

## Hidden Places Evaluation 2006 - Jessica Brand Summary [nesa]

The Radstock Art Project, has seen the development of a series of arts workshops at the RAP facilities in Radstock Youth Club combined with outreach and social inclusion work in Norton Radstock, has resulted in the development of Hidden Places, a community project that will lead to community wide exhibition in September 2006.

An external evaluation of the Hidden Places project written by Jessica Brand has highlighted a number of issues that will be important to **nesa**'s future development.

- It is a key premise of **nesa** that creative social engagement contributes to cultural regeneration and social inclusion. The evaluation points out that the use of a theme/concept such as Hidden Places has a positive contribution to make by the provision of a focus for disparate groups in the community, and can promote social inclusion through involving these disparate groups in creative activities that encourage them to relate to their community. With a remit to produce work for a community exhibition, groups are keen to see what others have done and look forward to an opportunity to meet with the other groups and compare achievements.
- The report also states that there is potential to develop cross-cultural provision through this way of working, encouraging partnership working, networking opportunities, skills sharing and adding value to each others activities. The report also states that **nesa** is an obvious candidate to collaborate with regeneration organisations to promote regeneration through the arts.
- The project has provided new and different experiences, skills and opportunities for participants, promoting the gaining of self-esteem and confidence and the raising of horizons. The exhibition has the potential to develop community spirit and pride.
- The evaluation also recommends that **nesa** needs to do further work in establishing criteria and standards to define quality in the exhibition of socially engaged arts projects. This needs also to extend to the curation, publicity and interpretation of material.
- There is great potential for **nesa** to support and develop artists who want to develop socially engaged arts projects, by offering mentoring and collaborative opportunities and developing partnerships with local colleges and training organisations. [This is backed up by the **art|speak** event that **nesa** ran in April 2006 [see appendix 3]]
- This could also be developed into establishing opportunities for care and support workers to gain skills that support cultural activities in their own organisations.
- There is evidence that working in partnership with other organisations has added value to their activities. Notably the Youth Service, where a project initiated by the Hidden Places artist in residence resulted in the identification of some key issues that the Youth Worker was able to

pick up on, addressing key targets set for performance. An activity with Playrangers helped the group to establish with the Town Council that there was a need to address the safety of a local play area, and the Barnardos group who have been so impressed by the difference that creative activity has had on the behaviour of their client group that they have fundraised for the continuation of arts activities themselves.

- Management of the project had been very good
- The development of a digital studio and a website were identified as resources that would greatly enhance **nesa**'s work.