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**Final Evaluation Report**

**for Cultural Spring’s Phase 2**

**Creative People and Places Project**

April 2020

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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Phase 2 of Cultural Spring was a three year project which delivered a wide range of arts activities and events designed to engage and involve those least engaged in the arts in South Tyneside and Sunderland. The Project was overseen by a Steering Group which involved local people from the target communities in planning, design and delivery. The Project provided a variety of ways for local people to get involved and help shape Project delivery - as Community Champions, Steering Group members, Volunteers, Community Forum Members, Interns, Co-creators and through Your Art panels. The Project also offered a range of ways for people to engage in and consume programmed arts activities and experiences as: Audience members, Creative Workshop and Go and See participants. The Project was funded through a one million pound grant from the Arts Council England’s (ACE) Creative People and Places Programme.

**Beneficiaries**

***18906*** people engaged in Cultural Spring’s activities - 7576 participants; 11128 audience members; 125 community champions; 74 volunteers and 3 interns.

***91%*** ***were from the areas of least*** ***engagement*** – Sunderland (51%) and South Tyneside (40%). The remaining 9% came from outside these areas. Of these:

***15%*** had ***no previous arts engagement*** in the preceding 12 months.

***29%*** had ***1-3 arts engagements*** in the previous 12 months.

**Return on investment**

***For every £1 the Arts Council invested a further £1.05 was secured to support, enhance and expand delivery.***

Cultural Spring’s clever stewardship of its ACE investment led to a further £1,051,427.00 being secured (i.e. £782,260.00 in grants, £133,624.00 in-kind contributions and £135,543.00 value added through co-commissioning).

An estimated 2859 hours of arts activity delivery took place over Phase 2. This gives a crude ***unit cost calculation of £0.15***. (i.e. Total costs divided by hours divided by engagers).

A conservative estimate of engager spend could be £23,632.50 (based on 50% of all of those engaged spending £2.50 each. There is no standard/agreed way of calculating the associated economic multiplier for spend in the local area resulting from programmed arts activities. The meaningful calculation of this would require a sizeable piece of research out with the parameters of this commission. We have therefore used a £2.50 per head for fifty percent of engagers (equivalent to buying a coffee, drink or sandwich).

**Outputs**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Splash**  **180**  **Creative Workshops** | **Bus**  **37**  **Go and See Visits** | **Group success**  **82**  **Co-produced pilot arts activities** | **Graduation cap**  **3**  **Academic/**  **partnership research studies** |
| **Group of people**  **6**  **Large commissions & events** | **Artist**  **178**  **Artists and creatives engaged in delivery** | **Users**  **6**  **New companies attracted to deliver in the area** | **Pound**  **25 Artists/organisations assisted with funding applications** |
| **Quotes**  **100**  **Cultural Spring conversations** | **Chat RTL**  **23,417**  **Social media communications** | **Meeting**  **28**  **Commissioning Forums** | **Boardroom**  **14**  **New partnerships developed** |

**Outcomes**

The statistics below are based on a healthy sample size of 20% (N. 1515) of participants responses:

* **77% Improved wellbeing**
* **78% More connected**
* **77% More active**
* **85% Learned new skills**
* **59% Intend to give back to their local communities**
* **96% Increased confidence**
* **93% Appetite for future arts engagement**
* **99% Recommend to others**
* **66% Increased pride in the area**

**INTRODUCTION**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Cultural Spring is a consortium, with members from: The University of Sunderland; The Customs House Trust Ltd; Sunderland Music, Arts and Culture (MAC) Trust and Sangini. Project delivery was overseen by a Steering Group comprising wider membership from: Sunderland Council, South Tyneside Council and community representatives Tony Davey and Kati Whiteoak. The consortium was awarded £1 million pounds to deliver a Phase 2 Creative People and Places (CPP) Project between April 2017 – March 2020, building on the work of their Phase 1 CPP Project delivered between 2014-17.

# The Creative People and Places Programme is a multi-million pound Arts Council England (ACE) Programme which targets funding at those parts of the country where people’s involvement and engagement in the arts is significantly below the national average. Sunderland and South Tyneside are two such areas. A core ambition of ACE is for more people to experience and be inspired by the arts, irrespective of where they live or their social, educational or financial circumstances. Their CPP Programme aims to get more people choosing, creating and taking part in art experiences in the places where they live.

Cultural Spring’s Phase 2 Project sought to encourage and increase participation and engagement in the arts across South Tyneside and Sunderland, particularly residents in the ten wards of: South Tyneside - Horsley Hill, Beacon & Bents, Simonside & Rekendyke, Bede and Monkton; Sunderland - Hendon, Millfield, Pallion, Sandhill and St Anne’s.

The Project’s four main aims were to:

1. Increase participation in these wards.
2. Enable more excellent art to happen in these wards.
3. Create a lasting social and cultural legacy for Sunderland and South Tyneside.
4. Reflect and share learning.

The Project sought to engage the public in the design and development of its programmed activities through:

* Identifying and supporting Community Champions from the target communities.
* Providing a mix of volunteering opportunities.
* Involving local people in Commissioning Forums.
* Involving local people on the Your Art Panel.
* Through Cultural Spring Conversations.

The Project programmed a range of arts activities to appeal to those least engaged in the arts, which included:

* Creative Workshops.
* Go and See Visits.
* Large commissions/events.
* Cultural Calendar activities.

The Project sought to build the capacity of the target communities to sustain arts activities in the following ways:

* Co-producing pilot art activities with communities through Your Art.
* Commissioning local artists to deliver activities.
* Attracting new companies to deliver arts and cultural activities in the areas.
* Supporting artists and organisations to access funding.
* New partnership development.
* Internships and work experience opportunities.
* Attracting additional funding.

The Project aimed to raise the profile of Sunderland and South Tyneside by:

* Attending national CPP meetings.
* Peer networking sessions.
* Academic research partnerships and studies.
* Case studies.

**EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

In November 2017 CoLibra was commissioned to undertake formative and summative evaluations of Cultural Spring’s Phase 2 CPP Project. Two formative reports have been produced and this is the final summative evaluation report. The evaluation scoping document asked evaluators to address the following research questions:

1. Did the project reach and engage those least engaged in the arts?
2. What worked well and why and what did not and lessons to be learned?
3. Impacts and benefits of the Cultural Spring Project?
4. The Project’s legacy?
5. Cultural Spring’s strategic role?

We were also asked to address ACE’s three research questions:

1. Are more people from places of least engagement experiencing and inspired by the arts?
2. The extent to which the aspiration for excellence of art and excellence in the process of engaging communities has being achieved?
3. Which approaches have been successful and what lessons can be learned?

We began our commission ten months after the Project had launched and started by co-producing a Theory of Change (ToC) for the Project. This helped clarify and articulate the Project’s vision and mission, activities, intended beneficiaries, outputs, outcomes and impacts and thereby enabled the co- design of a set of data capture and evaluation tools, which have subsequently been used to report on outputs, outcomes and impacts. Our evaluation is based on the findings from these tools, secondary data analysis (i.e. demographic data collected by Cultural Spring), surveys and semi structured interviews with participants, community champions, stakeholders, partners, artists and commissioned organisations.

The Theory of Change essentially provided an evaluation framework for the Project and beneficiaries were segmented as follows: Audience members (i.e. those attending one off events); Participants (i.e. those engaging in arts activities on a more regular basis); Artists, Creative Practitioners and Commissioned Organisations; Co-Creators; Partners and Stakeholder and different evaluation tools were developed for each segment and can be found in Appendix 1.

We focussed our evaluation on the differences made to participants, partners, stakeholders and co-creators, as we believed their sustained engagement in the Project would have greatest impact and yield greatest results.

The Project’s Theory of Change is presented in the table overleaf.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **VISION**  For arts and culture to be an expected and accepted part of everyone’s lives in Sunderland and South Tyneside | | | |
| **MISSION**  To develop a programme of all art forms to encourage and enable everyone to get involved and to establish a new cultural environment: To attract great musicians, writers and artists (locally and nationally) to work in and with our communities; To provide opportunities for people to enjoy new experiences, discover new passions, learn new skills and be involved in decision making about the types of activities available to them; To-develop a rich programme capable of catalysing previously untapped partnerships and opportunities | | | |
| **ENGAGER SEGMENT** | **OUTPUTS –** Quantifiable short term results | **OUTCOMES –** Medium term results (**Difference** made to those engaged | **IMPACTS –** Longer term results  (**Change** brought about) |
| **PARTICIPANTS** | 4500 workshop participants  450 Go and See participants  1000 cultural calendar participants | More connected/less socially isolated  New skills development  Greater awareness/taking notice  Giving back to the community  More active  Enhanced pride in local area  Sense of achievement | Improved wellbeing  Community cohesion and self-reliance  Civic pride and improved local image |
| **AUDIENCE MEMBERS** | 11000 audience members at large commissions and events | More proud of local area  Enhanced sense of belonging  Thinking differently | Improved wellbeing  Community cohesion  Civic pride and improved local image |
| **ARTISTS/CREATIVE PRACTITIONERS & COMMISSIONED ORGANISATIONS** | 45 workshop leaders  18 commissioned organisations  3 new companies | Increased awareness  Increased income | Economic  Community cohesion and self-reliance  New approaches to community engagement |
| **CO-CREATORS** | 150 Community Champions  30 Volunteers  21 Commissioning Forums  3 Interns  Your Art Panel co-produced projects | More connected/less socially isolated  New skills development  Greater awareness/taking notice  Giving back to the community  More active  Enhanced pride in local area  Sense of achievement  Increased engagement  Improved employability | Improved wellbeing  Community cohesion and self-reliance  Civic pride and improved local image |
| **PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATIONS** | 12 groups assisted with funding applications  3Research studies  30 Cultural Conversations  6 Peer network sessions  3 national CPP meetings  6 new partnerships developed | More connected  Increased social capital  Enhanced pride in local area  Increased partnership working | Community cohesion and self-reliance  Civic pride and improved local image  Stronger evidence base  Effective partnership working |

**FINDINGS**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

This section starts by examining the Project’s quantitative outputs against delivery targets. It then goes on to present our qualitative evaluation findings for the different activities for the various engager segments (i.e. Participants, Audiences, Artists/Creative Practitioners and Commissioned Organisations, Co-Creators, Partners and Stakeholders). We also analyse Cultural Spring’s social media and marketing activities.

**Outputs**

The table below provides an overview of Cultural Spring’s outputs. We have split the outputs into ‘Delivery’ and ‘Process’ outputs. Delivery outputs relate to the numbers of activities and people attending these as participants and audience members, i.e. as consumers of the arts. Process outputs are those which relate to the ways in which Cultural Spring sought to engage the least engaged in the process of designing, delivering and management of the Project.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Process outputs** | **Target** | **Delivered** | **Achieved** |
| Your Art co-designed pilot activities | - | 82 |  |
| Community champions | 150 | 125 | 83% |
| Volunteers | 30 | 74 | 246% |
| Community Commissioning Forums | 21 | 28 | 133% |
| Supporting artists to access funding | 12 | 26 | 216% |
| Academic research partnerships/studies | 3 | 3 | 100% |
| Cultural Spring conversations | 30 | 100 | 333% |
| Peer network sessions | 6 | 4 | 66% |
| National CPP meetings | 3 | 9 | 300% |
| Internships | 3 | 3 | 100% |
| New partnerships developed | 6 | 14 | 233% |
| Case studies for AMA | 6 | 4 | 66% |
| Social media communications | 6000 | 23417 | 390% |
| **Delivery outputs** | **Target** | **Delivered** | **Achieved** |
| Go and See Trips | 37 | 37 | 100% |
| Go and See Participants | 450 | 1124 | 249% |
| Creative Workshops | 180 | 180 | 100% |
| Creative Workshop Participants | 4500 | 4250 | 94% |
| Cultural Calendar Participants | 1000 | 2212 | 221% |
| Your Art Participants | - | 1958 | - |
| Large commissions | 18 | 17 | 94% |
| Audiences | 11000 | 11128 | 101% |

**PARTICIPANTS**

We use the term participants to mean people who engaged in Cultural Spring’s programmed activities in active and sustained ways. Ways which required them be in attendance on more than one occasion and with physical/mental interaction in order to contribute to the creation of something. We have classed those who engaged with Creative Workshops, Go and See Trips and Cultural Calendar workshops/activities as participants.

*Good to know that my local area is participating in the arts*

*Cultural Spring’s activities are inclusive of everyone*

*A lot of talent is out there and this gives people the opportunity to express that creativity and build friendships*

**Creative Workshops**

A wide range of arts and craft based workshops were delivered across Sunderland and South Tyneside, aimed at providing local residents with opportunities to try their hand at new creative activities in fun and friendly environments. Workshops were led by creative practitioners and delivered in local community venues over a number of consecutive weeks, each lasting between 2 and 10 weeks.

A group of people posing for the camera

Description automatically generatedA group of people standing in front of a crowd

Description automatically generatedA group of people sitting at a table eating food

Description automatically generated

Processions Banner Making Singing for the Soul Fun with Fabrics

Workshops delivered are shown in the table below. Some workshops were repeated:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Workshop** | **Workshop** | **Workshop** |
| Banner Making | Bollywood Dance | Calligraphy (Beginners) |
| Calligraphy (Intermediate) | Ceramics | Chalk Construction |
| Copperplate Calligraphy | Creative Gardening | Creative Writing |
| Drumming | Falling on Your Feet | Family Eco Crafts |
| Find Your Voice | Fun with Fabrics | Jewellery Making |
| Glass Fusing | Gothic Calligraphy | Introduction to Textiles |
| Mixed Media Arts | Northern Men’s Chorale | Paper Cutting |
| Photography | Photography for Beginners | Print Making |
| Proper Poetry | Romance Story Exchange | Screen Printing |
| Singing | Social Singing | Story Telling |
| Theatre & Performance | Theatre Skills | Traditional Calligraphy |
| Ukulele | Upcycling Furniture | Write Your Life |
| Writing Skills |  |  |

**Results**

4240 participants attended 180 workshops, covering 37 different types of creative activities, at a total cost of £163,994.00. Voluntary donations from participants attending workshops amounted to £12,000.00.

* £844.41 - the average unit cost per course of workshops.
* £35.85 - the average unit cost per participant to attend a course of workshops.
* 23 - the average number of participants per series of workshops.

The following findings are drawn from a 20% sample (N. 848) of workshop participants.

**Demographic data**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Gender, ethnicity and age** | **Percentage** |
| Male | 20% |
| Female | 80% |
| Disability | 21% |
| Ethnic minorities | 5% |
| Under 25 years | 7% |
| 25-44 years | 10% |
| 45 – 64 years | 58% |
| Aged 65 years + | 25% |

**Previous arts engagement**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Arts engagement in the last 12 months** | **Numbers** | **Percentage** |
| None | 51 | 6% |
| 1-3 | 68 | 8% |
| 4 + | 93 | 11% |
| Unknown | 636 | 75% |
| Resident in Sunderland – CPP area of least engagement | 424 | 50% |
| Resident in Sunderland’s most deprived wards | 322 | 38% |
| Resident in South Tyneside – CPP area of least engagement | 356 | 42% |
| Resident in South Tyneside’s most deprived wards | 280 | 33% |
| Resident outside the area | 68 | 8% |

**Outcome Data**

Below we present outcome data, supplemented with quotes from those consulted. These serve to illustrate, in qualitative terms, the added value of creative workshops, in terms of their contributions to wellbeing, confidence, self-worth, community cohesion, civic pride and embedding an appetite for future arts engagement.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Outcome** | **Illustrative quotes** |
| 75% More connected | *‘The camaraderie with other people at the workshop …. brought a community together as the age group was from young to old, loved it’*  *‘I have been more anxious about joining new groups and meeting people since the death of my husband nine years ago. This small size group and the supportive tutor have helped me feel like I have achieved something’.* |
| 73% More Active | *I have problems with my neck, Fun with Fabrics and Falling on Your Feet is all I do, my confidence has improved’*  *‘Experiencing something new just made me want to get out and join in’* |
| 94% Learned something new/new skills development | *‘The course has given me the ability to develop skills that I didn’t realise I had’ and ‘I now want to discover more’.* |
| 57% Intention to giving back to the community | *‘Going to volunteer in the local library to keep it open’*  ‘*Becoming a Community Champion for Cultural Spring’* |
| 88% Taking notice/increased awareness | *‘The tutor has inspired me to be creative and increased my confidence. This course has opened my eyes and mind to the world around me. Now I see the beauty in everyday materials’*  *‘I have a greater appreciation of all aspects of the arts’.* |
| 77% Improved wellbeing | *‘I know things like this improve wellbeing from personal experience, I would love to encourage others to do things that make them feel better too’*  *‘I am very interested in creative writing. Initially it helped me cope with and to a great extent get rid of my PTSD’* |
| 100% Intending to pursue arts activities in the future | *‘Looking for new things to take part in, it was a very rewarding event to be part of’*  *‘It made me want to do more activities’.* |
| 99% Recommend arts activities to others | *Cultural Spring find amazing local venues with amazing artists who all have the same approach that say - just give it a go’.* |
| 96% Sense of achievement | *‘I have been encouraged to do things I wouldn’t have thought I could do – I feel more confident’*  *‘I joined to help my confidence, it worked! Never thought in only eight weeks’ time that I would be performing on stage’* |
| 66% Increased pride in the area | ‘*Good people and facilities and proud of the Cultural Spring and what it offers’*  *‘I am so proud of the impact that the Cultural Spring has on the area and on people who may otherwise be isolated’*  *‘Working alongside others and listening to their positive stories gives a better sense of community. Once you find out what is available in the locality it improves your attitude to the place’.* |
| Increased confidence | *‘I joined to help my confidence; it worked! Never thought in only 8 weeks’ time, that I would be performing on stage’*  ‘*I gained confidence in myself’* |

83% of workshop participants completing evaluations reported that local access to the workshops was important in their deciding/ability to attend.

6% of participants identified themselves as newcomers, 8% had 1-3 engagements in the past 12 months and 11% has four or more, 75% unknown. The higher levels of art engagement are perhaps a result of Cultural Spring’s workshop delivery over the past 6 years, their popularity and repeat participants.

**CASE STUDY**

**Tony’s story: Bringing ukulele to the people of South Tyneside**

Tony had always wanted to play a musical instrument ,so when he retired and saw an advert for a beginners Ukulele class he jumped at the chance! With free tuition and instruments available at low cost, Tony’s Ukulele skills came on in leaps and bounds. He met new friends and started to perform in concerts. Tony went from strength to strength and with help from Cultural Spring, he began teaching others to play, starting up four local Ukulele Groups, all of which continue to this day.

Tony said *‘I had no previous knowledge of arts and didn’t consider what I was doing to be anything like art. Cultural Spring has been extremely helpful in supporting us and we now have a much better appreciation of what we can do.’*

**Tony’s story continues: Becoming a Community Champion**

When the Cultural Spring team approached Tony to become a Community Champion he was hesitant as he was unsure what the role involved. As soon as he realised it was an opportunity for him to give something back to the community he jumped at the chance. Tony now sits on Cultural Spring’s decision making panels, uses his expertise and brings a community perspective to ideas and innovative ways of bringing art to some of the most deprived communities and engaging with those least engaged.

Tony puts it quite simply - *‘I give and I get’.*

**Go and See Visits**

Go and See Visits were designed to offer individuals from target communities, the opportunity to go, see and experience, new and different arts and cultural offerings in small, friendly groups. A diverse range of Go and See trips were organised to ensure broadest possible appeal and widest reach, including trips to: Festivals, Theatre, Museums, Art Galleries, Heritage, Outdoor Events and other attractions. Some trips were local and others further afield such as Edinburgh. 1124 participants took part in 37 separate Go and See Visits to:

**Festivals**

* Hull Freedom - launched in 2007 to commemorate anti-slavery pioneer William Wilberforce which has since established itself as the city's annual festival celebrating creative expression and community.
* Take Off Festival – England’s leading annual festival of theatre for children and young people delivering some 103 performances and events across 27 venues in County Durham
* Edinburgh Fringe – the world’s largest art festival, including theatre, comedy, dance, circus, cabaret, children’s shows, musicals, opera and exhibitions.
* Processions – a once in a lifetime mass participation artwork project to mark the centenary of the Representation of the People Act that gave British women the right to vote.
* Festival of Thrift – an annual weekend long family friendly event in the Tees Valley, showcasing how to live sustainably with style.
* DN Festival of Light – a winter festival using light installations to bring different communities together in Durham to celebrate arts and culture.

**Theatre & Performances**

* Trapped – a physical theatre piece inspired by the monumental collapse of the San Jose mine in Chile in 2010 and the 33 miners trapped underground for 69 terrifying days.
* Warhorse – a powerful, moving and imaginative drama revealing the role horses played in WW1.
* Do Not Enter Monster Zoo – a play about a little boy’s visit to the zoo and his encounter with Squirgal – who likes nothing more than to gobble up children.
* Jopling Read through - A musical show performed at The Word as part of the Write Festival, based on events surrounding William Jobling, Jarrow Pitman and the last man gibbeted in the north in 1832, performed with music accompaniment from the Westoe Brass Band – a co-develop seed funded through Your Art pilot project.
* Five Dead Nobodies – a comic murder mystery about a fictional evening newspaper The Tyneside Times struggling to retain its circulation.
* Sound Around Concert – Royal Philharmonic Orchestra performing family friendly music including classical masterpieces and themes from blockbuster films.
* Christmas Pantomime – a comic retelling of Snow White.
* Slime – a play for children and families invited to squish, squelch and play their way through this hilarious and surreal show, told with a handful of words and lots of slime.

**Galleries & Exhibitions**

* Leonardo Da Vinci – a touring exhibition of 144 of the renaissance masters works to mark the 500th anniversary of his death.
* Shipley Art Gallery – a national centre for contemporary craft including ceramics, wood, metal, glass, textiles and furniture.
* Hepworth Gallery - an award-winning art gallery in the heart of Yorkshire, set within Wakefield's historic waterfront overlooking the River Calder and featuring works by Barbara Hepworth.
* Yorkshire Sculpture Park - the leading international centre for modern and contemporary sculpture with several galleries set in 500 acres of parkland, featuring work by Andy Goldsworthy, Damian Hirst and Henry Moore.
* Mining Art Gallery – sharing the experience of life underground and life in the community through the miners and their families. Also hosting the Gemini Collection, featuring 420 works by mining artists.

**Museums & Heritage Attractions**

* Dippy on Tour – the Natural History Museums Diplodocus cast on tour, allowing visitors to get hands on with fossils and to step into Jurassic forests.
* Woodhorn – a popular visitor attraction in a former colliery.
* Bowes – a diverse collection of paintings by Caneletto and Goya, porcelain and marquetry as well as a highly regarded textile museum.
* Carlisle Castle – a great medieval fortress near the ruins of Hadrian’s Wall and home to the ‘licking stones’ where parched Jacobite prisoners found enough moisture to stay alive.
* Preston Park Museum – a 100 acre public park and popular place for families with galleries, Victorian street, walled kitchen garden and butterfly world.

**Outdoor attractions/Other**

* ITV signpost – an industry-leading company with cutting-edge technology to provide sign language and subtitling access provision for audiences.
* Forbidden Corner - a unique labyrinth of tunnels, chambers, follies and surprises created within a four acre garden in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales.
* Alnwick Garden – a complex of formal gardens adjacent to Alnwick Castle, including a poison plan garden and spectacular water features.
* Elmer Trail – public art and sculpture trails inspired by one of the most iconic and widely read children's book series of all time.

*Note:* *Some repeat trips took place e.g. Edinburgh Festival.*

**Results**

37 Go and See Visits were programmed at a cost of £17,672.00 with 1124 participants taking part. Voluntary donations of £10,000.00 were received from participants. This equates to an average £207.35 per trip and £6.83 per participant. The following findings are drawn from a sample size of 20% (N.223).

*I volunteer to take part in things I would never have dreamed of doing*

*I had never thought a kid from Jarrow would be going to the theatre*

*I feel proud that a little community centre in Sunderland could hold their own amongst others talking about Shakespeare!*

**Demographic data**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Demographic** | **Percentage** |
| Male | 29% |
| Female | 71% |
| Disability | 24% |
| Ethnic minorities | 2% |
| Under 25 years | 25% |
| 25-44 years | 18% |
| 45 – 64 years | 32% |
| Aged 65 years + | 25% |
| From Sunderland | 27% |
| From South Tyneside | 25% |
| Outside area | 4% |
| Unknown residential location | 44% |

**Previous arts engagement**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Arts engagement in the last 12 months** | **Percentage** |
| None | 16% |
| 1-3 | 28% |
| 4 + | 20% |
| Unknown | 36% |
| Resident in Sunderland – CPP area of least engagement | 56% |
| Resident in South Tyneside – CPP area of least engagement | 34% |
| Resident outside the area | 10% |

**Outcomes**

Below we present outcome data, supplemented with quotes from those consulted to illustrate, in qualitative terms, the added value from their participation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Outcome** | **Percentage** | **Quotes** |
| More connected | 82% | *‘Enjoyed being in a group’* |
| More active | 76% | *‘I enjoyed standing with all the other women from all walks of life. I was proud to carry our banner’* |
| New learning | 76% | *‘I wanted to see lots of creatures and animals and history because I want to learn more’* |
| Intention to give back to the community | 65% | *‘To do even more’* |
| Taking notice/increased awareness | 86% | *‘I enjoy seeing places never been to before and experienced’* |
| Improved wellbeing | 77% | *‘My recently diminishing confidence is returning’* |
| Intention to pursue arts activities in the future | 87% | *‘I should visit more and participate in cultural activities’*  *‘I will look for opportunities to take part in arts events and activities in my local community’* |
| Would recommend arts engagement to others | 100% | *‘Go and See trips are great and I encourage others to give them a go’* |

**AUDIENCES**

Audience members are individuals who engaged with Cultural Spring’s programmed events in more passive and ad hoc ways. We have included those who attended Cultural Spring’s performances, theatre, festivals and other commissioned events in this cohort.

Cultural Spring contracted with the Audience Agency to produce Audience Profile Reports for 2017, 2018 and 2019. The Audience Agency worked with Cultural Spring to help them understand who their audiences were and who they could be. In so doing audience members were categorised into ten different segments based on their attendance, participation and engagement in arts, culture and heritage and rated their levels of arts engagement as high, medium or low. Individuals are assigned a segment based on the dominant segment within their residential postcode.

The ten standard audience spectrum segments include:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Engagement** | **Segment** | **Description** |
| High | Metro-culturals | Prosperous, liberal, urbanites interested in a very wide cultural spectrum |
| High | Commuter land Culture buffs | Affluent and professional consumers of culture |
| High | Experience Seekers - | Highly active, diverse, social and ambitious, engaging with arts on a regular basis |
| High | Dormitory Dependables | From suburban and small towns with an interest in heritage activities and mainstream arts |
| Medium | Trips and Treats | They enjoy mainstream arts and popular culture influenced by children, family and friends |
| Medium | Home and Heritage | From rural areas and small towns, engaging in daytime activities and historic events |
| Medium | Up our Street | Modest in habits and means. Occasional engagement in popular arts, entertainment and museums |
| Low | Facebook Families | Younger suburban and semi-urban. They enjoy live music, eating out and popular entertainment such as pantomime |
| Low | Kaleidoscope Creativity | Mix of backgrounds and ages. Occasional visitors or participants, particularly community-based events and festivals |
| Low | Heydays | Older, they are often limited by mobility to engage with arts and cultural events. They participate in arts and craft making |

**CASE STUDY**

**Reducing social isolation through music**

The team at Cultural Spring were instrumental in helping to set up a music project to reduce isolation and loneliness for elderly and frail members of the community in South Tyneside and Sunderland. ‘*Home is Where the Heart Is’* was the brainchild of Ben Hudson and Diane Gray who contacted Cultural Spring for support to help bring music and singing to these hardest to reach community members. Songs were written with individuals which reflected their life stories and members from both South Tyneside and Sunderland communities were brought together for a concert at St Hilda’s pit Head in South Shields, which ran annually for a further three years.

Ben said: *‘Advice and support from the Cultural Spring team was extremely useful and it gave us the confidence to do what we have done. It has been very positive in all aspects of our work. Without them we would not have achieved what we have.’*

**Results**

Six large commissions were programmed by Cultural Spring at a cost of £236,000.00 (almost a quarter of the ACE investment) and a further £107,000.00 was secured from partners in match funding. These six commissioned events were attended by 11,128 audience members. This equates to costs of £30.82 per person (i.e. £343,000.00 divided by 11128). Events commissioned by Cultural Spring included: Fireflight; #wearexperimenting; Picture Books; Bitesize; Heart of the House and NHS 70.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Commissioned events** | **Audience numbers** |
| Fireflight ( including fireworks and dance finale) | 4000 |
| Wearexperimenting | 210 |
| Picture Books | 100 |
| Bitesize Theatre | 318 |
| Heart of the House | 2500 |
| NHS 70 | - |
| Summer Streets 2017 \* | 4000 |

***Note:*** Where more detail is provided below, this is because these were not reported on in the previous summative evaluation reports.

**Fireflight**  - an outdoor spectacular dance and light show to launch the opening of the Fire station - a new music and arts hub in Sunderland. It attracted 4000 people, including 1300 who saw the show and the dance piece and fireworks afterwards.

**#Wearexperimenting** - a project devised to engage people in photography and science based on life in Sunderland, using social media, workshops and exhibitions.

**Picture Books** - a seven month long project which sought to provide opportunities for twenty families in South Tyneside to engage in the arts, in fun and creative ways through the co-creation of several new children’s books. Its launch attracted 100 audience members.

**Bitesize Theatre**- a series of four different ‘pop-up’ bitesize performances delivered in non-theatre spaces such as football clubs, community centres , pubs and scout huts. The aim was to see if delivering theatre in different local venues would attract new engagers.

**Heart of the House**

We have provided more detail for this event, as it had not been covered in the previous formative evaluation reports.This event celebrated the past, present and future of The Customs House through story-telling projections on the outside of the building which were full of nostalgia, fun and illusion. Projections showcased the history of the Customs House, ranging from shipbuilding, coal mining, music and performance to South Tyneside icons and pantomime characters.

**A picture containing colorful, table, filled, small

Description automatically generated**

This event took place over three consecutive nights in October 2019 and had an estimated audience of 2500 people. The free outdoor visual spectacle was designed by the world-class team at NOVAK and marked the twenty fifth anniversary of The Customs House as a cultural venue. It celebrated the past, present and future of The Customs House with exciting story-telling projections on the outside of the building which were full of nostalgia, fun and illusion. The projections showcased everything from shipbuilding, coal mining, music, performance, South Tyneside icons, pantomime characters and a colourful walkway featuring unique flags and banners created by 300 people through Creative Seed workshops. Groups involved included: Autism Able**;** Boys Brigade**;** Creative Community Group; Kayaks**;** Laygate Community School**;** Marine Park Primary School**;** Tom Finch Artand Waves.

NOVAK worked with local groups and 85 individuals to develop the projections: The Customs House Youth Theatre; Custom Breaks; Hindu Nari Sangh; Cast of The Customs House pantomime and Jason Cook (comedian).

The Custom Voices Choir worked alongside musician and sound artist Ed Carter to create a soundtrack to accompany the projection and performed a twenty minute collection of songs on the first evening of the event.

A group of people standing in a room

Description automatically generated

An open, public workshop was held to encourage individuals to take part in the project and 225 people engaged. The youngest participant was 4 years old and the oldest 75 years old.

**Findings**

The following findings are drawn from a survey of audience members – a sample size of 11% (N. 271).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Demographic data** | **%** |
| Female | 65% |
| Male | 35% |
| White British | 96% |
| Ethnic minorities | 3% |
| Prefer not to say | 1% |
| Disability | 11% |
| Under 16 years | 18% |
| 16-24 years | 4% |
| 25-34 years | 10% |
| 35-44 years | 23% |
| 45 – 54 years | 15% |
| 55-64 years | 9% |
| 65 years + | 21% |

* 99% enjoyed Heart of the House.
* 68% had attended more than four arts activities within the last 12 months.
* 6% had not attended/participated in any arts activities in the previous 12 months.
* 98% would like to see more events like this
* 97% would recommend to others
* 97% increased their pride in the local area

When asked what they enjoyed about the event, Audience members said:

* *‘It was truly wonderful. First time visit to Customs House. Loved the music, the colours and sheer joy of it all.’*
* *‘It opened my eyes to some of the history of the Customs House. It also made me proud of its success and how it embraced new and interesting artistry.’*
* *‘The projections were an excellent representation of the diversity of the surrounding area, and it was depicted in glorious colour and not the grey grim up north’image that many have of the area.’*
* *‘It was just as spectacular as Durham Lumiare.’*
* *‘It was a lovely way to spend an autumn evening. Colourful, beautiful, surprising. Combined with a ferry journey in the dark it was a great atmospheric experience which didn’t go on too late.’*
* *‘Left feeling much better than when we arrived, the true sign of a great experience. Thank you.’*

Participant findings from the associated workshop programme include:

* 97% had no experience of silk painting and reported learning a new skill.
* 70% had not taken part in creative sessions like this before.
* 98% said they enjoyed the workshop and would like to attend similar workshops in the future.

**NHS 70 – 70 Years of the NHS in South Tyneside.**

ArtistBethan Maddocks engaged with Women’s Health in South Tyneside (WHiST), Age Concern Tyneside South and South Tyneside Young Health Ambassadors to carry out a residency in the cafeteria of the South Tyneside Hospital chatting with staff members, patients and family members. The papercut entitled ‘Seventy’ that was produced was unveiled in South Tyneside hospital on 6th August 2019. A photograph of the completed work is below:



Cultural Spring made financial contributions to the following events organised by others:

**Summer Streets**  - a free art and music festival that takes place annually in Sunderland. This Festival was incubated by Cultural Spring in Phase 1 and has been running ever since. On average it attracts 4000 annually.

***NOTE:*** We have only included audiences for the 2017 Summer Street Festival. The 2018 & 2019 Festivals have been included under Cultural Spring’s legacy.

**Wonderlooper Sept 2018 - Great Place Bridge Commission –**Wonderlooper was an interactive installation delivered by artist Di Mainstone to mark the opening of The Northern Spire. The event was held on the new bridge and involved creating kaleidoscopes from cast-off pieces of plastic used to encase the bridge’s huge steel cables. Cultural Spring contributed £3,000 toward the community engagement element of the event.

Cultural Spring was itself commissioned to deliver the following two project in Sunderland:

**West Area Signage -** this project involved working closely withSunderland Council and local councillors to create new signage relating to ward based environmental issues in the West Area of Sunderland (Barnes, Pallion, Sandhill, Silksworth, St. Anne’s and St. Chad’s).Activity included; Delivering 19 Workshops over a 9 week period covering 6 wards. With 11 signs designed with 96 people engaged.

Sail Creative delivered 12 creative hands on workshops including: message creation; illustration; typography; collage; graffiti art/spray painting; mood board design and illustration. Seven engagement sessions with community groups were used to collect stories, memories and to understand the place and local peoples’ memories, history, hopes and ambitions.

**Social Isolation Workshop Engagement -** Cultural Spring was commissioned by local councillors in Sunderland West Area wards of Pallion, Sandhill and St Anne’s to develop a series of ‘Clean and Green’ workshops to attract residents who don’t typically engage in activities due to social isolation. Attendance and engagement figures for these workshops were as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ward** | **Workshop** | **Number of attendees** | **Number of engagements\*** |
| St Annes | Family Eco Crafts | 16 | 32 |
| Sandhill | Learn to play the Ukuele | 7 | 31 |
| Sandhill | Eco Arts Installation | 15 | 78 |
| Pallion | Storytelling | 15 | 21 |
| Pallion | Pl-abrics Burning and Banner Making | 4 | 7 |
| Pallion | Creative Gardening ( in partnership with Parker Trust | 10 | 70 |
|  | **TOTAL** | **67** | **239** |

\* The number of engagements relates to how many times one person went to 'x' amount of sessions - some may have gone once, others may have gone to more, some programmes ran for up to 12 weeks.

**Findings**

Workshops were open to all people in the West Area and Sunderland, but were particularly aimed at those who might be socially isolated, such as the elderly and those with carer responsibilities. 84% of respondents identified themselves as low engagers with either no engagement or enagement in between 1-3 arts activities in the last 12 months.

* 64% more connected to their local community.
* 55% more proud of where they live.
* 92% learned something new.
* 100% recommend to others.

**Summary**

Cultural Spring is not a venue based activity deliverer and so the use of Mosaic and Audience Finder reports (largely designed for venues) have limited application. Audience findings across all events have been hampered and limited by the secondary data collected by others.

Sunderland and South Tyneside areas are merged together within the Mosaic data. The table overleaf shows the main categories and category engagers in the Cultural Spring Project.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Segment** | **Description** | **Sunderland and South Tyneside population** | **Cultural Spring engagers** |
| Kaleidoscope Creativity | Mix of backgrounds and ages. Occasional visitors or participants, particularly community-based events and festivals | 21% |  |
| Facebook Families | Younger suburban and semi-urban. They enjoy live music, eating out and popular entertainment such as pantomime | 19% | 16% |
| Up Our Street | Modest in habits and means. Occasional engagement in popular arts, entertainment and museums | 16% | 16% |
| Heydays | Older, they are often limited by mobility to engage with arts and cultural events. They participate in arts and craft making | 16% |  |
| Dormitory Dependables | From suburban and small towns with an interest in heritage activities and mainstream arts |  | 15% |
| Trips and Treats | They enjoy mainstream arts and popular culture influenced by children, family and friends |  | 15% |

The Cultural Spring team worked with a diverse range of organisations to bring diverse events to the area, to deliver arts engagements activities and to help extend reach to the least engaged. By working in this way, a sense of cohesiveness across the city has been achieved vis-à-vis the arts - *‘Momentum built up and now events, arts and culture is in the vocabulary of the people on the ground.’* Ross Millard Summer Streets.

The events highlighted are prime examples of Cultural Spring’s contribution to increasing the sense of identity and civic pride in Sunderland and South Tyneside and serve to illustrate the ways in which they have achieved excellence in the process of engaging communities.

**ARTISTS, CREATIVE PRACTITIONERS AND COMMISSIONED ORGANISATIONS**

Cultural Spring’s programme of events relied on commissioning high quality, professional artists/creative practitioners and organisations and attracting new art companies to deliver arts activities and larger commissions in the area. These artists, creative practitioners and companies brought a wealth of experience and diversity to Cultural Spring’s programme and in so doing further developed their practice in community settings and working with the least engaged.

**Results**

178 artists and creative practitioners were commissioned to support Cultural Spring’s Project delivery.

Six new art companies were attracted to deliver in the area, including:

* **Periplum** - a Brighton based NPO. commissioned to deliver Fireflight. <http://www.periplum.co.uk/content/home/>
* **Extraordinary Bodies** - <http://www.extraordinarybodies.org.uk/> an integrated company - Extraordinary Bodies are a professional circus company and a partnership between Cirque Bijou & Diverse City. We started conversations and paid for a recce for them to come to the North East and meet with some of our partners (Sunderland Culture, Sunderland City Council, The Customs House, Ocean Arts (now Ocean Choices), Breana - this led to Sunderland Culture booking them for 'What Are We Worth' a piece of touring work they have that was performed as part of the Tall Ships Cultural programme.
* **Kamaal Hussein** (The Thief of Baghdad Theatre Company) - our Go and See visit in 2017 saw Kamaal's piece - Becoming Scheherazade and this led to him applying for one of the Bitesize commissions. This took place in South Tyneside.
* **The Herd** - Slime performed at FANS Museum, Hull based and make theatre for young people
* **Curious Arts** - 'Spectacular Drag Storytime' - Newcastle/Gateshead based - performed at FANS Museum and a South Tyneside venue as part of a Go and See opportunity.
* **Thought Foundation** - <http://www.thoughtfoundation.co.uk/>, Gateshead based.

£782,260.00 in additional grants was secured for artist and organisations to enhance and expand arts activities in the area.

Findings are based on evaluation questionnaires and fourteen semi-structured interviews – a sample size of 8%.

When asked what ***worked well***, respondents reported:

* Use of local community spaces to encourage participation.
* Working through gateway organisations to access new participants e.g. a local church to get people to do something outside their comfort zones.
* Maximising social capital and relationships to encourage audiences and participants from the least engaged.
* Activity timings and local marketing to extend reach.
* Opportunities for post-show discussions with audiences and the provision of food
* Group visits which helped integrate participants with other members of the community

Suggested ***areas for improvement*** included:

* Longer lead in times to provide more opportunity to build and develop audiences for local shows.

Reported ***impact on their creative practice***, included:

* Implementing changes to the ways in which they worked with communities, for example *‘Using a method to offer taster skills from a wider skill set’* and ‘*Focusing on one skill for the whole term and really developing it worked well in the development of skills and confidence of the group’* .
* Increased confidence in being able to tour theatre in non-traditional venues.
* Understanding that relationships with host venues for activities is crucial to help build audiences.

One respondent said they found the whole experience hugely informative and described their commission as a brilliant and significant project for themselves and their practice. They said, *‘My role as storyteller, additional to creating the work, has extended my skillset in a focused and constructive way’.* They now want to explore more work with and for South Tyneside.

A significant number of respondents said their commission had been one of their most challenging in a long time, but that it had helped them reflect on their practice, face challenges and change their approaches to engaging participants who are least engaged in the arts.

Comments from respondents relating to what they had ***learned*** coalesced around the following:

* Learning not to be too ambitious and using a few simple techniques, so that participants become very skilled and confident with what they are creating.
* Creating more pieces/examples to help test theories before going ahead. This helps to refine the balance between leadership and allowing group members to lead.
* Team working.
* Realising the community is lot more diverse and vibrant than previously thought
* Participatory skills development when working in community venues.

When asked about ***the impact on income***, a few reported that their commission had resulted in further work and leads:

* Follow on commission because the group worked with secured funding to run a young person’s version of the previous commission.
* Subsequently secured three commissions with community groups.
* Helped an artist remain in the area and to open up new opportunities and relationships.
* New partnerships developed.

**CASE STUDY**

**Rowan’s Story: Funding to help build mental resilience**

Artist and poet, Rowan McCabe was supported by Cultural Spring to set up a creative writing project. Participants from the mental health charity – MIND, who had never been able to access creative art programmes before were given the opportunity to get involved in creative writing sessions. Over five weeks, Rowan helped 15 workshop participants to learn to write poetry and several attended their very first ever poetry show at the end.

Rowan said: *‘The opportunity to work with Cultural Spring was an absolute pleasure and helped me develop a new model of working, to include workshops as part of my national and international shows. The new partnership created with Cultural Spring and others enabled further work in the pipeline. Watch this space!’*

**CO-CREATORS**

Cultural Spring’s co-creators are people from South Tyneside and Sunderland’s communities who were involved in planning and decision making capacities, such as Community Champions, Commissioning Forums members, Your Art Panel members, Interns and Volunteers.

***Community Champions*** are a network of people passionate about the arts in their local community who worked to help shape and promote the Project’s opportunities for arts engagement. ***Commissioning Forums*** were groups of local people who collectively made decisions on art projects to be commissioned through Cultural Spring in their local areas.  ***Your Art Panel*** members were community individuals who co-designed pilot arts activities for their local communities. ***Interns*** were local individuals who were given the opportunity to join the Cultural Spring and be part of the Project in a paid capacity. ***Volunteers*** were individuals who willing gave their time to support Cultural Spring’s activities – particularly the larger events.

Co-creators were an essential part of Cultural Spring’s ethos and delivery model – believing that people help to sustain that which they have created. Involving co-creators, was one of the ways Cultural Spring sought to encourage, enable and empower local people to get involved in the arts through local decision making and ownership.

**Results**

The table below shows outputs against targets for this cohort:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Description** | **Target** | **Delivered** |
| Community Arts Champions | 150 | 125 |
| Commissioning Forums | 21 | 28 |
| Your Art co-designed pilot art projects | - | 82 |
| Value of Your Art | - | £60,047.00 |
| Volunteers | 30 | 74 |
| Interns | 3 | 3 |

Feedback was obtained from co-creators and semi structured interviews with this cohort were wide ranging in an attempt to capture their journeys and motivations for engaging.

People became co-creators in many different ways. For instance, one spoke of initially joining a Ukulele Workshop and then going on to set up a guitar group before becoming involved. Another reported being involved in the Tall Ships event prior to becoming a Community Champion and then subsequently joining the Your Art Panel.

There was a clear sense amongst respondents that Cultural Spring is a grass roots, arts engagement programme, specifically targeting people who have never previously being involved in the arts. Respondents felt they were genuinely involved in decision making and reported feeling more *‘*empowered and enabled to voice their own creative ideas in a supportive environment’.

One respondent reported suffering with anxiety and felt that her involvement as a co- creator had helped reduce her stress levels. Another respondent, who is a carer for her father, said that being part of Cultural Spring helped to reduce her feelings of social isolation.

Co-creators reported being much better informed and having expanded horizons, with increased exposure to new, positive arts experiences. Respondents also reported a sense of increased civic pride resulting from their engagement.

**CASE STUDY**

**Sandra’s Story: From beginner to Community Champion**

Sandra was introduced to Cultural Spring after taking part in the Great North Run and becoming involved in the RUSH dance group. From then on, Cultural Springs’ ‘no experience necessary’ approach to creative arts, gave Sandra the confidence to try her hand at other new activities. From Opera for Beginners to Glass Making Workshops, Sandra has tried them all and now feels strongly about the power of creative arts to bring the community together.  From never accessing the arts, she is now a Community Champion and encourages others to try out art activities and the benefits they bring.

Sandra said: ‘*The opera class alongside many other activities opened a whole new world for me now I’m retired. I try new things I would never have tried before. It’s very non-threatening. Cultural Spring find amazing local venues with amazing artists who all have the same approach that say “ - just give it a go.’*

[***https://youtube.be/L2ts5BNArRQ***](https://youtube.be/L2ts5BNArRQ)

[**https://vimeo.com/users23398103**](https://vimeo.com/users23398103)

**Views on what has worked well, in terms of engaging the least engaged included:**

* Use of local venues to deliver activities, negating the need to travel too far.
* Opportunities to meet others and to gain real life experience within the programme.
* Go and See opportunities were seen as valuable in terms of seeing what is out there and then coming back with ideas for their local communities. Similarly going to see Bitesize theatre locally meant that participants were inspired and motivated to try to deliver similar things in their own areas.
* Opportunities to work alongside arts professionals was valued and appreciated.
* All being treated equally, recognition that everyone brings something to the table - this helped to increase confidence and self-esteem.
* The proportionate levels of paperwork.

**Views on what has worked less well and areas for improvement.**

Publicity and marketing were the most commonly cited areas for improvement. Others raised concerns around the sustainability of some activities and for artists to support delivery*.*

**Views on impact and legacy**

Co-Creators cited increases in confidence, self-esteem, new activities and new skills development as the Project’s legacy**.** Examples given included: Being instrumental in setting up a dance group; learning first aid and standing up and talking to people. Respondents said, *‘I volunteer to take part in things I never would have dreamed of doing’, ‘I’m more sensitive to peoples needs’* and  *‘I don’t always take the easy options’.*

Co-creators recognised the value of arts activities and engagement for wellbeing and mental health. One respondent commented *‘Cultural Spring’s activities are inclusive to everyone and the artists involved strive to bring the best out of anyone who attends’* .

One respondent reported how she has subsequently gone on to set up her own rag rug making business following her engagement as a Co-creator.

**Internships**

Cultural Spring’s four internships were delivered in partnership with Sunderland University’s Internship Programme for graduates resident in Sunderland and South Tyneside. Interns were an integral part of the Cultural Spring team and drawn from members of the local community. Case study details for interns are provided below:

**How a Cultural Spring internship can be a catalyst for future success**

Iam grew up on a council estate in South Shields - an area of high unemployment, poverty and deprivation and where culture was not part of his daily life. He said *‘Arts and culture were portrayed as opera and ballet, Shakespeare and Keats, Rembrandt and Monet. Arts and culture were apparently ‘elitist’. They were for people with money’.*

Only in later life did Iam come to realise that arts and culture were for everyone. With lived experience of mental health, Iam found that photography really helped his wellbeing, and at the age of forty three he embarked on a degree, graduating in 2018 from the University of Sunderland, with a First Class BA (Hons) in Photography, Video and Digital.

He reported finding it difficult to break into the arts/cultural sector. His internship at Cultural Spring changed all that, allowing him to gain valuable work experience, make connections and network – all of which have enhanced his employability and social capital. Working at Cultural Spring allows Iam to witness at close quarters the benefits arts and creativity have on many residents across South Tyneside and Sunderland. It has also helped him to understand the challenges artists and practitioners face with regard to community engagement, planning, budgeting and career development.

Iam hopes he may get the opportunity to work with The Cultural Spring as an artist in the future, *‘It is an amazing organisation, run by people who are passionate about how arts, culture and creativity can bring positive outcomes for all. It would be great to be a part of their legacy’.*

**From unemployed graduate to employed Graphic Designer**

Dominic joined Cultural Spring as an intern following an initial six months internship at Sunderland Cultural Partnership. He brought his passion and skills for graphic design to the team - designing posters, banners and flyers. He was involved in marketing events such as ‘WordPlay!’ and others. Dominic’s internship ended in August 2017 and has subsequently went to work as Social Media and Marketing Manager at Elopa, then Social Media Content Creator at OCOCO and is now Online Editor/Graphic Designer with Aphrodite Clothing Ltd.

**From arts to the environmental sector**

Erin’s internship focussed on administration and marketing whilst she was a third year She now works for DEFRA. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X90HhgcYRll>

**Your Art Panel**

The Your Art Panel sought to enable communities to co-design small pilot art activities/events for their communities. It placed local community members in the driving seat and hoped to support people to shape, lead and programme the arts events they wanted in their own communities. The Your Art Panel was made up representatives from Cultural Spring and Community Champions.

**CASE STUDY**

**Supporting deaf photographers in Sunderland through The Click Click Club**

The Click Click Club first accessed support from Cultural Spring to provide training to upskill some of their photographers. This really helped and some of the photographers have subsequently secured paid work as a result. The Cultural Spring team connected them with Sunderland Culture which brought new opportunities to collaborate on projects, such as the successful production of the ‘Deaf See Us’ book and film. More people have been able to see and access the photographers’ work, through an exhibition and hearing their stories. This has had a huge impact on raising the profile of deaf photographers in Sunderland.

Rachael Hayes from Chick Click said: *‘Our involvement with Cultural Spring has led to many more opportunities. In terms of the economy, it has meant deaf people are paying back into the economy. The achievements of the attendees had a massive impact on their self-esteem, sense of purpose and wellbeing, which in the future may mean they are able to come off benefits and return to work’.*

**Results**

82 co-designed pilot arts activities/events were developed at a cost of £60,057.00, 37 of which were in South Tyneside and 45 in Sunderland. 67 individual organisations were involved in these.

The table below provides a breakdown of these pilot art projects:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **Project** | Project cost |
| Autism Able CIC | Specialist Drama Group | £400.00 |
| Community Arts Project North East C.I.C (CAP NE) | Pandilla | £1,000.00 |
| Compass Acapella Men’s Chorus | Beer Mats Promotion | £720.00 |
| Dame Dorothy Primary School | Conversation Pieces | £740.00 |
| Friends of Donnison School | Framing Your Community | £943.00 |
| Friends of West Park | Community Arts Picnic | £1,000.00 |
| Hadrian Primary School | Bad Taste Cru Sessions | £960.00 |
| Holmeside Writers | Zine | £400.00 |
| Living History North East | Intergenerational Singers | £1,000.00 |
| Living History North East | Silent Voices | £1,000.00 |
| Low Simonside CA (Bilton Hall Community Trust) | Busker Entertainment Nights | £374.73 |
| New Hope Church | Mural | £650.00 |
| Nifties Group at Arts Centre Washington | Arts/Crafts Sessions | £1,000.00 |
| Sangini | The Line | £1,000.00 |
| Sunderland North Family Zone | Exploring Art Sessions | £975.00 |
| The Click Click Club, Sunderland Deaf Society | Introduction to Digital Photography for Deaf People | £1,000.00 |
| The Senior Scribblers Writing Group | Creative Writing | £400.00 |
| A690 Youth Initiative | Musical Education | £400.00 |
| African Caribbean Community Association | Black Festival of Art and Culture | £800.00 |
| Calligraphy Group | Illuminated Letter and Visit | £810.00 |
| CHANCE | Circus Skills | £900.00 |
| Changing Lives | Kielder Forest Installation Visit | £480.00 |
| Cuckoo Young Writers Group | Writing | £400.00 |
| Fausto Coffee Music Group | Ukulele | £400.00 |
| Ford, Pallion and Millfield Community Development Project | Kynren Go & See | £400.00 |
| Gateway North East | Murals | £400.00 |
| Headway Wearside | Therapeutic Art Based Activities | £978.00 |
| Ocean Road Centre Quilting Group | Quilting Art Tutor | £800.00 |
| FODI | Radio Farsi / Global Sunderland | £1,000.00 |
| The Crafty Guys & Dolls | Craft Sessions | £310.00 |
| Wearside Stroke Group | Confidence through Creativity | £967.00 |
| West Harton Churches Action Station | Batik Banner | £995.00 |
| Women's Health in South Tyneside (WHiST) | Creative Digital Art Session | £400.00 |
| Art of Ukes | Workshop with Craig Chee/Sarah Maisel | £400.00 |
| Bede Art and Calligraphy Group | The Glory of Northumbria | £950.00 |
| Bilton Hall Community Trust | Jarrow Festival | £1,000.00 |
| Bojangles Ukes | Songbook | £250.00 |
| Creative Mind | Christmas Creative Crafts Project | £400.00 |
| Dovecote Meadow Choir | Dovecote Meadow Choir | £400.00 |
| Fausto Pop Choir | Fausto Pop Choir | £1,000.00 |
| Friends of Backhouse and Barley Mow Parks | Fairy Trail | £600.00 |
| Fulwell Community Library | Singing Group | £475.00 |
| Sunderland BID | Community Stage | £200.00 |
| Women's Health in South Tyneside (WHiST) | Creative Digital Art Project | £1000.00 |
| Apna Ghar | Sewing Club | £400.00 |
| Big Local Central Jarrow | Introduction to Glass Fusing | £400.00 |
| Bright Futures Young Women's Project | Participation in South Tyneside Festival Summer Parade | £400.00 |
| Horsley Hill Youth Project | Three Arts Activities | £390.00 |
| Southwick Neighbourhood Youth Project | Summer Streets Participation | £929.87 |
| The Bunker (Sunderland) CIC | Interactive Open Day Music Events | £400.00 |
| The Click Click Club (Sunderland Deaf Society) | Photography Mentorship in BSL | £1,000.00 |
| Bilton Hall Community Trust | Entrance Mural (Workshops) | £700.00 |
| Community Arts Project North East | WW1 Memorial Stained Glass Window | £1,000.00 |
| Ford, Pallion & Millfield Community Development Project | Candle Making Workshops | £680.00 |
| Friends of East Boldon Parks | Scarecrow Festival | £382.00 |
| Fulwell Community Library | Weekly Art Group | £1,000.00 |
| Miss Tina's (Sunderland) Community Interest Company Ltd | Murals by Young Artists | £950.00 |
| New Hope North East | Monkey See, Monkey Draw | £1,000.00 |
| Queen's Road Centre | Singing Group | £400.00 |
| Samba Art Group | Outings to Venues and Galleries | £390.00 |
| Sunderland North Family Zone | Exploring Arts Sessions | £950.00 |
| Thursday Get Together | Singing Sessions | £500.00 |
| Tyneside & Northumberland Mind / Open Door Jarrow | Creative Writing | £375.00 |
| Community Arts Project NE | Music Group | £400.00 |
| Southwick REACH | Programme of talks, creative workshops and visits | £994.00 |
| Friends of East Boldon Parks | Photography Course | £961.75 |
| Town End Farm Residents Association\* | Entertainment Group | £1,000.00 |
| Big Local Central Jarrow | Glass Fusing Workshops | £1,000.00 |
| Solo Arts CIC\* | True Crime Inspired Participatory Workshops | £950.00 |
| Community Arts Project NE | Music Group | £400.00 |
| Southwick REACH | Programme of talks, creative workshops and visits | £994.00 |
| Friends of East Boldon Parks | Photography Course | £961.75 |
| Town End Farm Residents Association\* | Entertainment Group | £1,000.00 |
| Big Local Central Jarrow | Glass Fusing Workshops | £1,000.00 |
| Solo Arts CIC\* | True Crime Inspired Participatory Workshops | £950.00 |
| Community Arts Project NE | Music Group | £400.00 |

*\*Support withdrawn because the project did not going ahead.*

**PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATION**

Cultural Spring worked with a wide range of partner and stakeholder organisations to deliver and add value to its programme of activities. This cohort included individuals from: organisations supported to access funding, Steering Group, research partnerships, Cultural Spring conversations, CPP network and other CPP North East Projects.

**Results**

Semi-structured interviews (both face-to-face and over the phone) were undertaken with nine Cultural Spring partner and stakeholder organisations to gain their insights as to what has worked well and why, what has worked less well and why and to explore Cultural Spring’s emerging impact and legacy.

New partnerships were developed with the following organisations:

* **Rowlands Pharmacy** offered an area to display Cultural Spring’s posters and fliers. As a pharmacy they come into contact with a lot of older and socially isolated people and they informed customers about Helix arts dance project ‘Falling on your Feet’ – a project with significant wellbeing benefits and fall reduction activities. They took part in the pre and post health assessments with Falling on Your Feet participants, providing blood pressure, height and weight measurements.
* **The Bridges Shopping Centre** provided a free empty shop for six weeks for Cultural Spring to deliver sessions and consultations with local people. They also provided space for promotions and exhibition space for ‘Set the Sails’ and’ #wearexperimenting’.
* **East Area VCS Network** worked with their voluntary and community sector networks to help Cultural Spring consult with local authority, wards members and other community organisations.
* **West Area VCS Network** were funded to deliver the signage commission project and three social isolation projects, e.g. ‘Clean and Green’. They also supported the ‘Bandstand’ element of the Barnes Park event each year.
* **Sunderland Deaf Centre** were initially supported through Your Art and encouraged to get involved in #wearexperimenting.
* **FODI (Friends of the Drop In)** an organisation that supports asylum seekers. Cultural Spring supported weekly sessions and took part in a visit to the Tate Exchange and participation in a film that was shown during Counterpoint Arts week-long residency – ‘Who Are We?’ <https://vimeo.com/271360513>
* **Counterpoint Arts**, introduced by Chrissie Tiller, Cultural Spring’s Critical Friend, took part in the ‘Who Are We?’ project and worked on a national application to ACE, which included a North East strand.
* **South Tyneside Inspire Network** - **Inspire South Tyneside** is an umbrella body for the voluntary and community sector across **South Tyneside**helped to promote activities.
* **South Tyneside Public Health** – ongoing conversations resulted in Cultural Spring being asked to deliver the NHS 70 commission for the borough, based on the programme’s impacts and ability to include community participation throughout the devising, recruitment and delivery of projects.
* **FANS Museum** hosted a number of performances including ‘Slime’.
* **University of Sunderland Medical School**. There are ongoing conversations about how Cultural Spring can work together with trainee GPs vis-à-vis the health and wellbeing elements of programme.
* **Sunderland Health and Wellbeing Network** attended regular meetings which have led to new connections.
* **South Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Alliance**- attended regular meetings and are exploring funding opportunities to support social prescribing work with Cultural Spring.

*Achievements have been extraordinary*

*Created a shift in the way we talk about arts and public value*

*Opened people’s eyes to culture led regeneration*

*Cultural Spring has been a catalyst for all sorts of things*

Interviews with partners and stakeholders revealed the following insights into what they thought had ***worked well:***

* Increased sense of identity and civic pride in Sunderland and South Tyneside.
* Improved arts accessibility by producing and bringing good quality art to these areas.
* Raised confidence amongst community groups and professional artists/creative practitioners.
* Connecting and re-connecting older people with their communities, through programmed activities such as music workshops, ukulele bands and choirs.
* Wider partnership working, e.g. with local schools to engage children such as The Inventors Project and Picture Books.
* The Creative Garden and upcycling of furniture activities which have engaged people aged 20 – 70 years, enabled community ownership and increased civic pride.
* Empowered people to create their own creative businesses by raising their confidence and self-esteem through creative practice.
* Genuine buy-in and backing of Local Authority Councillors and Officers – either as Steering Group members or active stakeholders.
* Putting South Shields and Sunderland on the map by working together with partners on national platforms and highlighting successes.
* Your Art has provided groups with access to professional artists whilst still working in their own local community venues.
* Opening doors for people to engage in the arts at grass roots level, in ways that works for them.

Suggested ***areas for improvement*** included

* Diversifying Cultural Spring’s funding base to aid sustainability.
* Better articulation of Cultural Spring’s aims and objectives linked to other arts/culture partnership strategies, to help differentiate, avoid duplication and demonstrate complementarity.
* Attracting more diverse partners through, for example, partnerships with the mental health and wellbeing organisations or engaging with young Asian voices.
* Improvements to Cultural Spring’s social media and marketing, particularly for/with children, young people and families.

Partners and stakeholders believed Cultural Springs ***impacts and legacy*** to be:

* A demonstrable track record in delivering quality arts activities and successful engagement of the least engaged.
* Being instrumental in Sunderland having the appetite and confidence to submit the City of Culture 2021 bid.
* Several believed that there would be no Sunderland Culture without Cultural Spring. Sunderland Culture was set up 2018 by Sunderland University, The Mac Trust and Sunderland City Council. It is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) whose mission is to improve life for everyone in Sunderland through culture.
* Embedding an appetite for arts, creative and cultural activities amongst Sunderland and South Tyneside’s residents.
* Summer Streets Festival, now in its seventh year. An annual free music festival aimed at young people and families which was incubated within Cultural Spring for its first four years and is now a standalone project and part of Sunderland’s cultural calendar. It has attracted its own funding and has around 4000 audience members on an annual basis.

A number of partners believe the Cultural Spring programme has *‘opened people’s eyes to culture led regeneration’* throughnew opportunities and strengthening links with other groups and activities.

**SOCIAL MEDIA, MARKETING AND PR**

Cultural Spring’s social media and marketing activities covered:

* **Face to face engagement:** Visits to groups, open days and coffee mornings, audience development plans creation for events such as Heart of the House involving visits to local pubs, groups and venues, and speaking at meetings to promote joint working.
* **Printed materials:** Termly workshop programmes and brochures; Leaflets for direct mail distribution; Leaflet drops at local venues and organisations; Public handouts where possible and appropriate and printed materials given to Artists and Community Champions to distribute.
* **Website:** Developed and grown content and now an important engagement platform for the Project. The website is optimised for mobile platforms and integrates relevant back-end analytics. <https://www.theculturalspring.org.uk>
* **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/culturalspring>
* (2,469 current likes, increase of 935 likes)
* **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/Cultural_Spring>
* (4,200 current followers, increase of 1,664 followers)
* Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/theculturalspring>
* (982 followers, increase of 605\*)
* **Newsletter:** Produced a monthly basis with 1400 subscribers
* **Events listings:** Upcoming events are sent to all relevant local events listing services in Sunderland and South Tyneside and further across the region.
* **Vimeo:** Used to push video content and to present a summary of activities over the year.

**Results**

A total of 23417 social media communications were achieved and 9,051 social media, newsletter likes, followers and subscribers. Activities such as Wearexperimenting which made significant use of social media were more successful at engaging young people.

The Cultural Spring’s AVE (Advertising Value Equivalent) figure, used to measure PR coverage in Phase 2 was a little over £600,000. The majority of coverage was in two titles, The Sunderland Echo and The Shields Gazette - the two principal newspapers covering Cultural Spring's target areas. There was also regular coverage in regional titles, including: The Journal, The Chronicle and The Northern Echo, both paper and online versions. Coverage also appeared in regional arts magazines The Crack and NARC, as well as on BBC Radio Newcastle, Sun FM, Metro Radio and the University of Sunderland's radio station, Spark FM.

**CONCLUSION**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Cultural Spring delivered and largely exceeded 16 of its 21 output targets. Whilst the number of workshop participants was slightly below target, the overall target of 5950 participants was exceeded by 27%, with 7576 participants engaging in Go and See Visits, Creative Workshops and Cultural Calendar commissions. Audience numbers were slightly higher than anticipated at 11,128 against a target of 11000. Those engaged in cultural conversations was 100 against a target of 30 and the Project’s reach through social media communications was considerably greater than anticipated at 23417 against a target of 6000. The number of Community Champions at 25 was below the projected target of 30, however, the increase in volunteers recruited (74 against a target of 30) helped to mitigate this. This can perhaps be explained due to the nature of anticipated engagement levels for Community Champions being greater than that for volunteers, who preferred to engage in the Project on more ad-hoc and less time consuming bases. It should also be pointed out that it was the quality and depth of the engagement that counts rather than simply numbers.

Engagement in the arts and cultural activities has many benefits which extend way beyond intrinsic value, with much wider impacts on health, wellbeing, society/communities, economy, place making and education. Engagement in the arts has been shown to:

* Improve educational attainment across the curriculum. Schools integrating the arts show above average reading and mathematical scores. Drama has been found to improve attendance, literacy and confidence, particularly for students for whom English is a second language. For this reason, creative workshops for children and young people such as Picture Books were particularly important, as were the Go and See trips for families to Do Not Enter Monster Zoo, Dippy on Tour, Slime and the Christmas Pantomime.
* Help to develop skills for the jobs for the future. The increase in automation means that future jobs are likely to require skills that only human beings can bring e.g. creativity, enterprise and empathy. 83% of participants reported new skills development and all four interns moved on to find employment.
* Improve mental health and wellbeing by improving self-esteem, social skills and social inclusion, providing opportunities to develop social support relationships and by providing immersive experiences which encourage mindfulness (i.e. living in the moment) and provide distractions from worries and anxieties. Evidence suggests that those who had attended a cultural place or event in the previous 12 months were almost sixty percent more likely to report good health compared to those who had not, and theatre-goers were almost twenty five percent more likely to report good health. *(Source: The Value of Arts and Culture to People and Society – An Evidence Review, ACE, 2014).* Evidence from this evaluation, particularly feedback from participants in relation to Go and See visits, and Creative Workshops supports their contribution to improved wellbeing with 77% reporting improved wellbeing. 96% of participants reported increased confidence and 78% reported feeling more connected following their engagement.
* Encourage civic pride and community engagement. Cultural Spring’s Community Champions, Volunteers and Partnership all helped to contribute to this, alongside the range of locally delivered activities and events. Participants reported 66% increased pride in the area following their engagement and 57% stated their intention to give back to the community through volunteering activities.
* Provide routes to success for people who are differently abled. For this reason Cultural Spring’s accessible and inclusive activities are important and need further development. For instance Your Art support for Click Click which supported deaf photographers, FODI which support refugees and the visit to ITV Signpost. The Project’s participant rates for people with disabilities averaged 22% which is above the 10% rate for people with disabilities.
* Promote community engagement and cohesion, reduce social exclusion and isolation, make communities feel safer, stronger and more connected – revitalising community pride and resilience. 59% of participants stated their intention to give back to their communities through volunteering. This, if achieved, is above the 33% statistic for those who volunteer on an annual basis. Using the national minimum wage of £8.72 per hour for those aged over 25 years, would mean that if 59% of Cultural Spring’s 7576 participants each only volunteered for just one hour in the coming year – this would equate to a £38,970.00 of voluntary effort into local communities.
* Strengthen infrastructures and boost local economies through the use of local community assets, creative and cultural industries, developing and retaining talent, revitalising places, job creation, savings to the public purse and attracting visitors.
* Make learning fun. People who engage in arts and culture have been found to have a more positive view of themselves through developing their critical thinking skills, creativity and imagination. They also demonstrate improved achievement, engagement, motivation and collaboration. 99% of participants said they would recommend Cultural Spring’s activities to others which suggests their engagements were fun and enjoyable.

The range of opportunities provided for people to engage in arts and cultural activities which they enjoyed and liked doing, has created an appetite and demand for future arts engagement. This suggests that Cultural Spring’s activities have supported the Project vision *‘For arts and culture to be an expected and accepted part of everyone’s lives in Sunderland and South Tyneside.’*

Delivery of local arts made these offerings more accessible and helped to generate civic pride. This in turn, helped to retain people and talent in local areas, with artists and creative practitioners staying because of income earning opportunities and thereby contributes to improved local image, diversity and community cohesion.

The forging of new and strengthening of existing partnerships, collectively committed to arts and culture led regeneration, led to improved coordination and better promotion of the areas many arts and cultural venues, activities and offerings.

Below we address Arts Council England’s (ACE’s) three evaluation questions:

**Are more people from places of least engagement experiencing and inspired by**

**the arts?**

The simple answer is YES. Cultural Spring demonstrated success in reach the least engaged with 91% of those who engaged coming from the target communities of Sunderland (51%) and South Tyneside (40%). Of these 15% reported no previous arts engagement in the previous twelve months and 29% reported only 1-3 engagements in the preceding twelve months. This means that 44% were from the hardest to reach groups or the least engaged amongst the least engaged.

In terms of being inspired by the arts 93% reported an increased appetite for future arts engagement, 99% said they would recommend arts engagement to others and xx% reported thinking differently. A further 59% stated their intention to give back to their local communities following their engagement in Cultural Spring’s activities. These statistics clearly demonstrate that Cultural Spring’s programmed activities were successful in terms of inspiring people through the arts. Illustrative quotes include: ‘*Never too old to experience new things’* , *‘I now want to discover more’, ‘Experiencing something new just made me want to get out there and join in’* and *‘There is a wide world of possibilities out there’.*

Strong and effective working partnerships and cross organisational/sectoral collaborations have been key to Cultural Spring’s success. There was a real sense amongst those interviewed of genuine partnership working and all pulling in the same direction to bring high quality and varied arts engagement opportunities to the least engaged in Sunderland and South Tyneside. For instance: Local Authorities acted as conduits to help extend reach into some of the harder to reach communities; Joint programming, for instance with Helix Arts to deliver Dance for Health and Falling on Your Feet demonstrated how bringing the arts and health agendas together can help deliver positive health and wellbeing outcomes for older people; Joint funding with NEPN for the Wear Experimenting project meant a larger project with extended reach was able to be delivered; Working with local schools to deliver the Picture Books Project ensured access to families and children and created a local buzz; Partnerships with the University of Sunderland, The Mac Trust and the Customs House meant there was a strategic high profile platform which helped raise the profile of arts and the benefits of art engagement.

**The extent to which the aspiration for excellence of art and excellence in the**

**process of engaging communities has been achieved?**

Cultural Spring worked with a diverse range of professional artists, creative practitioner, organisations and companies to deliver its arts engagements activities and to help extend reach to those who were least engaged in the arts. In so doing it helped to quality assure provision. The individuals who sat Community Forums, the Steering Group, or whom worked in partnership to design and deliver activities such as Community Champions and Your Art panel members, or who supported Cultural Spring in other ways, such as volunteers and interns brought diversity, community capital and a wealth of different and complementary skills, knowledge, experience and inspiration and played a central role in the Project’s creation, design, promotion and delivery.

The notion of ‘excellent art’ is a loaded and very subjective term. We have chosen to look at this through the lens of participants and audience members to see if they would recommend the activities they engaged in to others – word of mouth being the best recommendation and cheapest form of promotion. On this basis 99% said they would recommend to others.

59% of respondents stated their intention to become more involved in their local communities. This suggests that their engagement with Cultural Spring as participants, audience members and co-creators were enjoyable and positive experiences and that they could see the benefits of such engagement and are therefore willing to give back to their communities through volunteering. This potential future community engagement will contribute to improved community cohesion and enhanced resilience, enhanced wellbeing, improved social capital and reduced isolation – all of which will have positive wellbeing impacts.

Cultural Spring’s creativity in the different ways and processes it deployed for engaging communities in the arts – as consumers (i.e. participants and audiences), but perhaps more importantly as, co-creators. Co-creators ensured that Cultural Spring’s activities were both grounded in what local communities wanted, whilst at the same time pushing the boundaries for people to experience new high quality arts activities. They also embedded arts provision within local communities, and it is a well-known fact that people support that which they have helped to create – all of which suggests enhanced sustainability and community resilience.

Large commissions and events helped with profile raising, place making, civic pride, large audience numbers and attracting new companies to deliver in the area. Some projects were more successful at attracting younger people, noticeably Wear Experimenting and Picture Books. Others were more successful at attracting older people for instance Go and See and Creative Workshops.

Cultural Spring therefore demonstrated excellence in the process of engaging communities –as consumers of art and as co-creators and in so doing embedded an appetite for ongoing arts engagement. As one co-creator said – *‘We need to support what we believe in’.*

**Which approaches have been successful and what lessons can be learned?**

In terms of delivery:

***Creative workshops*** proved to be very popular and given their more involved levels of engagement, provided a rich data source to mine in terms of the benefits to individuals. The range of workshops on offer and the numbers attending demonstrate good value for money. Workshops were a good way of wetting the appetites for future arts engagement and for building confidence, improving wellbeing, increased activity levels, enhanced social connections and encouraging participants to give back to their local communities. They tended to attract an older demographic so consideration could be given to running more children/young people friendly/focussed workshops perhaps in school holidays to expand demographics,

***Go and See visits*** were also popular and again represented good value for money. They provided stimulation and inspiration, moved people outside of their comfort zones, encouraged the import of arts activities into their own local communities, for instance the Biteize theatre performance of Scheherazade, first seen at a visit to The Edinburgh Fringe. Go and See visit also contributed to improved wellbeing. However, there were a number of repeat Go and See participants and some participants from out with the target areas. Priority should be given to participants from target areas and for new participants. Additionally, future Go and See visits could be arranged with certain target participants in mind. For instance attendance at Caribbean Festivals, Black History Events, and Asian Melas to attract different demographic or encourage participation amongst specific target groups.

Go and See visits tended to attract older people, unless they were to family friendly festival or outdoor attractions. Consideration could be given to tailoring more future Go and See trips to encourage more young people and families to attend where the objective is to encourage the least engaged in the arts. Consideration needs to be given to the purpose of Go and See trips – importing, expanding horizons, widening participation etc

***Large scale commissions*** and events were costly and took up almost one quarter of Cultural Spring’s budget, however they did reach large audiences. Picture Books was a particularly successful project. It exceeded targets, successfully engaged children and their parents, was high profile, was good value for money, produced new cultural products and no doubt sowed the seed for future creative endeavours amongst the children engaged.

Wear Experimenting was an ambitious and costly project, which failed to deliver against it stated objectives. The creative concept was too loose, the outcomes unrealistic and there was a need for stronger project management on projects of this scale. Whilst large numbers were engaged and greater numbers of young people involved, these engagements were minimal and therefore the project’s ability to meaningfully engage and therefore generate any significant benefits and longer term impacts was questionable. Having said this, there are lessons to be learned vis-a-vis contract/project management for similar large commissions in the future and around the project’s successful use of social media to attract young people.

There is a need to put in place more effective ways of quickly capturing meaningful outcome data from audiences in any future project.

***Co-creator*** processes were an invaluable part of Cultural Spring’s modus operandi and successful delivery. For instance Your Art represented a relatively small portion of Cultural Spring’s budget £60,047.00 or 6% and resulted in 82 co-designed pilot arts activities being delivered in communities. We are given to believe that a number of these pilot projects led on to further arts activities, but no statistics were available to quantify this. This was in part because of the preference to keep monitoring and reporting requirements to a minimum for pilot projects. A simple telephone follow up should be made in future to Your Art projects to capture useful legacy information in a consistent way.

Cultural Spring’s approach to genuine partnership building and working led to leveraging considerable additional monies to enhance and expand provision – with £1.16 million being secured in match funding. Their approach to supporting artists and creative practitioners engaged in delivery helped to build capacity. However, firmer contracting arrangements could have been put in place particularly for large commissions to ensure more robust collection of output, outcome and impact data. Similarly, further work could be undertaken with artists, creative practitioners and organisations delivering Cultural Spring contracts in the future to enhance Cultural Spring’s branding. We understand that previous attempts to engage those commissioned into groupings was unsuccessful, but this is something that should be revisited in the future and could form part of contracting arrangements. This would help to ensure consistency of approach amongst those commissioned in the collection of data required by Cultural Spring.

Co-creators brought with them: local knowledge and expertise, community capital/credentials, passion for the arts and arts promotion and were instrumental in Cultural Spring demonstrating diversity, inclusion and excellence in its processes of engagement. All Co Creators carried out a variety of roles and became involved with Cultural Spring in different ways. Word of mouth played a huge part in engaging Co Creators and has led to varying levels of engagement. Some heard about it at Trades Union meetings and others first came across Cultural Spring at their local libraries. For many they first became involved through engaging with Cultural Spring’s programmed activities such as, ukulele bands , dance groups (RUSH) or through the Great North Passion. This led to them becoming Community Champions.

Cultural Spring’s Community Champions provided a network of people who were and still are passionate about the arts and who wanted to bring arts activities/events to their local communities. They successfully worked with the Cultural Spring to shape provision and in so doing provided a degree of local community legitimacy. Co-creators not only helped to increase engagement in the arts, they also increased and diversified their own levels of participation, through for example, Go and See trips and Bitesize performances.

The choice and use of the right local community friendly venues made a big difference and contributed to bringing art provision to the areas and people with least engagement. Co-creators were extremely active in promoting and increasing the profile of Cultural Spring’s activities. They were the foot soldiers on the ground for Cultural Spring who helped to increase attendance, enhance local and community pride and promote community cohesion.

Cultural Spring provided unique opportunities for local in people from Sunderland and South Tyneside to take part in its Programme, not just as passive audience members, or activity participants, but also as decision makers, developing, shaping and informing what took place. These opportunities resulted in people feeling empowered and being proud of the ‘quality’ of the resultant activities/art produced and further raised the profile of the arts in these localities.

**Social media and marketing**

This is an area that requires constant attention and improvement., particularly given the Government’s aspirations for a truly digital Britain. A total of 23417 social media communications were achieved against a target of 6000 and 9,051 social media, newsletter likes, followers and subscribers. It would be useful to put these in the context of digital users from the target areas and groups.

**Cultural Spring’s strategic role** can be summarised as follows:

* Raised the profile of the arts in Sunderland and South Tyneside.
* Supported the health and wellbeing of communities.
* Supported and initiated affordable and inclusive arts activities.
* Worked with partner to bring art projects to disadvantaged areas.
* Increased opportunities for residents in Sunderland and South Tyneside to engage in and be inspired by high quality arts activities and events.
* Nurtured and embedded an ongoing appetite for arts engagement amongst participants.
* Supported provision for local artists, practitioners and groups to inform and deliver of great arts experiences.
* Worked with communities to co-create arts activities .
* Helped to secure new partnerships to maximise resources and leverage additional funds to enhance arts delivery in target communities.
* Nurtured and inspired individuals and groups.
* Built community capacity and infrastructure.
* Helped with refreshed place making.

**Project’s Legacy**

In summary, theProject’s legacy is a strong arts and cultural network/partnership working across Sunderland and South Tyneside, at both strategic and local community levels. Examples include: The Inventors Project developed by Dominic Wilcox – a project which worked with local school children to stretch their imaginations and draw invention ideas with no limits. The best ideas were selected to be brought to life by professional makers and designers, showing that children’s ideas are worth taking seriously, and it led to the creation of worldwide project, Little Inventors. This project involved some 500 children as well as some older people and people with disabilities and; The Creative Garden and Upcycling Furniture activities which have engaged people aged 20 – 70 years, enabled community ownership and increased civic pride. As a result of Your Art a total of82 co-designed pilot arts activities/events were developed at a cost of £60,057.00, involving 67 organisations and many have continued to deliver activities.

* Improved wellbeing amongst participants with attendant reduced calls on health and social care services, thus contributing to public purse savings in these areas.
* Place making for Sunderland and South Tyneside as areas experiencing cultural regeneration and not now simply associated with the old traditional industries of ship building and mining, but with the arts, culture and festivals.
* Summer Streets Festival, a free art and music festival in Sunderland, is now a legacy project run by the community. The event has been running since 2014.
* It is estimated 6000 people visited the Summer Streets Festival last year alone, for music, comedy, dance, creative workshops and more. The festival sees many local bands and creative workshops delivered during the day, proving popular with both children and families. Now in its seventh year it’s a model that works and one incubated within Cultural Spring for its first four years. Cultural Spring’s contribution to raising the confidence of both community groups and professional artists/creative practitioners has enabled it to carry on to the present day. The festival is now a standalone project and part of Sunderland’s cultural calendar. It has attracted its own funding and has around 4000 - 6000 audience members on an annual basis.
* The establishment of Sunderland Culture which was set up 2018 by Sunderland University, The Mac Trust and Sunderland City Council and now an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), whose mission is to improve life for everyone in Sunderland through culture.
* Significant contribution to art and culture now being as an expected and accepted part of everyone’s lives in Sunderland and South Tyneside – Cultural Spring’s Vision.
* Community capacity building and community cohesion using arts engagement as a vehicle to achieve this.

Cultural Spring’s arts activities provided a powerful creative force to connect people, inspire people and make them feel good about themselves. In so doing it contributed to social cohesion, place making and much needed ways for people to express themselves.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Cultural Spring’s staff team was a small one and the work they delivered in terms of programming, partnership building, contracting, commissioning, co-ordination, monitoring, reporting and measuring activities was substantial and should be applauded. So whilst this report makes a list of recommendations, as did our two formative reports, it should be noted that these need to be prioritised.

1. For large projects and commissions, cost benefit analysis should be considered, particularly in terms of levels of engagement and the likely impact this will have on embedding an appetite and love of the arts amongst the least engaged.
2. Contracting arrangements for larger events and commissions could be tightened to ensure expectations are aligned from the start and clarity about promotion, IPR, joint branding and data capture responsibilities. When commissioning future work, Cultural Spring should consider articulating the aims and objectives for the commission, allied to the Cultural Spring’s overarching aims and objectives, outcomes and impacts in contracting documents. This would help to provide greater clarity of purpose and shared goals and would help to re-enforce and embed the Project’s ethos.
3. Given the size, scale and popularity of Cultural Spring’s workshop programme, more rigorous follow up is needed to ensure that a greater percentage of evaluation forms are completed and returned. This might best be achieved through working more closely with the artists commissioned to deliver the workshops and through contracting arrangements.
4. Consideration should be given as to how these creative workshops might be sustained beyond the lifetime of Cultural Spring. For instance, re-visiting charges for these workshops for those able to pay or offering ‘bundle’ discounts – where participants buy four and get on free.
5. Further thought needs to be given to programming creative workshops that would appeal to men or people from ethnic minorities, based on analysis of previous workshop attendance.
6. There could be closer alignment between the workshops delivered and the programmed Go and See events to further embed arts engagement. This could be achieved through targeted invitations e.g. Theatre and Performance workshops and visits to the theatre or Sewing workshops and visits to textile related exhibitions. This would help to further embed arts engagement.
7. Consideration could be given to targeting black, Asian, minority ethnic groups as future participants in Go and See visits – perhaps through working with and through BAME gateway organisations.
8. Given funders’ increased focus on investing in outcomes and impacts rather than outputs, consideration as to how artists, creative practitioners and commissioned organisations might be supported to articulate, capture and report on these areas should be given some thought. This would help build capacity.
9. Cultural Spring might want to consider, if practicable, allowing for longer lead in times for commissioned organisations to encourage and enable larger audiences and greater numbers of participants, i.e. the gap between been commissioned and starting delivery.
10. Cultural Spring to circulate a short survey to all previous Your Art pilot projects to build a picture and evidence base for this approach.
11. Consideration could be given to more actively engaging co-creators and in particular Community Champions in the planning of future marketing for events and activities.
12. Co-creators should be encouraged to share their experiences as part of future marketing campaigns to extend reach through the use of realistic achievable role models.
13. Cultural Spring might want to undertake demographic analysis of Co-creators to ascertain if gaps exist and to then put in place plans to redress this.
14. Consideration should be given to how to best support and utilise existing community champions who have proven themselves to be loyal volunteers, supportive promoters, enablers and advocates for Cultural Spring. This could help with sustainability of future activities and ensure the least engaged are targeted and supported.
15. Cultural Spring might want to consider undertaking a review of their current marketing and communications to ascertain what has worked well and why and what has not and why – in terms of cost benefit analysis and reach into target communities. This could help feed into the development of a future SMART marketing action plan – allied to the last year of the current CPP and the 3 years for the future CPP Programme.
16. Consideration could be given to developing more and stronger partnerships with thematic gateway organisations working to support, for example, BAME, LGBGTQ, Refugees and Asylum Seekers and Youth organisations, as a way to increase their engagement and involvement. New partners sought should clearly align with Cultural Spring’s future strategy.
17. Creating an email capture form to increase newsletter subscribers, through an added section to the website. This would build relationships and help to keep people informed.
18. Consideration could also be given to SMS (text marketing) to promote upcoming events to people who have used them before.
19. Resolving issues around permissions for the creation of some quick video case studies on smartphones, so that people can see from members of their own community. These could be uploaded to the website, be posted on social media, included in the newsletter and be used individual’ own Facebook pages. Facebook could also be used to live stream videos, projects/activities/events - turning them into virtual events.
20. Creating topical articles/expert opinion pieces around why the arts is important, top ten tips on how to access certain activities? Demonstrating health and wellbeing benefits to art very topical at the moment – all pointing back to the website.
21. If the people Cultural Spring wants to target use Facebook, and Twitter then consideration could be given to advertising with these.
22. Setting targets for certain groups of people to engage in CPP Phase 3, which would then guide/frame engagement and promotional activities.