

## nesa Creative Change Evaluation Report

Grants for the Arts REF: 014717

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### Executive Summary

1. Creative Change has demonstrated that the arts are a catalyst for change, promoting personal and social change, facilitating community capacity building, supporting communities through periods of transition, redevelopment and regeneration and transforming lives.
2. Creative Change has expanded and focused **nesa's** developing creative programme around creative community development.
  - Identifying new settings, new processes and new contexts in which to work, including establishing clear links with Local Area Agreement [LAA] targets.
  - Influencing the development of **nesa's** Strategic Business Plan 2008-2011
  - The project has utilised new sources of funding.
3. 6 creative projects have been developed and delivered in partnership with a wide range of organisations. Each project has completed its own evaluation report and longer term development plans for each of our programme areas have been developed in response to the lessons learned from Creative Change.
  - Fit for Life [originally KidzFit]
  - Transitions
  - Transformations
  - Over To You
  - Postcards from Peasdowne [originally Casting Light]
  - Integrational Project: Twerton [originally Casting Light]
4. Creative Change has supported the development of promotional tools and a promotional plan for advocacy and project development.
  - One Case study has been produced that highlights the processes used in the projects and the outcomes achieved.
  - 2 DVD's featuring the Fit for Life and Over to You projects have been produced and disseminated. Shorter edits will assist in promotional work and advocacy. The Fit For Life edited DVD will be featured at the launch event for the B&NES Cultural Forum in February 2008.
  - The art|**works** festival in September 2007 and the art|**works** in Radstock community festival provided a valuable focus for the Creative Change Projects to showcase their work, celebrate their achievements and share good practice with other community groups and artists. Nesa is working with local people and the Town Council to ensure that the festival becomes an annual event.
  - A research project has been commissioned from the University of the West of England [UWE], to review **nesa's** current creative programme in order to advise on the development of a research strategy for **nesa**.

- On receipt of the analysis and recommendations further development work will be undertaken towards initiating a long term research programme into the role of cultural activity in community development and promoting well-being. It is hoped that this can be developed in partnership with other cultural, social and health organisations.
5. Creative Change has assisted in the development of a **nesa** Unique Offer for Artists which includes working with artists to support their professional development through **art|speak** seminars, mentoring opportunities and potential collaborations with **nesa** as artists in residence or in creative community development projects.
    - **nesa** has also worked with Bath Spa University to research and develop an accredited post graduate course in Socially Engaged Participatory Arts. **nesa** will provide a consultancy role for its continued development and delivery.
    - Creative Change artists and project participants were involved in celebrating their work as part of **art|works** in Radstock community festival in September 2007 through exhibition, publications and events.
    - **nesa's** RAP+ Artist in Residence, Andrew Henon, collaborated with Creative Change artists to showcase their work at Keynsham Music Festival and **art|works** in Radstock. He also worked with project participants, leading a motivational tour of arts exhibitions at the Visual Arts Fringe Festival in Bath and facilitating discussions and developing plans with them for further arts activities in participants' communities.
  6. Creative Change has had an impact on the investigation and formation of **nesa's** assessment of quality and excellence of process and product.
    - Inspiring the development of the RAP+ project that is focusing on quality and assessment issues.
    - Development of **nesa** artists job description.
    - Confirming the **nesa** model as a vital element in the success of the Creative Change Projects.
    - Using high production values for print and exhibition, to raise the profile and critical esteem of community arts.
    - Improving the way **nesa** recruits and selects artists.
    - Raising the profile of participatory arts through advocacy, promotion publication and exhibition.
  7. Creative Change has had an impact on **nesa's** organisational development:
    - Pioneering the development and use of a project development and management tool.
    - Commissioning a consultative evaluation which worked with the staff team to investigate and improve our processes of monitoring

and evaluation. See **nesa** evaluative consultancy, Final Report, Karen Smith July 2007.

- Supporting and influencing the development of **nesa's** Strategic Business Plan 2008-11 and the development of our creative programme.

## Creative Change Introduction

Creative Change aimed to develop and deliver a range of new arts projects to demonstrate the unique ability of the arts to act as a catalyst for change and to support individuals and communities through periods of transition. It proposed to provide quality participatory arts activity for people with mental health issues, obesity issues and women experiencing domestic violence, and to work with residents in socially disadvantaged areas to bring about positive changes to their local environment.

The new projects aimed to extend and connect our existing programmes in Neighbourhood Arts, Arts & Health and Young People & Creativity, and to enable us to demonstrate the effectiveness of **nesa's** approach to new partners. Whilst the individual projects were time-limited, it was expected that they would have a long-term impact on programme development, enabling **nesa** to cement new partnerships and access associated funding streams, explore creative relationships with a wider pool of artists, and build a creative momentum for the organisation following a period of internal organisational focus.

Six creative projects were delivered and they each contributed to a celebratory event in September 2007, art|works in Radstock. Dynamic project management tools are attached and detail each projects development, methods of working and evaluate results. There were some changes from the original proposal to the Arts Council and these are explained in the project documentation enclosed.

- **Fit for Life** [originally KidzFit], worked with children from St. Nicholas School in Radstock to creatively explore health and fitness.
- **Transitions**, initially conceived as a project with women who had experienced domestic violence, was unable to develop due to staff illness and overload at the refuge and focused instead on a group of dads from the Snow Hill area of Bath.
- **Transformations** documented the process of re-development of a social housing area in Keynsham and the impact on the residents as their homes, sometimes of 50 years, were demolished and they were moved to new accommodation.
- **Over To You** encouraged and supported women with post-natal depression to set up their own creative support groups.
- **Postcards from Peasdowne** [originally Casting Light] re-established contact with the Peasdowne Opportunities Project [POP] with a view to developing a long term creative community development project, resulting in various groups within the community contributing to a reminiscence and visioning project that has informed the development of the next stage within the Creative Places project.
- **Integrational Project: Twerton** [originally Casting Light] also aimed to re-establish contact with the groups who had contributed to the initial consultations around the proposed lighting project. An

intergenerational project was initiated to improve relationships between neighbouring sheltered accommodation for young people and older people in Twerton.

### **Benefits.**

Alongside individual project evaluations, a SWOT analysis [attached] and other documentation and briefs, capture the achievements of the project; assess the benefits to participants and the wider community; highlight the benefits to **nesa**; outline the contribution to and by project partners and artists; identify new opportunities and potential difficulties and demonstrate how the project has met ACE ambitions for the arts, in its support for artists, its contribution to enabling **nesa** to develop and thrive and by encouraging organisational growth.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

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#### **The Legacy of Creative Change**

- Creative Change has had a significant impact on the development of long term plans for organisational development and **nesa**'s creative programme.
- High quality productions, publications, print and other media will support future advocacy and promotional work, attracting new partners and raising the profile of both **nesa** and creative community development.
- New working partnerships have been developed and **nesa** has improved its integration with local priorities.
- **nesa** has a greater awareness of time scales and commitment needed to properly address creative community development.
- Creative Change established the potential to develop a long term research programme that will provide evidence and advocacy to support the value of cultural regeneration.
- Evidence has been collected to support **nesa**'s intention to develop approaches to creative learning, in schools, extended schools, continuing professional development, through children's services and as family learning initiatives.
- The success of the Transformations project will support development of links with redevelopment and regeneration initiatives in B&NES, East Mendip and regionally.
- The POP project demonstrates the role that the arts can play in consultation, engagement, involvement and motivation of local residents, empowering them to get more involved in local issues and the democratic process. **nesa** will continue to demonstrate how the arts can have an impact on achieving local area agreement targets and the development of Parish and Local Community Plans.
- **nesa** has developed a unique offer for artists and has pioneered a significant development with Bath Spa University to develop a modular post graduate course for artists working in socially engaged participatory arts.

- **nesa's** partnership approach has demonstrated the benefits to a community in the potential for interlinked projects that addresses for instance, relaxation, health, food and fitness issues throughout the arts activity, adding value to and joining up approaches to improvement issues.
- Specific artist development and training in Mental Health Awareness and support has proved vital for the support of artists working in mental health settings.
- **nesa** will use the experience gained during Creative Change in the development of and support of progression groups in the Over to You project, to develop a policy that will be integrated throughout our programme to support the development of user-led groups to promote sustainable creative community development, through partnership, through training and advice, through support to develop constituted community businesses/social enterprises.

### Learning Points

- Short term project funding makes it difficult to develop long term productive relationships with communities to facilitate change.
- Expectations from partners to continue successful arts projects that add value to and help them to achieve their agendas cannot always be met.
- The extended time between planning and delivery of some of the projects meant that there was a discontinuity of contact with some of the communities, priorities and circumstances had changed and impetus and involvement was lost. There was limited local/community buy in for the Casting Light Proposals for instance, as well as other planning issues that had not been identified during the planning of the project.
- Staff changes had a significant impact on the development of projects, requiring some fast rethinking of roles and responsibilities. This has also had an impact on the length of the project and completion of the Evaluation Report.
- The development of Toolkits for the Fit for Life and the Over to You projects was not deemed appropriate. Given the sensitivity needed to set up projects with women with post natal depression and for projects working with schools and health & well-being organisations, it was felt that any groups wanting to initiate similar projects would benefit in the first instance from talking to **nesa** rather than following a set of actions. Letters were sent out with the DVD's encouraging recipients to contact **nesa** for further information.

There are some elements of the project still to be completed, but they have been agreed and budgeted for within the Income and Expenditure presented with this report. Briefs and Agreements are enclosed in the attached documentation. The pieces of work still to be completed are:

- The Creative Change Case Study – completed by the end March 2008
- The Research Project as agreed in the Draft Work Agreement, to be completed by the end March 2008 and the Implementation of the

reports' recommendations, partnership development and applications process will continue into 2008/09 for 14 days freelance work.

- Website development will be ongoing into 08/09 for 7 days freelance work.

### **Budget**

A Statement of Certified Accounts verified by an independent accountant has been completed.

Lesley Featherstone  
Director  
February 2008

### **Documentation:**

- Creative Change SWOT analysis
- Creative Change Income and Expenditure
- Project Proposals/Summaries and Development Plans
  - Intergenerational Project: Twerton
  - Transformations: Caernarvon Road
  - Postcards from Peasdowne – POP Group
  - Creative Change – Transitions
  - Over to You Report
  - Fit For Life Evaluation
- Creative Change Case Study Brief
- Creative Change and **nesa's** Research Project
- **nesa** Research Project Brief
- Draft Work Agreement, **nesa**/UWE – Agreement in process.
- Creative Change and Website Development
- **nesa** Promotional Plan 2008
- Local Area Agreements and **nesa**
- Evaluative Consultancy, external evaluation report. Karen Smith
- **nesa**: working with Freelance Artists
- **nesa's** Unique Offer for Artists
- **art|speak** brief
- **art|works** Outcomes
  
- Marketing material and press releases
- Transformations publication
- DVD's, Fit for Life and Over to You [+shorter edits] and letters of introduction.