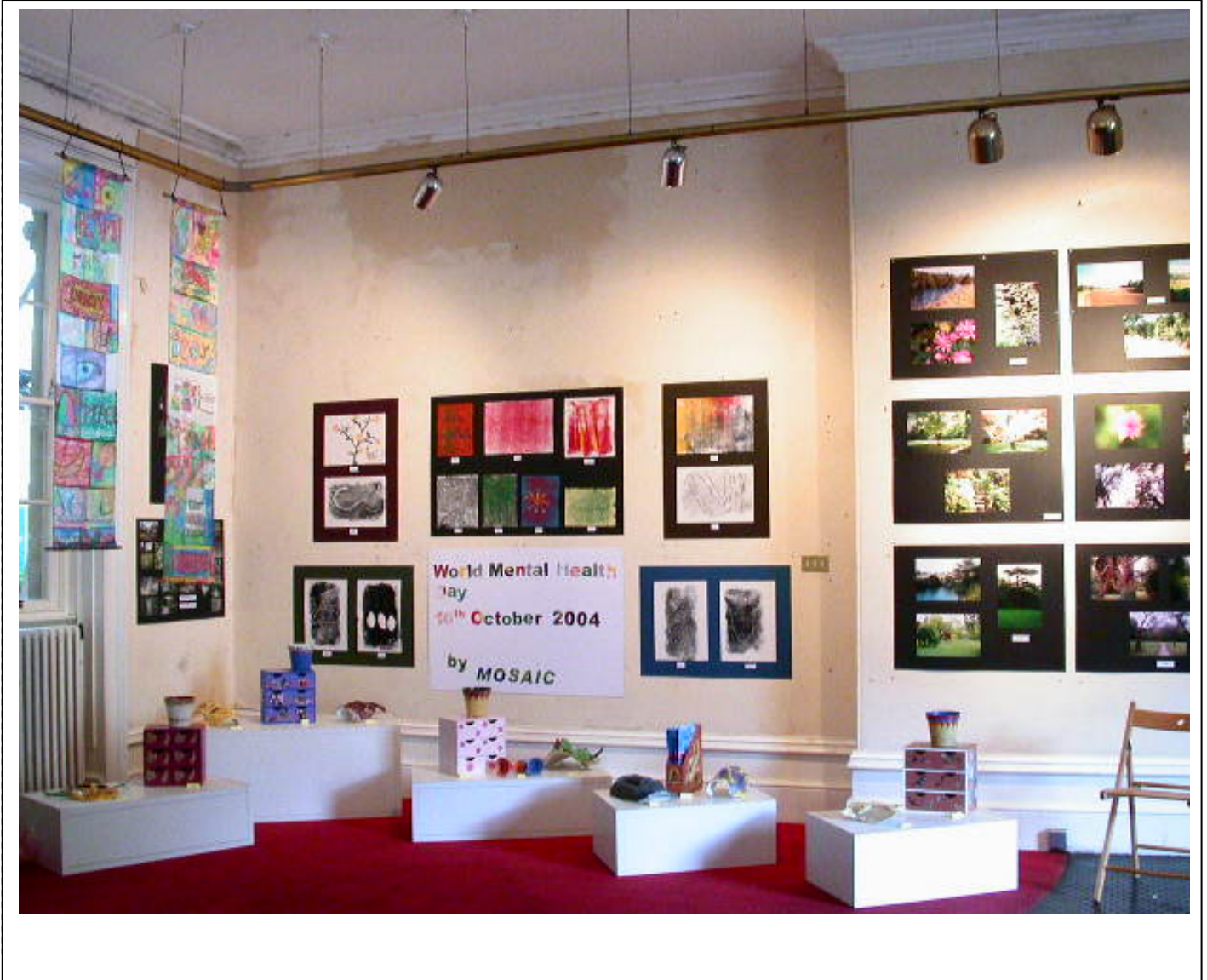


Creative Links II Report March 2005



our funders:



our partners:

Bath & North East Somerset Council
Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (NHS) Trust
Bath City College
RETHINK



organised by **nesa** who provide quality art provision for the community

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History of the Creative Links Project

During 2001, **nesa**, Rethink, Bath and North East Somerset Social Services and the Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership, NHS Trust ran a successful project called 'Sounding Out'. Freelance musicians were contracted to run various musical workshops for people with mental health challenges.

The response from the project's participants was very encouraging and led to discussions with the newly formed Bath and North East Somerset Community Mental Health Network, regarding future arts opportunities within this field.

It became evident that what was needed was an arts programme that encapsulated the ability for individuals to progress – offering a stepping stone to support individuals, who were well enough, back into local education/arts provision.

April 2002, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) funded the first 'Creative Links' project, with an investment of £60,000 from its Adult and Community Learning Fund, over a two year period.

The Bath and North East Somerset Community Mental Health Network partners involved in the project were:

- **nesa** (lead partner);
- City of Bath College;
- Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership, NHS Trust;
- Bath and North East Somerset Social and Housing Services; and
- Rethink.

Creative Links entailed a project in 3 stages:

Stage 1

- The Project would run 'taster workshops' with the user groups to identify specific arts interests and aspirations;
- Courses would be designed by artists, and chosen and developed by the users of mental health care services and the service providers;
- The Network would train freelance arts workers in how to teach people with mental health difficulties, and use them to deliver the courses; and
- A summer showcase would exhibit the work produced in the taster workshops and introduce information about local arts/educational opportunities.

Stage 2

- Stage 2 activities would be designed for those participants of Stage 1 who were able and willing to progress to new skill levels and to gradually move from their mental health setting to a more formal learning environment;

- A longer set of workshops would be run in an art form chosen by the group, utilising specialist equipment in arts/educational venues;
- Continuity and support was to be provided by the arts workers and support workers accompanying participants to the new arts/education venues; and
- The product of the workshops was to be showcased at a World Mental Health Day Exhibition in Bath.

Stage 3

- Working with the mental health groups, the Project would individually assess participants to identify and encourage those able to take part in the final stage of progression; and
- Stage 2 participants would be supported (with Information, Advice and Guidance, as well as practical and financial support) in progressing to courses/arts activity based entirely at a college or arts venue.

Creative Links Project II

Following the success of the first Creative Links Project, **nesa** embarked on seeking further funding to run a Creative Links II with a more flexible structure, which would allow it to meet the varying needs of its participants. Despite applications to several appropriate funds, **nesa** did not secure the level of funding to sustain the project at its previous scale.

An initial £6,293 was invested by Bath and North East Somerset's, Social and Housing Services. With which, the steering group decided to deliver a series of arts workshops to three groups over the summer 2004. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) work, was to be focused on one of these groups, a ceramics group based in a local Community/Youth Arts Venue.

In addition to this, a group, which had previously been involved in Creative Links I, requested further delivery of 8 arts workshops and supported their proposal with their own funds.

Bath and North East Somerset Social and Housing Services also requested further delivery of photography workshops alongside a planned rambling group.

Both of these subsequent groups brought additional funding totalling: £1965

Aims, Objectives and Measures of Success

Creative links aims to develop an integrated programme of creative learning activities for people with mental health challenges. Supporting participants' progression from discrete arts courses within mental health care settings to participation in mainstream arts activities and courses.

Creative Links II aims to improve project delivery through implementation of key recommendations from Creative Links I.

The below objectives were set to be delivered within the scope of the Bath and North East Somerset Grant of £6293. These have been applied across the project to encompass the work being done within other supporting funding streams.

Objectives

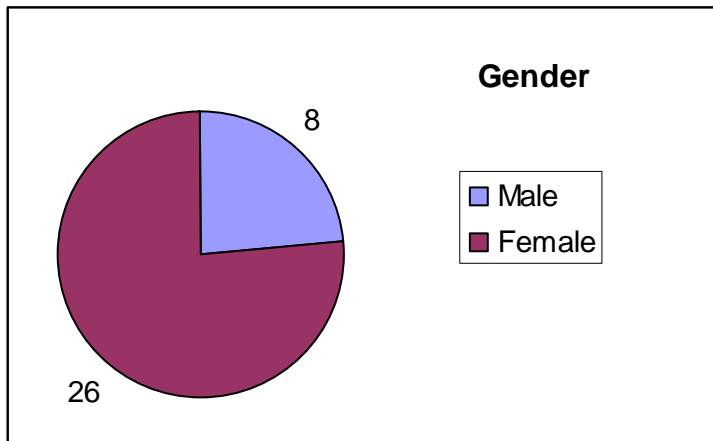
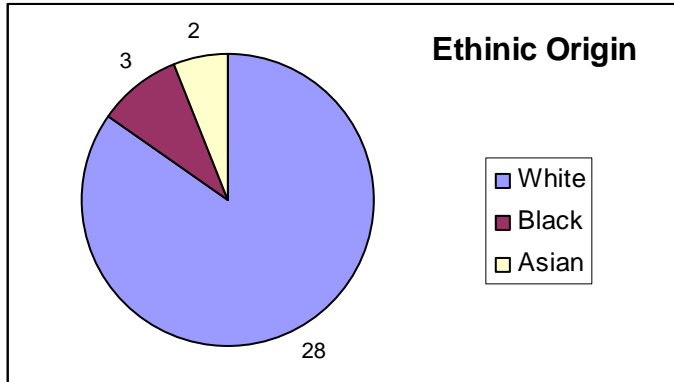
1. To run workshops
2. To support participants onto further arts/education provision
3. To the reduce amount of paperwork for participants
4. To experiment with data collection formats
5. To deliver an exhibition of Creative Links II work
6. To seek further funds to enhance and expand delivery
7. To increase participant's independence
8. To increase participant's involvement with the local community
9. To increase participant's Motivation/Confidence
10. To increase participant's Competence
11. To increase participant's Social skills
12. To increase participant's Understanding of different art forms

Success Measures

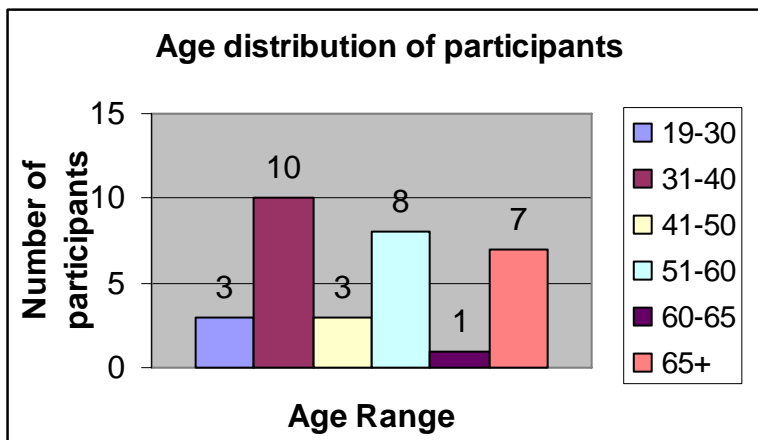
1. To run 40 x 2hr workshops
 2. To have supported 10% of participants onto further arts/education provision
 3. To the reduce amount of paperwork for participants
 4. To experiment with data collection formats
 5. To have delivered an exhibition of Creative Links II work
 6. To have found funds to enhance and expand delivery
 7. To have increased participant's Independence
 8. To have increased participant's Involvement with the local community
 9. To have increased participant's Motivation/Confidence
 10. To have increased participant's Competence
 11. To have increased participant's Social skills
- To have increased participant's Understanding of different art forms

Learners Statistics

The following data has been collated from 34 equal opportunity forms (a total of 41 participants took part in the project):



Consider themselves Disabled	16
Registered Disabled	15



Workshops Statistics

The following information has been collected from the registers:

	Funding source 1		Funding 2	Funding 3	Total
	Part-funded	B&NES	Rambling	Mosaic	
Arts Workshops	Rap 24	Rap 6 m/h 6 o/a 6	4 (3 were 4 hours long)	8	42
Participants	(16)	Rap 8 m/h 8 o/a 7	7	11	41
Admissions *	Rap 84	Rap 35 m/h 37 o/a 36	24	60	262
Artist hours	Rap 48	Rap 15 m/h 13 o/a 17	15	21	105

Please note:

1. 2 workshops have not been included, which have not been run due to ill health
2. 3 of the above workshops were 4 hours long instead of the usual 2 hours

* Admissions: number of attendances recorded for a set of workshops (one participant will represent 3 admissions if he/she visits 3 times).

Riverside Older Adult Group

Initially set up as an anxiety group, quickly changing into a social group and then a focused arts group, with the introduction of Creative Links I, the core members of this group have seen a lot of changes. The sustainability of the group, with its high transportation costs and more recently decreasing numbers, has been under constant discussion within the local mental health services, Creative Links II will be the last leg of the group's existence. The last opportunity for these participants, who have been very supportive of one another to engage, with the arts, as a group. Individual participants have consistently shown much interest in developing their arts skills, within the group and beyond.

Predominantly a white, female group, all over 65 years of age, with varying mobility issues.

Art forms selected:

1. African percussion with Daniel Soko
2. Box decorating with Anne Kirkbride

1. African percussion

Some group members had taken part in African percussion workshop at the Creative Links I, Summer Showcase workshop. This is the first time the group had entertained a performance art form as one of their workshop options, coupled with the fact that the origins of which were African, initially brought about much amusement.

Considering that some group members suffered with arthritis and/or hearing issues, it was decided to run just one taster workshop and to evaluate the participant experience for future reference.

The workshop ended with a short group discussion with the project coordinator. Participants reflected on the workshop with the following comments:

- 'I didn't really know what to expect'
- 'Fantastic, it went really well!'
- 'I'm feeling a little achy'
- 'Hearing was not a problem, I just turned my hearing aid down'
- 'It would have been lovely to hear Daniel do some more singing'
- The group expressed particular enjoyment at the opportunity of learning about the history of the African percussion
- 5 out of 6 would like to do it again, not as an intense course, but as small sets of taster sessions

SWOT analysis reflecting the views of the Artist and the Support staff:

Strengths

- A focused group with good listening skills
- Everybody's willingness to play and contribute, including support workers
- Daniel allowed participants to experiment with instruments and make some noise
- Daniel engaged on a one to one basis when he notice participants struggling
- The group really enjoyed the way Daniel explained about the history of African music
- It was amazing to see the group's achievement; within 2 hours the group had created and executed one African rhythm

Weaknesses

- Too short a timescale to create anything substantial (one x 2 hour session)
- Artist's mobile rang regularly throughout session

Opportunities

- Daniel handed out flyers, inviting all group members to an African dance performance.

Threats

- Some participants had to deal with discomfort due to arthritis and back pain.

To summarise: the group had been given permission to play and to culturally experience something that many of them would never have envisaged. Daniel's casual narrative of the history of African music stirred much interest in participants. While physically demanding, causing some participants discomfort, no one dropped out, and all took part in the final performance, recorded by the project coordinator. Given an opportunity, 5 out of 6 participants said they would like to do it again, not as an intense course, but as small sets of workshops.

2. Box decorating

The group have worked with Anne Kirkbride before, learning to paint and decorate glass. Most group members chose to decorate a 9 drawer tidy (box tidy), with images from magazines, paints and beads. One participant chose instead to decorate a magazine rack, believing the box tidy to be too ambitious. Another member of the group had childhood interest in embroidery, and was keen to see what she could remember, she was coached in basic embroidery skills, using a plastic canvass.

This time participants were asked to complete a simple smiley faced evaluation form.

Six, different people filled in evaluation forms, however, 2 people completed 2 forms each (reading different results). None of the figures differ greatly from the average, hence they have all been included.

- 87.5% of participants had noted that the workshops had a positive effect on their confidence
- 75% found the learning experience good or very good

'I get on very well, making friends.'

Anonymous participant comment

- All thought they had a good or very good Artist
- 75% of participants thought the support to be very good

'I have benefited very much from all the Creative Links Workshops, and have enjoyed them a great deal. All staff have been helpful and supportive.'

Anonymous participant comment

SWOT analysis prepared by the artist and support worker:

Strengths

- Group's supportive, encouraging interaction
- Adaptable artists, taking into consideration individuals needs (one participant made a magazine rack and another engaged with some embroidery)
- The artist was imaginative and the group worked well with her
- Box decorating was thoroughly enjoyed and appropriate for this client group
- Shiny, pearl paint
- The participants loved having a final piece to take home

Weaknesses

- All perceived weakness turned into positives by artist and support worker
- Storage problem was overcome by Centre Manager allowing the use of an empty cupboard
- A misunderstanding regarding the changing of dates and subsequent lesson plans meant the support workers directed the varnishing of the work instead of the Artist, as a result, this presented an opportunity for the group to also decorate flower pots in the additional artist's session
- The embroidery was not completed

Opportunities

- Sharing of ideas, such as using beads as handles and painting of the inside of the drawers
- Exhibition

Threats

- Some participants found the cutting and sticking physically demanding, this was overcome with assistance from the support workers and artist

The artist met the varying needs of the participants and changing circumstances, delivering a range of crafts from box tidy decorating to embroidery. Problems arising were well managed and turned into positives by the artist, support staff team. Although some participants found cutting and sticking difficult, the support worker thought the workshops to be at an appropriate level, and, with a little support, participants had some lovely items to exhibit and later take home.

Additional overall comments:

The group were only available for 6 sessions of workshops within the delivery period of the project. This was due to cuts within the mental health services sustaining this group.

Miles House Group

This group had previously been funded by the local FE college, running arts workshops during term time. Creative Links was intending to continue provision to this group during the summer vacation. Most group members did not know one another very well, due to the group serving a day centre, which had a high turn over.

During consultation, silk painting was undoubtedly the most popular art form on offer, followed by African percussion and Creative writing, which seemed as popular as one another. Creative writing opportunities were about to commence elsewhere within the day centre; hence the group eventually choose the delivery of African percussion workshops.

8 participants: 1 male, the rest female, all white. Their ages range from 30's to 50's. Only one person considers herself disabled.

Art forms selected from the consultations:

1. Silk painting – Anne Kirkbride
2. African percussion – Daniel Soko

1. Silk Painting

All participants were keen to engage with silk painting with the exception of one person, who had previously had a go at silk painting while in hospital for his mental health condition. The venue offered a small, but well equipped, base from which to work.

Participant feedback showed the following:

'I thought Anne was very inspiring, she made me feel confident enough to tackle most things and to experiment with materials.'

Anonymous participant comment

All 6 participants reported a good/very good improvement in their confidence, 50% of participants found learning new skills very good

'It would be nice to join in conversations to make friends. Difficult when you're deaf, any suggestions!!'

Anonymous participant comment

All those answering the evaluation questions (4 participants) thought both the artist, and the support provided, to be very good

'I really enjoyed the workshop. Relaxing and rewarding and it boosted my confidence, as I thought I wouldn't be able to do it to begin with. Would like to continue as a hobby.'

Anonymous participant comment

The following SWOT analysis was provided by the Artist and the Project Coordinator:

Strengths

- All group members worked well together
- Lots of skills brought to the class from group
- Media used allowed experimentation
- Growing enthusiasm from participants
- Working in an activities based room with all the basic facilities at hand
- Support worker was from an arts background

Weaknesses

- Venue a little cramped at times
- The fact that we had a deaf woman in the group, who was struggling with communication. This had not being relayed back to the coordinator, who could have explored support options
- Banner not finished in the workshop, nor could the Artist show the group the finished product before it went on display at the Mental Health Day exhibition, however, it was later returned to the group
- Group didn't have firm plans, as the following artist had not been confirmed.

Opportunities

- Exhibition

Threats

- Technical difficulty using salt, which continued absorbing moisture from the damp environment and prevented drying!
- Woman with hearing issues could have felt excluded and not returned
- Booking of artists over the summer

2. African percussion

Three African percussion workshops were booked. The artist felt ill for two of the three workshops, the outstanding workshop has been offered to the group at a later date, but has not yet been booked. Data for the first workshop is not due until all workshops have been completed.

Unfortunately, not enough sick notice of absence was given to prevent participants from turning up to the second workshop. A further issue arose, through a lack of communication between the artist and project coordinator. The project coordinator wrongly assuming the artist had recovered, as no further notification of illness had been received, led to a further workshop whereby participants attended without an artist.

RAP – Radstock Arts Project Group

The RAP mental health arts group was established in January 2004, following the development of the RAP Centre and the success of the Creative Links I project. Its purpose was to provide local mental health service users with a supportive arts space, based in a community arts venue. Following the success of Creative Links I - summer ceramics workshops - ceramics was the first art form offered to the group. Regular consultation took place, offering the group choices of art forms, however, the group choose to further their knowledge of ceramics. Funding for these workshops came primarily from Bath and North East Somerset, Adult and Community Education Service. Matched funding, from Creative Links II, provided materials and a contribution towards tutor fees, from April 2004, for 12 weeks , until the Adult and Community Education Service funding ceased for the summer and Creative Links II continued sole funding of the workshops.

The group consisted of 8 white, female participants, all of whom considered themselves disabled. Group members aged from their 20's to 50's.

Altogether, an average 43.75 hours of learning took place per participant, 26.25 of which was supported/part supported by Creative Links II.

Artform(s): Ceramics

'I have made new friends and I would very much like to do another course. I have found a talent that I didn't have, and, with the help of everyone, I made some very nice things, and I am very grateful for that.'

Anonymous participant comment

All 4 of those participants who sent feedback in, thought the Support, the Artists and the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) support to be very good.

All felt the workshops had a good/very good effect on their confidence
All fed back that learning news skills was either good/very good

The SWOT analysis below was compiled by the Support Worker, the Artist and the Project Coordinator (IAG worker):

Strengths

- The number of participants meant an appropriate level of support could be offered. The group had bonded well and showed much support towards one another, leading to a good level of group confidence. This meant the artist could do more one to one tuition with those who needed more guidance
- The artist demonstrated a very good range of teaching skills from her ability to inform and explain things (making people feel at ease) to her ability to plan
- RAP has good ceramic facilities

- The group used enamel glazes and lustres over the top of earthenware, which added to the design of their work
- 7 out of 8 participants completed an OCN in ceramics. The participant who did not complete the OCN did not wish to enter for it. She had attended every workshop and was as able as the other group members to achieve the OCN. Instead, an attendance certificate was awarded to her.
- Some of the OCN portfolios were of an excellent standard and showed much commitment
- The support worker managed the group's highs and lows extremely well and played a key role within planning
- Very good support provided for participants and support worker
- Project coordinator used an appropriate sense of humour to build rapport and encouraged participants to fulfil their full potential, offering information on various moving on opportunities
- 7 participants attended individual Information, Advice and Guidance sessions
- All recognised the benefits of the workshops and 6 were prepared to attend sessions elsewhere, providing suitable opportunity/venue could be found

Following individual IAG support, the group were keen to discuss possible moving on opportunities within the group context, to establish common interests and the possibilities of moving on in small groups.

Weaknesses

- The room was quite small. Some participants had mobility issues, which would have been eased by a larger room
- The kitchen was attached to a different group activity room, which initially caused some tension
- Using a new material for the summer workshops, and creating from their own designs, left some participants initially lacking confidence
- Moving on opportunities did not materialise for the crucial September start dates.

Opportunities

- The artist brought in various resource materials from which to base their designs, some participants felt a little overwhelmed and needed simple ideas and directive teaching, which the artist provided
- Mental Health Day exhibition
- January start dates pose opportunities for some members to move on, however the group will not have been together for over 3 months, and the project coordinator is concerned that the group's momentum, which has been building over the 28 workshops, will be lost by January. The Project Coordinator/IAG worker will be leaving before January and there are concerns that it will not be a priority for, nor within the job roles of the support staff or other NESAs staff members.

Threats

- Some participants fell ill during the course – but Hilary still helped these students to catch up.
- Moving on opportunities failed to materialise at this crucial point (September start date for colleges) due to:
 - A late Adult and Community Education Service prospectus, which didn't inspire participants
 - Re-consultation with group too close to City of Bath College start dates
 - Project coordinator applying her time elsewhere, seeking further funding
- The project coordinator will not be in post to oversee progression of group members in January

This set of workshops demonstrates the real and potential life changes a substantial number of arts workshops, with a committed staffing team, can make to a participants life.

Most participants have experienced the high moments with the lows, some have spent time off sick, but all committed to the group and retention was exceedingly good. All of the 7 participants choosing to enter the OCN in Ceramics passed. 75% would move on to further arts opportunities, providing the right opportunity was found. While it is unlikely 75% will progress at this late stage, it is worth reflecting on the issues and, in terms of IAG delivery, considering what should be done differently next time:

- Individual's development/attitudes towards a moving on opportunity were good, but should have been materialised quicker, to give contingency time for changing goals.
- The Bath and North East Somerset Adult and Community Education prospectus should not have been waited on, instead, use of an old prospectus at this stage should have played a more prominent role.
- Capacity to support participants to move on, from September 1st until start dates, should have been a priority. The Creative Links coordinator has faced issues before where the project's work priorities have impinged on the IAG work, at crucial moments. A previous recommendation suggests the project coordinator not to be responsible for IAG work.

It is equally as important to reflect on some of the project's soft outcomes that were achieved:

Meeting new people, new environment.

All group members faced insecurities around meeting a new group in new surroundings to varying degrees. All group members overcame this and formed trusting/supportive friendships with other participants.

Managing to remain committed to the workshops.

This proved a successful point for several participants, the most prevalent of which is outlined here:

A lady who had ongoing issues of commitment and seeing things through to the end. It was not plain sailing, we had a few issues around the consumption of alcohol, which gave rise to an ultimatum to remain in the group or leave. With support from the support worker, she managed to pull through and complete the course, and achieved an OCN in Ceramics. These classes were a break-through for her; bringing about a huge sense of achievement.

Anxieties around travel

One participant had expressed anxieties about getting on public transport to make her own way to the group. When she didn't turn up for a session early on, we knew this was a serious barrier to be supported and worked on together, hence, initially, we provided a taxi to collect her. As her confidence grew in the group and her interest in the arts flourished, we negotiated a point for her to begin making her own way to the group. Her initial solution was to get a lift by another participant, when this participant was unable to attend, her next step was to take the bus, which she managed successfully on a number of occasions. Again a real tangible outcome.

Distance travelled by the group could be summarised when, considering the initial, timid interaction of group members' and the transformation into a group voice searching for further arts opportunities to share.

Considering the initial, timid interaction of group members, distance travelled by the group could be summarised by the transformation into a group voice, searching for further arts opportunities to share.

Mosaic

This BME group established itself in the early 1990's to tackle the isolation of its members. Since then, the group has met regularly to socialise and eat together. To prevent the group becoming merely a social gathering, Adult and Community Education Service delivered a variety of workshops, then Creative Links I provided arts workshops with progression opportunities.

Due to a considerable reduction in funding and the reluctance of group members to show an interest in progressing outside of their established group, Creative Links II was unable to provide funding to this group. The artist workshops were sadly missed. One participant, whom the project coordinator had never heard speak in the two years she had been visiting the group, one day spoke, expressing her desire for artist, Anne Kirkbride to return to the group.

Eventually the group uncovered an investment, which, among other opportunities, allowed the group to independently commission Creative Links II to deliver a further 8 arts workshops.

Participant details:

This is a BME group, hence no participants in this group considered themselves white British, the gender mix was quite balanced and age range varied.

Consultation lead to contracting to the following Artists/Art forms:

1. Mono-printing – Sarah Peyton
2. Magazine Rack Decorating – Anne Kirkbride

1. Mono-printing

11 participants took part in Mono-printing - to varying degrees

'I enjoyed it'

Anonymous participant comment

80% of feedback suggests that participants thought the workshops had a good/very good effect on their confidence.

100% thought learning new skills to be good (only 4 answered the question)
4 out of 5 evaluations indicated the Artist and the Support to be good or very good

'Keep it up Sarah, you are a good teacher'

Anonymous participant comment

The following SWOT analysis was provided by the Artist and Project Coordinator:

Strengths

- Welcoming and friendly group
- Very good support worker, who taught artist to allow for participants' own difficulties
- Talented group, who enjoyed the activity and produced some fine results to exhibit
- **nesa** staff, very efficient and clear approach; Sonia was very supportive with difficulties within group
- Artist's willingness to share her concerns with support staff and project coordinator

Weaknesses

- 4 workshops didn't give enough time for the group to push the medium to its full potential
- Sometimes difficult to speak to the right person at NESAs (presumably due to part-time staffing hours)

Opportunities

- World Mental Health Day Exhibition

Threats

- Group issues could affect the enthusiasm of individual participants. On a bad day no-one wanted to try anything
- Funding was not provided by the Creative Links II budget, but from the group itself
- Not enough time to produce a large collaborative collage

The nature of the group is drop-in, hence, typically, group members do not automatically become participants in the arts workshops. Many group members take a while to build confidence and group politics can easily override workshop dynamics. Sarah was new to the group, and was quick to raise concerns regarding the numbers and involvement of participants. Following discussions with the support worker and project coordinator, who reassured Sarah that this was normal for this group, participation levels increased.

2. Magazine rack decorating

9 participants showed a committed attendance to this workshop

No Participant Evaluation has been submitted

SWOT analysis prepared by the artist:

Strengths

- The high number of participants, often group members chose to watch instead of participate. Until now, over the four-year period Anne has been working with this group, one participant had didn't join in. A real breakthrough!
- Originally, the group were going to be decorating 9 drawer, tidy boxes, but they were unavailable, and, on reflection, these would have been too ambitious for some participants. The decision to downsize to magazine racks, plus mirrors, for those individuals who progressed quicker, proved a more appropriate aim.
- Availability of storage space meant adequate drying times and the artist did not have to ferry the work around every week.
- The selection of very individual decoration
- Impressive, well-executed, individual results.
- Support worker joined in

Weaknesses

- None found

Opportunities

- The World Mental Health Day Exhibition was held before the workshops began
- Next time:
 - It would be good to encourage the group to contribute their own ideas towards development of projects
 - To bring in materials and items from home, for a stronger link between creativity at the workshop and at home

Threats

- Funding

Due to insufficient evidence from the participants and support workers, it is difficult to draw an accurate picture of the workshop. The artist felt the workshops were very successful. The most significant contribution to the success of these workshops was the participation of one group member who had never before taken part, but for 4 years watched others participate.

Additional overall comments:

Group members have not shown an interest in engaging with opportunities outside of the group. This could be something that is looked at in more detail in future projects.

Ramblers Photography Group

The initial idea to combine the rambling with photography was management lead. Consultation then took place with the group, who came together for the first time to partake in the workshops, to establish if there was a desire to include photography in with the rambling, and there was. Funding for this group did not come from the main Creative Links II budget, but an additional investment by Bath and North East Somerset Social and Housing Services.

Three, half-day photography workshops were planned, followed by one 2 hour workshop, mounting photographs for exhibition.

4 males and 3 females took part in these workshops. 3 participants consider themselves disabled and all consider themselves white. The group of 7 participants' aged from their 30's to their 50's.

Photography – Sonia Hartmann

'I think the whole scheme was run most effectively and I had a very enjoyable time'

Anonymous participant comment

50% of feedback suggested the workshops had a very good impact on participant's confidence.

67% of participants thought the workshops had a positive effect on ability to learn new skills

83% of participants thought the artist and the level of support to be good/very good.

The Artist, Support Worker and Project Coordinator developed the following SWOT analysis:

Strengths

- Artist explained the use of cameras and films well, and made staff and participants feel at ease
- Artist encouraged participants to reach their full potential
- Rambling meant the group were presented with lots of opportunities for interesting shots. Participants all had different interests, which led to a range of photographs to exhibit. Wildlife was a particularly tricky, but rewarding, subject
- An artist, who regularly worked in Bath town centre, was able to take films to the developers, which meant perceived issues around processing became manageable

Weaknesses

- It was difficult to find an appropriate photographer to run the workshops, as a result, the workshops commenced a week late

- The artist was unable to find transport to remote places, so all workshops had to start from Bath
- A communication failure within the mental health service, resulted in the artist being paid for an additional workshop, for which she was not required
- At times, the group were difficult to keep together, which made it tricky to give all participants equal time

Opportunities

- A smaller group would have presented more opportunities for individuals to receive an equal amount of tuition time
- Pre-workshop publicity, received a high demand of interest. Not all could be catered for, within these workshops, leaving scope to run a second group.
- To re-run such workshops at different times of the year
- To give a young artist experience leading a group
- Exhibition

Threats

- Some participants expressed a wish to focus on the rambling element of the workshop, feedback showed all participants enjoyed the overall experience of the workshops
- Funding
- Difficulty recruiting an Artist
- 3-way communication between support workers, their manager and the project coordinator
- Artist had no current police check – **nesa** and Bath and North East Somerset Social and Housing Services manager agreed that, under such workshop conditions, and with an appropriate risk assessment, the workshops could take place. The artist was still asked to complete a CRB check.

An interestingly even gender balance, showed interest in, and joined, the workshops.

This was an unusually complex project to plan; simple tasks, such as recruiting an appropriate artist to deliver the workshops, at times seemed an impossible undertaking. The photography started a week later than originally planned, there were times when it was difficult to envisage the photography element of the project starting at all. However, once up and running, the delivery of the workshops seemed well received. All participants seemed proud to select 3 of their photographs to be displayed in the World Mental Health Day Exhibition.

World Mental Health Day Exhibition

Learning from previous exhibitions, we had hoped to deliver an exhibition over 3 days to meet demand of participants wishing to view the work, and to justify the amount of effort involved in delivering such an event. Unfortunately, despite much support from staff at Envolve, a suitably secure, yet easily accessible location could not be found to host the work. So a one-day exhibition was held on the 7th October 2004 to coincide with Bath's, World Mental Health Day celebrations.

Preparation for the exhibition went well, all artists were given clear instruction as to the required format for hanging and were requested to ensure that all exhibition preparation was included in workshop time.

Artists and Support Workers all ensured that the artwork was delivered to the appropriate location in time for the event.

This exhibition was different to previous years. Firstly, there was less artwork to display and, secondly, the project coordinator had a tighter schedule to deliver within.

Time organising the manpower to transport, erect the exhibition kit and display the artwork, was substantially reduced by:

- Mounting up to three items on one A2 sheet of mounting card. Less mounting and less hanging time.
- Fixing 2D artwork to the walls, only using the exhibition plinths to display the 3D artwork. Less to transport and nothing to erect.
- Assistance from Envolve staff, who received and stored artwork at the venue, and fixed all the 2D work to the walls.

Further assistance was given, towards the end of the day, from steering group members and staff, who assisted in taking the exhibition down and returning the artwork back to participants.

If this brief summary of the exhibition formed a SWOT analysis, then somewhere between weakness and failed opportunity would lie the project coordinator's inability to remember to take the comments book out of her bag.

The exhibition was situated in the Foyer of Green Park Market, Bath. Here, the artwork faced the un-expecting and often curious public.

'I could have sold the older adult's decorated tidy drawers, three time over'
Project Coordinator

Amongst the visitors were many familiar faces: steering group members; support workers; participants and their family members; past participants; and surprisingly, fridge participants, who showed great interest in viewing the artwork. Two local councillors were keen to investigate and talk to participants.

The project coordinator had advertised her availability to give Information, Advice and Guidance support at the event. Despite her attempts to engage participants in conversations around current opportunities, little use of the service took place.

To summarise this level of exhibition, delivery with such a degree of support proved to be a manageable, one-day event. For larger events, the recommendations found in the Creative Links Showcase report 2003 remains a good guide.

Mono-printing OCN –Radstock Art Project January – March 05

Recruitment for the OCN Mono-printing course was through RETHINK, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (NHS Trust) and Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) Social and Housing Services Mental Health Team. This included participants new to the Creative Links courses and those who had previously taken part in Creative Links courses. The course was supported by the mental health support worker Maria Tozer from Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) Social and Housing Services Mental Health Team.

The OCN course ran for 12 weeks and was funded by Bath and North East Somerset Council's Adult and Community Education Service.

8 people enrolled and successfully completed the OCN coursework.

Participants were required to build a portfolio of evidence of creative mono-printing techniques throughout the 12 weeks.

The evaluation at the end of the course showed that participants had gained:

Skills in a new art form

Friendships

Increased self-esteem and confidence

Confidence to continue studying art

The success of this course on participants self esteem, confidence and enthusiasm was marked by the progression that participants made after the course had finished. 7 of the 8 participants progressed onto a Watercolour painting course held in a community resource building in near-by Peasedown St John, organised by Adult and Community Education Service in the following term. Independently participants made their way to the community centre either by sharing a taxi or by car sharing. After initial support in the first 3 weeks by the mental health development worker, Philippa Forsey, participants continued to attend the course regularly. The watercolour painting course, run by Jo Ingleby, took students through the basis of colour mixing, tone and observation and through which the students could progress at their own pace.

One student from the original Mono-printing course was unable to attend the watercolour painting course because of family commitments.

The progression onto this community course is seen as big progress and as a success of the Creative Links model which takes participants through a supported programme where they can gain confidence, self esteem and new skills which will take them confidently back into the community.

Budgets

Creative Links II

Income	£6,293.00
Actual Expenditure	
Management fee	£600.00
Project Coordination + Transport	£3,204.84
Artist Fees	£1,312.50
Materials	£162.73
Total	£5,280.07
Variance (+/-)	£1,012.93

Comments:

The remainder of this budget is to be spent before April 2005. 3 African drumming workshops will be coming from this, plus other workshops as the steering group see fit. No header exist for the World Mental Health Day Exhibition as the generosity of Envolve and support from the Creative Links partnership keep cost very low. Please note that this may not be the case in future exhibitions.

Photography/Rambling

Income	924.56
Actual Expenditure	
Project Coordination + Transport	255
Artist Fees	395
Materials	274.56
Total	924.56

Comments:

nesa did not include a management fee as it was felt that the Creative Links II management fee could be used to cover these few additional workshops. The actual budget came in less then quoted £1250, partly due to the last workshop being cancelled, saving on approx £100 of materials.

MOSAIC

Income 1040.5

Actual Expenditure

Project Coordination + Transport 367

Artist Fees 550

Materials 123.5

Total 1040.5

Comments:

nesa did not include a management fee as it was felt that the Creative Links II management fee could be used to cover these few additional workshops. Projects actual costs came in less than the quoted £1117.

Data collection methods and feedback

The statistics being monitored were reduced to a minimum for this short project, to reflect a strong recommendation in Creative Links I.

The forms were designed to monitor:

1. How participants felt the workshops affected their confidence
2. How participants felt about learning of new skills

For quality assurance purposes feedback on the Artist, Support Worker(s) and IAG worker (where appropriate) was also gathered.

Also in response to Creative Link I recommendations the following methods were used to collect data:

Method I: Questionnaire

Method II: Questions with drawings, which were completed by the participants to express how they felt

Method III: Recorded verbal group discussion

The project did not receive any negativity regarding the volume of evaluative data being collected and support workers were keen to trying out the new methods.

Neither method I or method II could be recommended to be used as a generic Creative Links Evaluation form on it's own.

Some support workers felt method II to be too patronising for their group members. Other support workers thought method I to be, too long winded and felt their group members would respond better to method II. From the participants that were offered the choice of forms, a similar number of each form type was returned.

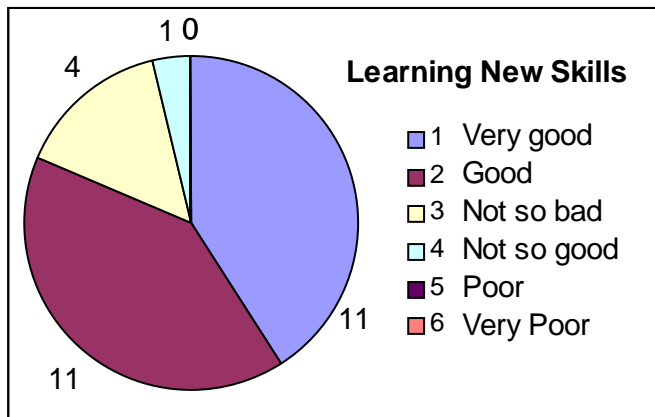
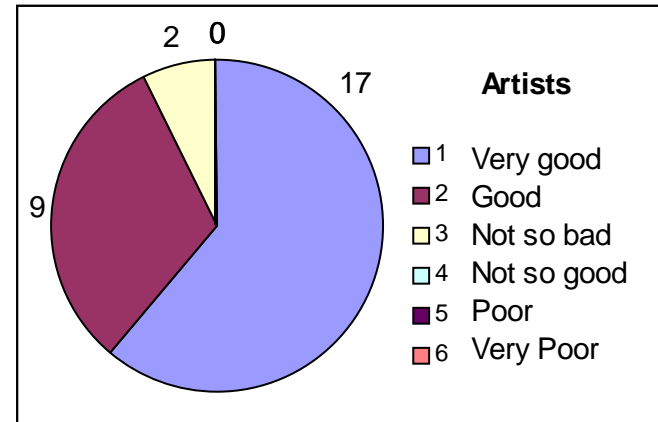
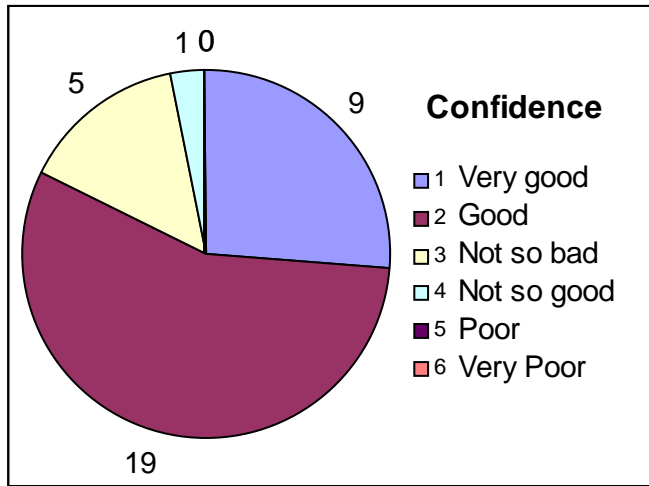
One Creative Links group partook in a single 2-hour workshop. For this the project coordinator used method III. This method proved useful, combining the evaluation with the consultation for further delivery, while the workshop was still fresh in people's minds. It did not seem balanced or appropriate to expect members of this group to also complete an evaluation form. However a show of hands indicated those individuals who would be keen to experience more of this art form.

For such short taster sessions, where funding streams allow, then the above method would be worth considering.

It is recommended to continue using both method I, and method II and for a more formal evaluation to take place at the next evaluation event.

The volume of all data being collected should be negotiated with the funding body and partners to keep paperwork to a minimum and avoid duplication.

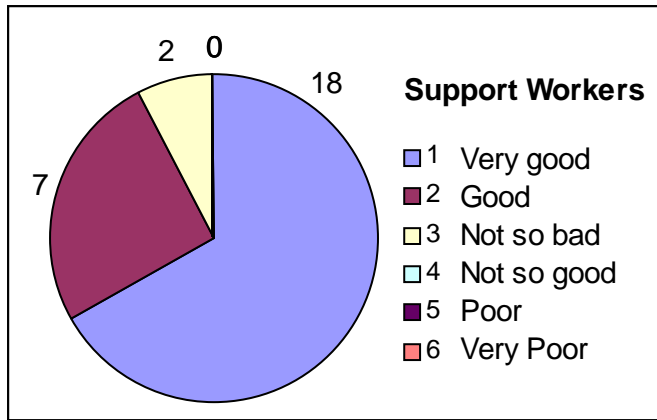
Statistics from 5 set of returned participant evaluation surveys:



82.4% of participant evaluations show that the workshops have had a good/very good effect on their confidence. Only 1 person (2.9% of those asked) found the experience to have a negative (not so good) effect on their confidence

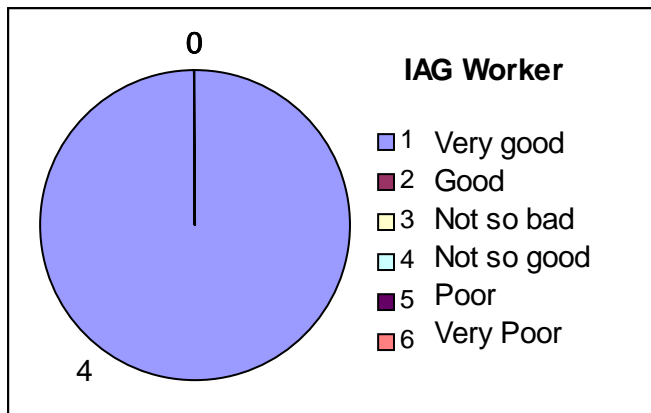
81.5% of participants feedback showed participants found Learning New Skills to be Good/Very Good

60.7% of participants thought the artist to be Very Good. No participants responded in their evaluation, to the support in a negative way.



100% thought the IAG support to be Very Good! However it is worth noting that only 4 people responded to a mail evaluation, which was posted to the 7 participants who received individual IAG interviews.

66.7% of participants thought the support given to be Very Good. No participants responded in their evaluation, to the support in a negative way



Project Review

Measures of success	Findings
To run 40 x 2hr workshops	<p>19 workshops were held within the scope of the £6293 grant. 2 additional workshops have been booked but have not yet taken place. 12 further workshops were part funded.</p> <p>With additional funding of £1965, a further:</p> <p>24 workshops were run, an equivalent to 27x2 hour workshops.</p> <p>The total number of 2 hour workshops (or equivalent), run by the project, to date = 58.</p> <p>Approximately £740 of the £6293 grant is still remaining.</p>
To deliver a Showcase of Creative Links II work	A Creative Links II, exhibition was held, during the World Mental Health Day celebrations, displaying work from all those groups involved.
To seek further funds to enhance and expand delivery	<p>5 applications were submitted to funders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tudor Trust • Pilgrim Trust • LloydsTSB <p>Smaller awards from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIMHE awards • National Learners Week Awards <p>The initial response from some of the above avenues seemed very promising. Unfortunately nothing came to fruition.</p> <p>nesa has been offered, £5,000 by Arts Council England South West (ACESW) and funding from Chew Valley School to fund a programme of mental health projects. This funding will be shared with nesa My Time My Space project and the Creative Links project. With the addition of the remaining £750 from the Creative Links II budget, short-term delivery of the project will now be planned, across Bath and North East Somerset.</p>
To assist 10% of participants onto further arts/education provision	<p>*Information, advice and guidance (IAG) took place with 16 participants, 7 of who had one to one IAG interviews. 6 are wishing to attend City of Bath College, but have missed September enrolments. 7 participants progressed onto an Adult and Community Watercolour Painting course held in the Community Resource Centre in Peasedown St. John so the Creative Links project met the progression targets for this project.</p> <p>Officially 23 participants were funded through the initial £6293 grant. A total of 41 participants took part in the project.</p>
To have increased Independence	1 participant has shown she can now use public transport instead of arranged taxis.

	Please see above*
To have increased Involvement with the local community	Please see above*
To have increased Confidence	82.4% of participant evaluations show that the workshops have had a good/very good effect on their confidence.
To have increased Competence	81.5% of participants feed-back showed participants found Learning New Skills to be Good/Very Good 7 Ceramics participants gaining an OCN. Their comparison and experimentation with different types of clay. 8 Monoprinting participants gained an OCN. Photography participants now more confident at using SLR cameras.
To have increased Social skills	The social aspect of a new group has for some initially proved challenging. For others it has been a challenge to leave a group, where they have developed their social confidence, and move-on. There have been ample opportunities for individuals to practice their socialising skills in supportive environments. 7 participants felt confident to engage in an open adult and community education course at a local community education centre.
To have increased Understanding of different art forms	3 of the 5 groups experienced more than one art form. Art forms delivered included: African drumming, Box/letter rack decorating, Photography, Ceramics and Mono printing. The Riverside Older Adult group was one of the groups who enjoyed the opportunity to engage with an art form from a different culture: African Drumming. The participants showed as much interest in learning about the African cultural, as in learning to drum.
To reduce the amount of paperwork for participants	Simplified the previous creative links forms to evaluate the participant's thoughts on how the project affected: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Their Confidence 2. Learning of new skills The participants also gave feedback on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support Staff 2. Artist 3. IAG Worker (where appropriate)
To experiment with data collection formats	Two forms were designed to monitor the above information: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One written 2. One image based, where participants would finish drawing the faces to express how they felt. Verbal feedback was also used on one occasion, where the group had just 2 hours of one art form.

Outcomes

- Participants have increased mental well being and likelihood of hospital admission (relapse prevention)

Outputs

- Participant's work
- 7 participants completed an OCN in Ceramics (part-funded by Creative Links II)
- 8 participants completed an OCN in Monoprinting
- Exhibition for World Mental Health Day
- Creative Links II, Evaluation Report

SWOT analysis

Strengths

- Manageable delivery of World Mental Health Day Exhibition with low costs
- NESA capacities to write funding bids and raise the project profile
- 7 participants completed an OCN in Ceramics
- 8 participants completed an OCN in Monoprinting
- Individual IAG interviews with 7 participants
- 7 participants progressed onto an Adult and Community Education Community Course in Watercolour Painting in a community resource building
- Progression participants made their way to the Adult and Community Education under their own steam sharing taxi's and cars.
- 2 competent artists introduced to the project
- Experienced support staff and artists
- Opportunity to experiment with evaluation methods
- Project well supported from Mental Health Service Staff
- African drumming stimulating cultural awareness

Weaknesses

- Project Coordinator was ill for the first Creative Links II steering group meeting
- Capacity to delivery IAG within Groups 3 and Group 4 budgets
- Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) outcomes
- Communication
- The closure of Bath and North East Somerset Community Mental Health Network
- Loss of valuable steering group member
- Artists taking responsibility for ensuring project paperwork is completed and returned promptly
- Artists returning tools brought for the project
- Workshop getting interrupted, by artist's mobile ringing.
- A deaf participant could have been provided better supported, if the project coordinator was aware of the issues being faced.
- Bath City college unable to accommodate the needs of the ceramics students who wanted to progress onto their courses as priority given to students from the previous term.
- Difficult to catch the right member of **nesa's** staff as they are all part-time
- Of the Creative Links II participants, only 24% were men.
- Time unavailable for former **nesa** project coordinator to handover to present **nesa** co-ordinator

Opportunities

- 6 participants interested in joining 7 classes, likely anticipated outcome, due to loss of momentum, 3-4 classes by 2-3 participants.

- Social enterprise possible direction, particularly for the RAP art group
- ACSW funding enabling extension of work albeit on a short-term basis

Threats

- Capacity of Project Coordination
- Capacity of Mental Health Services to continue support funding
- Sustainable funding for the project
- Supported progression of participants onto college courses
- 4 of the 6 groups chosen to work with had limited delivery periods available, which had a knock on effect to the number of workshops able to be run.

Recommendations

Planning

- Those groups with more flexible delivery periods are selected to work with and initially planning is increased to ensure that targets are achievable.
- Consultation and booking of artists for summer workshops commences at Easter.
- To look at specific issues facing the BME community and their accessibility to local arts/education opportunities.
- To look at specific issues facing men and their accessibility to Creative Links opportunities.
- To investigate the possibility of running a second group for Photography/Rambling.
- To make strong progression links with Bath City College and Adult and Community Education

Project Coordinator / IAG Worker

- Divide Coordination role and IAG role
- Build stronger links with IAG Network
- To design and deliver a small Creative Link guide for Artists/Support workers to ensure:
 1. New Artists/Support workers have an introduction to the project: it's history; aims; and objectives.
 2. Good working practice guide for running arts workshops for people who have mental health challenges
 3. Artists/Support workers are aware of relevant recommendations from previous reports
 4. Artists/Support workers are aware of how they can support the information, advice and guidance work
 5. Artists/Support workers all aware of their responsibility for collection of paperwork
 6. Artists are aware of training opportunities

Artists

- To keep mobile phones off during workshops
- Flexible delivery to cater for individuals needs
- Support needs of individuals are relayed back to the project coordinator

- Artists ensure that, participants evaluation forms (from the last workshops), the register and their own SWOT evaluation is return with their Invoice.

- Project coordinator to remind artists that they are responsible for returning the above paperwork, and where applicable enrolment and equal opportunity forms and that payment of any invoices will be with held until paperwork is altogether.

Small Exhibitions (for larger exhibitions please refer to Showcase report)

The prime targets of this exhibition, was to keep it simple and manageable. To achieve this the following worked well:

- All artists ensured that exhibition preparation takes place within the workshops.
- Mounting up to three items on one A2 sheet of mounting card. Less mounting and less hanging time.
- Fixing 2D artwork to the walls, only using the exhibition plinths to display the 3D artwork. Less to transport and nothing to erect.
- Assistance from Envolve staff, who received and stored artwork at the venue, and fixed all the 2D work to the walls.
- Support from Artists and support staff in delivering and returning the art-work
- Use of NESAs storage boxes to transport art-work.

If held at Green Park Station again, then Envolve are developing a system whereby local community groups mount work on transportable boards up to a month in advance of the exhibition. Could this be done directly by Creative Link groups?

Evaluation (please see, Evaluation Statistics - page 27, for more detail)

- Two types of feedback forms are available for support workers and participants to select the most appropriate.
- Verbal feedback/consultation session, straight after workshop, for short taster sessions
- Amount of data required to be negotiated with funders and partners keep it to a minimum and prevent duplication

Funding

- Bid for larger pots/sustainable funding

Other directions the project could take:

- Seeking accreditation for the Creative Links Project from an accreditation board or QCA's framework for achievement.
- Social Enterprise