factors affecting mental and physical health, no health professionals were involved in running the Be Creative Be Well strand. However, they will undoubtedly be interested in what has emerged from it, particularly at a policy level. There is a strong desire, in both medical and government circles, to encourage behavioural change towards healthier lifestyle choices. The role of creativity in this process was recognised and sometimes adopted by other Well London partners. The outcomes from artistic interventions across the whole programme, particularly in Be Creative Be Well, should therefore be of great interest to the health sector.

Well London and Be Creative Be Well are equally significant in terms of arts development. In the long-running debates about the role of the arts in society, it is increasingly accepted (and shown) that participation in creative activity can – on an individual and a communal basis – develop personal and social skills as well as technical or aesthetic knowledge. Thus, in a variety of social and institutional settings including schools, prisons and hospitals, artists are helping people to develop a range of positive behaviours, improving their ability to learn, to take responsibility, to act pro-socially, to take pleasure in creating things and so on. There is now a considerable body of research showing the positive impact of creative interventions in medical settings, much of which addresses improvements in patient wellbeing and their rate of recovery from illness. This is echoed by evidence from participatory and community-based arts, particularly from policy-driven interventions aimed at reducing social exclusion and building community cohesion that were put in place under the last Labour government. The political and economic context for the launch of Well London and Be Creative Be Well four years ago has now changed considerably, of course, but the outcomes of the programme should be of significant interest to the current coalition government that has identified happiness and wellbeing as a major policy issue. In its emphasis on ‘localism’ and on engaging participation, the programme may also contribute to realising some of the current government’s hopes for the Big Society.

For Arts Council England, Be Creative Be Well is arguably central to its core mission of achieving great art for everyone. The programme offered opportunities for arts participation where little currently exists. It tested not only the impact of creativity on individuals but whether, by encouraging individual creativity and personal confidence to emerge and flourish in a social (ie collaborative, cooperative) context, engaging in arts activity might help to strengthen neighbourly bonds and thus community cohesion. By giving local people a new or renewed sense of creativity, purpose and confidence, the programme might also leave a

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legacy, both in terms of wellbeing and of agency in a political sense, for individuals and the community as a whole.

Meeting the challenge of evaluation

This report is an independent evaluation of the Be Creative Be Well programme. Commissioned by Arts Council England, it is intended to complement the overall evaluation of Well London by the University of East London.

The delivery of the Well London programme was specifically designed to allow a rigorous evaluation, generating evidence about the impact of the programme on health and wellbeing. The research team at the University of East London, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and the University of Westminster used a community-randomised trial approach; each neighbourhood where Well London has been delivered was paired with a similar neighbourhood where nothing happened. The areas would then be compared in terms of health and wellbeing at the end of the trial. The University of East London has used a community survey to collect data to allow them to do this comparison. The evaluation has also involved qualitative research to understand people's experiences of Well London and how it might have affected their health and wellbeing. The final report on the evaluation is due in spring 2012.

The university also collected data on the programme structures and processes. Data from self-reported participant questionnaires tells us that throughout the life of the Well London project there were 14,772 participants. The data shows that 79 per cent of participants increased their levels of healthy eating, 77 per cent increased their physical activity and 82 per cent felt more or much more positive about life.

Of these, 3,862 participant engagements were with the Be Creative Be Well project. Some people may have attended more than one session, so the overall number of people reached is likely to be slightly fewer, but this reveals a high level of participation and suggests positive indications in that people came back to additional events. Among the people taking part specifically in Be Creative Be Well, 55 per cent reported an increase in healthy eating, 76 per cent an increase in physical activity, 48 per cent feel much more positive and a further 37 per cent feel more positive.

Our own evaluation brief has been rather different, requiring us to focus on the story of the programme, the qualitative outcomes of artistic engagement and its impact on wellbeing. So, rather than try to duplicate the work still being done by the University of East London research

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team in measuring the impact on wellbeing in terms of the five Well London targets, we explore the links between the process and outcomes of participatory arts work and creating the conditions for wellbeing, as evidenced in particular by the new economics foundation. The resulting report will, we very much hope, complement the university's social research approach. We should also point out that, due to budgetary constraints, we have had to focus on a limited but, we believe, representative set of case studies running during the third and final year of the programme, rather than attempt a comprehensive account of all the projects.

Our approach has been based on 'realistic evaluation', as defined by Ray Pawson and Nick Tilley in *Realistic Evaluation* (Sage, 1997). These authors focus on 'context-mechanism-outcome' pattern configurations, which helped us to draw out the lessons from Be Creative Be Well and to analyse its achievements.

The context-mechanism-outcome configuration is defined by Pawson and Tilley as 'a proposition stating what it is about a programme which works for whom in what circumstances' (*Realistic evaluation*, Sage, 1997, p.217). In the case of Be Creative Be Well, the programme itself posits the initial, 'conjectured' configuration or 'theory of change' – namely, that a creative or arts-based intervention in a particular community will enable it, and the individuals within it, to achieve higher levels of wellbeing, better mental health and wider participation in the arts.

We started out in the belief that there is a potential link between evidence-based benefits for people from participating in arts activity and actions that have been shown to promote health and mental wellbeing. We argue here that the two themes we were tasked to explore – improvements in health and wellbeing and greater engagement in the arts – are closely intertwined: the better the creative engagement, the more likely it is to lead to healthy outcomes.

We set out to test these assumptions through a close analysis of what actually happened, in all its local detail, in a dozen projects run during the third and final year of the Be Creative Be Well programme. In Pawson and Tilley's terms, we wanted to 'refine' our initial configuration: our task was 'not to hypothesize or demonstrate the constant conjunction whereby programme X produces outcome Y'. We share Pawson and Tilley's view that social interventions should be viewed 'internally' as they are 'always embedded in a range of attitudinal, individual, institutional, and societal processes' (*Realistic evaluation*, Sage, 1997, p.216). We therefore did not look for a facile 'what will work everywhere' formula but a more nuanced analysis, out of which we have drawn recommendations that acknowledge the

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opportunities and threats that such programmes as these will need to engage with in the real world.

The report we have produced follows the context-mechanism-outcome pattern. We begin by setting out the context or, rather, contexts for the Well London programme and its Be Creative Be Well strand. On the one hand is the physical nature of the chosen area for activity, which may entirely or partly consist of social housing. There is also a political context, not just locally but also in terms of arts and health policy. This 'meta-analysis' is then mirrored at ground level in individual case studies, where we try to outline the concrete conditions into which the programme 'mechanism' was inserted. As realist evaluators we sought through this study to better understand 'for whom and in what circumstances' a programme like this might work.

After setting out the context, we address mechanisms. In Pawson and Tilley's terms, we try to show how the 'causal mechanisms' which generate social and behavioural problems are removed or countered through the alternative causal mechanisms introduced in a social programme. In other words, we set out to analyse how (and how far) the commissioned artists and the artistic process itself worked to change patterns of behaviour relating to health and wellbeing, as well as to engagement in creativity. We discuss this in general terms but try to base as much of our analysis as possible on what we saw, heard and read about actual projects from residents, artists and other stakeholders. The case studies act here as anecdotes, which have been theorised as 'access to the real': that is, opening a window onto the reality of the work. These illustrate our account of how artists addressed the causal mechanisms generating health problems, from poor housing to a lack of exercise.

Finally, we examine a range of outcomes, as far as they are understood at this early stage, in terms of what they can tell the reader and us about how our theory of change works, or fails to work, across a range of contexts. In the process, we also pass on some transferable recommendations on future practice and future commissioning, as we believe that a fundamental purpose of evaluation is improvement through learning.

Good art and the social good

Our report is, on the one hand, an extended snapshot of the final year of Be Creative Be Well. We visited projects as they were taking place, during the final year of this three-year programme and talked to artists, local people and staff from other agencies in the community about what had been happening and what it felt like to be engaged in artistic activity. None of the team has ever lived in social housing or in poverty so this was a steep learning curve for

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us. In writing this report, we are very aware of the thin line between empathy and patronage and hope we have not crossed it.

The conversations we had and the reports that each project team sent in over the last year have helped us to identify not just what has been achieved but, more broadly, what has been learned in the course of meeting such a complex and challenging brief. This gives our report its second important function: it is a diagnosis as well as a portrait.

We have set out to draw out the learning from Be Creative Be Well for the Arts Council, for its partners in Well London and for those who we hope will continue to commission and deliver this kind of work. We try to show what impact the programme has already had on people's wellbeing and creativity. We believe the most important learning is about what needs to be in place to create the conditions for success and that requires some analysis of what exactly the artist and the creative process bring to a community context and how that can best be supported by policy makers and funders.

The story of Be Creative Be Well is, without doubt, one of considerable success. Even where very few residents were involved from a particular area, there were individual breakthroughs – people who were inspired to try new things, change jobs, refresh their outlook on life and gain useful creative skills. Even where all that happened on site was a short-lived programme of fun arts activities, there was a new sense of possibility evident in the neighbourhood – a hint of what could be. In the majority of projects we ourselves visited, there was a lot more than this and, in the best examples, the possibility that an enduring change for the better had occurred.

If one word could sum up the nature and power of the artists' role in the Be Creative Be Well programme, it is 'energy'. By introducing their energy into a community, artists can – given the right conditions – set off a chain reaction, releasing people's own creative energies and making their full potential visible. Another important word here is 'play'. Artists model creativity as play and by involving people in play help to create a sense of wellbeing.

If we had to pick one finding from our visits and our research that might push this kind of work on to another level of understanding and support, it would be that the greatest communal impact seemed to be reflected in the most impressive artistic result and vice versa, the skills of community development and artistry performing a perfect balancing act. This tallies with the healing vision of a 'new instrumentalism', espoused by John Knell and

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Matthew Taylor in their pamphlet, *Arts Funding, Austerity and the Big Society* (RSA, 2011, p.18):

‘Artistic instrumentalism would embrace excellence in terms of raising artistic standards and a better understanding of the value of the artistic experience for producer and consumer. Public good instrumentalism would focus on the wide range of positive economic and social outcomes flowing from the arts, and active participation in the arts. Sometimes these logics will overlap. Sometimes they will not. Both are united by a common interest in the quality of the experience for audience members or for those actively participating in the art.’

It is our belief that in the best of Be Creative Be Well, the two logics overlap: good art and the social good.

Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs)

For social research purposes, all the Well London areas were selected from Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). These are standard mapping areas based on postcodes and used by the Office of National Statistics to gather neighbourhood data.

Each LSOA has 1,500 to 2,000 residents and four to eight LSOAs make up a council ward. However, they are not intended to represent actual communities and their boundaries often cut across the natural neighbourhoods of streets and estates.

The LSOAs selected to participate in Be Creative Be Well and the other Well London programmes were chosen from among those in the lowest 11 per cent of the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Thus, the LSOAs described in this report may be thought of as statistical communities of some of the poorest people living in London.

Overture

The object through which people understand the project

Where did the project take place?

Hoe Street LSOA, London Borough of Waltham Forest

How much money was allocated?

£31,000

Who received the funding?

the drawing shed

When did the project run?

April 2010-March 2011

What was planned?

A programme of arts events using and sharing the drawing shed and PrintBike (mobile arts studios) with the intention of facilitating social and emotional wellbeing and having fun.

‘There were more than 30 people involved in the making of it throughout the day. The children and adults started off with plastic gloves; there was a lot of physical work mixing clay and mixing sand and pounding the straw into this clay and sand and subsoil. By the end of the day, the gloves were off; the children were immersed in it. It was an extraordinary process and there was a huge sense of community pride. And then to see it fired up... it was a process that continued over several weeks. What came out of it has a real physical presence. It’s a proper sculpture, isn’t it?’

The drawing shed artists

This ‘sculpture’ is pulled on its trolley out of temporary storage: a clay oven, its small mouth blackened from use. Preparations for lunch are already underway, a small portable marquee is set up in case of rain (or worse – the cold is fierce), and various bowls filled with salad and sawn-up baguettes are rested along two trestle tables. A portable gas burner is placed under the soup one of the team has prepared earlier. Already, an hour or two ahead of lunch, people are stopping by and chatting. A woman in her 80s interrupts her walk to come over and inspect the oven. A younger woman reminisces how, back in Africa, her family would cook meat in this fashion. Several small boys poke kindling into the oven’s mouth, intrigued by fire.



This is taking place yards from a row of residents' garages, where drawing shed is temporarily housed. Other than that space, everything to do with this project – not just the oven – is a moveable feast. There is no formal venue, no community centre, no covered place for local people to gather in on this side of the main road, so artists Sally Labern, overall Well London co-ordinator here, and Bobby Lloyd, her co-lead on Be Creative Be Well, have decided that the team's programme of activities should go out and about. PrintBike, another key element in this programme, is about to be launched: this customised Brompton will provide a peripatetic design and publication service for leaflets and posters.

The Hoe Street LSOA is split by a main road, The Drive. People find little reason to cross the road over to this estate, though a few do make their way to try the food today. Ascham Homes, which manages the estate, is represented by the plethora of warning signs that have been erected over the grassy areas: residents are firmly warned off feeding pigeons as well as playing ball games. The artists have poked gentle fun at this slightly *Nineteen Eighty-Four*-ish feature by working with residents on alternative placards with witty captions and images. It should be noted, in fairness, that this housing company has been pleased enough with the artists' work – particularly the oven – to let them use a second garage.

Since its launch at last year's Big Lunch, when over a hundred people turned up, the oven has become a symbol of the whole Be Creative Be Well initiative here, as Sally remarks:

‘It’s not just about cooking. It’s about different cultures coming together and people really sharing something. And it’s also about family and history and intergenerational stuff. People don’t give it a label – no one is asking: is this art? Actually, of course it is art, just as much as remaking those signs is art. There is no misunderstanding about what this is. It is the object through which people understand the project.’

The oven provides, most obviously, a link between the creative act and encouraging ‘healthy eating’, one of the core Well London aims, but its significance goes some way beyond this. Eileen, the elderly passer-by who lives on the estate, takes a recipe tag: she plans to add her bread pudding to the community recipe book that the artists hope will be edited and published by local people. The clay used to make the oven was donated by the ceramics department at Waltham Forest College, located nearby on the other side of the estate, and which young people here attend. It is hoped that this small gesture might lead to a more substantial relationship with the college and the chance for local people to use its facilities.

The oven manages to combine the exotic with the everyday. It is, in the end, a gift from the community to the community and, according to Bobby, it has served as the main catalyst for gaining local people’s trust and respect for the project as a whole. It will remain here once the project is finished, a tangible legacy, an object with a story to tell and remember.

More people are turning up for lunch. It is still cold but the oven warms the conversations and provides something good and hot to eat.

1

Be Creative Be Well in context

Culture, health and the policy framework

‘Council estates have the effect of making people feel worse about themselves, and, in turn, physically worse than other members of society, because they know they are cut off from the mass affluence... that the rest of the nation enjoys.’

Lynsey Hanley in *Estates: An Intimate History* (Granta Books, 2007, pp.19-20)

1.1 Postcodes and poverty

Past visions and current failures of social housing

‘You’ve got South Kensington which is very, very rich with a couple of estates in it and then you’ve got North Kensington with a massive number of estates in comparison and a high level of poverty. It is much, much poorer.’

Lisa Nash, artist

The largely unregulated slums of the industrial age may have given way to government-funded social housing – a process that started a century ago with the razing of the notorious ‘blackest streets’ of the Old Nichol and the building of the Boundary Estate in Shoreditch. High rises may have gone up and, over the last 20 years come down again, but those on the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder still find themselves set apart within the intimate geographies of the capital.

There is an ironic contrast between the physical closeness of London's rich and poor and the social distance between them. A tall Victorian mansion with muted servants' bell-pulls on the gateposts speaks of a different life from that of an ageing 1960s tower block along the road, with rusty trikes parked on its strip of threadbare lawn. The rich and poor still inhabit different worlds. Their maps of the city and their mobility are very different, just as their quality of life, their state of health and their diet markedly diverge.

In the case of housing estates, the divisions between the haves and have-nots are written more clearly across the city's map. Originally built by the local authority to accommodate people unable to afford to buy their own homes, it is here that the different environs of rich and poor become most recognisable, each estate set apart spatially and architecturally from the 'nicer' residential areas. In her book, *Estates: An Intimate History* (Granta Books, 2007, p.150), Lisa Hanley writes:

‘If a map were to be drawn showing how the traffic of people and cars flow through London, its legion council estates would show up as large areas of blankness. The world seems to stop on the edge of every estate. You park your car... on the edges and enter the concrete labyrinth as though entering a foreign country.’

Providing council housing was a revolutionary idea that we and our government were once proud to support – ‘homes fit for heroes’ was the ideal after World War I – and, by and large, people felt privileged to have the chance to live in them. Building tower block estates at a later period was equally visionary, releasing people from dilapidated Victorian housing and adding good views into the bargain. As Hanley points out, these were moments when the government had the opportunity to ‘build social inequity out of the landscape’ (*Estates: An Intimate History*, Granta Books, 2007, p.19). That did not happen of course – and, in fact, little seems to have changed in this respect since George Orwell wrote up his social research in the northern towns in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937).

Orwell welcomed the removal of the 19th-century slums – those ‘labyrinths of little brick houses blackened by smoke, festering in planless chaos round miry alleys and little cindered yards’ – but saw the ‘Corporation estate’ as only marginally better. For all its advantages – clean air, more conveniences, ‘a bit of garden to dig in’ – such estates had ‘an uncomfortable, almost prison-like atmosphere, and the people who live there are perfectly well aware of it’. That sense of being cut off from the rest of society was, as Orwell saw, felt profoundly by many of the first generation taken out of the familiar ‘homeliness’ of the slum to live in the

new social housing estates but strangely, given the enormous changes in our society since the 1930s, this feeling seems to have persisted right up to the present.

Running down the estate

The sense of uprootedness amongst former slum-dwellers may be shared by some of the immigrant groups that have ended up on these estates in London in recent decades, but feeling isolated here has generally more to do now with endemic poverty and how estates and their residents are perceived by the rest of us.

In Orwell's time, the estate offered poorer people a way out of squalor, albeit in a somewhat 'ruthless and soulless' way. The council house was not then a first step towards home ownership but a destination: somewhere decent to settle down at last. This consensus unravelled fairly quickly after World War II, when government policy – reflecting perhaps an instinctive cultural preference among the English – favoured the ideal of buying one's own home over social tenancy. The council house became instead a staging post on the way to owning one's own property and, by implication, to achieving full citizenship.

The right-to-buy policy under the Thatcher government, encouraging council tenants to purchase their own home, was a logical extension of the party's long-held vision of a 'property-owning democracy'. It was also the thin end of the wedge that has been driven with increasing force, under subsequent governments, between the more and the less affluent, between those who can afford to buy and those who cannot. According to Hanley, the final stage in this ideologically motivated break-up of mass council housing has been the increasing delegation of provision from local authorities to independent housing associations since the late 1980s.

One could, of course, argue that there are health benefits from home ownership, which gives people more control over their lives. In an attempt to give all residents, whether renting or owning, that sense of autonomy, the New Labour government introduced a raft of supportive measures, including the New Deal for Communities, and it adopted numerous policies aimed ultimately at ending social exclusion and child poverty. This was not matched with any increase in new social housing, however – rather the reverse – and any gains in social equity have now been thrown into question by the global financial crisis.

Nevertheless, nearly three-quarters of the population (72 per cent) are now on the property ladder, however tenuously, and 10 per cent rent privately. The remainder rent council property, a third of those through housing associations. This might look like a good result but only if one happens to be in the majority of the relatively affluent. Those left as council tenants are,

in effect and in fact, by definition the poorest in our society. The impact of post-war deindustrialisation has had its greatest impact on those who used to work as skilled or unskilled labourers and who lived, by and large, on council estates. Unemployment in this setting means that one can never buy into the larger society – a fact made painfully visible in the eruption of violence on estates around the country in the early 1990s.

Just as those who lived in slums were tarred by association – blamed for the conditions they themselves had no means to escape or ameliorate – so now estate-dwellers are stigmatised by the larger society. Too many of the estates that were built to give working people a decent place to live have now become, as one artist involved in Be Creative Be Well observed, ‘social dumping grounds’. They have become run-down; so, too, have the people living on them.

1.2 The human cost

The link between poverty and ill health

‘There is serious deprivation here – very real problems that people have to face on a daily basis. They don’t know how they’re going to feed the kids next week. Unemployment is high. And depression. All they think they want is to get out of South Acton. Although I guess everyone is potentially just a few circumstances away from falling low like this, when you’re in that actual situation yourself, it’s very hard to see how you’re going to climb out of it, how you’re going to engage and become a part of the community again.’

‘People get isolated. They feel it’s all happening somewhere else. They just feel down and that affects their children, and masses of children have been born in areas like this. When you feel significant to society, you contribute more, you step out more. When you don’t, you just opt out, and you can get sicker and sicker.’

Comments from a roundtable discussion with a local Be Creative Be Well team

Over the last 15 years, the connections between mental and physical distress have been increasingly recognised. Policy makers, practitioners and others involved in health improvement have, therefore, broadened the concept of health to include wellbeing, as well as physical health. Although wellbeing is a very broad term that can be used to mean many different things, definitions in the context of health and social policy share some key characteristics.

Wellbeing is more than happiness or the absence of illness. It is fundamentally about how people experience their own lives, whether they feel able to achieve things and have a sense of purpose. It's also about a sense of belonging and being part of the social fabric, connected to other people and supportive local networks.

People living in areas of high deprivation certainly face practical barriers to being physically healthy. Studies have shown, for example, that estate dwellers have easy access to fast-food outlets but generally live a long way from shops selling healthier food; healthier food also tends to be more expensive. Sporting facilities are limited and the closure of many local youth services has meant young people have fewer opportunities to keep fit. Some housing stock on older estates is poorly insulated and riddled with damp and vermin. Unemployment also has a physical impact. The lack of exchange with neighbours and the sense of being on one's own and feeling threatened by real or imagined dangers – for older people, this might simply be the sight of young people roaming the estate – can make people ill.

The words of the Be Creative Be Well team quoted above suggest that the overwhelming barrier to wellbeing and thus to full health is the feeling of entrapment in places and situations like this. Participation in any aspect of mainstream society seems too often an impossibility, yet this may be one way out.

‘If you have links outside [the estate] – friends who live in a different area or type of housing, activities that regularly and repeatedly expose you to new experiences – then you’ve one less wall to knock down. This is known in think-tank speech as ‘social capital’.’

Lynsey Hanley (*Estates: An Intimate History*, Granta Books, 2007, p.181)

The Be Creative Be Well programme can be seen, then, as an attempt to create social capital: to break down that wall, offering people those new experiences and connections to a wider social world that could give them a new sense of wellbeing.

1.3 Recalibrating health promotion

How policy makers are responding to new thinking about wellbeing

How well people feel physically and mentally is determined by a range of factors that are outside the control of health services, including income, housing, environment, education,

social networks and access to social facilities and services embracing cultural, leisure and arts activities. These determinants of health have an impact on how people behave: whether they smoke, for example, or abuse drugs, or whether they are likely to take regular exercise or adopt a healthy diet. These lifestyle choices – and ‘choices’ is hardly the right word in this context – play a crucial role in overall health and wellbeing.

According to the London Health Commission’s report *Fair London, Healthy Londoners* (March 2011), the difference in life expectancy between those living in the most and least deprived neighbourhoods of London is 7.2 years for men and 4.6 years for women. In a worsening economy with an increasing gap between rich and poor, that statistic seems unlikely to improve without some radical remedy. There has been increasing concern about these inequalities in health and wellbeing and their seemingly entrenched nature. The growing understanding of the role of the determinants of health has transformed the policy debate about how best to reduce inequalities. Rather than focusing exclusively on improving lifestyles and access to healthcare, policy makers now understand that it is important to change the factors that make people ill or stop them feeling well in the first place. There is a growing realisation that, in this situation, the health of individuals and communities cannot be improved by health services alone.

Even the idea of providing health services for people is being rethought. Increasing importance is attached to individual and community empowerment – giving people the confidence, skills and power to shape and influence what public bodies do for or with them. People need to be involved in making decisions about service provision and encouraged to participate in health-promoting activities. This might not just enable people from disadvantaged or vulnerable groups to gain better access to services that are better tailored to their circumstances and needs. By putting people more in control of their own lives, it could also improve wellbeing.

As a consequence of these shifts in understanding, a much broader range of organisations have now become involved in activities to improve health and wellbeing and to try to reduce inequalities. In particular, local government has been given a range of new powers: the Local Government Act (2000) granted local authorities the power to promote social, economic and environmental wellbeing in their areas. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007) requires public bodies, including health trusts and hospital foundations, to work with their local communities in ways that give them a greater say over decisions.

The prescription for London

London has been at the forefront of these developments. In October 2000 the Mayor of London set up the London Health Commission, a partnership of agencies from different

sectors across the capital committed to taking action on the determinants of health. One of its first tasks was to advise the Mayor on how his statutory strategies for London, including culture, could maximise potential health benefits. A few years later, in July 2007, the Big Lottery Fund announced that it was giving just under £9.5 million to finance a new four-year health and wellbeing programme called Well London.

The London Health Commission had set up the Well London Alliance the previous year, bringing together the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, Groundwork, London Sustainability Exchange, Central YMCA and the University of East London. Its vision was of 'a world city of engaged local people and groups with the skills and confidence to improve their own physical health and mental wellbeing'. In particular, its aims were to challenge the stigma of mental health issues, to encourage healthier eating choices and to enable communities to provide opportunities for local people to become more active.

The Well London approach was to build and strengthen the foundations of good health and wellbeing in communities by:

- significantly increasing community participation in health and wellbeing enhancing activities
- building individual and community confidence, cohesion, sense of control and self-esteem
- stimulating development of formal and informal community and social support networks
- integrating with and adding value to what is already going on locally
- building the capacity of local organisations to deliver activities and making strategic links locally and regionally so the improvement in health and wellbeing is sustainable for the longer term

Also intrinsic to the Well London programme right from the beginning was the desire to demonstrate to those setting national policy around health and wellbeing the value of this kind of joint agency intervention. Therefore, rigorous baseline assessment, monitoring and evaluation were central to the Well London approach, in the hope that this would support the mainstreaming of activities into core programmes throughout London – and contribute to the growing evidence base on effective interventions to improve health and wellbeing.

Well London's research and evaluation framework, based on social research methodologies, was designed by University of East London. For its experimental method to work, it was necessary to adopt a standardised approach not just to data collection but also to the target communities themselves, which were to comprise some of the poorest sections of the population. In order to measure the impact of the various interventions for better health and wellbeing on those on the lowest rung of the socioeconomic ladder, all 20 areas included in

the Well London programme were selected from Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), as defined on page 19.

The local Primary Care Trust and the local authority had a role in the selection of LSOAs: two were chosen in each borough and randomised, one being selected to take part in Well London, the other not. In this way, statistical information before and after and between the two LSOAs could be easily gathered and then analysed to make the case for an intervention of this kind and scale.

The Well London programme included 14 projects, all of them ultimately aimed at encouraging behavioural change into healthier lifestyle choices. The first set were 'heart of the community' projects that supported community engagement and capacity building by increasing access to Well London projects and other health improvement opportunities, brokering changes in local service provision and activities to meet community needs. The second set of projects was based around the five themes of the Well London programme: culture and tradition, healthy eating, mental health and wellbeing, open spaces and physical activity.

The 'culture and tradition' theme was delivered through Be Creative Be Well – an ambitious programme developed by a new member of the Well London Alliance: Arts Council England.

1.4 The contribution of culture and the arts to health

A growing acceptance of the value of culture and creativity for health

Although the Be Creative Be Well programme was seen as the cultural or creative strand of Well London, it is important to note that the arts process was understood by other Well London partners as a key delivery mechanism. Creative approaches were embedded throughout the programme: UEL used graphic facilitation in its community engagement process; the YMCA ran dance activities; and DIY Happiness and the other mental wellbeing programmes employed a variety of arts-based approaches. This general acceptance of the value of creative activity reflects an increasing official recognition of the role that culture and creativity can play in addressing inequalities and other determinants of health and in improving health and wellbeing.

In order to understand the contribution and potential value of the arts more fully, the Department of Health began a review of its role in relation to arts and health in September

2005. A small working group was set up and over 300 responses to a questionnaire were received from senior NHS managers, NHS arts coordinators, artists, arts therapists, clinicians, charities, individual patients and users, professional bodies, academics, architects, constructors, designers and engineers. In addition, the working group carried out a number of literature and research reviews, and interviews with key individuals.

The Department of Health concluded that the arts should be firmly recognised as being integral to health, healthcare provision and healthcare environments, including supporting staff. Arts and health initiatives deliver real and measurable benefits across a wide range of priority areas for health. Given the wealth of good practice and the substantial evidence base, it was important for the Department to take a lead in promoting, developing and supporting arts and health initiatives.

Other independent research before and since this review has borne out the positive impact that arts and cultural participation can have on health and wellbeing. This evidence base also sheds light on how cultural participation impacts on health and wellbeing.

It is now widely acknowledged that cultural interventions can improve rates of healing and recovery in the healthcare environment. Evaluations of the Enhancing the Healing Environment programme, run by the King's Fund, which is aimed at humanising the hospital environment, showed clear benefits for staff, patients and visitors (*Enhancing the Health Environment*, Kings Fund and Department of Health, 2009). Several other studies have also provided strong evidence of the influence of the arts and humanities in achieving more effective approaches to patient management and to the education and training of health practitioners, improving doctor-patient relationships.

The need for increasing levels of social integration, which arts and cultural work can help to build, was cited by Professor Sir Michael Marmot as chair of an independent review commissioned by the Secretary of State for Health to propose the most effective evidence-based strategies for reducing health inequalities in England (Sir Michael Marmot, *Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post 2010*, The Marmot Review, 2010). The Marmot Review found that social networks and social participation appear to act as a protective factor against dementia over the age of 65 and are consistently and positively associated with reduced morbidity and mortality. It also drew attention to the strong evidence that social relationships can also reduce the risk of depression. People with stronger networks are healthier and happier.

There were similar findings from a research project, carried out jointly by Anglia Ruskin University and the University of Central Lancashire (*Mental Health, Social Inclusion and Arts: developing the evidence base*, The Anglia Ruskin/UCLan Research Team, 2007), into the impact of arts participation on mental health. It found that there were significant improvements in empowerment, mental health and social inclusion, even among people with significant mental health difficulties. There was also a significant decrease in the proportion of participants identified as frequent or regular service users.

The Arts Council's leading role

A study carried out by Dr Joy Windsor for Arts Council England found that people who attend artistic and cultural events are more likely than other people to report good health, even allowing for important characteristics such as age, socioeconomic status and highest educational qualifications (Dr Joy Windsor, *Your health and the arts: a study of the association between arts engagement and health*, Arts Council England, 2005). Taking part in dance activities is also associated with better health – one way of preventing obesity and contributing to an improvement in the nation's health. Although people with a long-standing illness that limits their activities were less likely to attend cultural events, they were more likely to engage in creative activities.

In 2004 the Arts Council published a review that included 385 references from medical literature related to the effect of the arts and humanities in healthcare. It highlighted the crucial importance of the arts and humanities in inducing positive physiological and psychological changes in clinical outcomes, reducing drug consumption, shortening length of stay in hospital and improving mental healthcare (*Arts in health: a review of the medical literature*, Arts Council England, 2004). Further evidence of the way cultural participation can improve health outcomes was provided in *A prospectus for arts and health*, published by Arts Council England and Department of Health (2007).

Finally, in 2007 Arts Council England built on the Department of Health's favourable review by developing a formal arts and health strategy of its own. This defined two overarching aims:

- to integrate the arts into mainstream health strategy and policy making, in order to make the case for a role for the arts in healthcare provision across the whole country and for a wider remit for the arts in terms of healthy living and wellbeing; and
- to increase, and more effectively deploy, resources for arts and health initiatives, through funding, quality assurance of artists' work and advocacy

To work towards these aims, five priorities were identified: healthy communities; the built environment; children and young people; workforce development; and advocacy and resource development.

The development of this strategy had paralleled the development of the Well London Alliance, whose aims were clearly sympathetic to those of the Arts Council. As a long-term funder of arts and health providers and programmes, including future national portfolio organisations like the London Arts in Health Forum and Arts and Health South West, the opportunity to become a partner in such an enterprise was clearly serendipitous. It was not only a chance for the Arts Council to strengthen the evidence base for arts and health work but to do so on a scale that would be well beyond anything it could fund or run by itself. Being part of the Alliance would also offer exciting possibilities for finding common ground with other agencies working in the health sector, and for exchanging skills and sharing specialist knowledge.

1.5 Areas of low engagement and participation

Ambitions for deeper and wider engagement in the arts

‘The arts are popular with ambitious programmes really making a difference... Yet we know how much work remains to be done because only a minority of the population has much to do with the arts on a regular basis. A big challenge lies in addressing the disparities in levels of engagement between different sections of the population, as currently those who are most active tend to be from the most privileged parts of society.’

Achieving great art for everyone (Arts Council England, 2010)

Arts Council England’s new strategic framework for the arts over the next 10 years sets out five long-term goals. Goal 2 is that ‘more people experience and are inspired by the arts’. This aim is much wider than building audiences for cultural product. There is a new emphasis here on participation and arts engagement. The people who do benefit are, almost invariably, the well educated who tend to be middle class, as John Knell and Matthew Taylor note in *Arts Funding, Austerity and the Big Society* (RSA, 2011), a provocation paper published for the joint Arts Council and RSA 2011 State of the Arts conference.

It is perhaps not a surprise, therefore, to learn that in mapping cultural engagement, whether across the country or across a city like London, a correlation exists between where you live and whether you participate in the arts. This might look like another form of postcode lottery,

as if these areas were poorly served by the arts sector, but the truth is that the lottery is a bigger one about affluence and poverty. Research into the potential cultural offer within close reach of the chosen LSOAs often produced impressive lists of artists and arts organisations, including some national flagship companies. The fact is, however, that for largely economic and social reasons, a relationship had rarely been forged between the communities on their estates and the arts bodies around them. It remains to be seen whether current ideas around localism and new structures of delivery might change this.

A key question that the Arts Council has been grappling with in various ways over the last few years is around supply and demand. Its traditional role has been to fund and support artists and arts organisations in the hope or expectation that there will be a demand for their work. The increasing pressure since the mid-1980s to develop the demand side of the equation has come from two politically opposed directions: those who want to see the arts paying their own way to a much greater extent, thus making less use of public money; and those who want public money to go further and reach a wider and more diverse audience. One response to this pressure was the New Audiences programme which devised imaginative and ingenious approaches to encouraging the reluctant or non-attender to take up the cultural offer and visit theatres, galleries and so on. Some approaches were based on tweaking the price offer or revamping the programme, others on trying to find ways to reassure people that the experience would be an enjoyable one, mainly by raising awareness and building confidence via education or participatory work.

In fact, the notion of educational outreach and participatory work has been a feature of our cultural landscape for a long time – going back to the creation of the Entertainments National Service Association (ENSA) at the beginning of World War II. This notion flowered in the late 1960s and took institutional form as community arts in the 1970s. Since then, there has been ebb and flow between national arts policy and the claims of grassroots arts activism as the increasingly sclerotic argument between excellence and access (the Arts Council's twin founding principles) shifted first this way then that, between art for art's sake-posturing and frank instrumentalism. The publication, after a wide-ranging consultation with the public, of *Achieving great art for everyone* signals a truce at last and perhaps indicates a growing consensus that the arts can be both 'truth and beauty' and a social good – and that the two are impossible to untwine.

Beyond access vs excellence

Knell and Taylor suggest how this realisation might be a real turning point in how the arts are viewed across society:

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‘The invitation here is not for the arts community to succumb to crude instrumentalism ... nor for it to reject accountability in favour of a bland assertion that art makes the world better. Rather it is to develop coherent (and challenging) accounts of the role art does, can and could play in helping us imagine and create more fulfilling lives in a better society. This is hardly unfamiliar territory for the arts. If you review the cultural strategies of local authorities, they have long placed an emphasis on how cultural participation can help build the good society, using the language of strong and cohesive communities in which individuals have a sense of connection with other residents and a pride in their neighbourhoods.’

Knell and Taylor (*Arts Funding, Austerity and the Big Society*, RSA, 2011, pp.27-28)

In evaluating the implications as well as the achievements of Be Creative Be Well, this is a critical statement. There is, for us, a real sense that, in collaborating with agencies outside the arts world to create a participatory programme of this scale aimed at achieving a social good, the Arts Council may have, in national policy terms, taken its most significant step yet towards achieving great art for everyone.

The strategy’s title itself is, in this context, interesting in its choice of the word ‘achieving’ over a word it might once have chosen, ‘providing’. It allows for a more active response from people than simply being consumers or suppliants. In identifying what achieving its second goal – ‘that more people experience and are inspired by the arts’ – might look like, the Arts Council states that one sign would be that ‘more people value the arts as being important to the quality of their lives and are actively involved in shaping provision in their communities’ (*Achieving great art for everyone*, Arts Council England, 2010, p.31).

Perhaps the next leap after that will be to recognise that there is an even more reciprocal relationship possible between those who provide art and those who receive it. To speak of ‘an arts project on a council estate’ might conjure up uncomfortable images of middle-class do-gooding among the poor or provoke patronising sneers about ‘cultural deserts’ but, as this report will show, the people who live here have something of their own to contribute. Sometimes, it may even be (whisper it) recognisably artistic.

‘As long as we keep an elitist approach to the arts, we are doing the arts a disservice and failing to value the energy that is here – energy that actually inspires a lot of the arts out there anyway.’

Rachel Pepper, Acton Community Forum and Be Creative Be Well team leader

2

Be Creative Be Well in practice

Artists and projects

Having looked at the context in the last section, we now turn to how the Arts Council set about pursuing the broad aims and objectives of Well London and achieving the specific goals of Be Creative Be Well.

The approach was simple. A lead artist or organisation was appointed to devise, develop and run a programme of cultural and creative activities that would be shaped as far as possible by each community's evident needs and desires. No area received an investment greater than £52,000 over the three-year life of the programme and many received much less; in all cases, the main cost was paying artists what was felt to be a professional rate for their work. Apart from requiring those leading the project teams to make quarterly reports back to the Arts Council, in addition to fulfilling the evaluation requirements imposed on all partners by the University of East London, there was no top-down directive on what should or should not happen on the ground in order to meet the aims and objectives of the programme.

2.1 Choosing the artists

The key attributes and the participatory process

The opportunity to participate in Be Creative Be Well was widely advertised. Because of the large number of projects and applicants, and given the modest staff resources at Arts Council England – the core team consisted only of Karen Taylor, Programme Manager; Lucy Clark,

Programme Coordinator (who succeeded Jenny Malarkey in this role) and a part-time administrator – artists and arts organisations were chosen on the strength of their paper applications and were not personally interviewed before being appointed. The decision-making panels often included arts team staff from local authorities, local residents, youth ambassadors and Well London partners. (It should perhaps be noted here that, especially given this mix, it was felt later that a paper-based approach might not necessarily be the best way to decide who should run projects.)

Some of those applying would already have been known to the Arts Council, either from having received funding for earlier work or being recognised as artists or organisations engaged in participatory arts practice. Others were new to the team but presented persuasive evidence of their arts and/or community development skills.

Not all successful applicants had a previous track record in arts and health work, though many did and others had transferable experience, having run projects with individuals and groups in a variety of community and institutional settings, from young offender institutions to schools. They were chosen on the basis of their evident suitability for a programme that demanded a range of skills.

This ideal skillset was composed of three key attributes: artistic ability, the ability to facilitate participation and the ability to work effectively in and with a community. In the case of a whole organisation, these abilities might be shared out: so, the person leading the programme might not be a professional artist but there would be artists within the organisation to run the workshops. Where a single artist was appointed, the demands on that person were, therefore, comparatively more challenging, though not impossible.

The sector in which artists work is full of changing definitions and descriptions – community arts, participatory arts, socially engaged arts, creative learning, outreach and so on. These are a struggle to keep up with and can become challenging in changing political circumstances. Although most, if not all, practitioners subscribe to the broad belief that arts engagement can make a difference to people's lives, the sector lacks a detailed ethical framework, and some artists struggle to fulfil their own needs as creative producers alongside their deep commitment to social progress. It is, in any case, a broad church.

Some practitioners, for example, will be happy to admit that they use their artistic skills simply as a tool to achieve desirable personal and social outcomes – so, they might use a particular theatre technique, like hot-seating, as a way of encouraging people to develop greater

empathy for others or to reconsider anti-social behaviour, such as pulling out a knife to settle an argument. Others will set out to involve people in a creative process, believing that this in itself will make them, in artist Hannah Hull’s words, ‘politically autonomous and socially mobile’. All will have their own ideas on where the artistic outcome, if any, fits into all of this (there is another tiring binary argument here, between the value of process and of product) – let alone what can be said or claimed about its quality.

There is, however, a greater consensus about the outcomes of this kind of work. The most recent addition to a large archive of research and evaluation documenting the process and potential benefits of participatory arts work is *Adult participatory arts – thinking it through* (509 Arts, Arts Council England, 2010), a study of several leading companies working in this way. Its chart (below) summarises the trajectory of a typical project, from start to finish and shows what participants can gain at each stage if things go well. It also, incidentally, shows how the product (or, here, presentation) can, in fact, be an integral part of the process.

PARTICIPATION	→	PRESENTATION
Immersion Introduction Workshop Skills acquisition Creative learning Group activities Learning Research	Scripting Compilation Composition Devising Rehearsal Try-out	Presentation Performance Display Sharing Exhibition Recording
Exploration Familiarisation Adoption Sign-up	Progression Confidence Motivation Learning Commitment	Recognition Validation Achievement Accreditation Self awareness
ENABLING	→	OWNING

‘Elements of process and product’, from *Adult participatory arts* (Arts Council England, 2009, p.20)

These findings will be very useful in terms of starting to analyse what artists and the arts might have contributed to achieving Well London’s aims. The attitudinal and behavioural changes that can come out of cultural participation are the kind of changes that are proven to help people to make healthier lifestyle choices.

As we will see later, in evaluating Be Creative Be Well, there is, in fact, a close coincidence between the personal changes and behaviours listed above with some of the evidence-based ways to wellbeing identified by the new economics foundation. This is also true when we consider the third area of skill, in community engagement and development.

Apart from screening applicants in this way, the Arts Council also decided that, as far as possible, the artists should be local to the relevant LSOA. This was in part to guard against the old problem of artists parachuting in and then vanishing for good once the project has been completed. One hope was that a close and lasting relationship would be formed between the artist and the community, which might continue beyond the life of the programme. Given that fresh money would be needed for follow-up work, artists might be able to provide local people with fundraising support or training or even help them write funding applications. The Arts Council also hoped that artists would be encouraged, outside of this programme, to apply for funding to continue projects.

This decision to stay local was also based on the assumption that such artists would either have personal knowledge that would obviate the need for a long research and consultation period, or were more likely to be committed to acting locally.

2.2 Briefing the artists

The situation on the ground

Prior to artists beginning their work, a wide-ranging survey of the selected LSOAs had been carried out by the University of East London. This research and consultation exercise analysed not just demographics and the like but it also attempted, through 'appreciative enquiry' and other methodologies, to discover what people there felt about their current lives and the neighbourhood, and where they wanted to see changes or improvements. Agencies and resources relevant to these areas were also researched, including arts and cultural organisations located in the borough. The appreciative enquiry workshop reports were used in briefing artists applying to lead Be Creative Be Well projects.

Artists were also introduced to or made aware of their Well London partners and the team coordinator as well as representatives of local interests, including members of tenants and residents associations and staff from the housing associations that might own all or part of the housing stock in the LSOA. In some cases, a committee had been set up to help advise,

establish or steer Well London; this was often called the local advisory group. In a few cases, artists became Well London coordinators and these naturally had a wider overview of how the Be Creative Be Well work might complement what the Well London partners were doing.

In most cases, once the programme was ready to begin, launch or taster events were also held to enable artists to meet and greet local people and to learn more about what they might want in terms of cultural activities.

2.3 Developing an artistic programme

A survey of artistic activity and achievement

The following chapter takes a more detailed look at particular projects and particular aspects and outcomes of delivery through case studies, as part of an analytical framework based around the new economics foundation's 'ways to wellbeing' and their coincidence with a range of health determinants. This section, therefore, simply celebrates the work, focusing on artistic outcomes over the three years of the programme's life.

Be Creative Be Well funded a diverse range of creative opportunities for residents from October 2007 until the end of March 2011 and it is almost impossible to do justice to the sheer volume of activities, products and partnerships these projects generated.

Initially, the Well London community engagement processes facilitated conversations directly with local artists, organisations and residents, who were then commissioned to run activities. In 2008, this included Clod Ensemble's Memory Soup, an arts, cooking and reminiscence project for elders at the Walter Sickert Centre in Canonbury, which printed several of the participants' favourite recipes; a contribution to the London Borough of Newham's Park Team for a jointly funded consultation on Star Park in Canning Town, which now has new play equipment; a film and video skills development and food diary project run by City Gateway for young women in Limehouse; and a Big Chair Dance for the Asian Centre in Noel Park by Entelechy Arts, which culminated with performances at the Capital Age Festival at the South Bank.

Many projects were also suggested by Well London partners, who often helped the Be Creative Be Well team broker relationships. In 2009, projects included the jointly funded Final Frontier Festival in partnership with West Ham and Plaistow New Deal for Communities at the

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Hub in Canning Town, where several local arts and community and voluntary sector organisations took part and ran workshops; the refurbishment of the Handcroft Road Tenants and Residents Association by local residents and artists in partnership with Croydon Council which included a variety of play equipment for the local youth club based there; and Waltham Forest Arts Education Network to run a series of dance projects across The Hoe Street LSOA, with hundreds of residents taking part, getting fitter and learning about nutrition.

In 2009, due to time and resources, the Be Creative Be Well team used a formal commissioning process to set up projects in each of the 20 areas to run from January 2010 until the end of March 2011. Apart from those featured in this report, projects included Creative Health Labs, which ran workshops, leading to a community parade and festival in the 192 Gallery in Haverstock; Green Shoes Dance company, which ran Dancing Heath to train residents to run their own dance activities; Stories in the Street artist Richard Neville, who ran several storytelling workshops in Westminster, Enfield and Lewisham; Age UK Croydon, which ran several creative workshops for local elders including dance, song and craft; the Somali Women Support and Development Group, which ran yoga and salsa workshops for women in White City; and Bounce Theatre, which organised youth drama, dance and an elders drop in centre.



A festival of light

Where did the project take place?

Woodberry Down LSOA, London Borough of Hackney

How much money was allocated?

£35,500

Who received the funding?

Immediate Theatre

When did the project run?

April 2010-March 2011

What was planned?

A programme aimed at developing a creative community, through activities exploring the local area's heritage, enabling residents to celebrate their relationships with different cultures and their environment, leading to the Festival of Light event.





3

Be Creative Be Well in theory Understanding the outcomes An evidence-based framework for evaluation

As the preceding section has shown, Be Creative Be Well was a wide-ranging, ambitious programme that, at its most effective, was shaped by local conditions and local people. Artists brought to each project their own particular set of values, experiences and practices and what emerged from their work with particular residents was unique. Each project produced its own self-evaluation and left its own particular legacy. How then to set about analysing so many variables, so much data, such wide and varying experiences and impacts? How to see the bigger picture when it was painted in all these different colours? How to identify the most significant outcomes?

We needed a framework that would assess both the programme's success in encouraging behavioural change into healthier lifestyle choices – Well London's overall mission – and what particular contribution creativity and the arts had made to this process. We found what we needed, first, in the evidence-based 'five ways to wellbeing' developed by the new economics foundation in 2008.

Commissioned by the government, the foundation reviewed the work of over 400 scientists working on different aspects of health and wellbeing. Based on this research, the new economics foundation produced a concept of everyday wellbeing in its report *Five Ways to Wellbeing: The Evidence* (new economics foundation, 2008, pp.1-2), comprised of two main elements: feeling good and functioning well:

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‘Feelings of happiness, contentment, enjoyment, curiosity and engagement are characteristic of someone who has a positive experience of their life. Equally important for wellbeing is our functioning in the world. Experiencing positive relationships, having some control over one’s life.’

It then identified ‘five simple actions which can improve wellbeing in everyday life’:

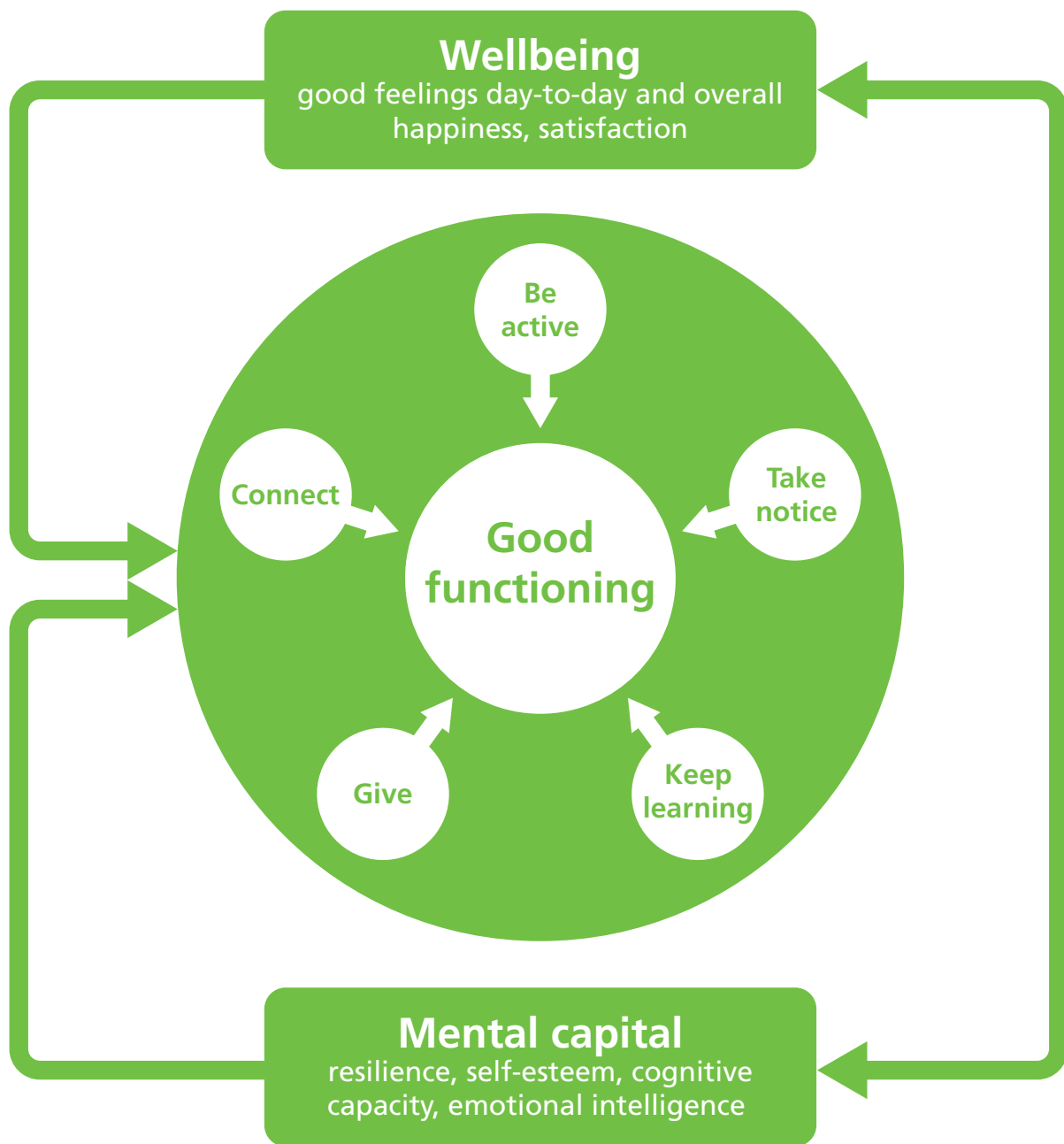
Connect = to build supportive and lasting social relationships that go beyond career-related and material goals.

Be active = to engage in physical activity and, by extension, to achieve mastery of a physical process.

Take notice = to practise awareness of sensations, thoughts and feelings and to reflect on matters that go beyond mediated and commercialised flows.

Keep learning = to try something new, to rediscover an old interest, to take on a new responsibility or to gain a new skill.

Give = to behave cooperatively, to help one another and to seek reciprocity and engage in mutual exchange.



'Five Ways to Wellbeing: The Evidence' (new economics foundation, 2008, p.13)

As this chart shows, these actions produce feelings of wellbeing that might also build more lasting 'mental capital'. The fact that each action can engender its own positive feedback means that wellbeing promoting factors can be reinforced. As one researcher puts it: 'Positive emotions can lead to positive cognitions, which in turn contribute to further positive emotions.'

This model is based on behavioural changes at the individual level and, the authors point out, it does not explain 'the role of enablers (infrastructure and motivators) at the societal level,

which have the capacity to encourage and sustain individual behaviour change' (*Five Ways to Wellbeing: The Evidence*, new economics foundation, 2008, p.14). We argue that the artists in Be Creative Be Well act as enablers and that the creative process they facilitate provides a structure that triggers and supports positive behavioural change.

At the outset of this evaluation, before we had made any visits, we recognised that these five actions correspond closely to behaviours that can emerge in well-designed participatory arts projects. People can form close relationships by engaging in a common creative task (connect). Physical activity is intrinsic to artforms like dance but applies equally to the making of material things (be active). Creating art encourages people to reflect on their world and their experiences in it (take notice). People develop skills and find out new things through arts projects (keep learning). Art is a powerful means of communication as well as self-expression, and participation in the arts can build both self-esteem and empathy (give).

When we did make our visits to see what was happening, we found abundant evidence of these behaviours in action and reported back to us. How, though, to organise this evidence, without simply listing examples or wildly generalising? We considered then what we had learned from residents and from our own observations about aspects of their lives that affect their health and sense of wellbeing. These 'determinants of health' (as discussed earlier in this report) include the physical environment they live in, the relationships they have with their neighbours, their access to a cultural life, their fitness and their role and agency in the community. Their health and wellbeing – indeed anyone's health and wellbeing – depends on the quality of these constituent elements of everyday life.

We realised then that the 'socially engaged' artists delivering Be Creative Be Well had, in fact, addressed these 'determinants of health' simply through their practice, if not always as a matter of declared intent. Unlike formal arts education or training, the participatory arts process engages with the person in their own context and by extension, as with community arts, with the everyday social formation around them. So, by examining how artists addressed each of these factors – place, relationships and so on – we could then exemplify how they encouraged the attitudinal and behavioural change embodied in the New Economic Foundation's 'five actions towards wellbeing' through a participative creative process.

The five chapters that follow provide an analysis based on the foregoing framework and offer case studies that we hope illustrate how this actually played out on the ground in each case. The final, standalone case study is included as an example of how creative projects can take people on a personal journey and bring them together in what policymakers term 'community cohesion'.

3.1 Place/Take notice

Paying attention to where you live

Taking notice means being aware of the world around you and your personal relationship to it. This state of mindfulness has been 'shown to predict positive mental states, self-regulated behaviour and heightened self knowledge' according to the research reviewed by the new economics foundation. The idea of paying attention is exemplified by the foundation on its Five Ways to Well-being postcards as 'being curious' and 'savouring the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends'.

We apply this idea here to how people notice – or often fail to notice – the place they live in and what part artists played in helping residents to observe, re-view and transform their physical environment.



‘At the top you have Manor House, which is where the Woodberry Down Reds, one of the most prolific gangs in the borough, are based. That is where they sell the crack and heroin. You go down to the left of the Robin Redman Centre [the main venue for the project] and round by the off-licence and the bookies is where the old Jamaican guys sell their weed. You cross over and go down the slip road between the really derelict blocks and that is where the working girls hang out of an evening – and sometimes during the day. That’s the patch.’

Lead artist

There are instances like this where the notional line demarcating and encapsulating an area of low income is made flesh, as it were, in the visible social world. Elsewhere, the LSOA might lack such coherence. A typical example would be Canning Town LSOA in Newham, where a vast underpass to the motorway cuts through the area and, according to the artists working there, breaks up any sense of community. What little open space it has is riven by the noise from endless streams of traffic.

This LSOA is also one of several where the local authorities have approved regeneration schemes – another is Woodberry Down, where a new academy has opened with a new community centre and a refurbished and expanded youth club. Such programmes vary in intention and quality. In some cases, there is a sense of papering over the cracks – in another estate we saw, this was literally the case: gently scrape the turf laid over the bleak new park

and you are quickly through to the rubble of recently demolished tower blocks. Local people might be forgiven for questioning the value of such 'progress'.

Although, across the LSOAs, the age and fabric of the buildings will vary considerably, there remains more than a vestige of the council estate and its unmistakable sameness: rows of identical houses, grids of tower block windows. This is, for those who live elsewhere, an abject landscape – the very architecture is a signifier of deprivation. Because that is the outside perception, residents are often conscious of a stigma attached to living here. Yet this does not necessarily mean they share that bleak vision. Some residents we met did bemoan to some extent what had happened to their estate over the years, citing an increase in anti-social behaviour or the physical dilapidation of the buildings, but more were keen to speak of the virtues of where they lived – perhaps, in some cases, defensively, aware of the reputation that such places can have in the world outside, particularly among policymakers. Indeed, these descriptions were often the first barrier to engagement.

Ultimately, how the environment is viewed by those who live in it is shaped by their own economic and social circumstances and by their sense of agency and purpose. There will be young unemployed people who have grown up here and whose parents may never have been in work, who may think of the estate as their entire world. It thus becomes – objectively – their 'prison' in Orwell's terms but, in their own terms, a safe space – their territory, their ends, which they will defend against all comers. They are the creators or inheritors of the no-go areas and safe routes that map all young people's lives in the city.

This difficult, often ugly or unfinished place has, nevertheless, the potential to be transformed. By looking around with a fresh eye, as if you had just landed here, and by thinking about the place and what makes it – despite everything – home, can lead ultimately to a new apprehension and appreciation of what it might become. That is what some of the artists working for Be Creative Be Well have aimed at making possible.

In North Kensington, for example, with lead artist Lisa Nash's encouragement, a young Muslim woman screened a 360-degree film taken from the top of her tower block, setting the new perspective on her estate to rapid beats. Someone in the same workshop approached the same place from ground level, taking colour photographs of, in the words of the resident artist, 'a row of garages which are the most disgusting and uninviting spaces and making something quite beautiful out of them'.

In Barking and Dagenham, Studio 3 Arts worked with participants, who included sedentary elderly residents and people with mental health issues, to enhance their environment and ease their sense of isolation. Simply cleaning up the green spaces was not enough in a place that one described as having 'no centre or focus in the community, nowhere safe to meet'. Artist Martin Swan was also keen to create public art where people live – 'not just on roundabouts':

‘This is about making an aesthetic difference to areas that people see every day, places that are close to people’s hearts: their gardens and balconies...’

For many people, the decorations they ended up making for window boxes and trellises and other meaningful spaces made a real visual difference – one spoke of 'the metal sparkling in the snow, making the place look so lovely now...' another of 'the mosaic that had 'brightened up my garden so much that this is where I spend all my summer now'.

This project was all about creating art to adorn living spaces, including pots for their gardens. The artists and local people in the Larkhall LSOA in Lambeth and the Cossall Estate in Southwark also had the same idea of using ceramics to brighten the environment – in the first case, by decorating the window boxes, thus individualising the rows of flats; in the second case, creating ceramic 'beauty spots' in 10 different sites to bring all the fragments of the estate together. In these ways, artists and residents turned the public space of the LSOA into a site of transformative creative activity.



100 Angels

Where did the project take place?

Upper Edmonton LSOA, London Borough of Enfield

How much money was allocated?

£28,006

Who received the funding?

Tiger Monkey

When did the project run?

April-December 2010

What was planned?

Inter-linked creative ventures involving public art, film, creative learning, public engagement and individual enrichment, the objective being to support wellbeing through a unifying theme

‘As I walk past and look at the angels, I feel something within me saying that we are being watched over and protected. I feel safe and happy.’

A local resident and participant

When arts company Tiger Monkey came to the Upper Edmonton LSOA, it found little evidence of a coherent community there: the LSOA was defined more by data than any meaningful relationship to self-defining communities of interest, race, culture or even geography. The implications of this were graphically demonstrated when, despite the company producing leaflets and posters, running open sessions, promoting word of mouth – ‘anything and everything that you can imagine to let people know what we were doing and

give them a taste of what was going on' – only a handful of people turned up to the first session the artists held at the local Boundary Hall one long Saturday.

Tiger Monkey then adapted its approach and found, at a primary school, the local support it had been looking for. It put aside its original plan of running a particular activity straight away and carried out instead a wide-ranging creative brainstorming session with local people. At these sessions of dance, storytelling, craft, music and so on, ideas were floated and discussed. It was at one of these that the notion of angels emerged.

In the consultation undertaken prior to the project, researchers from the University of East London discovered that local people wanted improvements to the built environment, a greater sense of safety and security in walking around the area, and community building. The 100 Angels project, as it became known, arguably achieved all three, transforming the physical fabric of the LSOA and giving the disparate individuals and families living here a sense of collective pride and confidence.

Putting it all into place

After the first (research) phase of the project, collective work on this theme began in earnest. The artists helped local people to create metal plaques, a large sculpture for outdoor display and flower arrangements of angels throughout the LSOA. All this work was launched as an arts trail, with around 70 people helping Tiger Monkey artists Joe Robinson and Emma Ghafur to complete a two-tonne concrete angel by planting 200 angel-hair grass plants to decorate its wings. They all celebrated at Boundary Hall with – what else? – angel cake, as part of a community feast funded by partners London Sustainability Exchange.

The artists point to the fact all this happened in an area actually called The Angel Edmonton: the inspiration for the 'angel' theme. They were also aware that some participants saw the concept in a more spiritual light – either way it has, they say, been the key to the programme's success:

‘When the angel first arrived, we were conscious it might be mistaken and seen as a largely Christian symbol, but we’ve endeavoured all the way through to talk about the original concept of the area’s name and the angel as a being that watches over us – a metaphor for our community. Because what seemed to be needed here was something or someone that could look over everyone rather than just one particular group of people.’

Emma Ghafur

The project has also brought together the various strands of Tiger Monkey's arts programme – and attracted a wide variety of partners to the whole enterprise. Enfield Homes, which runs the Snells Park Estate, gave permission for the public artworks to be erected; it gave them use of the Boundary Hall and helped with publicity to all the local homes. Groundworks Trust, a Well London partner, was involved in the planting and gardening side of the project. Fore Street Library hosted a residency and have put a set of angels permanently on display. Aptly enough, the Angel Community Centre has assisted with publicity and signposting, as well as hosting the set of angels that start the trail. The artists worked with the Florence Hayes Adventure Playground, running regular workshops and training staff to continue the Arts Award programme that had been set up; two Tiger Monkey apprentices gained their Gold Arts Awards while volunteering on the 100 Angels programme. It has all come together.

The question of legacy also seems more secure than usual, with the Angel arts trail still there to be seen by anyone who walks the half mile from Angel Community Centre to Snells Park. At its launch, one local commented: 'The angels are fantastic – a reminder of how great our area is.'

3.2 Relationships/Connect

Developing friendships and networks

Connecting means being aware of the people around you and building a personal relationship with them. According to the research reviewed by the new economics foundation, the most significant difference between people with good mental health and those without is social participation. The idea of connecting is exemplified by the foundation as investing in relationships with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours.

We apply this idea here to how artists helped residents to initiate, renew and develop social exchange and build mutually supportive relationships. Residents may sometimes feel isolated but artists can provide activities that bring people together in collective and constructive activities.



“I was brought up in south London where we knew all the neighbours. I moved away from home but my mum still knows everybody in the street, including the new people coming in. When I was living in a tower block and working on the Aylesbury Estate, I was probably the only one who knew all the people on my landing. I was born in Guyana in South America and in my village, if I came home from school and I didn’t say good afternoon to Miss Mary or whomever before I got home, somehow my grandmother would know and I would get beaten. “You walked past Miss Mary and you never said morning, good afternoon, nothing.” So, for me in my formative years it was natural: that’s the way it should be. You’ve got to smile and be friendly to people. I don’t think we should be so scared to get to know each other.”

Drama worker Tony Gouveia’s memories encapsulate the vision of community as a web of social exchange and mutual obligation. The image it conjures up has a nostalgic blur to it, even though it is still a vital part of Tony’s practice as an artist at Immediate Theatre. It is probably in all of us – this need for communion, for being part of a larger whole. It exists as a rebuke to the way most of us now lead our lives, pushed for time, always promising to meet up but never quite managing it. For those living on the LSOA, however, the situation can be much more serious and the experience of living here a far greater contrast to that glowing vision of community.

The initial consultation with local people revealed a worryingly predictable set of concerns and problems about living on estates, much of it focused on community safety. In most cases, fears about – and for – young people were paramount. Even the common complaints about

life here, such as the need to improve the street lighting, could be linked to the spectre of youthful gangs, lurking in the shadows.

Fear is one acid, eating away at the possibility of trust and respect across the generations or across different cultures. Another is isolation. It seems unlikely that putting so many people onto estates or piling them into tower blocks would result in a lack of community, but that has been the reality. Everyone lives close in space but many live apart socially, immured within the nuclear family and disconnected from those in the same street or block, often not aware even of their neighbour's name. Perhaps the group most affected by isolation are women, some of them raising a family by themselves, others out of work or in low-paid employment. It was notable how large a proportion of participation in Be Creative Be Well was female, with women more likely to be based on the estate during the day and free to attend workshops.

As a community-based participatory arts programme, Be Creative Be Well is all about relationships: group work, cooperation and collaboration. Exchange and peer mentoring are intrinsic to practice. The reason for taking part is not driven by the idea of monetary gain and, although participation might encourage some to explore new career directions, the process is fundamentally about creating art in the company of, and with the help of, others.

Perhaps the most obvious model of how such participation builds supportive relationships can be found in the drama group: the community that forms around any mutual creative enterprise like this is bound together by something very like love. Recent research into 'mirror' neurons suggests that we have an inbuilt propensity for sympathy and understanding which proximity, above all, brings out in us. Our moral awareness relies on the 'affective nearness' of others.

One of the Larkhall LSOA projects, making textiles and aimed at managing stress, serves as an example of how artists brought people together who hadn't met before though they might live in the same area and who, after a few weekly workshops, were sharing personal experiences quite intimately. It was, according to the artists running the project, 'quite a therapeutic space'.

Breaking the ice

When residents were asked what difference Be Creative Be Well was making, many of them would cite the fact they now knew by name people they had passed in the street for years, discovering neighbours they could now talk to, having shared the experience of making art together.

‘People who’ve been living next to each other for years have spoken for the first time – I even saw someone kissing their neighbour outside my door!’

Local resident

The way in which some artists, like Tony Gouveia in Brownswood LSOA in Hackney, approached engaging the community modelled how relationships can be formed, crossing generations – reaching older people through their children and bringing everyone together in communal activity, in the case of Immediate Theatre, a street parade.

‘We have always started by working with the young people – this is about informal education and with informal education, you need to get the parents involved as co-educators. That way you get to know all the family.’

‘You might get quite a small group to begin with but it will have a ripple effect because, next time they come, they bring friends. A couple of weeks later, they bring another lot – and their mums and dads. This is also why Immediate Theatre has peer facilitators – young people who talk to other young people, young people supporting each other. If they say ‘come on’ or your family says ‘come on’ or your neighbour says, ‘come on’, you feel you can join in.’

He has also begun to form bonds with young gang members – young men usually, teenaged or in their early 20s who are probably the hardest demographic to reach and whose involvement overall in Be Creative Be Well was much lower than other groups:

‘I still haven’t got the boys from the gangs through the door but they don’t give me any trouble. On day one they came to the door, they looked in, they came in and they saw what was going on. We were having a laugh and invited them to join in – a couple of them did for one session and then they left.’

‘One of them is a boy – he’s 13 – who comes in every now and again. He’s quite a brave little soul, a soldier and he’ll come by for a couple of weeks at a time. Then I’ll see him in the streets with all the familiar faces. They’ll go, “Hi Ton, hi Rasta” and be really friendly. At least I know some of their names now, so I can say hi back.’



An artist with people

Where did the project take place?

Woolwich Common LSOA, London Borough of Greenwich

How much money was allocated?

£20,119

Who received the funding?

New Global Image

When did the project run?

April-October 2010

What was planned?

Connecting Barnfield: using performing and creative arts to generate greater awareness of community development and to create ambassadors to champion people's participation

Barnfield Estate has no tower blocks – most of the buildings are four or five storeys high. They surround a featureless expanse of thin, tired-looking grass brightened by the swooping contours and bright colours of a new children's play area. The flats have balconies, most of them used for drying laundry or for overflow storage. None of them seem to be used for sitting out, talking and watching the world go by. Many of the flats also have satellite dishes, strengthening the impression that life here is experienced indoors.

The estate has a long-standing reputation for violence and crime and there are high levels of turnover and transfer requests. There is little in the form of community organisation, apart from a project for under-fives. Only with the advent of Well London at the end of 2009 was a residents' group – The Friends of Barnfield – finally established. Unsurprisingly, the need for

social cohesion and a community identity was of the key issues to emerge from initial consultations with local people.

The Be Creative Be Well project was managed here by New Global Image, led by Iristide Essien, known as Iris. In partnership with the African Community Development Foundation, New Global Image ran art and photography workshops and outdoor performing arts events. The programme focused on young people, in the hope that they might act as ambassadors. Championing the call for Barnfield community action under the banner of 'Connect: My Side of the Story', Iris hoped to convert the introspective inaction of life here to a new narrative of practical citizenship and community participation – and to spark the necessary creative thinking and imagination of residents not just through engaging them in arts activity but in supporting them to manage the programme itself.

As a result, volunteers on the project benefited from training in community development and youth work practice, innovative and creative thinking about citizenship and community engagement, people management and sustainable development – training that, it was also hoped, would enhance their chances of employability. Having participated in other Well London activities, some volunteers were already committed to increasing 'constructive neighbourliness' on the estate as a way of sustaining activities once the project had finished. One such volunteer was involved in both the creative programme and the afterschool link that was set up at the suggestion of residents:

‘I was sitting at home, thinking my English isn't good enough, my maths isn't good enough – all that kind of stuff. But since I joined this programme, I've found a new confidence in myself. I've just finished my health trainer's course, which was very good. Here at the afterschool club, we've grown from one or two children to 10 and I hope we'll have even more by next year. The arts activities – dancing, drawing, modelling, drumming – have made a huge difference. It's not just through maths and English that people communicate who they are.’

In fact, maths and English were on the menu at the afterschool club, along with healthy eating (fresh fruit), skipping and football. After some internal debate, New Global Image had decided that this club was a legitimate addition to its programme, given its importance to local parents, many of whom have English as a second language. Here, their children were encouraged to develop different kinds of relationships with adults, based on shared interests, enjoyment and curiosity rather than on power and authority. The youth ambassador who had first promoted the idea of the club commented:

‘Eventually, they wouldn’t want to leave at the end of the club. That showed me I didn’t have to do anything really out of the way, just be there to support them when I was needed – and to laugh with them when they were laughing!’

A healthy pragmatism

The integration of these educational and creative elements was typical of Iris’s pragmatic approach to delivering Be Creative Be Well. It also illustrated his emphasis on the community development aspects of the programme, rather than on achieving overtly artistic aims. The arts were seen primarily as instrumental: as a means of achieving wider social goals. Individual artists might or might not bring to sessions a passionate engagement with their artform but the main point was to provide a varied programme of activities – including photography, African drumming, fashion design and rap poetry – that would give novice participants a breadth of creative experiences rather than seek to draw from them any greater depth of involvement.

Iris’s diffidence about his own artistic skills may have been a factor here. ‘I’m not an artist!’ he would say, laughing and slightly defensive. The right answer to that came back from one of the participants: ‘You’re an artist with people, Iris.’

His core belief is that, fundamentally, play is as important as work is – an artistic position as well as a social one. It may well be that his overriding desire is to get people involved in anything positive that gives them pleasure and creates shared laughter, because that is the way to promote their health and the health of the communities they live in. Initially less confident himself about how ‘doing art’ might fit into this process, Iris can now combine his community development expertise with a new understanding of how to get people going creatively. One young participant illustrates that shift:

‘When we started, we were learning about how a picture looked – it was boring. I didn’t feel like coming back again. Then we started actually doing things and since then I’ve done a rap about Barnfield and made a video with my cousins. I’ve had a lot of fun.’

Fluid engagement with the energies and interests of local people is, in the end, as essential to a successful artistic programme as it is to achieving its social goals.

3.3 Cultural life/Keep learning

Discovering and developing creative energy

Learning, in this context, can mean rediscovering an old interest as well as trying something new – examples offered by the new economics foundation range from signing up for a course to ‘setting a challenge you will enjoy achieving’. While learning plays an important role in children’s social and cognitive development, research reviewed by the foundation suggests that ‘the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities helps to lift older people out of depression’, enhancing their self-esteem, encouraging social interaction and a more active life (*Five Ways to Wellbeing: The Evidence*, new economics foundation, 2008, p.9).

We apply this idea, here, to the issue of cultural engagement and creative activity. While it is clear that many residents lack access to mainstream arts provision, it is also evident that there is often rich and sometimes untapped cultural potential within the community. Artists can facilitate the learning of new skills and help those with creative abilities to take these further; they can also facilitate the expression of local cultural practices.



Those living outside these LSOAs or the housing estates that make up many of them might assume that these are cultural deserts, cut off as they are from mainstream arts activity and consumption. That attitude does, of course, have real effects on how people in these areas view themselves and may either discourage them from developing skills they have, or persuade them that ‘real’ art and culture lies somewhere beyond their neighbourhood. That negativity is similar to that which pervades schooling in these poorer areas, where young people learn not to aspire. There is also the fact that culture, like health, is some way down some residents’ agendas, which will be focused on meeting more basic needs.

However, human communities always create culture, even if it is not recognised as such by those who have the power to set the definitions. These places have their own mix of cultural habits and preferences and one of the many challenges for the artists leading Be Creative Be Well was to identify these and then to find a balance between offering more and better of the same and introducing the less familiar and more demanding.

This is central to the participatory arts process, from learning how to hold a paintbrush to leading a workshop on poetry. In Be Creative Be Well, it is noteworthy how often artists living in or near the LSOA were discovered and drawn into the programme but, even more

encouraging, there were frequent instances of local people rediscovering or sharing old creative skills and in some cases being spurred on to return to study or training, having regained their confidence.

Certain areas of London might be considered home to particular populations – Portuguese and Brazilian people in and around Stockwell in Lambeth, Turkish and Kurdish along the Green Lanes corridor in the north east of the city – but the general picture is one of ethnic mixture rather than segregation. Whether current government policy – the cuts to housing benefit in particular – will change this jigsaw of difference, driving the poorer communities out of the centre, is not clear, but this is the city in which Well London and Be Creative Be Well has operated. This swirl of cultures, eddying and mixing across the LSOAs, provided artists with a rich palette of possibilities.

Tony Gouveia of Immediate Theatre truly mingled the cultures in Brownswood LSOA:

‘This year we have had street dance, Bollywood dance, capoeira, African dance and drumming, Turkish dance and drumming but then, intermixed with that, we have had Latin American voice and rhythm and general theatre games as part of a whole stream of activities. Then we have had Bigga Blocco, which is a band that evolved out of Brazil’s AfroReggae group working with our youth theatre members.’

Although most of the artists he brought in to work with residents were local, he sought out others to bring something different to the table, including a Bollywood dance group imported from Greenwich Dance Agency. However, this should not obscure his commitment to the values of home cultures, as opposed to what he calls ‘Coca-Cola culture’, the commercialised sector that exoticises such traditions when it does not ignore them.

As residents in such projects learned or rediscovered these skills, so too did artists learn more of the cultures represented in the LSOA. In the case of Canning Town LSOA, there was a reminder that such places have contributed to so-called mainstream culture and that there is a two-way process going on – an exchange of skills and energies.



Not just jigs and bells

Where did the project take place?

Canning Town North LSOA, London Borough of Newham

How much money was allocated?

£25,645

Who received the funding?

East London Dance

When did the project run?

June-December 2010

What was planned?

All Folked Up: a programme of participatory dance workshops and visual, literary and historical events celebrating Canning Town's historical contribution to the birth of modern English folk-dance movement

‘I feel that when I dance I am celebrating my body, my fitness, my energy, my spirit, my being! The music takes over completely...’

Dancer from the adults and older people group

Dance has a long history in Canning Town. A hundred years ago, Maud Karpeles and Elsie J. Oxenham came to work here at women's settlements. Karpeles taught folk dance to local children at the Mansfield House Settlement and went on to found the English Folk Dance and Song Society with Cecil Sharp in 1911. Her pupils received national media coverage for their performances and the wider folk dance movement achieved widespread credibility after D.C. Daking taught the dances to soldiers behind the lines during World War I. After the war

ended, Daking came to teach at the Plaistow YMCA, and her experiences there were immortalised in fiction in Elsie Oxenham's Abbey books.

Twenty-five years ago, Dr Ju Gosling, a disabled artist, also came to live here. Knowing Canning Town's celebrated role in the development of the folk dance movement, she set out to reconnect the local community with its rich history. The shape of the Be Creative Be Well programme here was in large part down to her efforts: devising the original concept, doing the research, briefing the artists, producing an exhibition. Crucially, she introduced East London Dance, the lead artists, to the key folk dance protagonists, as well as working with project partners the English Folk Dance and Song Society on a national conference about traditional folk dance.

The other main mover was Kiki Gale, project lead and artistic director of East London Dance, an organisation committed to dance in the community and descended, via the dance amateur movement of the 1970s onwards, from dancers like Maud Karpeles. She saw the possibility that celebrating the contribution made by Canning Town to the folk dance movement might not only help to revive the tradition here but, given the cultural diversity of today's residents, could produce interesting new forms and expressions.

In fact, the population here was already something of a melting pot back at the turn of the last century, with people from Germany, India, Malaysia and Japan, and from a wide range of Eastern European, African and West Indian countries. This time, however, there would hopefully be more sharing and exchange of the dance traditions of these and more recently settled cultures. Before this could happen, the organisers had to address the notorious divisions that still linger on in the folk scene – whether in song, dance or storytelling circles – between purists and innovators, preservationists and modernisers.

For East London Dance, this posed some challenges, one of which was deciding which styles of dance to teach and how – could they fuse styles, for example? Another was how far they could strike a balance in the exhibition between dances produced locally and professional work. Ultimately, East London Dance braved the traditionalists and mixed different styles and approaches, not least so that it could broaden the appeal of the dance programme to local people. As one dancer put it, folk dance is 'not just about jigs and bells'.

The support of the English Folk Dance and Song Society was essential in helping to make this 'fusion' approach acceptable. Folk dance does not have a large teaching community but the society advised on whom to work with for maximum impact. The selected artists were

experienced and highly skilled technically but equally important was their flexibility and willingness to adapt their art to whatever was required to engage different groups. They were joined by other artists trained in contemporary dance, making for some high-calibre artistic collaboration, as Kiki Gale remarks:

‘Our sessions were often organic. The dancers were completely open to teaching and learning from each other, and speaking up when they thought something didn’t feel right as a performer.’

This approach also resulted in local people engaging with a remarkable variety of dance and musical styles – including clog dancing, Jamaican dance hall, sword dances, bagpipe tunes, maypole dancing – and dancing everything from the Sunshine and the Star to the Dip-and-dive and the Thunderclap.

A fitter legacy

Given this hectic level of activity, it is no surprise to learn that participants report feeling fitter in terms of stamina, strength and flexibility and feeling altogether healthier for taking part. For many, dance will now be how they keep themselves fit in the future. Wellbeing is about more than this, of course, and the close relationships that developed between artists and participants were important in building trust and reducing inhibitions about performing. The intergenerational element in the programme helped local people to make new friends and to suggest what being part of a community might mean. New skills have been learned and participants have developed their own creative voice – as one remarked: ‘We are artists too.’

What this confident assertion of creativity might mean was vividly illustrated at the last session of the programme, when members of each group were invited to teach a short sequence to the other group. One shy 12-year-old from the under-16s group, who had earlier struggled to remember the material, found herself teaching a complicated sequence to a group that included 70-year-olds. Then, to the surprise of everyone who knew her, another, even shyer participant – an adult new to the UK who spoke little English – chose to deliver a sequence to the under-16s.

At the culmination of this session, another local participant performed two duets. This woman had trained professionally but, as her passion for folk dance grew, the contemporary dance world had turned aside. She lost confidence, aspiration and passion and quit dance completely. This project not only reinvigorated her love of folk dance but also gave her the

space and time to regain her confidence as a performer. She is now spearheading the adult dancers group's plans to form a regular club.

The legacy of the Canning Town project extends beyond its impact on this community. Some of the professional artists were so inspired by their collaborations that they have begun to work together on other projects for East London Dance, which will now be able to continue bringing folk dance to communities in East London. Meanwhile, the membership of Canning Town's local history group has doubled and the English Folk Dance and Song Society will now be publishing the autobiography of Maud Karpeles, who used to teach in Canning Town and who would be very pleased to know that her work here is still continuing to bear fruit.

3.4 Physical activity/Be active

Exercising healthy choices

Being active means most obviously physical activity – from walking and running to dance and gardening. According to the research reviewed by the new economics foundation, there is evidence to indicate that physical activity ‘protects against cognitive decline in later life and against the onset of depressive symptoms and anxiety’. Engagement in physical activity provides ‘increases in perceived self-efficacy, a sense of mastery and a perceived ability to cope’ (*Five Ways to Well-being: The Evidence*, new economics foundation, 2008, p.7).

We apply this idea here to how artists got residents on their feet, moving and performing in creative ways. Residents often lack access to adequate sporting facilities and opportunities for exercise – artists can model new ways of developing physical health and fitness, including healthy eating.



Whether a lack of exercise causes depression or depression prevents people taking exercise, there is a clear link between levels of fitness and mental health. People living in deprived circumstances are less likely to have access to good sports facilities and more likely to buy processed foods that are less healthy and more fattening. There is an obesity epidemic and increasing concern at the inactivity and loss of muscular fitness and stamina among the young, due to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle.

Many artists incorporated activities that would encourage healthy eating and physical exercise – two of the five core aims of Well London. Examples include mothers and children sitting down to make things together at home for the first time, the manual effort of making ceramics and working with charcoal and paints.

There was a varied range of dance projects, including Dance at Bellingham for adults and young people in the same building at the same time, combining a physical workout with good warm-up exercise programmes as well as creative expression. Dance at Canning Town brought together English folk dance and Jamaican dance hall for young and old. Even elderly people were not exempted – encouraged to use their hands to work on planting new gardens and decorating pots to enhance the exterior of people’s houses and gardens.

Although 'being active' is usually taken to refer to physical activity and exercise, it can, we believe, be extended at least to the haptic aspects of making art and probably further. Creating something artistic is as much an act of the body and the senses as an intellectual act – often much more so. Dance is obviously physical exercise but so is getting out of the flat to participate in a painting workshop.

East London Dance worked with one group of parents/carers and toddlers only for a short period of time but the material that was taught was designed specifically with health and wellbeing in mind. The dancers concentrated on helping them to understand the role of gravity, development of cooperation, and the use of props in dance, which develops spatial awareness and stimulates sensory awareness. The babies that were often a part of the taster sessions were also engaged – they positively responded to the atmosphere in the studio by smiling, laughing and moving to the music.

Residents also learned a fair bit about healthy eating. Asked what she had learned about this, one young participant immediately offered: 'Not good to have too many sweets. Take time to digest your food.' One 'youth champion' on the programme was astonished to find that the young people he had been working with had developed a genuine liking for fresh fruit: 'I've never seen young people so excited by eating fruit. They'd literally argue over who got different bits of banana, apple, tropical juice.'



More fruit than cake

Where did the project take place?

South Bellingham LSOA, London Borough of Lewisham

How much money was allocated?

£5,650

Who received the funding?

Trinity Laban

When did the project run?

May-December 2010

What was planned?

Bellingham Moves: a dance programme for children and adults to promote the positive use of public spaces and to boost participants' health and emotional wellbeing

At 10 weeks, this dance-based project was relatively short so it was vital to get people involved – and moving – as quickly as possible. This proved challenging. The initial response was extremely slow with just three or four people turning up to the first few classes. Somewhat demoralised, the artists tried hard to boost numbers by running taster workshops targeted at residents on the Meadows Estate. They also ran workshops in the local primary schools, which worked very well, and plugged into the local health forum and other local neighbourhood committees to seek advice and help with promotion. In the end, however, most participants came from the surrounding streets outside the estate, many through the

schools taster workshops. Another recruitment initiative that proved more immediately successful was the idea of bookending the project with two community dance parties.

Let them eat... fruit

Joanna Gamper and her team of dance artists had written into their project plan that they would throw a party to launch the classes that would be fun but healthy. Just offering cake would not be a great way to start promoting healthy living, so they came up with the idea of providing 'healthy' cakes with big, colourful, hopefully enticing fruit platters to accompany them. Healthy cakes were duly commissioned from a specialist baker. When the day of the opening party came, the team was convinced that the cake would be devoured and the fruit would end up as decoration. But quite the reverse happened.

Joanna had the impression that a lot of the younger people had never seen many of the fruits on offer before and they had certainly not tasted them: 'They didn't know how to peel an orange, so we showed them how.' Following this success, Amy, one of the dance artists, suggested that Laban should theme the classes, which were held at the end of the week, as Fruity Fridays. Each class would have a break and free fruit would be shared among the group.

The launch party attracted around 40 participants and helped to raise awareness of the project with local residents.

Joining the dance

The dance programme itself began with directed sessions but gradually wove in more opportunity for creative input as participants gained in confidence. Interacting with a large parachute, using hula-hoops and playing a huge variety of games helped to build confidence and trust. Laban built their approach for young people on an already established model, their Nu Groovz dance programme, designed for those reluctant to engage in physical activity and with a tendency towards obesity. The model featured two classes running in parallel – one for adults and one for children – allowing parents to participate in a dance activity without requiring childcare.

Whether it was because or in spite of the increasing numbers of people from outside turning up to class, there was a late surge of interest from estate dwellers. The 10 weeks had apparently been enough to build awareness and, by the end of the project, participation had tripled. That was reflected in the high turnout at the joyful closing party at Christmas, when 80 people attended, mostly from the estate.

The results of taking part in the dance programme were encouraging for artists and participants alike. Both the youth and the adult group had grown in confidence and fitness levels and had ventured beyond aerobics for fitness into doing much more creative dance – proof for Joanna of being truly creative and well: ‘Creativity is the key – when you’ve cracked this, you know you are working at a deeper level and have a chance of sustaining it.’ The interaction in classes between young people from the surrounding neighbourhood and those on the estate was encouraging in building positive relationships and understanding. Children who had been scared or wary of each other were now dancing together as friends.

There were setbacks – notably, the failed attempt to set up a boys-only class for some of the very disruptive boys on the estate, who were creating a nuisance in the young people’s classes. It had worked for a while but, without additional funding to support and help to control them and give them individual attention, it was difficult to sustain. Overall, however, the news is good for the legacy of this intervention.

Dance is still happening on the Meadows Estate. The classes for adults and children over summer 2011 were set to culminate at the Bellingham Festival, when everyone would have the chance to perform. Laban is now seeking alternative funding in order to sustain these classes – the company is firmly committed to continuing its work here.

3.5 Leadership/Give

Making a difference locally

Giving means joining in or contributing to your community – seeing how you might make a difference. Based on its review of research, the new economics foundation states: ‘Feelings of happiness and life satisfaction have been strongly associated with active participation in social and community life. For older people, volunteering is associated with more positive affect and more meaning in life, while offering support to others has been shown to be associated with reduced mortality rates.’ (*Five Ways to Wellbeing: The Evidence*, new economics foundation, 2008, p.10)

We apply this idea here to the role residents might play in their communities but often fail to through lack of confidence, self-esteem and initiative. We examined how artists can build a sense of purpose and agency through the creative process and help to create partnerships and mechanisms for residents to play a greater part in the planning and running of their communities.



The machinery of power is not always as visible as it is on the Waltham Forest estate, where huge signs forbidding ball games, dog walking and so on dot every stretch of grass. It is all rather reminiscent of another observation from George Orwell over 70 years ago:

‘Take, for instance, the restrictions with which you are burdened in a Corporation house. You are not allowed to keep your house and garden as you want them – in some estates there is even a regulation that every garden must have the same kind of hedge.’

The Road to Wigan Pier (George Orwell, 1937)

These LSOAs are communities where power – visible or invisible – largely lies in other people’s hands. There are tenants and resident associations and similar bodies, but they are not always representative of the communities they serve and, in any case, have limited authority and power.

One of the aspirations driving Well London was to encourage and equip local people to develop leadership skills and to take up new roles and responsibilities in their communities. In the case of Be Creative Be Well, there were two ways in which it was hoped artists might contribute to this: by passing on artistic and facilitation skills to individuals so that they might

carry on some of the activities initiated by the programme; and – more indirectly – by raising individuals' sense of worth and independent agency to the point that they might play a more active role in local organisation and community affairs or go on to further study and employment – all actions that have clear implications for personal wellbeing.

There were good examples of these outcomes during Be Creative Be Well. There were also many examples of volunteering: local people contributing resources, skills, knowledge or simply a pair of hands to the creative work. The creation, for example, of the clay oven in Waltham Forest was a collective giving of labour and skill towards a shared resource. In Canning Town, younger people learning new dance skills helped to lead classes for the adults and elderly people, some as old as 90. Similarly, on the Cossall Estate, younger people empowered by their new skills were able to help pass on their visual arts skills to other groups just starting out.

The two accounts that follow show first how individual leadership can emerge not from the desire to wield power but, somewhat unfashionably, from a wish to serve others and, secondly, how a community can find ways to provide its own resources.



A new secretary for the tenants and residents association

Where did the project take place?

Nunhead LSOA, London Borough of Southwark

How much money was allocated?

£29,015

Who received the funding?

Arts Express

When did the project run?

April-December 2010

What was planned?

A project with four elements delivered through resident participation, including a filmed documentary with soundtrack, workshops towards an exhibition and 10 linked pieces of artwork across the estate

This sprawling estate seems to have little sense of community, perhaps because it has no obvious centre. As on numerous similar estates today, many residents are fearful of interacting with people beyond their immediate territory. Although there has been some recent investment, it hasn't dispelled a pervasive fear among many older residents about the youngsters who hang out here. The Be Creative Be Well programme run here by Arts Express set out to address the generational divide.

The organisation soon discovered that this general malaise extended to the tenants and residents association, which seemed to have given up trying to represent the huge cultural mix of people now living here. The perception of the association among many residents, fairly or unfairly, was that it had not only lost touch with local demographics but was also failing to provide leadership for the troubled community. It was significant in this respect that the Be Creative Be Well team decided to base itself not at the association hall, but in the empty shop next door.

Arts Express designed its programme around the principle that people who are connected with their community, who have a strong sense of being part of a wider entity and who contribute to their environment, experience mental wellbeing. It drew in 140 people of all ages, from toddlers to 80-year-olds, to work collaboratively on a range of arts, including printmaking, stencil cutting, Photoshop, screen printing, ceramics and filmmaking. It encouraged older people with professional-level expertise to support younger, less experienced participants. At the end of the project, all this work was exhibited in the same space – an impressive mixture of high-calibre photography and painting produced by the wider community. However, perhaps the greatest achievement of the project was to help revive and rejuvenate the tenants and residents association through the influence of a local artist and mother, Sam Hills.

Back in 2006, Sam volunteered for Arts Express and was very soon offered paid work, which she resumed after taking time out to have a child. As Arts Express wanted to engage local artists to work on the Be Creative Be Well programme, Sam was well placed to take up a position as she lives on the estate and already had a good track record with the organisation. She was invited to be one of the arts workshop leaders. The experience has had a great impact on her:

‘It’s been a huge confidence boost, being asked to take responsibility, meeting other like-minded people and realising that there’s no point in playing it too safe – you need to take risks.’

Sam learned her jewellery-making skills back at art college 20 years ago and had, until recently, her own studio. However, this project has made her rethink. In particular, it has been her visits to local schools on behalf of Be Creative Be Well that have had the greatest impact on her:

‘I found out so many positive things about the schools here. Like other parents on the estate, I was convinced that they were failing and were altogether bad news for our kids’ education. When I actually went in there, I began to see how dedicated the staff are and how they are trying to help struggling parents.’

Setting an example

Sam now feels very strongly that parents should do more to engage with these schools and not just send their children off to ‘better’ schools. She has set an example by sending her own son to a school she previously would not have contemplated and she has continued to work with the school to help improve its chances. She is also now considering whether she herself might make a good teacher and, as a first step, is studying for a Children and Young People’s Diploma. Her jewellery-making has also taken something of a backseat – having been offered free space at her son’s school in exchange for half a day of volunteering, she is now working with the deputy head to create a sensory garden, full of fruit and vegetables and plants to enhance the environment. This takes up much of the time she would have been spending on her craftwork:

‘I want to be part of creating something special for these children. I am passionate about working with early years children and their families, helping the ones that are really struggling. What I’ve learned is that creativity is so much more than sitting in a studio making jewellery when you could be working with the community.’

Sam is not the only participant to have found a new sense of direction and purpose. Among several others, her own husband, Steve, has begun photography again after a long fallow period. A stroke at the age of 18 had left Steve with disabilities and an acute lack of confidence. Although he graduated in 2004 from Camberwell School of Art, he couldn’t find work. As a talented photographer based on the estate, he was invited to lead the photography workshops for Arts Express and proved himself to be an excellent teacher and communicator. He mounted a very high-quality photographic exhibition as part of the final celebratory event and has gone on to have another show. With a new sense of confidence in what he can achieve, he is hoping to pursue other photography projects and, like Sam, he is keen to support his community on the Cossall Estate.

Meanwhile, Sam is now Secretary of the tenants and residents association where her remarkable artistic and social abilities are being put to good use. Clearly, being part of the Be Creative Be Well project was a huge catalyst for her. Communities like the one she is serving

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need someone with a clear vision for what can be achieved and a bold approach to achieving this vision: leadership, in other words. Residents are beginning to sense a change:

‘I don’t feel that hostility anymore. I feel safer now with younger people: this is what the association should have been doing ’



Somewhere for kids to go

Where did the project take place?

Larkhall LSOA, London Borough of Lambeth

How much money was allocated?

£34,500

Who received the funding?

Trust Arts Project

When did the project run?

November 2009-December 2010

What was planned?

The Big Tea: enabling local people to design and deliver a large scale community project and building relationships through consultation and inclusive engagement, including workshops in mosaics, crafts, dance, photography and graphic design, baking and food art

The Larkhall Estate was built between 1926 and 1931. It has the feel and look of a traditional tenement block, with a large rectangular courtyard at its centre. A narrow slip road provides the only exit and entrance to this enclosed and safe-seeming space. There are rows of balconies with their flags of drying laundry and flower-filled window-boxes, which, if you look closer, bear brightly coloured mosaics. These are, in fact, one visible outcome of the Be Creative Be Well programme: a permanent marker that art has been here and made a modest change to the way things were.

Up to the age of 11 or so, children gravitate to the centre of the estate to play. They look after each other and some of the older residents, too, as Belinda Sosinowicz, the project

manager here, has noticed: 'They all know the oldest member of this community. She's 92 and they make sure she can walk properly and doesn't fall over.'

Beyond 11 – and beyond this courtyard – the streets beckon. There is no real place for independence-seeking adolescents to hang out, unless you count an adventure playground open only during the day. Inevitably, issues around territory emerge along with the protective/aggressive appeal of joining a gang. That can lead to incidents like a fatal stabbing in the local park a couple of years ago.

Young people of this age need a place to go, a place of their own – and that also goes for everyone on the estate. When people wanted to get together in the past, to run an event, have a party or organise activities, they would use the local health centre. Owned by the community, the old building had parquet flooring and galleried ceilings and could be hired at reasonable rates. That has all gone. The new centre, built on the site of the old, is certainly attractive, with a large glass frontage suggesting accessibility, but room hire here is now 10 times as high as before, putting it out of reach of most local residents.

The lack of a community space was also a major problem for Belinda and her team of artists. It forced them to go to places where things were already going on. They would link up with the children's centre, for example, where they recruited participants from among the mothers doing activities there. Or they would go to the local residential home in order to work with older people. Belinda explains what these partnerships did not provide:

'These were people who were already being offered activities. Part of my remit was to reach those who were isolated and try to get them out of their houses and doing something.'

Finding the right place

The solution came with the discovery and revival of a 'youth flat' in the midst of the estate blocks. This small suite of ground-floor rooms had lost council funding some time before but was now quickly refurbished as a new venue for the community. A resident who used to go there as a youth is now running it; she is, according to Belinda, a natural leader. She hopes to add another evening to the regular weekly events, which are attended by up to 20 young people aged 11 to 18 who might otherwise be wandering the street.

This unexpected development solved the recruitment problem, as Belinda explains:

‘The youth flat was perfect for us. Because it’s here, it’s open to about 500 residents and all we have to do is put a big poster on the wall outside to draw people in.’

During the holidays, a timetable of regular activities was posted up. The project ran weekly workshops for about 5 months engaging children as young as 3 up to 16. These varied from textiles, jewellery-making, baking to film and photography. It also ran a strength-building exercise and piloted a youth Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment here – in collaboration with mental health service provider, the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM). Additional funding was awarded to run Summer University workshops as part of Lambeth’s holiday education programme. This resulted in more environmental improvements and enabled young people to build stronger connections with each other. For Belinda, the only downside – apart from the uncertainty of any such venture prospering in a worsening financial climate – is that the discovery came too late in the project to realise its full potential as a centre for sustained, confidence- and skill-building work among young people here:

‘We became an NQA awards site and it would have been great to run a programme where they could really develop their skills and gain AQA certificates – which, for some of them, would have made up for not getting qualifications at school. They would have had portfolios of work: from people with severe autism making shoelaces to others perhaps creating and maintaining a website and even building their own computer. That would have been an amazing achievement.’

However, although the project has now finished, Belinda – who worked in the area prior to Be Creative Be Well – remains hopeful that her dream of working on a youth offending project here in the flat will be realised at some point in the future.

In the meantime, local people are trying to keep the venue alive and open. Hiring it out for functions brings in some modest income and a couple of youth workers have volunteered to continue activities and develop the space. Friday nights have now become a regular venue for a youth club, led by a local youth worker. There is fighting talk, too, of putting in for more funding. Whatever its future, the point has been made and the venue’s potential is clear.

‘It was one of these serendipitous things. Finding and relaunching the youth flat meant that children and young people had somewhere to go again.’

Belinda Sosinowicz

3.6 Community cohesion

Realising the potential

It brings everything together

Where did the project take place?

Limehouse LSOA, London Borough of Tower Hamlets

How much money was allocated?

£34,000

Who received the funding?

Splash Arts

When did the project run?

November 2009-September 2010

What was planned?

Zoetrope Project: a moveable sculpture created by the communities it passes through, providing a focus for performance and neighbourhood cohesion and encouraging onlookers and participants to look to wider horizons

“Arts Council England brought together artists and youth workers for a meeting about Be Creative Be Well and we all had to promote or put forward ideas for an arts project. The one that seemed to bring everybody together was the idea of a sculpture. Gateway Youth, one of the other organisations, said, “Why don’t we have a moveable sculpture that goes from place to place throughout the LSOA?” Then somebody came up with the idea of a zoetrope. It’s perfect. It brings everything together. It’s art, science, drama; it’s theatre and media. So, it was a very good kind of focalising device. Because the other thing is: how do you work with five different arts organisations?”

David Bratby

David Bratby runs Splash Arts and coordinated the Be Creative Be Well programme in Poplar. As he explains it, the zoetrope was the spinning centre of all the artistic activity that took place here. It was also a device that linked people and places across the whole area, culminating in a procession to a festival in Bartlett Park where the project came to its formal close.

The zoetrope was a 19th-century precursor of cinema, an instrument consisting of a cylinder with a series of pictures on the inner surface that, when viewed through slits with the cylinder rotating, gives an impression of continuous motion. They can be made in all sizes. David and his colleagues commissioned Bill Wright, a sculptor and fabricator based in Ireland, to create one big enough – three metres across – for several people to stand under its fabric roof. It came as a kit: a set of aluminium rods and panels that could, with some effort, be connected together to form what looked like a skeleton gazebo, ready for painted canvas panels to be inserted at intervals



Photo: courtesy of Splash Arts

between the 12 slots. Static, it could act as a studio or a theatre or gallery. Spinning, it would bring 12 still photographs of a local young dancer to life. It was, in effect, a portable arts centre.

Each of the five organisations involved in the project (Stitches in Time, the Space Theatre, Belle Dancers, Gateway Media and Splash Arts) used the zoetrope as a medium and an inspiration for their own arts practice. Space, a company that runs drama workshops, did theatre sessions around the estate, inspired by the Victorian era that produced such optical wonders. They explored the zoetrope's connections with silent film, vaudevillian performance and animation and, by focusing on physical performance techniques, reinforced the Well London aim of being more active. Children learned about the characters and stock gestures of melodrama, devised plot lines themselves, found costumes and performed at the festival.

Stitches in Time ran costume-making workshops, where residents produced two different types of costumes to tie in with the silent film theme, with hats and special armbands, some featuring sewn cityscape skylines. These were for wearing on the street procession to Bartlett Park. Bodices and pointed hats were designed and made for the dance groups that had also come together at Hind Grove, the community centre at the heart of the LSOA. During Saturday dance classes parents would make or decorate the costumes with stitching, while their children practised their routines for the two dances that they would be performing on the festival day.

A work in progress

‘We could take this travelling or portable sculpture from place to place, creating a new panel in each place, be it a housing estate, youth club, community centre or art club. Linked to the sculpture we incorporated dance, drama, art, dressmaking and a video documentary. As we went we created art clubs and enhanced other existing ones.’

David Bratby

Dropping into the project midflow was a slightly bewildering experience though it soon became clear that everything going on here would cohere around the zoetrope.

First, there was a group of older women, all members of the Art Knit and Chat club. They were engaged, under David’s guidance, in creating Victorian cameos in preparation for designing their own panels for the zoetrope. They began by hanging up a large white sheet of paper and getting another participant to sit behind it with a light shining behind them. They then drew the shadow projected at the front of the paper. It was a quirky process and fun, allowing plenty of time for the weekly gossip.

Outside, David has – with a little help – succeeded in erecting the zoetrope, an art class formed itself out of passing children and their parents. The estate here is dotted with odd but potentially usable corners and even concrete platforms. The one outside the centre has paths leading to it from several directions and it became an impromptu meeting point once the zoetrope frame was up and two canvas panels laid on trestle tables ready for painting.

The overall design of these panels was based on the paintings of Ferdinand Legér, not copying his work but using it as an influence. The growing group of children, some of whom had begun the paintings in a previous session, were now tasked with adding colours to create depth and perspective. Another artist is adding her own touches ‘just to bring out the composition’:

‘I believe that there should be a very strong structure behind anything we are doing creatively. Arts work is not some kind of wishy-washy thing but very formative. They might not know the structure at the time but they will see it at the end. Actually, I’m very impressed with their achievement. They are telling me which panel looks complete and which panel may need to be retouched. Next week we’ll go through all the panels and to see which part they think needs more work.’

This process began at a local school with two participants who were so interested they stayed for four hours:

‘They just really loved it. I could not accommodate everybody who turned up for the last two sessions. Today we will work here for a couple of hours. It’s different from an afterschool club, where there is a set room you have to book and go to. Here they’re at home in their neighbourhood, among the places and people they know.’

Various parents linger and lean over to give their children advice or encouragement, some unable to resist joining in, picking up a brush and painting. It is a vivid example of how adults can be drawn in to arts activity through their children: a picture of cross-generational creativity at a physical crossroads on the estate.

The turning world

Around 400 people attended the Bartlett Park festival, bringing the Be Creative Be Well project out into the open. They included locals, residents from an elderly people’s home, children’s groups from around the borough and even one from Stratford. At the centre of the celebration was the colourful revolving zoetrope. As it span, it projected the convincing illusion of a child dancing inside. Among the surrounding crescent of marquees and gazebos was a small theatre and an art tent, places where people could take part in a landscape painting competition or make their own paper zoetropes.

Will Bock, the designer of the zoetrope at the centre of the project, sums up what the whole enterprise achieved:

‘I think the real success of this project lay in its ability to draw on diverse local resources such as youth clubs, dance groups, elderly artists and so on – and bring them all together for a final event, celebrating the work they’ve been creating together. Seeing the zoetrope spin during the final event, with children all running trying to make it spin faster, was a huge joy for me.’

‘I think projects such as this are essential in bringing the local community together with a common creative goal. It is important that communities such as the ones in Poplar have access to high-quality creative and social projects such as this, as it allows them a chance to play and, however briefly, to get a different perspective on their everyday life.’

4

Plonked in the middle of an estate Learning from practice

What does the experience of Be Creative Be Well mean for future arts interventions?

The most successful projects were those where the artist brought both artistic and emotional intelligence to the task, combining the catalytic charge of their artistic energy with a sensitive and creative approach to engaging people on their own terms. In theory, this combination of energy and engagement should work every time but in practice local conditions shape, support and thwart what actually happens on the ground.

How artists dealt effectively and creatively with the considerable challenges of such a wide-ranging and ambitious programme has been illustrated in the previous chapters. However, things did not always go so smoothly, even in the case study projects, and a lot may be learned by artists and, perhaps even more importantly, by those who commission them and who set the terms and conditions of their work.

The comments quoted in this section were made by artists involved in the programme and are used here as well articulated examples of general observations made to us, rather than as purely personal views. For this reason and to maintain confidentiality, these comments are not attributed to named individuals.

There is, in the end, no formula for success but that is no reason not to take whatever measures we can to guard against failure. The question we ask here is: What do the

experiences, challenges and achievements of the Be Creative Be Well programme tell us about making an arts intervention in this kind of community as successful and sustainable as possible?

4.1 Preparing the ground

‘I do think there is something to be said for just having cups of tea with people and giving it time. To plonk an artist in the middle of an estate and expect things to happen straightaway is unrealistic. If funding is there for three years, wouldn't it be a better plan to spend the first year just getting to know local people, gaining their trust and understanding? Then you would really know what kind of activities they would like to see and support.’

Some artists found the initial weeks and months very challenging – particularly if unrealistic expectations had been raised in the way that the Well London programme had been introduced to communities. Large sums of money were sometimes mentioned, creating the mistaken impression that projects would have big budgets. In fact, the largest individual project budget in Be Creative Be Well was £37,000, although some organisations received additional funding if they delivered more than one project over three years.

One of the challenges faced by artists working on this programme was how to manage expectations. When residents were invited to express concerns they had about their neighbourhoods and what kind of improvements they hoped for in their lives, a wide range of issues emerged – from inadequate housing to poor street lighting, and from anti-social behaviour among young people to dog fouling. However committed, creative and sympathetic artists might be, there were problems here that they could not realistically be expected to solve – although that did not stop them sometimes trying. One ran an imaginative and very popular project that addressed the problem of dangerous dogs, for example.

Once they actually started work, artists – especially those appointed for limited periods – encountered difficulties around engaging sufficient numbers of local people. One reported that, instead of focusing on teaching, her team had been ‘pulled in all directions, attending local meetings and social gatherings to try to increase numbers’. Having spent considerable time ‘beating doors down to try to engage people when the project had already started’,

numbers picked up 'just as it was time to wind down'. In other cases, artists found they had to change tack when their original programme proved unpopular or inappropriate.

Some participants had such profound and challenging problems that their ability to take part in the more demanding activities was often very limited. The gentle discussion and cups of tea needed to involve them could have a significant impact on the timetable, slowing development down 'to almost a trickle at times', as one artist put it, describing how his team had to abandon plans to make large sculptures and concentrate on more domestic arts and crafts activity – something that was, it should be noted, warmly welcomed by the participants.

There is a great pressure on such artists to deliver activities, partly because money and time are always tight and those hosting and funding such projects often want to see quick results. That can lead, as it did on occasion during this programme, to requiring the artist applying to do the work to present detailed ideas of what kind of programme they plan to deliver before they have developed a working relationship with local people. There is always a reluctance to send artists in with an open brief, yet in a programme like this, aimed at engaging people who have little or no previous involvement in arts-based workshops, it is important to give artists time to develop a relationship of trust with the people with whom they hope to work. Allowing more time would let artists maximise take-up of the opportunities they are offering but would also help to shape what form those opportunities might take in the first place.

Forming relationships with local people also depended, initially at least, on how well the preparatory work had been carried out. The research had been fairly thorough but it was in no way a passport to understanding local conditions and politics. Sometimes this research had been effective in identifying key people to link up with and so on; in other cases, expectations had been raised that Be Creative Be Well could not fulfil, potentially souring relations. There was also a suspicion among some residents that this was another short-term intervention, which made building trust – the foundation of a good relationship – problematic.

4.2 Defining the community

“*Making a boundary of 1,500-2,000 targeted homes does not define a community. Many of the participants lived just outside the boundary and it seems a shame to be so restrictive. Communities are organic and define themselves; programmes such as this should reflect*

this. At times, the Well London programme seemed to take for granted that 'community' is always a well-defined thing. That's not our experience at all. ʹ

Clearly, the LSOA, with its population defined in this case by a postcode analysis of poverty, might be a useful locus for expressing change and progress in terms of statistics. However, as these LSOAs are linked only by shared socioeconomic disadvantage, they presented the Be Creative Be Well managers and artists with a set of significant practical problems. Postcodes do not coincide with or represent organic or coherent communities; although several participating LSOAs were contiguous with estates, others were on split sites, with, for example, a large main road dividing one part of the population from another. Physically, socially and culturally, many LSOAs were, therefore, heterogeneous.

It was not clear how to ensure that activities were promoted and delivered to the right people, ie from the target postcode(s), and not to all local people – perhaps even including those who lived on the same estate as legitimate participants. In reality, many projects ended up topping up with people across the boundary in order to make up numbers, with the tacit acceptance of funders. If they had not, the programme might simply not have been viable. Artists did take a pragmatic approach to this in order to get activities going and simply recorded postcodes whenever they could, reporting back to the Arts Council numbers of participants from both within and outside the LSOA.

In most cases, artists found a way to engage with local people through a combination of running open activities while targeting particular groups. Sometimes targeting was on the basis of reaching those who seemed most in need, such as older people isolated at home; at other times, it was more strategic, when – for example – artists worked initially with children or young people partly as a way into reaching out to a reluctant adult community.

As many artists and residents told us, it would have been easier simply to set up projects based within the architectural entity of an estate. There would have been no diminution of the problem of trying to reach a community that often had little but poverty in common, but at least the people would share the same physical space. Where the LSOA did coincide entirely with an estate or part of one, it made the job considerably easier. There was more likelihood of a venue on site, of a residents' committee with an interest in what might be on offer, of shared needs among local people. At best, as in the South Acton LSOA in Ealing, there might already be an active community development resource that could provide a structure and support for a creative project coming out of the blue like this.

4.3 The well-balanced artist

‘I had no idea that it would be so difficult to recruit onto a course like this. I was expecting there to be a waiting list of people wanting to participate and that it would be really busy. I am experienced in project management and I have a ready-made system in place, but I’m realising that working within the community presents a whole set of different issues from working in a school, which is my usual setting. It has been quite a steep learning curve.’

Where an artist lacked sufficient experience or knowledge of community development, this would most likely result in a low uptake amongst residents alongside some often very high-quality artistic product from individuals self-motivated enough to engage with the programme. Very occasionally, there were instances when artists failed to turn up at agreed times or wore inappropriate clothing and local people considered this a mark of disrespect. In contrast, where a project was led by someone whose primary skill lay in working with the community through the creative process, rather than focused on high quality artistic practice, the outcome would be a well-subscribed programme of arts activities but no ‘high point’ of artistic interest or inspiration.

We discovered a fascinating characteristic of projects where the artist already had or was able to develop a good balance between the two essential skillsets, which is highlighted in many of the case studies we have included in this report. Each of these projects brought the relationship that the artist(s) had created with local people into an artistic product, whether that was a performance, as in Canning Town’s folk dance fusion or South Acton’s community play, or a more permanent work, as in Waltham Forest’s clay oven or Edmonton’s trail of angels. That product, admirable in itself, might also stand as a metaphor for the programme, embodying both the physical realities of making art collectively and the human relationships that make this possible. It is perhaps analogous to the personal epiphany experienced by individuals discovering themselves in an act of creativity.

Incidentally, what this also shows is how a product can be an intrinsic part of the artistic process, bringing a sense of completion and resolution that often leaves a lasting impact on participants. The debate that some participating artists have had on this issue will no doubt continue but, although it is a fact that setting a date for performance or booking a hall for an exhibition can put an external pressure on what is seen by many as an organic process, this can be balanced by pride in showing one’s work to the public in as professional a manner as possible.

4.4 Demystifying the artistic process

‘What I think is off-putting to everyone is actually talking about ‘the arts’. A lot of people struggle to have any interest. These are people who are in the most deprived communities in London, so their whole interest in life is about getting work, money, safety and security, looking after their children, those sorts of things. Worrying about their own health and art and all those things is so far down the scale of things.’

The starting point for successful projects was rarely a declaration about ‘we are going to make art’. In most cases, artists began by exploring participants’ thoughts and feelings about their own community and environment. That way, there was no intimidating ‘blank canvas’ to fill and no sense that special aptitude was needed to participate.

In one project, in the North Barns LSOA in North Kensington, participants had been given cameras and encouraged just to wander the estate and collect footage and photographs of what they saw. Several found themselves able to focus on their environment in a way they hadn’t before – one, who had never been interested in art or done any filmmaking, discovered she had a flair for producing striking images. She went on to prepare an installation for exhibition. Instead of being fazed by the technology or held back by her lack of knowledge, the subject matter and the facilitation of the lead artist, Lisa Nash, had led her into making art, almost without realising it.

There is a subtle but crucial difference between this journey – of needing to explore something, adopting a suitable artistic medium and learning technique on the way – and taking a technical arts course.

‘I had one woman come in, knowing I was a photographer, who said she wanted to learn how to do photography for makeovers. I was completely honest and said that wasn’t my thing. I’m not a technician. I just happen to use video cameras and still cameras to make work.’

There was no hard and fast approach to this issue. The woman went out without putting her camera on auto, as she normally would, and began playing with shutter speed and apertures. She ended up producing some striking images.

Sometimes, the activities were advertised and marketed not as art or as explorations of subject matter but as practical opportunities to learn useful personal and social skills. For

example, one theatre artist, recognising that a lot of young people want to know what they are going to get out of an activity, marketed his workshops as, in effect, employment training.

‘They want to know the bottom line. When you say it will be fun – well, “fun” is subjective and they may well think, “that ain’t fun.” My strategy is not to say “come to drama” but more on the lines of: “If you want to get ahead in life, you need to be able to communicate – so come along and develop skills in self-confidence, speaking in public and working as a team”. These are all things we know you can get out of drama and theatre but my approach is to hide the drama at the bottom and sell the work-ready skills.’

4.5 Working with local structures

‘To be honest, the tenants association is a club for members only. There’s about six or seven of them that sit on it. They don’t seem to do anything very much, apart from meet and take control. They seem more concerned with their particular tower block estate – it’s very territorial. They did help us with our barbeque but no one from their patch came to it.’

As illustrated here, there were cases where the local organisations, such as the tenants and residents association, that might be expected to support artists with projects like this, proved to be their biggest hindrance. Where they did help, they had a great effect, brokering free use of space, advising on the shape of the programme and maximising the benefit of ‘the familiar face on the estate’ in marketing and helping to spread the word about Be Creative Be Well.

At times, the programme suffered from a naivety about community politics. There were examples of artists trying to set up activities without support either from the local residents association or the Well London team. In some cases, the local individuals or groups identified as project partners by Well London were not best placed to help artists engage with local people or to support their activities; artists had to seek out more appropriate collaborators. There was also a common problem in getting the active support of the local authority or other major agencies, including mental health area teams, given the modest scale and population of the LSOA. Many potential partners have a much wider territorial brief than a single LSOA and wider responsibilities to fulfil.

‘What part does the council play in the estate? Well, there is a key figure who could have been really amazing, the residents liaison officer. He’s very much on board with what we’re

doing, which is great, but I think he's really stretched. But he has said that we can use his name to get things done.」

Forming mutually respectful and productive relationships with local managers and representatives is vital to generating support and structure for activities and to achieving successful outcomes. There were some very good examples of projects working with local organisers who held positions of trust within the community – these individuals were key in unlocking relationships.

4.6 Collaborative programming

「The YMCA has supported our dance programme – we created a couple of dance drama productions, which have been funded through that strand of money. I have heard of other strands, like Groundwork, but I haven't got round to it. I'm no good at gardening or decorating, or any of that stuff. I'm on the theatre squad.」

It seems clear now that more should have been done to create good conditions for collaboration and joint working. Each agency has its own agenda and often its own language in which it expresses its vision and practice. As in any projected partnership, the challenges of bringing such different discourses and approaches together should not be underestimated. The slightly belated entry of Arts Council England into the Well London Alliance may not have helped here, but the main lesson for those commissioning must be that a joint approach to research and consultation is essential prior to beginning the actual programme of activities. This would help the agencies themselves, identifying at this preparatory stage those areas, interests and approaches they share, as well as the communities, which would then be more likely to understand what each agency would be bringing and sharing on the journey. Ideally, this initial stage would be followed with commissioners monitoring progress and encouraging each partner to continue their joint working on the ground, while ensuring there would be sufficient resources to support initiatives outside each agency's core delivery of activity.

On the other side of the coin, artists and arts organisations may be experienced at collaboration within the arts sector and may be good at delivering creative programmes commissioned by agencies in other sectors, such as hospitals and prisons. However, working with such agencies as equal and active partners is perhaps not as familiar.

Artists also stand to learn from collaborating with agencies equally committed to community-based work, not least by working alongside staff with a high level of community development expertise – and sometimes a sharper awareness of how their work might contribute to Well London’s overall aims. Not every artist working in Be Creative Be Well seemed fully aware of the value of the scientific evidence underpinning Well London – and was thus less likely to make a credible connection, in terms of influence and advocacy, between their intervention and what it might produce in terms of better health.

4.7 Finding the right setting

‘This space is the community rooms and they’ve been done up. The idea was to open the shutters, because most of the time they are down and it becomes an invisible space. The idea is to make it a more welcoming place that residents feel they own. At the moment it’s only used for evening classes in Arabic and ward meetings and that’s it – and now my art workshops.’

In this LSOA, several people from the local estate could not identify where these ‘community rooms’ were. They were clearly underused and oddly located spaces and it was here that the artist was expected to run activities. Although she discovered early on that the local nursery could provide a ready-made audience of mothers – and a crèche, which the LSOA lacked – the artist was told she could not relocate outside the patch. It may have been the intention to use the Be Creative Be Well project as a way of popularising a venue that did clearly have potential, but the short-term outcome was to make the process of engaging with local people that much harder.

This may not have been a common experience but it does point up the vexed question of where activities like this are best located. Although many housing estates do have venues, there was not always an obvious place in which artists could base themselves or run their activities – and, even when there was, it was not necessarily a place towards which local people would naturally gravitate. Spaces are culturally coded – some people use them while others avoid them or don’t know they exist – and they only exist where there is an actual or presumed need, matched by the resources to support them. There is also often a real issue around the high cost of hiring community spaces.

In some cases – as in the Hoe Street LSOA in Waltham Forest – there was not even a space to be had, with all the implications for communal wellbeing of not having a decent place to meet up with neighbours and to participate in activities together. In a number of cases, recommended venues had to be abandoned for practical reasons. In the Bellingham LSOA, for example, locals said people would not cross the road to use it. In another case, the venue was accessible but the staff were unfriendly and did little to help people feel at home. Sometimes, administrative crossed wires meant that venues were not always secure – in one case, a shop being used on the estate to run the Be Creative Be Well activities was threatened with closure by the local authority on the eve of a final exhibition of local people's work.

Again, the question of finding an appropriate venue that local people would actually attend is a question best addressed during the research period leading up to a programme like this, and not left until artists are in the middle of trying to run activities.

4.8 Building levels of engagement

‘Posters and flyers don't work, but what else can I do? I put one flyer in the newsletter at the school and the local nursery as well, but people don't read the newsletters. If a poster is up for more than a day, it gets ignored – people walk past it. I think word of mouth is the best way.’

An early test of the ability of Be Creative Be Well managers and artists to form relationships with local people lay in how they chose to approach recruitment. By many accounts, this was one of the biggest challenges projects faced – and an embarrassment at times as, rightly or not, success in such projects is often judged on numbers.

Most artists we spoke to had an opinion on what worked in terms of engaging and recruiting local people. All seemed aware of the risks of parachuting in and the fact that places like this had often seen well-meant interventions come and go. They realised, too, that however many might turn up to a launch event, persuading them to continue to attend classes or workshops – and to maintain their attendance – was a different matter – and a longer process. Anyone might need a good reason to step outside of their comfort zone, particularly on a cold night with something watchable on the television.

The main conclusion was that a direct face-to-face encounter was by far the most effective means of drawing people into the programme, but even then this could be a slow and dispiriting process. Recruitment worked best when coordinators infiltrated existing activities – attending meetings already running, visiting events and community gatherings and so on – and identified people who had local influence to act as channels of communication.

Engagement was strong where local agencies were able to help artists reach residents and where artists were able and prepared to spend a lot of time in direct contact with local people. Some artists were not as comfortable as others about going up to people in the street and striking up a conversation, preferring instead to rely on more conventional – and indirect – marketing approaches. The problem, as even these artists admitted, was that leafleting and putting up posters was almost always completely ineffective in attracting significant attendance and participation. As elsewhere, the key was in building personal relationships and earning local people's interest.

4.9 Using evaluation

‘In the midst of everything else, over the last two weeks I have done 17 hours of meetings – and I’m really not a meetings guy, I can tell you! And having to go through the evaluation forms with people when they are getting bored and you just want to start the workshop...’

The commissioners need to structure programmes like this in such a way that projects are able to find their own pace, given the concrete conditions and the resources available, while maintaining an overall sense of moving forward and making progress. Setting deadlines and targets, linked to a rigorous evaluation process, is unavoidable in a culture of accountability and regulation but it should not be allowed to unduly disrupt the organic and always unique culture of individual projects. Only if projects are allowed to set their own tempo and find their own sense of direction and purpose will there be a chance that what they have begun will continue once the programme has closed.

The framework for Well London was based around the notion of experimental evaluation, comparing LSOAs that had input from those who had no intervention. It was vital for this social research approach to make regular surveys of people's responses to the programme, largely through questionnaires but also through coded interviews run under the aegis of the

University of East London. Be Creative Be Well projects also had to produce quarterly reports for Arts Council England, which requires its clients to produce rigorous self-evaluations. Selected projects were also subject to evaluation by the Big Lottery and, of course, our own evaluation demanded time and attention from the dozen projects we visited.

Consulting local people on a regular basis about their feelings and experiences could be counterproductive at times and even hold back the work. However, others expressed surprise at the light touch of the organisers, having only had to fill in forms; in one or two cases ours was the first evaluation visit they had had from anyone.

While future commissioners may need to reflect on what kind of evaluation is essential for their purposes and how it can be implemented without making those studied feel like lab rats, many artists too could play a more active and imaginative role in shaping how evaluation is carried out. There were, in fact, a few outstanding examples of artists who turned evaluation into a creative exercise and who produced a considerable amount of well-presented data. In one case the artist, Belinda Sosinowicz, piloted a mental wellbeing impact assessment in an attempt to measure impact more scientifically. This was a rare case of an artist attempting something more ambitious than simply counting numbers of attendees and workshops and reporting positive comments. It was also a rare example of an artist taking the scientific aspects of this programme very seriously – in future, when artists are recruited onto a programme like this, a key question should be how they intend to explore and deliver health outcomes as well as artistic results. The new economics foundation's 'five actions to wellbeing' could form the basis of the answer.

4.10 Leaving a legacy

‘I would love this to be an art studio, with a couple of artists in residence. It would be brilliant. If it was open and used every day, it would be more visible and more people would be able to participate in the different things that were going on. I really like the idea of an artist actually being embedded in the community so that they become a natural part of the place.’

One of the most difficult challenges for artists in Be Creative Be Well was to walk away at the end. Having had to invest a considerable amount of time and energy in developing the necessary trust and respect among local people in order to engage them – and, on occasion,

to produce some worthwhile art – artists were then expected to sever the connection once the project was over or the budget exhausted. In some instances, artists tried with varying degrees of success to maintain these personal relationships, even on a voluntary basis. In other cases, artists worried whether what they had built in the community would be able to weather the worsening financial situation – or were simply concerned about who would take on the activities and maintain the resources acquired during the project.

Although a comparatively long-term programme, three years is not four or five or 10, and commissioning agencies need to see how such initiatives can be embedded systemically so that their achievements can be built on and not relegated to a fond memory. Equally, artists need to be aware that their role on such projects is time-limited and so they need to be finding effective ways of passing on skills – not just artistic but fundraising and advocacy skills among others. The decision of the Arts Council to employ locally based artists was a risk that, by and large, paid off handsomely: the potential of artists based in their local communities is one that should be explored by all the stakeholders.

The final point to be made here is that projects worked well when artists were properly embedded in the community, not just present but linked into effective local structures and partnerships. This kind of work cannot be delivered effectively – and would almost certainly not have an afterlife – without those relationships of mutual respect and trust binding artists and community together.

5

Recommendations to Arts Council England

The strategic implications

Be Creative Be Well should, we believe, be seen as a crucial contribution to Arts Council England's core mission of 'achieving great art for everyone', enabling more people to experience and be inspired by the arts.

In our final commentary on what has been achieved and learned from this remarkable three-year programme, we suggest ways in which Arts Council England might develop its strategy and practice towards engaging areas and communities that have traditionally been excluded from mainstream arts provision.

- **Respond more effectively and consistently to local cultures, needs and aspirations**

In many ways, the Be Creative Be Well programme embodies the deeper values of the Big Society promoted by the current coalition government, a vital element of which is a new emphasis on localism. At its best, Be Creative Be Well has demonstrated how cultural and creative provision can be shaped by local people and local conditions rather than imposed from above. How and why people engage with arts activity and the kind of partnerships essential to making projects a success is just part of the important learning from this programme and will inform how investment can most effectively be made in the future.

One of the aspirations driving Well London was to encourage and equip local people to develop leadership skills and to take up new roles and responsibilities in their communities. Such leaders and ambassadors of the future did emerge out of the Be Creative Be Well

programme. This vital legacy should be sustained so that their considerable expertise can be invested in future projects.

Through a process of consultation and collaboration, local people have been drawn into owning and celebrating the art they have made alongside professionals. In that same process, artists have developed and strengthened their social role as creative catalysts and leaders, better able to function outside the structures of traditional artistic institutions and settings. This has lessons for Arts Council regularly funded organisations and future national portfolio organisations in planning and delivering arts programmes in and around their own local communities. They have considerable untapped potential to help a hundred local flowers to bloom.

- **Support and promote cultural and creative interventions that seek social good through artistic excellence, or achieve artistic excellence through social engagement**

As we commented in our introduction, the greatest communal impact of Be Creative Be Well seems to have been reflected in the most impressive artistic results and vice versa: 'the skills of community development and artistry performing a perfect balancing act'. We believe that, by publicly adopting the credo that good art and the social good can go hand in hand, the Arts Council can influence practice across the sector, highlighting those exemplary funded organisations that are already dismantling the barriers between 'core' and 'outreach', between 'artistic' and 'education' programming, and between 'pure' and 'applied' arts.

The Arts Council could encourage this shift by finding ways to enable practitioners with a highly developed combination of community development and artistic skills, like those featured in this report, to act as mentors for emerging and established artists and arts organisations keen to expand their practice beyond the arts institution.

- **Continue to challenge traditional definitions of what culture is and what the arts consist of**

Although the Be Creative Be Well programme focused on those areas with least engagement with the arts that the public pays for, artists found that these communities were far from so-called cultural deserts and that the people who live in these communities have much of their own to contribute. Equally, the experience of artists working alongside professionals from other sectors confirmed for many the value and benefit of acknowledging and contributing to creative practice in popular activities such as gardening

and cooking. The arts are still intimidating to many people and so much can be gained in integrating the arts in more familiar, everyday activities.

- **Build directly on the achievement and learning from Be Creative Be Well through further sectoral alliances and new commissions**

We hope that our evaluation will encourage the Arts Council and its peers in the health and other public sectors to continue the work begun with Be Creative Be Well and that this report will help to identify what is transferable from the Well London partnership in future commissioning.

We also urge the Arts Council to invest proportionately more in terms of staff resources in any future programmes of this kind. If a relatively small investment – a core team of two officers – can produce the results of Be Creative Be Well, then a larger complement could be even more effective in maximising and sustaining the financial and artistic investment made in the programme itself.

Coda

A good place to live

Where did the project take place?

South Acton LSOA, London Borough of Ealing

How much money was allocated?

£22,000

Who received the funding?

Acton Community Forum

When did the project run?

April-December 2010

What was planned?

A series of taster sessions and short courses for and by residents of all ages, building on the previous year's successful activity, existing local activity and new activity, including visual arts, crafts, carnival sculpture and costume

Emerging from South Acton station, it is immediately clear that regeneration is underway. A colourful new block is already up and expansive blue hoardings shield another site under redevelopment. Past these, across the main road, is that familiar feature of the post-modern estate: a plain, low-rise block whose ground-floor level houses a row of identikit shops and businesses, some shuttered, some trading. You might not immediately notice that one of these is where the regeneration team can be found. Round a windy corner are the offices where Acton Community Forum is based. Here, Forum project manager Rachel Pepper has assembled some of the people who have been involved in the delivery of Be Creative Be Well, including Luke Battle, a local resident and community hairdresser, and forum volunteers Amanda Cadogan and Sheila Gumbi. The quotes here are from our conversation.



All the high hopes, short cuts and bad dreams of the social housing boom, through the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, are writ here in the estate's concrete and brick: system-built, medium- and high-rise tower blocks and slab blocks. The parts built early on have ample pedestrian space but are isolated by a lack of interconnecting roads. The parts built later are characterised by 'complex deck access circulation patterns', which are difficult to negotiate as a pedestrian. As on many other estates, this means that residents are stuck here, effectively



Photo: courtesy of Acton Community Forum

cut adrift from the livelier town centre and prey to all the anti-social threats that most urbanists now agree were, like social segregation, unwittingly built into the fabric of these once-utopian projects. The estate has had its share of bad press.

‘When I used to go to the college just down the road, I heard so many stories about what was going on in South Acton – “South Acton’s got its own police helicopter,” people would say. The estate has been labelled over the years as some sort of ghetto by people that don’t live or work here.’

The estate has certainly had a reputation as a dangerous place, partly because of a serious drug-dealing problem, now under control, but the people round this table resist the community being labelled in this way. One comments on how young people here are often treated like potential criminals when all they are doing is hanging out – something that would be perfectly acceptable out in the countryside. Popular assumptions and fears about gangs don’t take into account the need for many young people to feel secure.

‘We need to change the language. It’s a pretty big world out there and it scares us as adults sometimes so I can understand why young people club together: “gangs” can simply mean safe groups.’

Outside perceptions of the estate do have real consequences. Until recent community policing efforts, there was a certain attitude towards the estate evident when police were called in – an example was a somewhat heavy-handed response to a complaint about noise, which resulted in officers intervening in an eight-year-old's birthday party. That incident, however, also illustrated a problem closer to home – a failure of neighbourliness.

The emergence of the Acton Community Forum

On the eve of the millennium, the council formally launched a major investment programme on the estate. Having listened to what the community was saying about life here, it recognised that simple refurbishment of the existing stock was not an adequate response. The demolitions have begun, starting with the toppling of Barrie House, a 21-storey tower block at the heart of the estate. Six other blocks have fallen and around 400 new homes, both social rented and shared ownership, have already been built. Crucially for running the Be Creative Be Well programme, the old Oaktree Community Centre, across from the Acton Community Forum offices, was also replaced in August 2007 by a generously proportioned new building. With approximately twice the floor space, the Oaktree is now offering residents a full programme of activities, from keep fit and dance to sewing and darts. The fact that it is flourishing is down mainly to the work of the forum.

The forum owes its existence to the belated recognition – through the single regeneration programme – that this estate had become a focus of serious deprivation. It quickly became independent in 2002, with a board of 18 people from across the borough. It acts as a bridge between residents and community sector organisations, local voluntary groups and the statutory sector. It is in a good position to advise the local authority about what is happening at a grassroots level. It has, Rachel says, the trust of both sides because 'we do what we say we're going to do'. She continues:

“We need a more positive voice for the people that have been spoken of negatively. When people come with ideas, we try to support them. If we all work, together, people can get up and get out of these situations – a lot of us have gotten back into work just through volunteering and networking. If you stay home and try to fight it by yourself it's really difficult.

‘Our aim is to bring different communities together, to celebrate difference but look for commonality as well. There's a nostalgic sense of what a community is but the communities here are changing all the time: we want to embrace that. When you see your own community coming together, you start to realise that it's not as bad as you thought

and you join in. Life is about relationships and we are all in a relationship with each other.’

Acton Community Forum started off small but now manages a wide range of community activities: an arts forum, an annual carnival, Black history month, networks for children and young people and for women, South Acton network and the Oaktree as well as two other community centres in the borough. The team was, therefore, well placed to take on the Be Creative Be Well programme, which it saw as a way to solve the catch-22 situation it has faced in the past, of being ‘too community’ for arts funders. It has taken the opportunity to bring quality arts and creative people to its community arts programme and to try to break down unnecessary barriers between professional and amateur so that more people can start to see the things that they’re doing as creative and valued.

‘In our visual arts exhibition, we had professional artists’ work hanging with amateur work so that visitors walking around could see a young person’s piece side by side with a piece by somebody who sells their stuff for thousands of pounds. We do this so that young people will be inspired.’

Putting it to music

Perhaps the most significant – and certainly the most artistically ambitious – element in South Acton’s Be Creative Be Well programme was devising and performing a community play that confronted the question of the area’s identity and the labels it has been saddled with. Interestingly, it approached these tricky socio-historical and political issues in the guise of a musical:

‘It was basically about people off an estate realising they had talent and had something to give the community. Although they couldn’t put their musical on in the West End, they could perform in their own neighbourhood – I was Jasmine, who worked in the laundrette, we had a West Indian hairdressers and so on. When everyone came to see us and we started making money, a West End producer – seeing a potential threat to his profits – tried to buy us all out. But the community came together and fought back and won.’

The show ended with the whole cast performing a song celebrating the multicultural nature of regeneration and future of their estate.

The production was in fact mounted at Watermans Theatre and was completely sold out for its two-night run. Some older residents were bussed over to see it and gave it a warm reception. Others came partly out of curiosity, not knowing quite what to expect from people

who had no experience in theatre at all. Many were surprised, first that it was a musical and, then, that it was historically interesting and had a powerful message for a contemporary audience. Local officials and councillors, including one who was to become mayor, were equally startled that so many people from the estate had come together to make this possible. The performers, too, had been surprised – they, too, hadn't realised that they had signed up for a musical:

‘That was a real challenge – we didn't know about singing, hadn't been to auditions. The discovery that you could sing was amazing. When you grow up thinking you're not worth much and you've suddenly got people telling you how great you are, it takes a while to digest. It feels really weird when professional directors and choreographers say: that was amazing. It gives you the confidence to contribute even more.’

Those round the table today think that the play conveyed to a wider public what the South Acton Estate is really like. Maybe now people will see it the way they do – a place with a lot more character than, say, Chiswick.

‘I didn't really want to come here, but when I was offered a flat and started living here, I discovered that South Acton is a good place to live. I'm glad to say I live here now.’

At the end of the day, as the cliché goes, it is the people who make the difference:

‘I've lived here for about 10 years. South Acton Estate is a good estate but it's the people in it that make the estate: you've got the good, the bad and the very, very bad. But the best thing about living around here is meeting all these different people.’

The regeneration theme, set to music in their production, is now very much uppermost in their minds. The South Acton Residents Action Group has secured enough signatures to apply for tenant management organisation status, which would enable them to take over maintaining their own estate from the council. There is a community board in charge of a £50,000 budget that will be distributed around the estate like a community chest. The regeneration team has based itself round the corner from Acton Community Forum, squarely in the community, it seems keen to consult and inform local people on what is being planned and built. A couple of its staff even participated in the musical that brought the Be Creative Be Well project here to a stirring and entertaining conclusion.

Crossing back over the road, you can see large photographic portraits of local people on the hoardings around the new building site. Commissioned for Be Creative Be Well, this gallery puts the residents of South Acton Estate on public view. It's something to be proud of.

Appendix Be Creative Be Well funded projects

Organisation/ contact	Project name	Project Description	Funds awarded	Dates	Lead contact
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham					
Arc Theatre	Changing Spaces	The Changing Spaces project aimed to support three targeted groups in creating performance pieces in response to the changing physical landscape of the LSOA, to be shared between the groups before being presented at a community celebration day.	£6,501	April -July 2010	Josh Cass
Studio 3 Arts and Arc	Me and Us	Me and Us aimed to engage a diverse group of local people in arts activities they had never tried before, providing an opportunity for people who are often disengaged to be creative, have their voices heard and have fun.	£15,000	June -September 2009	Martin Swan
Green Shoes Arts	Dancing Heath	Dancing Heath aimed to improve the health and mental wellbeing of local residents through the facilitation of dance sessions, the creation of new networks and signposting to ongoing physical activities, as well as giving 15 young dancers the skills they needed to deliver dance taster sessions to their community. A community celebration event was planned to bring together all those involved and publicise ongoing local activity.	£5,672	May -October 2010	Lauren Crowley
Studio 3 Arts	Gardenforce!	Gardenforce! aimed to enable and empower a group of disengaged and isolated local people in the LSOA to bring positive change to their own lives and the local environment by bringing art and creativity directly to local gardens and private, public and communal green spaces.	£18,480	April -December 2010	Martin Swan
London Borough of Brent					
Harlesden Youth Theatre		Harlesden Youth Theatre hosted drama workshops for students from years nine to 12 at three local schools in the NW10 area, led by Sarah Ullman and culminating in a production of Timberlake Wertenbaker's <i>Our Country's Good</i> at Tavistock Hall.	£5,000	May -October 2008	Sarah Ullman
Harlesden Youth Theatre		A second production by Harlesden Youth Theatre was cancelled after several workshops.	£1,777	n/a	Sarah Ullman
Bigga Fish		Bigga Fish planned a programme of 40 sessions teaching a group of 25 young local residents samba drumming, dance and digital music mixing. A second group of 20 older locals were to develop performances for local settings exploring the traditions of steel pan music and how it can relate to modern youth culture.	£14,000	May -December 2010	Nii Sackey
Sports Clinic & Events		Sports Clinic & Events planned a series of 24 two-hour photography workshops, broken into 12 sessions over six weeks, ending with an exhibition at the local Pocket Park Festival.	£7,000	June -August 2010	Carlos Salvador Joao

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Organisation/ contact	Project name	Project Description	Funds awarded	Dates	Lead contact
Harlesden Hub Poetry Group		Harlesden Hub Poetry Group planned 20 two-hour poetry workshops, the publication of a booklet and performances/readings at the Tubbs Road Pocket Park Summer event 2010.	£2,700	April -December 2010	Ursula Troche
Helena Roden		Helena Roden's project aimed to involve local residents in the transformation of Tubbs Road Pocket Park via a series of creative workshops to encourage residents to collaborate and design a birdbath.	£6,000	August -September 2010	Helena Roden
Wayout Dreams Community Centre		Wayout Dreams Community Centre planned 12 two-hour music workshops for young people at NW10 and performances at Tubbs Road Pocket Park in summer 2010.	£5,000	April -August 2010	Kola Aluko
London Borough of Camden					
Queens Crescent Community Association	Queen's Crescent Festival	This project worked in partnership with Creative Kilburn on the development of the Queen's Crescent Festival 2009.	£3,336	January -July 2009	Foyezur Miah
Real Arts	Queen's Crescent Community Festival Parade	Real Arts aimed to deliver a series of carnival and parade workshops producing lanterns, puppets and dance movements in the Haverstock area, resulting in a parade and participation in the Queen's Crescent Community Festival.	£2,530	July 2009	Emma Pask
Creative Health Labs	Redreaming Communities	A programme of 60 two-hour workshops was devised to include music-making, dance and visual arts culminating in a weekend of celebrations and showings at 176 Zabłudowicz Collection gallery in October 2010.	£17,000	May -October 2010	Rokiah Yamon
Creative Kilburn	Queen's Crescent Festival	Creative Kilburn created a programme of physical activity including the Coca-Cola challenge, Roundhouse circus skills, an outdoor gym launch at Lismore Circus, Dr Bike and parkour skills workshops.	£12,664	January -July 2009	Ags Irwin
Creative Arts Brazil	Recy-festa project	The Recy-festa project aimed to deliver three three-hour creative workshops at the Thanet Centre. Members of the community were invited to learn music, costume-making and decoration, using recyclable materials to transform them into new objects of cultural and decorative value to the community, such as musical instruments, fancy dress costumes, murals and banners. The project ended with a community celebration.	£7,000	September -October 2010	Aguinaldo Tavares
London Borough of Croydon					
Age UK Croydon		This project planned a series of 16 workshops for elders in the Handcroft LSOA to reduce isolation and improve mental wellbeing locally.	£6,075	September -March 2011	Sue Orchard

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Organisation/ contact	Project name	Project Description	Funds awarded	Dates	Lead contact
Eye Music Trust	Coulourscape	Eye Music Trust planned intergenerational workshops, including parent/toddler groups; primary-age children learning about sculpture and percussion; teenagers/young adults learning about computer music and sound engineering; song writing/singing workshops; and creative writing for older residents. It resulted in processions and performances, with a legacy of equipment and skills including CDs and a book, and culminated in a community celebration in June 2010.	£25,500	March -June 2010	Simon Desorgher
Winston Philips and PINS	Chameleon Project - Handcroft Refurbishment	This project aimed to transform the Handcroft Road Resource Centre, incorporating ideas from local residents. Well London provided funding for a range of new equipment including the music cube, computers, IT software, plants, two plasma screens, a fish tank, gaming equipment (such as Wiis and Xboxes), tables, chairs, sofas and massage chairs. Croydon Council also contributed by fitting a new kitchen into the Centre. It is now a very modern and inviting space which could be used in a variety of ways to support community led activities in the area.	£20,000	January -June 2009	PINS
London Borough of Ealing					
Acton Community Forum		This project planned a series of activities at the Oaktree Community Centre in South Acton, culminating up to the Acton Carnival in July 2009. These included dance taster sessions in a variety of styles including salsa, ballroom, street and bhangra.	£15,000	April -December 2009	Rachel Pepper
Acton Community Forum	South Acton Theatre Project and creative workshops	Together with the South Acton Theatre Project and Pupil Parent Partnership, this project provided a series of taster sessions and short courses for and by LSOA residents of all ages. This built on the previous year's successful Be Creative Be Well activity, existing local activity and new activity emerging from feedback and consultations, including visual arts, crafts, carnival sculpture and costume.	£22,000	April -December 2010	Rachel Pepper
Pupil Parent Partnership	Creative Workshops	This project aimed to work with 30 young people experiencing barriers to inclusion and their families. Groups of young people, families and community elders would be brought together to address issues and explore similarities and differences through cultural visits, workshops and community-led talks, with the aim of improving intergenerational/intercultural relations, community cohesion and developing a better understanding of difference.	£10,000	April -December 2010	Brian de Lord
London Borough of Enfield					
Tiger Monkey	Angel in Edmonton	The project focused on five inter-linked creative ventures – public art, film, creative learning, public engagement, and individual enrichment – to support wellbeing using a unifying theme and developing greater trust, encouraging a sense of unified community and understanding between the diverse people and generations within the neighbourhood.	£28,006	April -December 2010	Emma Ghafur
Tiger Monkey	Angel N18	A community film, where local people could record their relationship with, interest in and experience of dancing was planned along with the staging of a modern tea dance.	£11,433.30	July 2009 -February 2010	Emma Ghafur

109 Appendix Be Creative Be Well funded projects

Organisation/ contact	Project name	Project Description	Funds awarded	Dates	Lead contact
Richard Neville and Enfield Library Service and Museum	Storytelling workshops	This project saw Richard Neville work with Enfield Library and Museum Service, St John and St James Primary School and Raynham Primary School to run storytelling workshops at the Fore Street library. The workshops encouraged grandparents, parents and children to exchange stories passed down through the family, leading to a book, DVD and exhibition.	£10,470	June 2010 -February 2011	Richard Neville
London Borough of Greenwich					
New Global Image	Connecting Barnfield	Connecting Barnfield used performing and creative arts to generate greater awareness in community development, encouraging participants to be ambassadors and championing the need for people's participation in actions on issues that matter to them.	£20,119	April -October 2010	Iris Essien
Avant Gardening	Blooming in Barnfield	The Avant-Gardening programme planned a range of activities and workshops designed to facilitate communication and interaction on the estate. The workshops would be artist and participant led and range from green crafts and gardening workshops to cooking and sports events, leading to the development a multimedia digital magazine showcasing the project and the residents.	£11,881	March -September 2010	Paul Green
The Barnfield Project (London Borough of Greenwich)	Two talent shows	Greenwich Well London talent brought the community together in celebration of the community, to promote community cohesion and healthy eating. All project activities aimed to bring young people together and showcase their skills, hidden talents and reduce barriers. The project took into account the Well London core objectives of healthy eating, physical and mental wellbeing.	£2,400	July 2010 -March 2011	Kelly-Ann Ibrahim
Stream	Sing Barnfield	A community song and music project featuring community workshops and events to share compositions. It aimed to record the results on to a CD and distribute it locally.	£14,786	June 2009 -March 2010	Isabel Lilly
London Borough of Hackney					
Immediate Theatre	Dance with Me	Dance with Me planned a week of intergenerational dance activities for local people, run in partnership with East London Dance, ending with a public performance for the local community.	£14,408	May 2009	Tony Gouveia
Immediate Theatre	Creative Workshops and Festival of Light	In partnership with L'Est and local arts organisations, Immediate Theatre planned a programme aiming to develop a creative community in Woodberry Down. The programme used arts activities to encourage creative exploration of the local area's heritage and enable residents to celebrate relationships with different cultures and their environment, leading to a Festival of Light in October.	£35,500	April 2010 -March 2011	Tony Gouveia
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham					
Phoenix School		A series of floristry, arts/crafts, golf and capoeira workshops at Phoenix School.	£14,990	Weekly until July 2010	Marcia Clack
Somali Women Support and Development Group		Twenty weeks of taikwondo classes were planned for young people.	£15,000	Completed	Kissu Denton Savage

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Organisation/ contact	Project name	Project Description	Funds awarded	Dates	Lead contact
Albert and Friends	Circus Skills	Ten two-hour circus skills workshops for young LSOA residents were planned for half-term.	£5,421	May -August 2010	Amy Lumsden
Somali Women Support and Development Group		A series of 43 workshops on yoga and salsa was planned, funded in partnership with the YMCA.	£7,000	June-March 2011	Kissu Denton Savage
London Borough of Haringey					
Entelechy Arts Ltd/ Capital Age Festival	Big Chair Dance	Older residents from the Noel Park area participated in a series of dance workshops as part of a pan-London cultural event with older people: The Big Chair Dance. The workshops culminated in dance performances both in Royal Festival Hall and the Haringey Asian Centre. The event was enthusiastically received by all of the local groups who had contact with it: members of the Council of Asian People, The Somali Welfare Association and the Over Fifties Group from Shropshire Hall.	£12,000	June-July 2008	David Slater
Salsa Direct	Team Brazil	A Brazilian carnival project, encompassing samba drumming, Latin dance, capoeira, juggling, song writing/recording, and carnival costume/banner-making workshops, leading up to the Haringey Carnival on in June. There were activities planned during the Easter and summer holidays, mural creation, and a community festival in Noel Park.	£36,817.74	April -December 2010	Nina Jaffa
London Borough of Hounslow					
APORN	Art and Health	A series of arts workshops including multimedia, pottery and painting.	£12,195	May 2009 -March 2010	Charles Rukwengye
Bounce Theatre	Sit and Share	Sit and Share planned a programme of three generationally focused projects using the traditions of storytelling to promote wellbeing, culminating in an outdoor performance for the whole community.	£21,700	January -December 2010	Louise Pendry
Sure Start Hounslow		A programme of activity was planned to bring together a diverse range of community groups working on projects contributing to greater community cohesion, engendering engagement of all sections of the community and an improvement of the local built environment. The plan included the design and creation of banners and stage curtains for local venues, mosaic work, graffiti art and a tranquillity garden in a local school.	£10,000	January -October 2010	Barbara Harvey
London Borough of Islington					
All Change Arts	Snapshot	All Change worked with Canonbury Youth Project and Rose Bowl Youth Club on three creative arts projects to improve the mental wellbeing and physical activity levels of young people in the Canonbury area.	£7,000	November -March 2009	Suzanne Lee
Clod Ensemble	Memory Soup	The project consisted of six cooking-based workshops where the participants created different soups while talking about food. The final session saw the presentation of a series of recipe postcards designed by the artists involved on the project and a film documenting the making of the soup.	£5,000	September -December 2009	Suzy Wilson

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Organisation/ contact	Project name	Project Description	Funds awarded	Dates	Lead contact
Jamie Marriott	My Endz	Jamie Marriot was charged with running a series of youth music and media workshops, promoting mental wellbeing and social cohesion through music. The work produced would then be showcased at a community event in which local residents were invited.	£1,610	February -April 2010	Jamie Marriott
Next Phaze	Canonbury Music Project	Jamie Marriot was charged with running a series of youth music and media workshops, promoting mental wellbeing and social cohesion through music. The aim was to continue the workshops after the initial programme through the provision of additional Well London funding.	£13,200.00	April 2010 -March 2011	Jamie Marriott
Almorah Road Community Centre		Almorah Arts aimed to give local people opportunities to participate in a varied arts programmes with the primary aim of promoting healthy community relationships (community cohesion). The core activities were the design and painting of a mural on the outside of the centre and a summer programme of intergenerational arts workshops including a community fun day.	£5,000	June -September 2010	Ben Bell, Joy Faulkenar
The Bridge		Twenty-four weekly creative workshops exploring elders' memories, celebrating the skills and knowledge of Canonbury's elders using mixed and multimedia. During the project participants produced a small zine and postcards to reach the wider community. During the final weeks the project collaborated with another group in the area to build a bridge together.	£5,000	March -September 2010	Herve Nourisson
Claremont	Midsummer Madness	Midsummer Madness is a partnership project that brings people from different generations and backgrounds in Canonbury together. It aimed to have participants co-create a multi-ethnic summer pantomime at the Walter Sickert Centre. Creative participation would catalyse social cohesion, improve health and psychological wellbeing and engender on-going social development.	£13,240	February -July 2010	Paul Tjasink
Urban Hope	Community Gospel Choir and Film Workshops	St Stephen's Community Centre, facilitated by Urban Hope, planned two activities within this project for the benefit of residents of Canonbury. The first was a creative film project enabling young people to document and reflect on their life experiences as well as documenting and reflecting on the One Canonbury initiative. The second activity was setting up a One Canonbury Gospel choir.	£5,000	April -October 2010	Ben Bell
London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea					
Biddy Samuels	Lancaster Voices	An eight-week series of choral and drumming workshops culminating in a community performance.	£2,200	January -March 2011	Biddy Samuels
Lancaster West Management Association Limited	Refurbishment and re-launch of EMB Rooms	This project saw the refurbishment and relaunch of the EMB Rooms with the aim of improving community usage of the space.	£7,000	April-May 2010	Adelola Dairo
Lisa Nash	Ways of Being	Ways of Being was a series of 15 film, photography and spoken word workshops for residents to explore and express aspects of their daily lives and identity creatively. The project planned to conclude with an exhibition/installation of the works produced, providing the participants with a set of sustainable skills on which they can build.	£8,500	May -October 2010	Lisa Nash

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Organisation/ contact	Project name	Project Description	Funds awarded	Dates	Lead contact
Brown Baby		A project comprising three strands – Collective Collection, Community Choir and Mosaics and Murals – aiming to provide something for everyone in the community, with opportunities to meet new people, learn new skills and improve the local environment.	£21,000	April -December 2010	Toby Laurent Belson
HISTORYtalk		The project planned six sessions of classes for 30 children with a group of older residents taking rationing as the main theme. Through memory sharing, pupils would gain a valuable insight into the diets of people in wartime Britain. The pupils would be encouraged to grow vegetables and learn from older participants about the ways in which vegetables were used to supplement rations during and after the war.	£4,500	April-July 2009	Pat Fuller
Rugby Portobello Trust		Youth arts and graffiti workshops organised by Rugby Portobello Trust. A wall by Grenfell Towers was transformed, depicting superheroes.	£5,000	July -August 2009	Rupert Taylor
London Borough of Lambeth					
Springfield Community Flat		A series of creative activities running at the Springfield Community Flat was planned for young people during the 2008 summer holidays, including jewellery-making, circus and drumming workshops.	£3,912	July -August 2008	Sue Peake
North Lambeth and North Southwark Sports Action Zone	Taster Programme	An extensive taster programme covering a range of dance for parents/carers and toddlers, girls aged eight-13 and adults (including elders and people with disabilities). In addition there would also be costume-making classes.	£6,000	October 2009 -June 2010	Kristine Keiffer
Trust Arts Project	Spring Forward	Spring Forward 2009 was a dynamic two-month long public festival celebrating and promoting wellbeing in the community through the arts across Lambeth. As part of part of Lambeth's Mental Health Promotion Strategy (in collaboration with the primary care trust and South London and Maudsley (SLaM) mental health services), it highlighted the importance of arts and creativity to wellbeing. This was an opportunity for the public, service users and providers to experience workshops, exhibitions, discussions and performances that were distributed across Lambeth.	£5,000	July-August 2009	Belinda Sosinowicz
Trust Arts Project	The Big Tea	This project aimed to enable local people to design and deliver a large scale community project. It aimed to build long-term relationships through meaningful public consultation and inclusive engagement, such as creative and skills based workshops (including mosaics, crafts, dance, photography and graphic design, baking and food art), training, and resident steering and action groups, culminating in a community Big International Tea and Party.	£34,500	November 2009 -December 2010	Belinda Sosinowicz
London Borough of Lewisham					
Sage Educational Trust	Making Learning Irresistible	A storytelling project for young people and adults, based at a local school.	£4,500	April-July 2009	Delena Davison

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Organisation/ contact	Project name	Project Description	Funds awarded	Dates	Lead contact
Sage Educational Trust	Intergenerational Movie Making	This project planned for children to work with other generations of local people to document a number of local community projects such as Farmstead Community Garden development (Well London programme). Children were taught to use video equipment and script their films in collaboration with parents and local older people. It culminated in screenings, open to all, at local community venues.	£5,270	April -September 2010	Beverley Thompson, Ros Spinks
Trinity Laban	Bellingham Moves	Bellingham Moves was planned as an engaging, fun and accessible dance programme for children and adults promoting the positive use of public spaces in South Bellingham to benefit residents. Highly focused on enabling active participation in physical activity, the project promoted engagement in dance to boost participants' health and emotional wellbeing.	£5,650	May -December 2010	Joanna Gamper
Elevating Success	Creative workshops	This project aimed to meet to the goals of Well London by providing jewellery-making, fashion and design and drama workshops for Bellingham residents, together with public exhibitions at which their creations could be displayed and their achievements celebrated, thus boosting their self-esteem.	£8,080	April -October 2010	Andrew Brown
standnotamazed	Magic workshops	A series of magic workshops for 8-12 and 12-15 year olds was planned, culminating in a performance at Bellingham Festival in June 2010.	£3,000.00	April-June 2010	John van der Put
Entelechy Arts Ltd	My Bellingham	A programme was designed to facilitate relationships and creative conversations between artists and isolated older people. The work would run parallel and connect with projects developed by Bellingham LSOA arts partnership organisations Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre and Artefacts Edutainment.	£4,1030	February -November 2010	David Slater
Richard Neville	Stories in the Street	Stories in the Street planned to use storytelling and crafts workshops, getting local residents to produce a pack of postcards containing images and stories from in and around Bellingham.	£4,500	September 2009 -June 2010	Richard Neville
Lewisham Youth Theatre	My Bellingham	Young people aged 11-13 created a drama documentary about the past, present and future in Bellingham, called My Life: Bellingham, to be shown at the Be Well event.	£4,910	April-July 2010	Helen Stanley
Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre and Artefacts Edutainment	If you're happy and you know it	Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre worked with young people in Bellingham on storytelling, drama and music projects to help combat mental health disabilities, culminating in a one day celebration of healthy living using the arts called Be Well, in Beckenham Palace Park. The event included Bellingham Big Dance, Bellingham Big Song and Bellingham Big Story.	£3,830	May 2009 -July 2010	Emily Hunka, Yvonne Phillip, Liz Amadi
London Borough of Newham					
New Deal for Communities West Ham and Plaistow	Final Frontier Festival	A series of local organisations and artists were funded to run creative activities throughout April and May 2009. Funded organisations included Hallsville School of Ballet, Hub Crafts, Rhoda Webb and the Community Mental Health Team. No individual award was over £500.	£6,682	April -September 2010	Howard Mendick

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Organisation/ contact	Project name	Project Description	Funds awarded	Dates	Lead contact
London Borough of Newham - Parks	Star Park	Well London community engagement in Canning Town North showed that many residents wanted improvements to local green spaces, particularly Star Park. Be Creative Be Well funding was matched by London Borough of Newham Parks team to undertake a feasibility study to make improvements and create a new play area.	£7,500	June -December 2009	Matthew Hill
CTR Triangle		The aim of this project was to set up five walks, gradually increasing in distance from 2.5 miles to 10 miles, taking part in different parts of the country, commencing with a walk to the Olympic site and ending with a walk on the South Downs. It was intended to increase fitness and health awareness among people of all ages by offering coaching and encouragement.	£4,100	April -September 2010	Robert Churchill
East London Dance	All Folked Up	All Folked Up aimed to deliver a programme of participatory dance workshops and celebratory visual, literary and historical events for and with the communities of Canning Town. The starting point was a celebration of Canning Town's historical contribution to the birth of modern English folk dance movement and the vitality of the current folk dance traditions in the areas.	£25,645	June -December 2010	Emma Kerr
London Borough of Southwark					
Arts Express	Art, documentary and music workshops	The project planned four elements to be delivered through resident participation: a filmed documentary combining a record of the project and interviews; a soundtrack to the documentary; art workshops that leading to an exhibition; and 10 linked pieces of art work across the estate.	£29,941.15	April -December 2010	Damion Viney
Arts Express	Pass it On	Arts Express planned to run a series of creative workshops and create two new works of public art, by engaging with local residents of all ages from the Cossall Estate.	£14,963	March -October 2009	Damion Viney
The Midi Music Company	Music workshops	Midi Music ran a series of creative workshops based around MCing, DJing, lyrical writing, radio presenting, and performance skills. There was an emphasis on an end-of-term performance/celebration at the end of each block of 10 weeks.	£11,000	January -March 2011	Tamsin Kayembe, Project Coordinator; Wozzy Brewster
London Borough of Tower Hamlets					
Stitches in Time		Stitches in Time planned a variety of textile workshops with community groups across the Limehouse area, producing four new collaborative pieces of work for display.	£13,070	October -December 2009	Di England
SPLASH Arts	Zoetrope Super Sculpture Project	This project planned the creation of a moveable sculpture to journey from Westferry to Hind Grove. Created by the communities it would pass through, it forms a focus for performance and neighbourhood cohesion, giving onlookers and participants the confidence to look beyond themselves to wider horizons through a mixed media arts project.	£34,000	November 2009- September 2010	David Bratby
City Gateway	Healthy Eating Video Diaries	The project directly met the healthy eating objective by educating women on some of the issues of healthy eating and encouraging them to share this best practice with their families. The women also took part in exercise classes at the centre.	£6,000	August -October 2009	Jerry Daykin

115 Appendix Be Creative Be Well funded projects

Organisation/ contact	Project name	Project Description	Funds awarded	Dates	Lead contact
London Borough of Waltham Forest					
the drawing shed		The drawing shed, led by Sally Labern and Bobby Lloyd, planned to develop a 10-month programme of arts events alongside the residents of the Attlee Terrace/Drive and YMCA LSOA. It aimed to bring other artists and creative practitioners across the arts, including community theatre, into the project to deliver specific elements. All activities would happen within the LSOA area. It also aimed to create and use mobile arts studios, the drawing shed and PrintBike with the aim of sharing this creative resource and other activities.	£31,000	April -March 2011	Sally Labern and Bobby Lloyd
the drawing shed		Led by Sally Labern and Sally Barker, who created a mobile drawing project based around the use of a portable drawing shed. This would be a unique, custom-built pavilion that could be set up in different venues, unravelling to reveal materials for an exciting drawing experience.	£9,000	March -September 2009	Sally Labern and Sally Baker
Waltham Forest Arts in Education Network (WFAIEN)		WFAIEN planned a series of dance workshops exploring multicultural, traditional and contemporary dance styles for children and young people. These would provide all those participating with the opportunity to experience accessible and enjoyable physical activities. The workshops would include a healthy eating session to highlight the need for a nutritious diet when pursuing physical activities with tips on how to snack healthily during and after dance sessions.	£4,505	May -September 2009	Chantelle Michaux
Social Spider		Social Spider aimed to work with Well London partners and residents to support the programme's goals a number of newsletters created with wider resident involvement. Social Spider would help people produce the content while also teaching and developing journalism skills, with each block of citizen journalism developing content for the newsletters.	£3,500	January -March 2011	David Floyd
London Borough of Westminster					
Stories in the Street	My Bangladesh	My Bangladesh aimed to work with the Speech and Language team at Queen's Park Children's Centre. It would collect Bengali/Sylheti rhymes, songs and stories from parents and work with them and their children to make a series of short films of them in Sylhet/Bengali/Chittagong and English. The resulting DVD and booklet would be part of the library of talking books at the Children's Centre and Nursery.	£6,550	July 2010 -March 2011	Richard Neville
Westminster Arts	Queen's Park Life Stories	The project dovetails the Isolated Vulnerable Peoples' Project (IVP) with the aim of to encouraging 12 potentially vulnerable or isolated older people to be active, engaged and involved as valued member of the local community of Queen's Park. Conducted by skilled artists, the project of eight sessions aimed to combine contemporary and traditional aspects of textiles and quilt-making culminating in a showcase in Queen's Park Library in March 2011 where each participant would be presented with a Creative Citizen Certificate by the Lord Mayor of Westminster.	£7,000	October 2010 -March 2011	Beth Cinamon, Kathryn Gilfoy

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Organisation/ contact	Project name	Project Description	Funds awarded	Dates	Lead contact
Dante or Die	Side Effects	A programme of dance-theatre workshops planned for elderly people (55 +) and their younger counterparts (16 - 24). Eight sessions titled Side Effects would explore participants' relationship to pills and whether our relationship with pharmaceuticals has changed over the past 50 years. It would then create a portfolio of performance pieces to share locally.	£10,000	August 2010 -March 2011	Terry O'Donovan
London Print Studio	Step into the Picture	A programme of photography workshops was planned to help the local community learn about their locality and about each other. Community produced self-portraits would be made into publicly-displayed banners celebrating the rich culture of the community.	£10,000	August 2010 -March 2011	John Phillips, Nadia Yahiaoui
Pan-London					
London Arts and Health Forum		A series of networking and learning events for Be Creative Be Well artists/commissioned projects with a final conference in March 2011.	£12,000	Until 31 March 2011	Damian Hebron
Richard Ings		External and independent evaluation of Be Creative Be Well programme. Includes 10 case studies and an overview of Be Creative Be Well within Well London Report.	£18,000	Until March 2011	Richard Ings
Acton Community Forum		Acton Community Forum planned to organise and run the dance stage (with performances from Well London/Be Creative Be Well groups) as part of the Well London World Cup on in June 2010.	£2,000	20 June 2010	Rachel Pepper
Bethany Clarke		Photographs of Be Creative Be Well projects.	£2,000	n/a	Bethany Clarke
South London and Maudsley NHS Trust		Mental Well Being Impact Assessment Training for artists.	£6,006	n/a	Nerys Edmonds

About the authors

Marsaili Cameron has worked in health for over 20 years as consultant, writer, researcher and evaluator. She co-led a team to evaluate and update Lambeth's Mental Health and Wellbeing Promotion Strategy. She also worked with the Greater London Authority health team and others to develop the first Assembly draft of the Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy. She is a director of the company PublicServiceWorks, which is currently working with Marie Curie Cancer Care to identify significant ways of improving the experience of young adults with life-limiting conditions, and embedding this learning across the system.

Nikki Crane has worked in the arts and wider cultural sector for over 20 years. She is a specialist in the arts and social inclusion and led this work for Arts Council England over a seven-year period, establishing partnerships and programmes across arts and non-arts sectors. Nikki launched the Arts Council's first national strategy for arts and health, bringing together the Department of Health, Strategic Health Authorities and clinical staff within the NHS. Nikki has been an independent arts consultant since 2007 and is currently working with a team to create an arts and health strategy for a new private finance initiative (PFI) hospital.

Richard Ings, who led the evaluation team, is an independent writer, researcher and arts consultant with over 25 years experience in the cultural sector. His clients have included Arts Council England, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, CapeUK, Thames Valley Partnership, National Youth Theatre, Protein Dance, Grassmarket Project, LIFT, People's Palace Projects, Glyndebourne, Poetry Society, Prince's Foundation for Children and the Arts, Shakespeare Schools Festival and the RSA.

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Notes

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