

Radstock Art Project (RAP)

Phase 2: Consolidation and Implementation Final Report

1. Introduction

1.1 During the period covered by this grant (ref: 013459) **nesa** has undergone some big changes – a new name (now just **nesa**, no longer North East Somerset Arts), a new brand image including a website, the culmination of a period of organisational development (Org. Dev. II), a new Director, Lesley Featherstone, and the loss of RAP's main development worker, Syrah Arnold. All these factors and more have brought about some changes in the structure of the programme, as described in the Interim Report and subsequent requests for extension of the grant period.

This report aims to highlight the changes that have taken place, celebrate the achievements, report on current recommendations for the future and clarify how RAP's work to date fits into the wider picture of **nesa**'s forthcoming Neighbourhood Arts programme, as well as comparing delivery against the original aims and objectives of the RAP Phase 2 proposal.

1.2 RAP Phase 2 aimed to:

- Promote a range of quality visual arts activities in rural and outer-city communities
- Support lifelong learning through the arts and the professional development of local artists
- Provide opportunities for local people to experience visual arts, as creators & consumers
- Provide a creative and stimulating environment that is maintained for the local community which will attract more visitors to the Norton Radstock area
- Provide employment opportunities for local artists and support local regeneration initiatives

1.3 By:

- Delivering an on-going exhibition programme
- Maintaining a programme of social inclusion and community workshops
- Providing on-going education, training and mentoring opportunities for staff, artists, students and volunteers
- Maintaining a fully-equipped art space, café and exhibition space for use by local community and artists
- Developing a policy to support RAP's volunteers
- Implementing the marketing strategy for the project
- Increasing networking and partnership working to ensure effective use of resources and maximum benefit to the community

1.4 What we wanted to achieve and what we have achieved

The original application stated the following objectives:

- Maintain and consolidate the successful social inclusion and education programme

This has been achieved through maintaining and developing our relationships with partner organisations in the community and offering a variety of 'open' workshops.

- Develop an after-school children's programme

Three successful 5-week courses demonstrated a demand which **nesa** plans to continue to meet through RAP with support from Norton Radstock Town Council. Several one-off workshops also took place during half term holidays.

- Implement a full exhibition programme

This has been partially achieved; as described in the Interim report, certain elements were dropped or scaled down, including involvement in the 'on-hold' Assembly Projects and re-showing of Memory Palette.

- Develop greater community ownership of the project

Again, this has been partially achieved through Hidden Places and ongoing consultation with partner groups, as well as the establishment of a RAP Steering Group, which has begun to inform RAP's programming and, it is intended, will go on to be instrumental in the development of **nesa's** Neighbourhood Arts programme.

- Continue to develop a professional development programme for local artists and students and help them to promote their work

This has been tied in with **nesa's** Organisational Development resulting in the start of a series of seminars called **art|speak**. In addition, RAP has arranged networking events and offered students support through workshops, exhibiting opportunities and placements.

- Increase public awareness of RAP and its achievements

During the period of this grant we have successfully gained wider and more positive press coverage with the help of the **nesa** Marketing Officer.

2. Social Inclusion and Education programme

2.1 Hidden Places (pre exhibition programme)

Total Workshop sessions: 58

Participants: 170 (on nesa workshops) plus 43 independent contributors

Admissions: 601

2.1.1 Hidden Places has been the key vehicle for delivering RAP's social inclusion and education programme, which aimed to:

- offer creative and educational workshops to a range of different users
- provide the opportunity for participants to develop communication skills, explore new media and discover new ways of expressing themselves
- raise public awareness of the different groups using the centre and their needs within the local community
- reflect the aspirations of the participants and pride in their community

2.1.2 With a slightly scaled-down programme headed up by one artist in residence, Jackie Calderwood (as described in the Interim Report), Hidden Places has enabled over 200 local residents from a wide variety of backgrounds to contribute to the project in very individual ways, and to help create a large showcase of art work at eight venues in the Norton Radstock area. (Please see the Hidden Places marketing material included in the press cuttings and publicity pack, Appendix 4.)

2.1.3 Partners have been: Radstock Youth Club, Connections Day Services, Creative Links mental health support project group, Radstock Junior Gateway Club (children with learning challenges), Barnardo's Norton Radstock Family Centre, Norton Radstock Area Play Rangers, Norton Radstock College, Rookery House, SWALLOW (another support service for adults with learning difficulties) and Old Bakery Artists. There have also been a number of independent contributors.

2.1.4 The exhibition programme took place in September 2006 instead of May, as outlined in the Interim Report.

2.1.5 Workshop sessions for Hidden Places

- Play Rangers: 8 sessions in a variety of art forms including temporary site-specific sculpture, film, painting, 'biscuit-fired' ceramics.
- Connections Day Services: 9 sessions in felt-making and mixed media sculpture (also incorporated drawing and photography in research stages)
- Connections Day Services Tiles Extra: 4 sessions in ceramic sculpture techniques
- Norton Radstock Family Centre (Barnardo's – The Art Group): 20 sessions in mixed media visual arts
- Children's after-school club: 5 sessions in mosaic making
- Radstock Junior Gateway Club: 4 sessions in 2D digital animation
- Radstock Youth Club: 4 sessions in 3D digital animation ('claymation') plus an extra 3 sessions funded by **nesa** Youth Arts budget.
- 'Open' adults' workshops: 3 sessions in drawing, painting and ceramics (the painting and ceramics ones were extended sessions due to the nature of the media, hence only 3 sessions instead of 4 as stated in the Interim Report)
- Norton Radstock College: one and a half full days in 3D digital animation
- Creative Links: 5 sessions in ceramic sculpture. (Please note due to delays to **nesa** obtaining funds for Creative Links, only one course has taken place at the RAP facilities during this phase of RAP instead of the anticipated 2).
- Plus independent contributions from Rookery House (residential home for young adults with autism or Aspergers Syndrome); SWALLOW (support service for adults with learning difficulties); old bakery artists; and several individual local 'amateur' artists. (Please note that nine workshop sessions were offered to Rookery House for workshops linked to the People's Show, but declined due to their current capacity. As outlined in a previous e-mail from Karen MacDonald to Andrew Proctor and Lindsey Hughes, these have been ring-fenced for widening community participation in an Extended Schools Provision project in partnership with Writhlington School this autumn).

2.1.6 Evaluation of Hidden Places

A professional freelance external evaluator, Jessica Brand, was engaged to produce a report of the pre-exhibition workshops and community involvement element of the project. A copy of her full report is enclosed (Appendix 1).

Particular points picked up from evaluation forms completed for **nesa** by partners, artists and volunteers were:

- That working towards an exhibition over a short time scale can be difficult with groups like the Youth Club and Play Rangers, because of sporadic attendance and because for them, process and issue-based work is more important than

- product.
- The prospect of work being exhibited may have created an anxiety for some groups/individuals which in some cases could have been alleviated by longer courses. RAP staff tried to address this by offering participants the opportunity to influence how the work was presented and interpreted. Visits to other exhibitions during the build-up, and 'trial runs' may also have helped.
 - More time was a wish reiterated by many artists, assistants and participants. Many felt that sessions were not long enough or there were not enough of them to develop ideas and finish work to their desired standard.
 - Storage space is also an important issue for a large scale project or one where work needs to be retained for exhibition. There were instances where artists had to store work at home, and sometimes participants took work away with them (naturally keen to retain it) and did not return it for exhibition.
 - Consultation with participants over artistic media demonstrated a higher demand for digital art forms than **nesa** can fully support with current facilities. There may be an opportunity to work in partnership with other organisations to provide for this growing area of interest.

2.1.7 "The children seemed really pleased with their accomplishments. Art forms and activities responded to children's interests, e.g. using video to talk about their dens / camp building." (Stephanie Bengry-Howell, volunteer, Play Rangers sessions)

"Many participants need one-to-one help to achieve their artistic aims. The group would benefit from more, and longer term, hands-on artists' input.... I've loved working with the group: their challenges and mine were huge, but we had a lot of fun!" (Clare Diprose, working with Connections)

"Thank you to the Animation people [for] giving up their time to teach us their skills. CD of our animation – great fun".

"I enjoy it I was very good at it. It was very different [from] what we [usually] do."
(Participants, Junior Gateway)

2.1.8 Key points to come out of feedback:

- It isn't possible to devise one method of collecting feedback that suits all. Forms in particular are unhelpful for some groups. **nesa** needs to plan carefully to make sure the same feedback opportunities are provided for all.

2.2 Regular sessions for Barnardo's Family Centre.

Sessions: 24 (at time of writing)

Participants: 43

Admissions: 289

'The Art Group', RAP's participant-led partnership project with Norton Radstock Family Centre, has developed very successfully and is now in its fourth term, thanks to one-year funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Referrals have increased, and other organisations have taken an interest (including B&NES Social Services department, and Waterside Family Centre in Bath which has approached us with a view to advice on setting up a similar scheme). An example of an in-house report for one term's course is enclosed (Appendix 2).

For reasons of practicality, planning, recruitment and staffing, only one course is run during each school term. This means that one is currently underway (finishing December 2006) and the final course with current funding will take place from January to

March 2007. Management of RAP's work for this will be taken over by Lesley Featherstone, until a new Neighbourhood Arts Development Worker is in place.

"A cohesive group with positive changes in confidence and communication from a number of children." (Kate Gold, artist)

(What have you liked best?) "Making frens. Seeing people enjoying and happy." (Is there anything you would like to be different?) "One group for young people and a group for larger people!" (Participant)

*N.b. Figures in sections below marked with a * are also fully or partially included in those above for Hidden Places.*

2.3 Disability Arts

Sessions: 30*

Participants: 90*

Admissions: 279*

2.3.1 RAP has provided continued support for users of Connections Day Services through four sets of workshops: banner making (following on from a project during RAP Phase 1); felt / mixed media textile sculpture, with artist Clare Diprose, creating work for Hidden Places; providing a second artist to work alongside Tiles Extra's regular artist Andrew Eddleston, introducing the group to new techniques, again for Hidden Places; and a filming project with Humbug Theatre group to create a DVD of their most recent production, Remember Your Dreams. This production was sparked and supported by RAP workshops with artist Eileen Haste during RAP 1, and the group have since performed it at University of Bath and other locations in the area.

2.3.2 RAP's recent work with Radstock Junior Gateway Club could also come under this heading. Hidden Places artist in residence Jackie Calderwood ran four sessions in animation (the medium chosen by the young people) which resulted in a series of short 2D digital animations shown in two different venues for Hidden Places. The Club has also received four introductory sessions in basic music and drama skills (part of the exhibition-associated workshops programme – see par. 1.4.3 below), one in felt making and two in pottery.

2.3.3 "We experienced new methods, saw how other artists work, and exhibiting will raise public awareness of our work." (Jan Hamblin, support worker, Tiles Extra)

"Good for building team work, confidence and knowledge" (Nicky Albrow, Manager, Junior Gateway Club)

2.3.4 Points to come out of feedback:

- Art forms like digital animation are very popular but require a higher ratio of staff to participants than some other art forms. To work successfully they also need more equipment than **nesa** can currently provide. A lack of this can result in participants losing attention whilst they wait their turn, or feeling dissatisfied with the end results of their work.
- It may be beneficial to have a higher ratio of staff/helpers to participants anyway, particularly for groups like Connections where there are a wide variety of

individual needs. An extra volunteer or two may make all the difference in helping participants feel heard and able to fulfil their potential.

2.4 Arts Education

Sessions: 26*

Participants: 90*

Admissions: 135*

2.4.1 The 'Open' workshop programme for adults actually provided by RAP was reduced as described in the Interim Report, due to not gaining funding from the Foyle Foundation. Nevertheless we provided several opportunities: a weekend of open 'taster' workshops for the Hidden Places project, in media determined by feedback from previous workshops and open days; a drop-in outdoor printmaking session as part of local event 'Party in the Paddock'; and the workshops associated with exhibitions, outlined below.

2.4.2 RAP also initiated a partnership with B&NES Community Learning Service which allowed us to host a full 10-week papercrafts course for adults with less than NVQ Level 2 qualifications. We had planned to host a full course in Creative Writing, but despite two attempts, fewer than CLS' requisite five participants with less than Level 2 qualifications enrolled. As a result five sessions instead of ten actually took place. **nesa** hopes to try this again in the future, perhaps without CLS support, as the numbers of enquiries from those with higher qualifications indicated a demand for a more flexible course.

2.4.3 Exhibition-associated workshops

Five open access workshops associated with the Hidden Places exhibition programme took place: one Creative Writing taster session with Helen Moore, for people aged 16 and over; and the following sessions for family units: drawing, felt and textile sculpture, clay sculpture, and mosaic. The figures for these are **not** included above, as they were not a part of the RAP2 budget.

Three open access workshops for adults, associated with the Changing Colours exhibition were also arranged: printmaking, ceramics and batik.

Two sets of workshops were scheduled to take place in connection with the People's Show exhibition: five for members of Radstock Youth Club, with them paying for materials; and three for clients of Rookery House and/or The Care Network. In the event both of these were re-allocated due to the original organisations' capacity. Radstock Junior Gateway Club instead of the Youth Club benefited from four sessions in music and drama inspired by the ideas of the People's Show (with the budget for the fifth session paying for materials, as their budget was too restricted); and clients of The Shed (homeless people) visited the exhibition and did oil painting in response to the work.

One workshop in presentation skills/mounting of work was also run for members of Out of the Blue to help prepare their work for the exhibition.

2.5 Children's After-school and half term Workshops.

Sessions: 22*

Participants: 75*

Admissions: 166*

2.5.1 As mentioned, three 5-week after-school courses were over-subscribed and very popular: pottery and printmaking for Christmas, puppet making and puppetry, and mosaic making. The puppet making course culminated in an evening performance of short plays devised by the children, attended by families, local councillors and other visitors, in conjunction with the opening of a café area exhibition of work by The Art Group at RAP's facility at Radstock Youth Centre. The work created on the mosaic course formed part of the Hidden Places exhibition programme.

2.5.2 The remaining resources for after school workshops were used to provide one term's activity for The Art Group with Barnardo's, whilst fundraising to support its continuation took place. The work produced during this and the subsequent term's Art Group both contributed to Hidden Places. The figures for these two courses are shown in the Barnardo's section above (par. 2.1.2)

2.5.3 Additional workshops for local children were provided during school holiday times: one Mask Making workshop; two creating Collage Treasure Maps; a one-day mosaic course; two glass painting workshops.

2.5.4 **nesa** intends to build partnerships with local schools to contribute to Extended Schools' Provision, as a way of engaging more people in creative and cultural activities, and ultimately helping to empower them to make a positive difference, in new ways, to their lives and their communities. After-school workshops and projects during school holidays will form an important part of this, and it is expected that a combination of workshops at the RAP facilities, and outreach work at other venues, will be used to deliver this in the Radstock area.

"I loved it!"

"It was excellent" (Participants, glass painting half term session)

"One child was home schooled and this was an important social and art educational experience for her." (Anita Andrews, mosaic artist)

"A lot more exciting than I thought it was going to be!" (Participant, Collage Treasure Maps, half term workshops)

"Brilliant shows – Ross really enjoyed himself and even though he was nervous on the night it worked out in the end with some help! Thanks." (Melissa Baber, mother of participant on the Art Club)

3. Exhibition and talk programme

Exhibition days: 181

Total Visitors: 535 (for exhibitions at Radstock Youth Centre) plus 16,837 at Victoria Art Gallery plus visitors from Hidden Places, 1516.

The following exhibitions have taken place during this funding period.

3.1 Main exhibitions:

- Changing Colours (work from My Time My Space sessions for women experiencing post natal depression)
- People's Show (My Time My Space continuation support group, Out of the Blue, exhibiting their own work alongside pieces chosen from the permanent collection)

- at Bath's Victoria Art Gallery. This relationship was brokered and supported by RAP. It is intended that the exhibition will be re-presented in Norton Radstock in 2007)
- Hidden Places (at Radstock Youth Centre, Radstock Museum, Norton Radstock College, Somer Centre, Masonic Hall, Radco Superstore and Hope House Surgery)

3.2 Café exhibitions at Radstock Youth Centre:

- 'Urban Environment' by Norton Radstock College students (former working title 'Postcard Views')
- two exhibitions of work from The Art Group project with Barnardo's Norton Radstock Family Centre
- 'Anything Goes' Artists' Trading Cards exhibitions, curated by artist and former My Time My Space participant Maxine Church
- An exhibition of Maxine Church's own work
- Spraycan Art by members of Peasedown St John Youth Club
- Felt making and mixed media work by users of Connections Day Services
- Work by members of BANA (Bath Area Network for Artists) which ran alongside their annual exhibition in Bath.

3.3 Talks programme

In the light of reduced funding, the Talks programme was scaled down to the artists' seminar events and three talks during the Hidden Places exhibition programme: **old bakery artists** talking about their development, Jackie Calderwood discussing the development of Hidden Places and her role within it, and 8th Bard of Bath Helen Moore discussing her new book 'Eco-notes of a Digital Woman', a contemporary take on the Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady, based around the Wellow and Radstock area.

3.4 "A strong and brave show. Wonderful images of emotional colour."

"What a fantastic idea for a group – would be great for every mum to be able to do this!" (Visitors, Changing Colours)

"When I first saw the work of other women I thought 'WOW' and then that my pieces weren't up to the job. Now seeing it all in one place I feel really proud of my work and what has happened to me since attending My Time My Space." (Artist, Changing Colours).

"Loved the sense of voices, people and secret hidden locations, layered photography."

"Really good to see sculptures and 3D work here, and bold use of photographic images" (Visitors, Hidden Places)

4. Community ownership

The RAP Steering Group, first established in summer 2005, meets quarterly and has now had four meetings. Members include representatives of user groups Connections Day Services, Radstock Youth Club, Radstock Junior Gateway, Old Bakery Artists, Radstock Health Visitor team, and RAP freelance artists and participants as well as RAP staff. To date the group's role has been mainly to guide the details of programming and assist with promotion and recognition of the project and mutual understanding of its beneficiaries, as well as helping with evaluation. It has been agreed that as the Neighbourhood Arts programme develops, the Group's role will become more strategic in determining direction and policy. It is envisaged that this will be done through setting up small sub-groups to research and action different issues. **nesa** is also looking to

recruit more members to represent a wider section of the community. So far, for instance, we have not been successful in recruiting any young people to the Steering Group.

Current members are:

Deborah Patten (Manager, Connections Day Services)

Nicky Albrow (Manager, Junior Gateway)

Andrew Eddleston (freelance artist)

Keith Wisbey (OBA Chairman)

Jayne Lewis (Manager, Radstock Youth Club)

Celia Jones (local resident and past participant of RAP open courses)

Janet Weeks (Radstock area Health Visitor team)

Maxine Church (Out of the Blue member and local resident)

Maria Vinney (local artist and participant of RAP open courses)

Fflyff McLaren (Norton Radstock Councillor and local resident)

Chris Barker (Head of Art, Norton Radstock College)

The Hidden Places project has enabled a greater sense of ownership from existing partner groups through consultation on workshops and on the interpretation and presentation of work for the final exhibitions.

5. Professional Development programme for artists and students

Events: 4

Participants: 97

Admissions: 128

5.1 Volunteer curator

It was hoped that a regular volunteer (possibly a student of Norton Radstock College) could be recruited and supported to manage programming and installation of exhibitions at the RAP café area. Unfortunately no regular candidate has been sourced, although short term and sporadic volunteers have helped to hang exhibitions. This is something that can be re-examined with the advice of the Steering Group and potentially offered out to students of other local colleges, such as the Arts Management and Practice students at City of Bath College.

5.2 Seminars and networking events

5.2.1 **nesa's** two art|speak Artists' Seminar events so far have identified areas to pursue further in terms of support and development for artists, including mentoring and shadowing opportunities for artists working in community settings. Please see the enclosed reports (Appendix 3). **nesa** and RAP have already started to trial these on a modest scale and it is hoped that **nesa** can adopt an important role in the region for helping to train and support artists to deliver socially engaged work.

5.2.2 In January 2006 a well-subscribed professional development event in partnership with South West Arts Marketing (SWAM) and Arts Council England South West gave local artists the opportunity to learn about basic skills in marketing their work and how to apply for funding. In future **nesa** and RAP hope to work with ArtsMatrix to develop practical solutions to local artists' training, networking and support needs.

5.2.3 In December 2005 RAP also provided an informal networking event for artists, arts students, and those engaged in or interested in volunteering for arts work in the community. This attracted 35 visitors and was valued as an opportunity for people to

find out what options might be open to them.

“Peer mentoring / skill sharing would be of huge benefit to me as the artist.” (Clare Diprose)

5.3 Work experience

RAP has continued to provide work experience opportunities for students and less experienced artists, ranging from school leavers to mature volunteers looking for a career change or personal development. During this funding period we have worked with 23 volunteers who have gained experience in workshop running, curation, marketing, administration and project management.

“One child commented that she would not participate without my support. I felt having my help gave her the confidence to carry on.” (Kim Harvey, assistant, working with The Art Group)

5.4 Dissemination of opportunities

nesa has increasingly become a part of the opportunities ‘circuit’ for artists locally, with reciprocal promotion and support through BANA, Creative Learning Agency, educational establishments and other organisations. Examples of the effect of this team-working have included two BANA artists recently gaining employment at Norton Radstock College through a **nesa** opportunities e-mail-out; and **nesa** artists being referred to BANA to gain the necessary public liability insurance for running workshops at a reduced rate.

6. Raising public awareness of RAP

Feedback shows that word of mouth is the factor most likely to make people enrol on RAP workshops, which we feel to be a very encouraging endorsement of the value and function of socially-engaged arts activity in the Norton Radstock area.

In addition we have also received very positive and considerable coverage in local press during the past year. Please see the enclosed pack of press cuttings and marketing material (Appendix 4).

7. Benefits

7.1 Benefits to local community - met

We built on our programme of workshops and exhibitions both for the wider public (to a lesser degree than hoped, due to reduced funding, but appreciable nonetheless) and for specific client groups. We have contributed to local regeneration by improving access to cultural activities in Norton Radstock, having an impact on the visual environment, providing opportunities for work and volunteering and contributing to health and social inclusion.

7.2 Benefits to Artists - met

nesa’s freelance artists have benefited from continuing opportunities for employment, professional development and wider exposure and publicity for their work.

7.3 Benefits to NESA - met

The continuation of RAP has helped maintain **nesa**'s profile and helped the organisation to plan for an expanded programme of socially engaged 'Neighbourhood Arts' to be rolled out to other communities and potentially, in the future, other areas of B&NES and even beyond.

8. Meeting the aims of ACE/SW

8.1 RAP addressed the following Arts Council aims:

To change people's lives through the opportunity to take part in or experience high-quality arts activities.

- Continued access to high-quality and accessible arts activities for the local community, key B&NES groups, and other agencies.
- The opportunity to address the issues around health and well-being of participants.

To invest in the creative talent of artists and individuals.

- Offered work and training to freelance artists.
- Enhanced capacity to train local community members in skills that will increase their employability.
- Enhanced capacity to provide networking, mentoring and work opportunities to local artists through our activity.

8.2 Ways in which activity has contributed to the aims of local, regional or national partners.

Partnership working is a core part of the **nesa** ethos, providing a monitored and evaluated positive impact. RAP has worked in close cooperation with key local and regional partners, particularly:

- Norton Radstock Town Council
- Norton Radstock Inter Agency Forum
- B&NES Council:
 - Arts Development, Housing and Social Services, Youth and Community, Adult and Community Education, Community Safety.
- ACE/SW

RAP's work has supported key objectives of the B&NES Council Arts Strategy, through:

- Enhancing facilities for the presentation and production of the arts.
- Developing new facilities for contemporary visual arts.
- Providing improved facilities and new opportunities for life-long learning.
- Supporting work with socially excluded groups.
- Increasing the number of B&NES residents experiencing high quality arts events and activities.
- Developing year round arts opportunities.

9. Evaluation

Feedback from each set of workshops, exhibition or event has been collected from participants, artists, visitors, partners and where relevant, volunteers. Sample copies of feedback forms received are in the pack in Appendix 5.

As mentioned, Jessica Brand was commissioned to produce an external report on the development of the Hidden Places project. **nesa** also commissioned an external report on the People's Show project and exhibition at the Victoria Gallery, which was carried out by Syrah Arnold in a freelance capacity (Appendix 5). A previous external report (written by Diana Hatton about the Visual Arts for Theatre course RAP provided for Humbug Theatre of Connections) was supplied with the Interim Report.

The collated data from all of these has been used to inform this report and will be used in **nesa's** subsequent planning.

9.1 RAP Evaluation Group

As part of her task in creating the Hidden Places report, Jessica Brand took on the co-ordination of a small volunteer assistant evaluation team comprising three individuals from the RAP Steering Group (Andrew Eddleston, Fflyff McLaren and Keith Wisbey). This group received basic coaching and advice from Jessica and assisted her by visiting workshops, observing groups and tutors at work, and gathering feedback through one-to-one interviews, group feedback sessions and questionnaires. As Jessica points out in her report, it is not ideal for those involved in evaluation to have a personal connection to the work, so this is something to bear in mind in the future. In certain instances it actively helped (for instance in gaining feedback from young people at Radstock Youth Club) for the interviewer to be a recognised face, but this does need to be weighed up against the risk of subconscious bias.

The three volunteers have all expressed a willingness to be involved in future evaluation work but **nesa** will need to consider expanding the volunteer base for any such activity in future, and arranging for more formal training for the group.

9.2 Evaluation Process

The original process outlined in the funding application was as follows:

- A workshop facilitated by an external evaluator will be held to train the evaluation group in the purpose and aims of evaluation.
- The outcome of discussions and the evaluation workshop will define the parameters of the evaluation.
- A plan will be devised to cover all core activities
- The core group of evaluators will conduct regular interviews and surveys to collect evidence
- The external evaluator will report quarterly to the RAP steering group and collate the final report.

This was essentially how the process did work, but because the evaluation (for the sake of focus and sound use of a limited budget) solely examined the Hidden Places project, as yet there is no ongoing evaluation team and hence no regular reports to the Steering Group.

Conclusions

1. The project has achieved all the stated aims and objectives, although its potential impact has been reduced as a result of unsuccessful funding applications which meant a reduction in workshops offered.
2. The project has also effectively added value to the work of partner organisations and has contributed to raising awareness about the role of creative community development.
3. The project has influenced the future development of RAP principally by identifying three key areas for continued development:
 - The development of RAP as part of **nesa's** Neighbourhood Arts Programme, supporting creative community development through both outreach and inclusion work and continued development of the RAP facility at Radstock Youth centre.
 - Establishing a focus on the quality and standards of socially engaged art through engaging with nesa's creative programme and promoting partnerships with local festivals that result in greater and wider opportunities for the exhibition, performance and publication of creative community development work.
 - Continuing to support in partnership the development of an artist's development programme that relates specifically to artists working in community settings.

Recommendations

1. Develop RAP as part of **nesa's** Neighbourhood Arts Programme, rolling out activities and opportunities to new communities and promoting creative community development.
2. Build on the effective partnership working that adds value to and supports the agendas of partner organisations, helping to achieve cultural regeneration and real benefits for communities.
3. Use **nesa's** creative programme to advocate for the value of creative community development.
4. Widen art forms offered in the creative programme, promoting multi-art form opportunities where appropriate.
5. Involve artists in the development of projects and support their development as artists working in community settings.
6. Explore the potential of developing a mobile digital arts studio that will support our creative programme.

Karen Macdonald, RAP Project Assistant
Lesley Featherstone, Director
December 2006