Learning Innovation Research Group and
The Applied Research Centre in Sustainable Regeneration

Final Evaluation Report

Evaluation of
The Belgrade Theatre Creative Gymnasium Project, Coventry.
Funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

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Executive summary

Overview
This evaluation reports on the findings of a study undertaken by Coventry University into the impact and effectiveness of the Creative Gymnasium project. The study used arts-based inquiry to examine participants and stakeholders perspectives. The aim of the Creative Gymnasium project, delivered by the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, was to examine the benefits of drama and arts activities for improving and maintaining the physical and mental health and well-being of two of Coventry’s priority areas for health: teenage pregnancy/sexual health and the 50+ age group.

Aim
This evaluation sought to examine the benefits of drama and arts activities for improving and maintaining the physical and mental health and well-being of the 50+ age group and teenage pregnancy/sexual health by using arts-informed inquiry to:
1. Understand participants’ gains in terms of health and well-being from using the arts through activity and interaction with others, from both an immediate, medium and long term perspective.
2. To understand the impact of an arts programme on participants' lives.
3. To investigate the possible and actual benefits to stakeholders.
4. To examine the extent to which this programme improves health and well-being and is able to sustain that improvement over time.

Key findings
The findings to date from across the study appear to indicate 8 important features:

1. Engaging in drama and arts activities provided forms of creative encounters and processes that were valued by participants. Examples included the development of a new and broad set of relationships which encompassed peer to peer, individual and facilitator, individual and family as well as between audience and the wider community. Such interactions amongst participants extended beyond
the creative process and influenced the roles, relationships and routines of participants’ everyday lives.

2. Participants’ skills and confidence improved through taking risks, for example in sharing personal material, public speaking, and generally doing things that previously individuals did not think they could do, or had opportunity to do. Such risk taking was fulfilling and rewarding.

3. Participants believed they gained a greater sense of agency, voice and presence in their community. This occurred through the creative process and products developed, such as digital stories, educational materials and public performances.

4. The skill set of the professional artist\(^1\) who was the workshop facilitator was a core contributor to effective participant engagement. For example, participants valued the facilitators who were generous, considerate, encouraging, with expertise in interactive and participatory performance encounters, and who demonstrated the ability to encourage and value participants’ ideas and contributions.

5. The connection with the respected theatre company added both kudos and value to the drama and arts activities.

6. Partnership between organisations and sharing of (established) networks and contacts helped to support ‘new’ projects in achieving their outcomes in a timely way, for example by inviting participation from individuals already engaged or known to services who may be perceived to benefit.

7. Effective partnership between stakeholders (including participants) needed to be a continual process of negotiation, discussion and reflection for all those involved in the project. This should include the ethical handling of data and or project outputs and their use and availability beyond the lifetime of the study.

\(^1\)There were two the professional artists one for the 50+ group and one for the young people’s group who facilitated the arts-based activities and hereafter will be referred to as the workshop facilitator.
8) Participant gains were evident from both an immediate and medium term perspective, however, due to the short time frame of the project it was not possible to give clear indications of possible long term benefits.

Key messages

➢ Participants’ engagement in an artistic occupation was self-validating; individuals realized that working in groups through the arts was valuable and brought a sense of community cohesion.

➢ Participants expressed that being involved provided an opportunity to address and influence a range of physical and psychosocial issues, for example, achieving personal goals, becoming better at public speaking, improved levels of confidence, shifting routines, reducing pain, and enabling participation despite disability.

➢ Social isolation was recognized by the participants as being greater than they had initially realized, and that being valued by others not only increased their self-esteem but also helped them to value themselves and their role in the project.

➢ The role of the professional artist as facilitator was valued in terms of the support and guidance offered, which enabled participants to feel both safe and confident in the activities in which they engaged.

➢ Participants believed they had become empowered through both storytelling and story sharing. The impact of being heard, valuing other people’s and their own voices were recognized by participants as having personal benefits in relation to well-being, enabling them to experience pride, accomplishment and presence.

➢ Transition was seen in the participants’ awareness of their own strengths and future potential: to accomplish, develop skills, and take on other activities outside the group.

➢ It was evident that participants experienced shifts in learning resulting in personal growth, redolent of transitional spaces; ‘transitional spaces are encountered when a
challenge or query prompts a reconsideration of views and perspectives . . . shifts in position occur in particular areas of peoples’ lives, at different times and in distinct ways’ (adapted from Savin-Baden, 2007:71).

Evidence and recommendations from the project, in combination with new partnerships established, will contribute to the Belgrade’s future delivery of arts activity to the older adult population, with the aim of this group becoming a key part of the delivery infrastructure of the city. In terms of young people, whilst the Belgrade were already working with youth theatre groups and schools, this project allowed them to work with schools in a new way and to offer an opportunity to young mothers, a group that would not traditionally be included, or who would not perceive drama to be open to them.

Suggestions for further research and practice
1. A comparative study of similar populations in different areas of the country (for example comparing those in areas of perceived poverty with those of perceived privilege in the 50+ age group).

2. Undertaking a study to explore wider (gender) issues around young parenting particularly in relation to seeking young male perspectives.

3. The commissioning of a longitudinal study (2-3 years) that will examine long term benefits of drama and arts activities for improving and maintaining physical and mental health and well-being.

4. A study that explores issues around the similarities and differences’ between stakeholder and participants’ relative wants, views, needs, requirements and outcomes when using drama and arts activities to examine health benefits.

5. Undertaking arts and drama based inter-generational work with younger and older people over a period of 2-3 years to focus on relationships and learning from one another.
6. Further research is needed to examine how different contexts influence study outcomes. For example, if established groups respond more positively to drama and art interventions than groups which are newly formed and have relied on diverse means of recruitment, or groups held at a theatre as compared to in a community centre of school.

7. Piloting a range of ways of delivering Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) drama based lessons, some focused on schools and others focused on venues outside of school, which could also examine the long term impact on behaviour related to sexual health.
Main Report

Introduction

This evaluation reports on the findings of a study undertaken by Coventry University into the impact and effectiveness of the Creative Gymnasium project. The study used arts-based inquiry to examine participants and stakeholders perspectives. The aim of the Creative Gymnasium project, delivered by the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, was to examine the benefits of drama and arts activities for improving and maintaining the physical and mental health and well-being across two of Coventry’s priority areas for health, the 50+ age group and teenage pregnancy/sexual health. Creative activities and health are an integral element of government policy and health guidelines (Social Exclusion Unit, 2004; Department of Health, 2007; National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, 2008). One strand of the Creative Gymnasium project focused on isolated and marginalised individuals and the other strand focused on using drama with young people to develop an educational resource. Whilst the Belgrade Theatre has a strong track record in community arts projects, it is notable that the over 50+ population in the City was not a group the Belgrade had worked with previously.

The evaluation of the project was undertaken by Coventry University Learning Innovation Research Group and the Applied Research Centre in Sustainable Regeneration.

Research aims

The purposes of this evaluation were to:

1. Understand participants’ gains in terms of health and well-being from using the arts through activity and interaction with others, from both an immediate and medium perspective.
2. To understand the impact of an arts programme on participants' lives.
3. To investigate the possible and actual benefits to stakeholders.
4. To examine the extent to which this programme improved health and well-being and was able to sustain that improvement over time.
5. To promote awareness of how the use of an arts programme may both raise levels of health and wellbeing and provide long term benefits as well as providing examples of good practice which can be shared with other areas.

6. To understand if, and to what extent, the project reduced isolation for those involved, and if so how.

7. To consider the implications for policy and practice for Coventry’s Older People’s Partnership and Respect Yourself Programme.

8. To examine the implications for policy and practice for Coventry’s Strategic approach to sexual health and teenage pregnancy.

Background

In health policy it is recognised that certain groups of people may be more likely to experience social isolation, such as older people, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health issues and people with long term health conditions. Social isolation needs to be understood in a wide sense; whilst often being linked directly to the politicised term of ‘social exclusion’ it also cuts across divisions of social class, ethnicity, gender and disability. Creative activities and health are an integral element of government policy and health guidelines (Department of Health, Arts Council England, 2007; 2011 National Arts Policy Roundtable; National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence [NICE] 2008; Social Exclusion Unit, 2004). Yet whilst the link between (arts) activity and health is well established through research (for example, Macnaughton, et al, 2005; Greaves and Farbus, 2006; Belardinelli et al., 2008; Howells and Zelnik, 2009; Hampshire and Matthijsse, 2010; Skingley and Vella-Burrows, 2010; Stacey and Stickley, 2010) the current evidence base regarding the effectiveness of interventions targeting social isolation is poor (Dickens et al, 2011), and requires further development.

There is now an increasing body of work that has documented the effectiveness of using the arts or creative approaches when working with young and older people. For example, arts activity and health (Macnaughton, et al, 2005) drama has been used as a pedagogical tool in education and health (Knowles and Cole, 2008; Rowe et al., 2011). The arts are considered a means of opening up engagement in new ways of expression and enthusiasm, and encouraging people to participate in ways that are
exciting, fun and inclusive. Building on the aforementioned research and literature, this project sought to explore the influence of theatre and performance with a diverse range of socially isolated older adults and young people. Ethical approval for this project was granted through Coventry University Research Ethics Committee (P1362/28.09.11).

The Belgrade Theatre conceptualised the project in the following stages over a 12 month period to include:

- Stage I – Recruitment and convening of the groups (older people; young parents; young people)
- Stage II – Developmental workshops (older people; young parents; young people)
- Stage III – Development and dissemination of resources

The evaluation, undertaken by researchers at Coventry University used arts-informed inquiry and adopted an iterative cycle of data collection and the sharing of findings.

Methodology and methods

Arts-based research has gained increasing attention from qualitative scholars and the spectrum of arts-based approaches offer spaces to both interrupt and create space for discussions about dominant discourses in research and practice across a variety of disciplines. This study recognised the distinction drawn by Savin-Baden and Major (2012) into different types of arts-based research, namely that there are three possible delineations:

1. Arts-based inquiry: where the artistic process is used as research by artists, researchers and participants in order to understand the art itself or understand a phenomenon through the artistic process
2. Arts-informed inquiry: which is of two types;
   a. Where art is used to represent the findings of a study
   b. Where art is used to represent a response to the findings of an issue or situation studied
3. Arts-informing inquiry: where art is used in order to evoke a response from an audience (in the broadest sense) made to a situation or issue; the response may or may not be captured.

Arts-informed inquiry was selected here as a means of representing the findings from the study and as a means of representing the response of participants towards the health issues and situations being targeted. As researchers engaged as participants and observers within the inquiry process, a conscious decision was made to follow guiding principles underpinning this approach which are:

1. The research is guided by moral commitment
2. Knowledge is generated through the work
3. There is a strong focus on reflexivity
4. Accessibility is a strong focal point
5. Diverse forms of quality are celebrated together
6. There is a sense of authenticity

(Savin-Baden and Major, 2012)

The research team’s methodological approach was therefore based on participatory methods and arts-informed inquiry, whilst also seeking to be socially just. In striving for shared understandings and locating shared values, the team believed they were in a strong position to shape an evaluation design that connected with the experiences of participants at all stages of the evaluation.

Data collection

Researchers at Coventry University developed a clear framework and research context in order to understand both the creative process and the research process. As well as documenting the process of the project and the production of resources, the team captured the journey of individuals. Furthermore, stakeholder perspectives were obtained at interim points throughout the 12 month project. In order to undertake a comprehensive evaluation, a wide range of qualitative methods were used to collect accounts from both the young people and the 50+ group.
Table 1 Data collection across the project strands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Those involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early September 2011</td>
<td>Creation of media release forms, consent forms and participant information for agreement of all parties</td>
<td>Coventry University&lt;br&gt;The Belgrade Theatre and Key stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October - November 2011</td>
<td>Initial interview with participants</td>
<td>Older adults (n=2)&lt;br&gt;Older adult stakeholders (n=1)&lt;br&gt;Young people (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October-2011-May 2012</td>
<td>Collection and creation of digital stories and case studies</td>
<td>Older adults (n=9)&lt;br&gt;Young people (n=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2011</td>
<td>3 Interactive focus groups (groups of 6-8 people)</td>
<td>Group 1 Older adults (n=7)&lt;br&gt;Group 2 Older adults (n=6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2012</td>
<td>Interview with participants Meeting with potential new group</td>
<td>Older adults (n=2)&lt;br&gt;Young people (n=5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb – April 2012</td>
<td>Interviews with stakeholders Meeting with further potential new group</td>
<td>Older adult stakeholders (n=3)&lt;br&gt;Young people stakeholders (n=4)&lt;br&gt;Young people (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March/April 2012</td>
<td>Audience feedback</td>
<td>Older adult sharing event&lt;br&gt;Young people digital stories sharing event at The Belgrade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2012</td>
<td>Interactive focus groups (groups of 6-8 people)</td>
<td>Group 1 Older adults (n=7)&lt;br&gt;Group 2 Young people (n=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2012</td>
<td>Interview with participants who left project</td>
<td>Older adults (n=2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June/July 2012</td>
<td>Interview with participants Interactive focus groups within schools</td>
<td>Older adults (n=4)&lt;br&gt;Young people (n=24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2012</td>
<td>Interview with Stakeholders</td>
<td>Stakeholder (n=1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2012</td>
<td>Older People Symposium and ‘Shine On’ Performance&lt;br&gt;Young People ‘Under Pressure’ Symposium</td>
<td>Observation, discussion and reflection, evaluation forms completed&lt;br&gt;Opportunity for research team to consider cross study themes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
50+ Group qualitative data collection:
Data were collected from the 50+ strand of the project which included:

- a city centre group, who met at the Belgrade Theatre
- a sheltered residential home, whose workshops were held in the residential setting
- an Asian Women’s group who met in a local suburb
- a group held on the ward environment at Coventry and Warwickshire University Hospital with out-patients receiving dialysis treatment (a short set of 3 workshops over 3 weeks)

The recruitment and convening of all the groups and facilitation of the 10 week workshop programmes was conducted by the workshop facilitator. Assistance in this task was provided by a Support Worker from Age UK Coventry.

Data gathered from across the different 50+ groups included:

Participant interviews and focus groups – 20 minute interviews and focus groups were undertaken with participants at the start, interim and end of the 10 week workshop programme, to gain an understanding of individuals’ hopes, expectations, and experiences (interviews n=10; focus groups n=3)

Participant observation of drama based sessions - a researcher attended several sessions across the different groups during the 10 week programme and observed the interaction, and also participated in the creation of the interaction as participant observer.

Ethno drama - was used to produce a range of performances which demonstrated participants’ experiences. This included not only the development of written scripts by participants, but also the exploration and reflections of participant perspectives through story boards, creative writing, art work (made into an animated film) and performance. Data were collected for this in the form of postcards, sharing journeys
and experiences which were captured by photographs and storyboards as well as audience feedback. The performances included the following:

- Interim sharing event used to demonstrate the abilities and work generated by the city centre group and the sheltered housing residence, presented together at the Belgrade Theatre in front of an invited audience of family and friends, March, 2012

- Interim sharing event to illustrate the work from the Asian women’s group which included the ladies working with a visual artist to create 2D images of the women’s stories they had developed, which was made into a short film. The live event, held at the Belgrade Theatre in May 2012, performed in front of an invited audience of family and friends, which presented live storytelling from the group participants and the presentations of their film ‘Mera Pind’

- ‘Shine On’ Performance, this was the 50+ group’s final performance at the Belgrade 28 – 30th June, 1st October followed by a local tour.

**Stakeholder interviews** These were undertaken with staff who represented Age UK Coventry and Coventry Health Improvement Programme and Theatre artists (n= 5). It also included feedback from participants’ families through audience feedback at performances of ‘Shine On’ and ‘Mera Pind’.

**Sharing of artefacts** Visual data were collected to capture participant perspectives at various stages of the project across the different groups and were used for both data collection and dissemination purposes. Artefacts included homemade crafts, sewing, needlepoint, dress jewellery (in particular from the Asian women), postcards, poetry, drawings, photographs and storyboards.

**The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS)** a health outcomes framework tool, recommended by the NHS Confederation (2011) was a tool the research team were requested to adopt, which was administered at the beginning and end of three workshop programmes (see Table 2) to gain statistical data to measure population-level progress for well-being.
Table 2 WEMWBS data set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>No. Completed Initial</th>
<th>No. Completed Follow-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential housing group</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City centre group</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian women’s group</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note that the WEMWBS performs well against accepted criteria at a population level and that the WEMWBS was developed to enable monitoring of population health. It is therefore recognised that the scale is likely to appeal to those evaluating mental health promotion initiatives, because of its positive focus, (Tennant et al, 2007). However, further research is needed to ensure that the scale is sensitive to change, and in terms of this study it is acknowledged that small numbers of participants completed the tool.
Young people’s group data collection

In the evaluation of the Creative Gymnasium project’s work with young people a wide range of data were collected which have informed this report which included:

Participant observation of drama based sessions The researchers attended the majority of the workshop sessions held at Valley House and observed the interaction as well as participating in the drama workshops as participant observers.

Semi-structured interviews (young parents n= 3, stakeholders n= 4) Participants were interviewed during the creation of the digital stories. Stakeholders involved in both the delivery, management and commissioning of the Creative Gymnasium project were interviewed, including representatives from Valley House, a film maker and workshop facilitator.

Focus group using creative methods. Data were collected through audio recording and photographs of visual representations of before, during and after the project. A focus group was held in the final workshop to gain post project reflections.

Digital stories – the creation of digital stories was both data and outcome. The four participants worked with a film maker to create three short films, using oral recording of their voice, stills of personal artefacts and animated images. Audience feedback was collected following the initial screening of the stories.

Observations –The research team observed delivery of Relationship and Sex Education lessons at two schools and collected observational data relating to both context and interaction within the lessons.

Visual and textual feedback data were collected from young people and staff at two schools, via post cards and group work on flip charts. Teachers at two of the four schools who had delivered the lesson plans also contributed their views.

2 Valley House is a community centre that provides access to a fully trained staff team 24 hours a day and a range of fully furnished, safe and secure shared and single family accommodation. Working with the community and particularly hard-to-reach disadvantaged families, individuals and groups in a complementary and collaborative manner in response to their differing needs.

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Use of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS). The majority of participants (n = 3) completed this at the beginning and the end of the project.

Table 3 WEMWBS data set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>No. Completed Initial</th>
<th>No. Completed Follow-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young parent group</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analysis across the project stands

Analysis of the qualitative data occurred in a number of ways, but initially by analysing the qualitative data from the separate groups and then comparing the cross over themes and outcomes. Interpretive interactionism was adopted to analyse the data, as it is an approach that takes account of cultural representation, gender, issues of class and biography. In this approach the researcher’s focus is on understanding the logical structures of participant meaning making, which provides a focus for the interpretation. As the researchers were often also part of the group activity, the analysis took into account the intellectual and personal presence of the researchers within the process (Cotterill and Letherby, 1993). The researchers also used a reflexive process to consider the challenges and complexities of using arts-based inquiry to evaluate an arts-based project. The importance of maintaining data integrity in the representation of, and sharing of, the process and products from the inquiry process was deemed to be a crucial part of the evaluation process. The research team were keen to ensure a respectful portrayal and representation of participant’s data. For example, themes and ideas for data representation (an arts-based installation, which would be on show in the foyer of the Belgrade Theatre) were shared with the 50+ participants during an evaluation workshop – from which positive support was voiced by participants for sharing their stories in this way.

In terms of the quantitative data, each item of the 14 item responses in the WEMWBS are scored from 1 (none of the time) to 5 (all of the time) and a total scale score is calculated by summing up the 14 individual item scores (Appendix 1), giving a minimum score of 14 and maximum score of 70. All items are scored positively. Individuals completing the scale were required to tick the box that best described their experience of each statement over the past two weeks. A higher WEMWBS score
therefore indicated a higher level of mental well-being. A Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test calculation was performed on the 50+ WEMWBS data. This is a non-parametric statistical test which was used across the three groups (city centre, sheltered housing, established community group) to assess pre and post test scores to calculate effect size and any statistical significance. In addition, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was performed to calculate how the 50+ groups compared, and if any differences in pre and post test scores could be attributed to other factors related to the three groups, for example in relation to context. Due to the available data from the young parent group it was not possible to confidently carry out the Wilcoxon calculation. The small sample size meant the test did not find that any difference was statistically significant. Even if the calculation did find a difference the effect size was not large enough to have a high power (in this case an effect size of about 4 would be needed).

Findings from the 50+ Group

A multicultural mix of participants was involved in the Creative Gymnasium project, both female and male with ages ranging from 50+ to 80+. As outlined, three different strands of the project involved a community based Asian women’s group, a sheltered housing residence and a city centre group. Cross-sectional data were also gathered from three workshop events held on a hospital ward with male out-patients undergoing dialysis treatment. Participants’ experiences of engaging with the arts in these different spaces are presented, along with other stakeholder perspectives, using art examples that portray particular compositional narratives under the following themed areas:

- Beginnings
- The influence of others
- Shifting perspectives
- Performing

*Beginnings*

This theme represents participants’ and stakeholders’ response towards a new opportunity. It describes the sense of disruption and challenge they experienced as a result of being involved in the project. There were two main perspectives portrayed here: the stakeholders who saw the project as innovative and atypical and participants
who were disarmed and stimulated by the challenge of the arts-based interventions. The collation of the participants’ responses was drawn together through an arts-based installation below (Figure 1) and is also explained further by the textual data as follows:

Figure 1 Arts-based representation of findings: Beginnings

The beginning phase marked a period of intrigue and interest around the project and what it might offer to the 50+ population of Coventry. An early response was captured from the manager of the Citizen Involvement Team, Coventry City Council:

There’s been quite a big focus on mental health and wellbeing and I thought this was a different vehicle, as the majority of projects are about physical health . . . it gives a really good change rather than just physical activity, healthy eating, you know, those kinds of messages. I thought it
would be really interesting to give people more of an option, because not everybody wants to go walking or, you know . . .

The emphasis that the Creative Gymnasium offered something *inclusive* whilst *untypical*, which could target a number of agendas for the city, was clearly evident for this City Council manager:

I thought it offered a wider sort of remit to promote to older people and I really think it could tick mental health *and* wellbeing *and* social isolation. . . . I think if we can widen our options, then we might increase who we can engage with, and to me I saw it as a vehicle as possibly targeting those people that will never look at the leaflet on going for a healthy walk, but if they were to see something that wasn’t exertion, that was a little bit different - but for me it would reduce isolation and, you know, increase friendships - I thought they may give it a try.

In terms of beginnings for those actually involved in the early workshops, this phase marked a process of discovery and adaptation. Individual choices made about levels of engagement with the workshop material was evident. People did not respond to the environment, content and materials in consistent ways and people came with different expectations, hopes, and ideas. For some an uncertainty was revealed, for others intrigue, enjoyment and for others a bewildering beginning:

I was told about this by an acquaintance who persuaded me to come along. I couldn’t quite work out what she was talking about really, so I was intrigued to find out about exactly what it was. The first meeting with the professional artist we were doing little mimes, the kind we used to do at school at the end of the day, and I was thinking what have I come to?, but I have come, so I’ll give it a go . . . and it gradually evolved.

Considering participants’ initial experiences, it was important to examine what influenced people to come back for more - the following theme expands on this further.
The influence of others

This theme illustrates how ‘a person is a person because of other people’ (isiXhosa proverb; Watson and Fourie, 2004:20). The theme both represents and acknowledges the interrelatedness of human existence and relates to Shutte’s (1993) perspective that people depend on one another for the exercise and development of their capacity for self-realisation. The collation of the participants’ responses was drawn together through an arts-based installation below (Figure 2) and is also explained further by the textual data as follows:

Figure 2 Arts-based representation of findings: The influence of others

The influence of the project and what might emerge from it, in partnership with others, was noted through stakeholder perspectives at Age UK:
I think it was the fact that it was a different way of engaging with older people of Coventry because we’ve never had anything to do with the arts before. So, I think we took it on board because we saw it as another medium that could be used with people to encourage people to do extra activities with others, extra things to support them . . . And, you know, if older people are getting out more, I mean very similar to our own aims and objectives in that, if people are getting out more then they’re not, they’re not in the doctor’s surgeries as much, are they? They’re not in the hospitals as much, you know, they’re, they’re becoming much more involved in what’s going on in the community. If projects like this, by working with organisations like ourselves, contribute to the outcome of less older people visiting the doctor for the same things, day in, day out then it should be funded because surely it’s a lot cheaper to fund a project like this than it is to continually have somebody visit the doctor.

In relation to the workshop participants, it was evident that a commitment and reliance on one another developed which led to opportunities for individuals to extend their influence whilst strengthening their abilities. The participants became a group through doing things together as the following quotation illustrates:

Meeting other people kept me coming back, I liked the company, I do live alone, so it was nice to have something different to do. I saw it as pushing me, challenging me to a certain extent - not stressful though - not like that. I had the element of choice, and I got to enjoy it with other people. It’s the interaction between people I enjoyed, we’re all in it together, and of course some people are more outgoing and show leadership in the group and that always happens, someone emerges as a leader where there’s a group of people.

The relationships amongst group members and the way they supported each other’s participation should not be underestimated. Many people spoke of the importance of ‘the group’ and ‘all being in it together.’ The fun, the friendship, the shared experience, the stimulation of seeing ‘change’ in one another, certainly appeared to help shape group confidence and prompted a willingness to do more.
The influence of the workshop facilitator was also reflected here: including her style and approach, and commitment to a belief in human potential and the vision of how the arts could support people in becoming enriched and empowered.

The facilitators were good, they really were. They did guide us along the way and I should say we wouldn’t have managed without them. It was our material but they had to hone it down so it could be used on a stage, so they helped with the quality, the delivery, we had no experience of that, not being in theatre work.

What became evident was how the workshop facilitator guided the group using her expertise in interactive and participatory performance encounters, whilst working with the participants’ ideas and contributions. It was evident that managing the challenge and pace of sessions within an environment of trust and respect was vital, and this approach influenced participants’ decisions to keep coming back - to engage. In addition, the workshop facilitator’s enthusiasm, creativity and warmth was viewed as inspiring and energising. The role of the Age UK project worker also requires mention here, as she supported individuals across the groups through her generous, considerate, encouraging and perceptive manner. Her role could be viewed as one of a ‘translator’; working with the content and subtleties of interaction between the workshop facilitator and group members. In summary, it was evident that human interaction and pursuit served to support people’s needs and wants as well as having the potential to be transformative. As Townsend noted:

Empowerment is enabled when people demonstrate mutual respect, promote positive interdependence, share risk and responsibility, encourage hope and build trust in themselves and others.

(Townsend, 1996:182)

The next theme presents the resulting shifts which occurred through such actions and interactions.
**Shifting perspectives**

This theme represents and explores how engagement in arts-based activities nourished and supported participants’ transition and reflects the way in which participants valued the quality of the personal and social dimensions of the arts-based activities. The diversity, strength and potential for development that each person offered and took from workshop sessions were also evident in this theme. What was apparent across these data was not only different forms and levels of engagement, but also the ways in which shifts in perspectives about engagement moved through the process of working and learning with and though others. The collation of the participants’ responses was drawn together through an arts-based installation below (Figure 3) and is also explained further by the textual data as follows:

Figure 3 Arts-based representation of findings: Shifting Perspectives
Participants argued that they became empowered during the creative process through development of the content which was based on using their stories, their ideas, their suggestions for improvement and their risk taking. In the following example, one participant shared a particularly significant experience:

I think when we started to do a little bit of writing that was a turning point for me because I like writing, I used to like writing. It’s given my writing a new lease of life now I think, I used to write doggerel but now I think I’m verging on writing poetry - without that hopefully not sounding too big headed.. There’s been quite a few bits of applause and well you know you play to the gallery don’t you. I think the group have enjoyed the few bits I’ve read out that I’ve written. How can I put this, I’ve never had a very high opinion of myself, a bit of a jack of all trades, not really very good at any one thing, so the response I’ve had to the poetry has been quite gratifying and I’ve been feeling quite big headed about it. I’m enjoying it!

Participants’ perspectives in this theme illustrated how mutual support and validation also enabled shifts in participants’ self-perception and sense of presence, reflected by a growing commitment to the group and the project. Indeed, the unity and group dynamic helped to support the transition from workshop participant to performer. Such transitions were also seen to influence other aspects of participants’ everyday life, as reflected in this individual’s account:

Of course I’ve got this condition, which isn’t really an illness but a condition, I feel quite good about things though, and I think I’ve got a bit more ‘get up and go’ since I’ve started doing things here in coming to these workshops - I may not be fast, but I am going (laughs). Well the poetry for instance, I have been doing a little more gardening – ladylike gardening – and what else? I’ve been to the theatre a couple of times by myself. Of course another influence is my sister who is a companion as well, and who has been housebound for the past few weeks so I’ve been doing things for her too, but it all adds up to the fact that I’ve got a bit more purpose in life. I think all through the last year I sat and
watched day time telly and really only did the things I had to do, so compared to that its improving.

Such personal reflections and revised perspectives about oneself provided some measure of evidence of the transitional experience encountered by participants. Such transitions occurred through the sense of unity, group dynamic and freedom of the participants to express, explore, create, dare, and to try things out, as illustrated by another participant below:

I didn’t have much of an idea about what exactly it would be, it’s just sort of gone on and grown, I think the difference is with this is we haven’t had a script, we had to do our own script and I think that’s been the interesting part of it, that we’ve had to put in our own ideas to make up a script, to make up the play if you like, and I think that’s been the really interesting part about it because some of the ideas that have come from the group have been absolutely fantastic and hilarious at times, absolutely, there’s been a lot of humour! I mean if nothing else, I must confess I have had a really, really great time, it’s been so much fun!

The workshop facilitator also experienced shifts at a personal and group level, expressed in terms of her initial apprehension to the energy and excitement of the unfolding creative experience:

The concept of a workshop plan has been an interesting area for me to explore. When I first started out delivering the workshop, I planned the activities very carefully. Making sure there was a good balance of activities, and to be honest I found the workshops were a bit of struggle at first. However, a friend of mine who’s also done some work with groups of older people down in Southampton, said you’ve got to throw out the workshop plan, because it becomes a barrier. So I adapted things, and realised that I needed to talk and listen to my participants more and respond accordingly. Having a fluid and organic approach has definitely worked out best for me. I feel that this has also enabled the participants to have a more personal and significant experience as well.
Shifting perspectives were also evident from stakeholders’ perspectives. For example, Age UK partners were clearly not prepared for the impact the project has had nor including what was achieved within a relatively short timescale

I think I’ve been proved wrong in that when we talked with the Belgrade about the timeframes and the expectations within those timeframes as in ‘this is the brief, you know, we want to do a series of tasters and we want to do a number of workshops, ten-week workshops and then, all that’s leading to a production at the end of the year and that’s going to happen in 11 months’ and I was thinking 11 months! You’ve got to be joking! You know, and I really thought that.

The final theme presents the impact of the project more widely and the dynamic and expressive responses experienced in being involved.

**Performing**

This theme captures participants’ diverse, yet often overlapping conception of the notion of performance. The theme illustrated how different notions of performance were seen across the different groups and it also demonstrates expression of individuality in that that there were a number of typologies reflected in ‘being involved’. Participants’ gains in terms of being-well included:

- A sense of pride and pleasure in undertaking something many had never thought possible
- Increased sense of performance noted in peoples’ lives more generally
- Performance in terms of taking part in something that had personal meaning and significance
- The quality of the performance – with the support and kudos of the Belgrade Theatre
- The sense of presence, and voice and how this challenged perceptions of the skills, abilities and valued contribution of older adults, which were demonstrated through expressions of self, agility, bravery, sharing of emotion and importantly humour
The collation of the participants’ responses was drawn together through an arts-based installation below (Figure 4) and is also explained further by the textual data as follows:

Figure 4 Arts-based representation of findings: Being Involved: Performing

Individuals placed value on being provided with the space and opportunity to be someone else, to try things out, to express themselves and to communicate this with others. In one example a participant explained:
Sometimes you know I feel I can be more like how I want to be when I’m here, you know, without holding back.

For others it was evident that performing required new skills and was experienced as a challenge:

We’ve had to push ourselves that bit more to think about performing on the stage, to think about that and be able to participate like that you know, but thankfully we were encouraged by the facilitators and one another.

Shifts in people’s health and wellbeing occurred by engaging in personally significant, meaningful occupation, through making informed choices and having control, and feeling increased self-confidence, creativity, ‘get up and go,’ and shifts in wider routines. It was also evident that this impact was noted in relation to wider networks of meaning, including relationships with family members:

My family don’t live in Coventry, but I speak with my son on the phone and he wants to know how I’m getting on and they think it’s great I’m doing this. And I know that he worries about me - I’ve only got the one son - when we’re on the phone and I say I’ve not been doing much, and he says well you ought to do something – but since I’ve be doing this he’s pleased and of course my granddaughter, she’s 15, she enjoys drama and she does it at school – so her and I we talk about this on the phone, we share what we’re doing, and everything’s ‘cool’ you know, and when I told her I was actually going to be performing at the Belgrade - because they’ve been here when I’ve brought them to see pantomimes and that - well she was so impressed!

In addition, this theme portrayed a momentum created amongst participants for future action. As Inglis (1997) notes, future choice in action and self-reliance centre on creating self-confidence, self-expression and an interest in learning, which this project has been the catalyst for:
when this came along it felt like a wonderful opportunity for me because I did used to do amateur dramatics a long time ago and really enjoyed it but back then ... so when I heard about this, I thought well I give it a try, and I’ve really, really, enjoyed it and I’m dreading it finishing because I’m wondering - well it will actually give me time to catch up on what I’ve not been able to do for over the past few weeks - but when I have caught up with myself around the house, I’m just worried I’m going to be back to where I started. I want something to help occupy my mind that isn’t just connected with the house or my garden.

The range of communication strategies used in the dissemination events was also appreciated. This included the stage, arrangement and setting, participants’ talking in their native tongue with the assistance of an interpreter, the use of traditional dress, props, film, music, dance as well as all the other devices on offer when performing in a professional theatre environment. As acknowledged by audience members, the stories shared were those not usually heard. The Wordle, Figure 5 captures examples of audience members’ evaluations following the sharing events and public performances:

Figure 5 Wordle of audience members’ evaluations
It was evident the audience enjoyed the personal perspectives and sense of bravery which came across as the cast (participants) shared their stories, which as well as being vibrant and filled with humour included difficult, challenging material about older age, ill-health, loss and hardship.

The sharing events at the Belgrade including performances of ‘Mera Pind’ and ‘Shine On’ were viewed as powerful expressions of self, agility and bravery, with participants sharing emotion and humour with professional quality. Feedback from the Theatre Manager included how inspirational the cast members were, with noticeable individual growth observed even over the three day run of performances of Shine On. The significance of the sharing events and public performances has led to audience members wanting to join, and several new members were recruited.

**Findings of the WEMWBS data**

Whilst presented here as a separate section from the findings of the qualitative data analysis, it was evident that analysis of the WEMWBS data provides complementary, confirmatory evidence about the positive shifts experienced by participants. This can be seen in Tables 4, 5 and 6 in relation to initial and follow-up scores. What is evident is that except for one participant who had no shift in scores (female vii Table 5) all individuals scores increased at follow-up and shifts were seen to occur across all items (Appendix 1 documents the full set of items and scoring system of the WEMWBS tool). Of note were shifts linked to the following items: ‘Feeling optimistic about the future’, ‘feeling close to other people,’ ‘feeling interested in other people,’ ‘having energy to spare’, ‘thinking clearly’, ‘being interested in new things’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Initial score</th>
<th>Follow up score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male a</td>
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<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male b</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female a</td>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>Female b</td>
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<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female c</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female d</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© Coventry University 2013
Mean initial score 49
Mean follow-up score 53.166
Mean group score 51.08

Table 5 City centre group data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Initial score</th>
<th>Follow up score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female i</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female ii</td>
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<tr>
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<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female iv</td>
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<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female v</td>
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<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female vi</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female vii</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female viii</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
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<td>Female viii</td>
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<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male i</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean initial score 52
Mean follow-up score 57.4
Mean group score 54.7

Table 6 Asian women’s group data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Initial score</th>
<th>Follow up score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female A</td>
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<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female B</td>
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<td>58</td>
</tr>
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<td>Female C</td>
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<td>Female D</td>
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<td>Female E</td>
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<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female F</td>
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<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female G</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female H</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mean initial score 51.75
Mean follow-up score 56.5
Mean group score 54.125

Overall mean score (both male and female scores) 51.08 + 54.7 + 54.125 / 3 = 53.30

Sample size calculation – total participants 24 (21 females and 3 males)

A Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test was carried out on the WEMWBS scores (see Table 7) and suggested that individuals scored significantly higher after the intervention (Mdn = 56.5) than before the intervention (Mdn = 51.5), Z = 4.22, p < 0.01, r = 0.86. Changes between pre and post intervention scores on the WEMWBS scores were examined using a Kruskal-Wallis test and suggested that the effect of the intervention was similar across Residential Housing, City Centre and Asian Women’s groups, H(2) = 0.39, p = 0.82.

Table 7 Pre and Post intervention score on the WEMWBS scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pre Median, (Range)</th>
<th>Post Median, (Range)</th>
<th>Change Median, (Range)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Housing</td>
<td>47.5 (22)</td>
<td>51 (20)</td>
<td>4 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Centre</td>
<td>53 (22)</td>
<td>57 (12)</td>
<td>4 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Women</td>
<td>52 (17)</td>
<td>57 (22)</td>
<td>4.5 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All groups N=24</td>
<td>51.5 (23)</td>
<td>56.5 (25)</td>
<td>4 (15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, the findings from both these calculations suggest that the increase in scores for participants in the respective groups was attributable to the intervention itself, rather than any other external factors.

However, it is important to note that the WEMWBS tool was developed to enable monitoring of population health and that to complete any further statistical tests based on a data set of 24 is not appropriate. In addition, we suggest a lack of guidance is available which defines the statements listed on the tool and the context in which
items are to be answered, an issue brought up by several respondents. Nonetheless, what is interesting to consider is how the different settings were not seen (statistically at least) to influence study outcomes. For example, the sheltered housing group workshop sessions took place within the sheltered residence; participants only had to walk out of their rooms to be involved. The city centre group involved participants who travelled independently to the Belgrade Theatre; these individuals had responded to an advert in the Coventry Telegraph, had attended another group facilitated by Age UK Coventry, or who had, by word of mouth, been encouraged to come along. The Asian women’s group were an already established group, as part of a larger project for the Asian Community in the city. These women were collected by a ‘call and ride’ taxi service, organised for them by the Asian community facilitator. Further research is required to examine how different group contexts have an impact upon the use of drama and arts based interventions as used in this study. Nonetheless, what is possible to acknowledge, was that no one was forced to attend. The residents in the sheltered housing setting had the option not to leave their room that day, the women collected by transport could cancel, and those travelling in independently could have chosen to send their apologies.

In summary, when considered alongside the amount of rich qualitative evidence gathered and presented here, we suggest the WEMWBS data supports and corroborates the overall study findings.
Findings of the young people’s group

One of the objectives of the Creative Gymnasium project was to produce a toolkit and resource to be used in Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) with young people, within schools and other environments. The aim of such a resource was to provide young people with an alternative and supportive narrative that may enable them to make healthy, confident choices on their own terms. The initial phase of the project focused on working with one group of young mothers to devise a visual resource (digital stories) that could be used within the lessons. The second phase of the project took the toolkit containing lesson plans and the visual resource (digital stories) into schools to be delivered to various groups of students.

The initial phase used drama to improve and maintain the physical and mental health and well-being of young parents and also ‘at risk’ young people. The Belgrade Theatre made contact with Valley House, who was keen to facilitate access to young parents attending their service and felt that the project seemed to offer something new and different which could be enjoyable and beneficial. Valley House offers a range of services to young people and through projects such as ‘The Whole Shabang’ and the ‘Unwind Youth Project’ are able to provide support related to general emotional well-being. Despite the opportunity to engage with the Creative Gymnasium project being offered to all young parents who were using their services, a smaller than anticipated number (n = 5) were recruited to participate in the drama based workshops, all of whom were young mothers. The second phase of the project was to develop a toolkit to be used in Relationship and Sex Education lessons within secondary schools. The young parent group were to develop an arts-based resource to accompany these lesson plans and a second group of young people were to support the development of the lesson plans. However, despite two separate attempts to introduce the project and recruit young people to take part, it was not possible to work with another group within the project timeframe.

At the outset of the project it was intended that ten drama based workshops would be held with the group of young women, all of whom were mothers, in practice a total of fourteen were held to enable time to develop trust and confidence. The workshops were over a two hour period, starting at 12.30 and ending at 2.30pm. Following the
first session one young woman decided not to continue, for personal reasons. The other four young women were aged 19 (with a son of 17 months), 20 (with a daughter aged 3 years), 22 (with a son aged 2 years) and 23 (with a daughter aged 3 and a son aged 11 months). Drama based session activities included:

- Establishing ground rules together
- Ice breaker activities
- Physical warm up exercises (requiring movement and participation)
- Games (involving alphabet, rhythm, spontaneity, improvisation, word association, tongue twisters)
- Telling personal and fictional stories through drama scenarios
- Group discussions and writing about experiences: attitudes to parenting, relationships, sex, social life, money
- Sharing ideas
- Developing personal digital stories in collaboration with the film maker and the workshop facilitator
- Giving consent to use images and text produced

Applied theatre techniques were used to draw on participants’ experiences to create theatre collectively and engage in discussions of issues through theatrical means (Conrad, 2006: 376). This activity in the workshop was not intended for an audience wider than those present; this work was foundational to the overall project. Using the format indicated above, all took part in the creation of fictional performances, some of which had a basis in real life experiences. In some workshops the basis of the scenarios emerged from discussion amongst the young women, in others the basis was more abstract, such as the performance of nursery rhymes in relation to a contemporary theme (the Jeremy Kyle show being one example). The workshops were active, and in a nuanced and indirect way allowed for critical reflection on life events and for the expression of emotions. In their widest sense the workshops could be said to be educational.

The main themes arising from data collected were:

- Engagement
Engagement

The engagement of all partners and stakeholders in the project was crucial to its success. The Creative Gymnasium project engaged a range of stakeholders including statutory and voluntary partners, key agencies, and young people identified as isolated or ‘at risk’. Important influences on effective engagement included clarity regarding the aims and objectives of the project, understanding what the project hoped to achieve, adequate time and provision of resources. Equally important was a willingness to share and to learn, on the part of all of the stakeholders, including the young women, and to be willing to connect with the arts-based approach.

At the outset young people were invited by staff at Valley House to take part in a series of drama workshops. The workshops were held on a Thursday afternoon. The professionals based at Valley House commented on how motivated, keen and committed all of the young women were. Attendance at other groups on their premises often had to be prompted, but when texts were sent to this group they were invariably already on their way and feeling excited about their next session. Factors that influenced whether young women were able to attend and participate in the project were a mixture of practical and perception. As one of the representatives from Valley House said:

We introduced the idea, invited people along, we did a Facebook event, we spoke to people individually. A lot of people weren’t keen, they thought Belgrade, they thought drama and they thought jazz hands, I think. But once they got into it, more of them wanted to do it, it was just really difficult to do the timings. We had the consistent four women, other women wanted to join in but weren’t able to because of the time and I suppose that was partly, we just had to stick to the time, also The facilitator’s time was limited, she was only here for a couple of days.
When asked their reasons for getting involved when the project was introduced, all of the young women said that they like trying new things. All talked about the chance to get out of the house and meet new people as three of the four had felt isolated. All of the young women were keen to emphasise that the outreach drama work enabled them to take part and that barriers relating to transport or the venue could have prevented their engagement if they had been expected to go to the theatre to participate in the workshops:

The theatre could have felt uncomfortable and intimidating so I must admit, if the project hadn’t been here I wouldn’t be coming, because it’s just easy, when you’ve got kids to contend with I don’t want to be getting on buses into town, I don’t know where the theatre is, I’ve only been there at night in a car and don’t have a clue.

The young women’s motivation and ability to participate in the drama based workshops was influenced by familiarity with the venue, access in terms of transport, the provision of appropriate child care, the timing of the sessions and the relationship of trust with the professionals involved. The provision of child care in particular was crucial to the success of this project; none would have been able to participate in the workshops without the child care provided on site at Valley House children’s centre. Most were not used to leaving their child with anyone other than a family member, so it was important that the children were located nearby.

The workshops involved some degree of exercise and activity and an opportunity for talk and discussion, the facilitator made it fun and enjoyable. She (the facilitator) had a particular set of skills in that she had trained as a drama teacher and also a Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) co-ordinator, incorporating Relationship and Sex Education (RSE), this was felt to be an advantage as she outlined below:

The joy of having done both the theatre and drama teaching and RSE teaching has almost made this easy…there are a lot of things I am still learning but the ground work is already there…there is a fusion of knowledge that has made it quite simple for me to just go in and get on. The
joy of that is there is immediacy in the relationships we form because the participants are aware that they are in fairly safe hands I suppose.

Participants emphasised the importance of the skills and qualities of the facilitator:

She’s so down to earth and she takes everything with a pinch of salt. She doesn’t judge you, you can say absolutely anything to her and she won’t judge you, she won’t laugh or pull a face or go like that. She’s just a happy person and her happiness comes out and everyone around her feels happy around her.

The space provided for the sessions was also important to those involved. It was felt to be a safe environment in which to take risks, be challenged and to do things outside of their comfort zone. The creation of a safe and familiar context for the drama and discussion to take place was important in encouraging the young women to take ownership of the direction of the project and invest themselves in the process. Being a totally new experience for the young women it was important to take time to establish trust. Whilst the facilitator was tasked with creating a useful RSE resource to be used in schools, and this was important to the young women, they also said:

[ ] it’s not just about making the DVD it’s about us as well. It’s about how we personally feel, it’s about making us feel better about ourselves to bring out the best in us, to be the best person we can be

Through engaging in drama based exercises in this initial stage of the project, all of those involved began to appreciate the complexity of young people’s lives. The group sharing of experiences and understanding led to a dialogue which revealed that the decisions which individuals took in terms of their overall mental and physical health, were made in relation to their circumstances and to other significant people.

Summary of Engagement:

- The importance of providing appropriate resources to enable young mothers to participate
- An opportunity to have their views heard
An opportunity to meet other young mothers
An opportunity to get to know themselves
An appropriately skilled facilitator

Journey of Discovery

This theme relates to the participation in drama being a new experience for all of the young women, which led them to begin to reflect on their lives and learn things about themselves. The new challenge was a different form of communication, it led to a development in confidence and a sense of achievement.

When they first attended the Creative Gymnasium workshops the young people were generally nervous and embarrassed to try new activities:

...when we first started doing the shake down and that; umm I think at first I feel like an idiot, I felt like a muppet. But I think you just get used to it and you get into it and you just start having fun. You’re also doing exercise while you’re doing it as well

The activities incorporated into the weekly sessions challenged them to try a new experience and led to a sense of achievement:

It makes you forget all those things that made you feel bad about yourself. And it makes you feel better about the stuff, the things you think you couldn’t do, you can do but you don’t realise because you’re having so much fun. And when you actually bring yourself out of it and the time is finished you realise I can’t believe I just done that

By becoming immersed in the drama workshops, challenging themselves and not thinking about everyday life for a short time, led to a recognised sense of achievement for the young women. Their views on the benefits of using arts and drama to communicate with young people were explored further:
Yeah, because you have to think more and you can pretend to be this other person. You can be this other person that you wouldn’t normally be, like the things that she talks about, like the things she asks us to act out. If that happened to us, well no one needs to know because we are acting, so we bring that into it because we have been through it

This option to play a character yet act out real issues worked well for this group and was recommended for other young people. It was evident that, on some occasions, there were a number of professionals present at the workshops, sometimes more than there were young women and the researchers were concerned that this could be perceived as intrusive and hierarchical to the young women. One young woman provided insight into why this was not a problem:

It’s fine because all the professionals are down to earth and they don’t judge…they just make you feel comfortable, so in that sense they are caring for you because they do care about the way you feel. Because they want to make you comfortable, otherwise there is no point’…they (researchers), they wasn’t going to join in last week, me and my sister were like ‘get up now/why are they not?’ And they did [claps hands once] …and it’s so much fun not just because them being professionals, they are joining in. And it just shows another, it might be embarrassing for them in their profession, most of the time they don’t get up and do stuff like this. May be they just go and sit down… but at least they actually get to know us and get to know themselves… in a fun way.

The workshop facilitator also commented on the evaluators’ interactive role in the arts-informed inquiry:

It is such personal work so the idea that you would have people just observing it would completely alter the whole dynamic . . . I think that it is really sensitive of the university to recognise that the work that is being done is not for observation . . . it is not a spectator sport and that the outcomes can
only be as good as they will be because of the genuine participation of everybody. I think that has made a difference.

For the researchers, being participants in the drama workshop was about more than building rapport or breaking down barriers. The emphasis on participation meant that the researchers used their life experiences in their intellectual work, being personally involved in the intellectual product (Mills, 1959). Researcher contributions as actors and discussants influenced the other professionals and the young women involved in Creative Gymnasium, just as their contributions influenced the researchers. This meant that the researchers had an intellectual response to what was being created in the workshops, noting aspects of the process and content for evaluation, and as well as an emotional response to taking part.

In terms of the drama workshops, one outcome often mentioned by young women was an increase in confidence:

I’m more outspoken, a lot out spoken, that’s my confidence, my real confidence is coming out. If I want something done I want it done now and that’s good because I just do it myself. [...] it’s changed me as a person, it’s brought my real confidence out and I think that’s the biggest thing it could have ever have done.

However, the use of drama also allowed for the expression of emotion and sometimes touched on traumatic experiences. This was evidenced to a greater degree than the facilitator had originally expected:

I imagined that I would come in and do some drama workshops, it would all be fine, they would say ‘that is great fun, I feel more elated, I feel more energised!’ I didn’t really think that we would be cutting underneath all of that into ‘I think my relationship with my partner needs work in this area’, ‘my relationship with my child is not great because of this and I recognise it through this one exercise’…that is a massive responsibility that I have
suddenly been given because we are talking about people’s lives, in the truest sense.

It became apparent early on in the project that it was important that the Belgrade Theatre were working in partnership with an organisation that offered skills and expertise in working with young people and could provide additional support when necessary. The drama facilitator was quite clear that she was not in any way a drama therapist and emphasised that she worked within her professional boundaries. A Valley House representative commented:

I don’t think there needs to be full on counsellors around (when drama is being delivered) but I just think there needs to be some support there […] So I’m not sure how it would have worked if [counsellor] wasn’t around…because I feel like you would do your stuff with the facilitator and then I think you could be just left until the next week . . .

The drama facilitator also felt that she had learnt from engaging with the young women:

I have learnt a lot. Firstly, I had to challenge my opinions about young parents. I’ve had to and that is largely because those young women won’t allow you not to, and they are such varied people…whereas I’ve always taught in a classroom ‘let’s not be pregnant before 35, let us not do this, let us not do that’ now I am aware that actually young people are making very real choices and we need to find a way to support the choice and for it to be recognised as such. So that has changed my mindset quite considerably and it’s a massive, massive turn around.

The journey of discovery often meant that young women were experiencing new things which took them out of their comfort zone. They demonstrated a sense of commitment to the project and enjoyed the active learning style. They developed an increased confidence and built trust. Not only were the young women challenged by new experiences; the drama facilitator also learnt from her experience of meeting and working with this group. Drama can be a very positive way to appeal to and engage
with young people, but as such it can also draw out a range of issues which may require further support. The shared experiences encouraged reflection on the events of their lives, particularly in terms of their relationship with their immediate family.

Drama can be a very positive way to appeal to and engage with young people, but as such it can also draw out a range of issues which may require further support. Evidence presented here draws attention to the power of drama in encouraging people to talk, to reflect and to start to think about their lives in a different way than before, sometimes raising issues which are beyond the ability of the facilitator. In such circumstances it is important to be clear from the outset that if young people are felt to be at risk of harm, the facilitator will need to seek support elsewhere. There are a number of positive aspects to drama, but it can be damaging if underestimated, not delivered effectively or if issues are raised but not dealt with – crossing into therapeutic territory. All of these issues would need to be borne in mind if this model were to be delivered outside of a setting that can offer support.

Summary of Journey of Discovery:

- A new challenge, such as drama, can increase confidence
- Drama can be an indirect approach to addressing issues of physical and mental health and well-being
- By engaging young people this approach encourages discussion of life experience – care needs to be taken to ensure that all are aware of any boundaries and that appropriate emotional support is available

*Relationships, roles and identity*

Relationships were an important part of this project and the workshops gave young women the space to discuss their roles as mothers, partners, daughters, siblings and individuals. An appreciation that each individual was situated within a web of relationships which affected their identity and roles in life came to the fore and led to some intense reflection. For example, the participants spoke of the importance of being able to talk through how they felt about being a parent, with other parents of a similar age:
To really talk openly about being a parent, being a young parent, without thinking ‘I’m gonna bore someone here’ and just being able to talk about all of it in such a safe environment was the thing, yeah, so I think that was the main thing for me and maybe to get closer to the other people that went to the group

Each of the group also appreciated the time and space to focus on being a young woman in their own right, without being regarded as their child’s mother or their partner’s partner or parents’ child. Personal successful outcomes of the project were:

I really don’t think about myself sometimes…I like helping other people more.
I don’t really know about myself yet

I would like to be seen as more than just somebody’s mother

Representatives from Valley House also commented on the importance of treating young women as individuals in their own right, rather than only seeing them as a mother:

It’s been a huge confidence boost for the young people and having the young parents being treated like professional participants has been the thing that has impacted on me the most . . . And although there was kind of a set agenda, she worked with it as it went along, it evolved with what came out of the sessions, so the participants themselves found that they had control over it and that they were being heard, all the things that they, you know, they don’t feel that they’re respected.

All four young women participated in evaluating their involvement in the project through a focus group which used an arts-based approach. Researchers captured the essence of participants’ experience through using visual collages. Creation of the images also stimulated discussion amongst the young women and the various support staff present at the focus group. The overall response, both from the pictorial representations and verbal feedback, was that experience of the project was positive. The young women valued being part of the drama workshops, being involved at the
beginning and influencing the direction of the content of the resource to be delivered in schools. However, they found it interesting but sometimes challenging as they were forced to confront the prejudices of wider society, as they talked about their personal experiences of discrimination, judgemental attitudes and comments, and lack of support.

Figure 6 captures a young mother’s feelings at different stages about being involved in the creative gymnasium project. Words written on the green paper express her feelings at the start of the project, the purple paper the middle stage and the orange paper at the project’s end.

As the project evolved, the resource became less of a focus for some and other factors became much more important:

Friends, definitely and being more comfortable about talking about certain things. I’ve cried there . . . and actually learning that us three girls . . . have had
some really crap childhoods and we’re not alone with that. I think that’s one of the massive things that’s brought us together, it’s really nice to speak to people like that, especially for me because like I don’t speak to my parents about it so it’s really nice to have someone that’s been in that situation and you don’t feel guilty that you’re bringing them down, because they’ve been there and they know, I think that’s really important, so that’s a massive thing for me, when you just need to get something off your chest.

All of the young women described how they developed friendships through accessing the Creative Gymnasium project:

... it’s brought me and my sister closer together. I think it is, it’s spending time together, talking about stuff we wouldn’t really talk about. You know what I mean, it’s sharing each other’s opinions and actually having a say because I’m younger I don’t well normally have a say. This has made us both change in a way, like she’s more patient with me and I’m more patient with her’. The facilitator probably doesn’t know this but she has brought a family together, in a funny kind of way. I would like her to know that as well, if you could tell her that.

The young women influenced the concept and design of the resource they wished to create to accompany the ‘Relationship Sex Education’ lessons in schools. They wanted to create and produce a digital story (a short form of digital film making which allows people to share aspects of their life story) which would be used to reach a wide audience of young people and professionals. This was achieved through discussing issues related to their first hand experiences of becoming pregnant as a teenager. The films consisted of an audio recorded interview which formed the basis for the artistic development of the final version of the digital story. The film maker used artefacts, graphics and animation alongside the oral narrative. The young women had the opportunity to listen to their recording and approve it in advance, although they had less control over the final editing process, leaving that to the film maker. Drawing on photographs and text, the young women developed individual digital stories in order to provide school-aged young people and professionals with an insight
into their lives. The aim of using such a resource was to provide young people with an insight into the realities of parenting, from the perspective of young parents, which resulted in the challenging of stereotypes of young mothers. The individuality of each story contested the overwhelmingly negative image of ‘the teenage mum’ whilst giving a realistic picture of sex, relationships and parenting.

When introduced to the idea of making a resource for schools, which would be used in RSE lessons, based on their experiences of being a young parent, one young woman asked:

Is this film about understanding what it’s like for young people who are pregnant or to stop them from getting pregnant?

_In reply the workshop facilitator said:_

Think about what you want to tell, what you think it is important for people to know. The film is about showing a spectrum of experience and is not about saying that this is what you don’t want to do.

Following the making of the digital stories the young women reflected on the message that they would like to convey to other young people:

Umm to get out of the project I would like other people... to see... that it’s not all bad... being a parent...We’re put in one box we all wear hoodies and we are all bad people and all bad parents because we are young, but we are not.

An emerging theme of this evaluation, discussed at length elsewhere (Brown et al, 2009; Brady, Brown et al, 2012; Letherby et al, 2007) was that the young mothers were living with a sense of social stigma, which impacted on their identity as mothers:

And it’s just made me realise I didn’t do a bad thing pregnant at sixteen. Yeah it was bad to some people but to me, she saved me you know. I wouldn’t be the person I am today if I didn’t have her, it’s as simple at that, I really wouldn’t, it made me realised how much I actually do love her. You know what I mean, how nice it is for me to have her in my life.
A Valley House representative described one particular outcome she had observed from the young women’s engagement with the Creative Gymnasium project. This was that the young women seemed to want to spend more time with their children, and that they had influenced other young mothers by this:

They’re thinking more about their children. They’ve thought about their past during this project [...] and their love seems to have increased for their children, the connection between them and their children seems stronger.

This was an important outcome of the project, borne out of time for reflection, discussion and the opportunity for some personal space, away from their children.

In commenting on making the digital stories, based on their own experiences they said:

I am hoping to educate other young people, how it really is being a parent. It’s not like it is on television or you see in magazines, because they make it look really easy and it is really hard…I am not going to say it is terrible being a mum but it is hard

The shared experience of motherhood was discussed at length by the group; this led them to form close bonds which helped to overcome isolation. Two of the young women were sisters who were reunited, following a family rift, and worked on their relationship during the workshops. The project also allowed young women to identify with others who had been through abusive experiences, as children and with partners. They felt that they were less stressed and that their mental health was improved. The workshops made a positive difference to the lives of young mothers and their children, and in a reciprocal way made a positive difference to the facilitator and to practice at Valley House. Most importantly, it gave the young women an opportunity to focus on themselves which enhanced their perspective on parenting.
Summary of ‘Relationships, roles and identity’:

- Space to discuss their roles as mothers, partners, daughters, siblings
- Importance of being treated as an individual, a performer
- Reflection which led to changes in the perceptions of all involved.

Legacy of the project

This theme captures the lasting and potentially sustainable outcomes of the project. The creation of personal narratives captured in digital stories are clearly a tangible legacy. Other less visible legacies include improved mental well-being amongst the participants, confidence to make difficult decisions and the support and encouragement to reflect for themselves. The young women particularly felt that their emotional well-being had improved during the course of the project. Although it is not possible for the evaluation to show that this was solely an outcome of the drama-based project they certainly felt this to be the case:

Just mental health really, my mental health is not so [...] I’m not so down, I’m down, don’t get me wrong, but I’m not crying so much because if I want to rant about something that’s happened they’ll be like ‘You’ll be fine’.

Emotional? Well I was a bit of a recluse when I started here, I didn’t really speak to anybody, I just kind of stayed on my own.

One young woman made the difficult decision to end her relationship with the father of her children, as she realised that she had not been happy for some time:

I’ve just split up from my boyfriend, and before these sessions I wouldn’t have been able to do it, but now I know I’ve got my girls to talk to.

A sense of achievement and satisfaction was an important outcome of the project, the young women felt buoyant and that the future held possibilities:
I’ve had fun, I don’t know how to explain it, it’s like you know when you’ve been working all day, on your feet all day, and you go home and you’re like ‘phewwwww’, it’s like that.

It’s been a good confidence builder.

It was acknowledged by all that the young women had invested heavily in the project and they were keen to stay involved and see how the resource that they created was received by young people within schools. This was discussed and was a potential possibility. Ultimately they did not get the opportunity to deliver the lessons in schools, and there were a number of reasons why it may not have been appropriate for this to happen. In hindsight, a firm decision from the wider partnership that this was a development not planned for in the original design needed to be communicated to the young women so their expectations were not raised (please refer to p71-73 for further discussion of some of the challenges involved in partnership working). The learning from this is that the aims of a project such as this need to be clear and realistic, and responses and decisions need to be made in a timely manner when working with young people.

In terms of the legacy of the digital stories created by the young mothers, the films were screened at the Belgrade Theatre on the evening of 2 April 2012. The screening of the digital stories was evaluated by gathering two types of feedback from the wider audience – post it notes to express immediate thoughts (See Figure 7 Wordle below) and evaluation forms which asked for views of the films. A Belgrade youth theatre group also evaluated the digital stories separately.

Below are some phrases used by members of the audience to sum up thoughts about the three digital stories screened at Belgrade Theatre on 2 April 2012:
Evaluation forms were completed by a range of people (n =21), the audience were asked for three comments about the sharing event. Evaluation of these responses identified three themes relating to: the format of a digital story, the content of the message of the films and emotional responses. Below we present a snapshot of the words of the audience within the 3 identified themes.

The *format* was of interest and appropriate to the topic of health, well-being and young parenthood:

The personal manner in which these films were made- you felt like you were talking to these people

The range of content brought out so much thought

It was so real- felt like the films were just talking to me
Pictures work perfectly
Creative: I like how they created the film using funny pictures to illustrate their experiences.

The content and message of the films was also commented upon:

These are real parents, real young parents
I liked that it showed people of different situations - unplanned/ planned pregnancy
Provided an insightful view to single parenthood from a youngster’s perspective
Truth from the heart
Tried to encourage people to keep their virginity

In addition to the more practical aspects of choosing to convey messages to young people via a digital story, the evaluation also captured the audience’s emotional responses towards the films and the young mothers who introduced their own stories. A Youth Theatre group, also present in the audience, reflected in Figure 8:

Figure 8 Youth Theatre group representation

Someone lost their baby; it’s quite shocking and unimaginable
Love Painful
Being a young mum is hard
Honesty
Educative, real & honest True
Relevant to today Emotional
Well made
Interesting
both in teaching and to encourage practitioners and professionals to reflect on their interaction with the issues young people and young parents often face. The digital stories provided a vehicle for those whose voices are not usually heard to reach a wide range of young people, professionals and practitioners. The life stories which they represent have already had resonance for young people within the audience at their first viewing. This is a positive impact – young people are talking and relating directly to other young people and encouraging them to think seriously about the choices that they are making. This is likely to be a more effective way of approaching issues relating to sexual health and well-being, than a traditional health educational approach that focuses on imparting information.

Summary of the legacy of the project:
As stated at the beginning of this theme, this project had ambitious and laudable aspirations. Young women engaged in drama workshops, developed in self-confidence, learnt about themselves, trusted in the facilitator and shared their experiences of mothering. In research terms, leaving ‘the field’ and disengaging is a crucial part of the overall process of involving people in a project. In a project such as Creative Gymnasium, relationships were forged and emotions were laid bare (particularly in the creation of the highly personal narratives and photographs within the digital stories). However, whilst user involvement has the potential to be empowering, it also has the potential to disempower, which is not often talked about openly (Brady et al, 2011). In recognition of this it is right and fitting that there should always be some form of closure, a marking of the ending. Having entered people’s lives and offered them opportunities that may previously have seemed closed researchers and those involved in the project need to be mindful that involvement does not leave participants wary of engaging in similar ventures or with professionals again. Attention is drawn here to the need for both researchers and those delivering projects with young people to be clear about how developments are dealt with which may be beyond the scope of the original project.

Findings of the WEMWBS data
The WEMWBS survey was administered to participants in September and then again in December in order to capture a quantitative measure of health and well-being.

Table 8 WEMWBS scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Initial score</th>
<th>Follow up score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female a</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female b</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female c</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst presented here as a separate section to the findings from the qualitative data analysis, analysis of the WEMWBS data provides complementary evidence about the positive shifts experienced by participants. This can be seen in Table 8 in relation to initial and follow-up scores. What is evident is that all participants’ individual scores increased at follow-up and shifts were seen to occur across all items (Appendix 1 provides the full set of items and scoring system of the WEMWBS tool). Of note were shifts linked to the following items: ‘feeling close to other people’ ‘feeling confident’ and ‘being interested in new things’.

Mean initial score 32.6
Mean follow-up score 46.3

It would not be appropriate to complete any statistical calculations based on a data set of 3. In addition, the participants asked for explanations of some of the wording on the tool, and there appeared to be limited guidance available which defines what is meant by the statements listed and the context in which they are to be answered.

Evaluation of Relationship and Sex Education toolkit

Following the completion of the drama workshops with young parents, held at Valley House, the second stage of the project began. The second stage involved using the resource (digital stories) and lesson plans in the delivery of Relationship and Sex Education lessons within schools in Coventry. Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) is a key vehicle for promoting healthy relationships with young people, but the quality of education provided varies and depends to a large extent on local commitment and
the competence of teachers and other staff in schools – who often have little training for working with young people on these issues (Maxwell and Aggleton, 2009:9). Young people want RSE to be relevant to real life and their personal experience, and to include a focus on the positive aspects of sexual experience (Maxwell and Aggleton, 2009; Billings, McVarish and Appleton, 2007). Research suggests that current school based interventions that provides young people with knowledge about sex and contraception is largely insufficient. The lessons developed as part of the Creative Gymnasium project aimed to explore a range of issues and provided an opportunity for young people to engage with the subject matter through participating in drama and classroom discussions. The resource created is entitled ‘Under Pressure’.

**Under pressure**

The series of eight sessions worked in partnership with the Coventry City Council ‘RU Ready?’ campaign, an initiative which supports young people in their choices around sex. The sessions which were developed covered topics which Coventry City Council had identified as gaps in their provision. The resulting toolkit can be used as a stand-alone session or as a project in conjunction with the Coventry Be Savvy website link and the Under Pressure young parent film (referred to above, produced by Belgrade Theatre). The desired overall outcome is for students to grow in confidence and learn skills of assertiveness that enable them to navigate sexual relationships.

The lessons follow fictional characters that are placed in a number of situations with which students will easily identify. Students are then required to act out the scene and also what would/should happen next. The focus is on how they can apply the ‘RU Ready’ strategies to the circumstances they are improvising. The sessions were designed to cover the following topics:

- Lesson One: platonic relationships and the factors which are present in a successful romantic relationship
- Lesson Two: communication in relationships
- Lesson Three: the impact of pornography on relationships and behaviour
• Lesson Four: early parenting and the options available.
• Lesson Five: sexual coercion and exploitation.
• Lesson Six: homosexuality and homophobia.
• Lesson Seven: an exploration of the preconceptions about young parents.
• Lesson Eight: an English or Religious Education lesson highlighting the support available to victims of rape.

Within this pilot of the lesson programme the sessions were delivered in four educational settings - three secondary schools and a specialist unit for pregnant teenagers and young mothers. The drama facilitator delivered some of the sessions and others were delivered by teachers or youth workers (see Table 9 below for details).

Table 9 Delivery of Relationship and Sex Education sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Number of sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School 1</td>
<td>Belgrade workshop facilitator</td>
<td>Year 9/10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 2</td>
<td>Belgrade workshop Facilitator (x1), Teacher/youth worker (x2)</td>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 3</td>
<td>Belgrade facilitator</td>
<td>School aged</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School 4</td>
<td>Teacher Led delivery</td>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>Not supplied by school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data here are based on information gathered using the following methods:
• Session observations
• Student feedback
• Facilitator feedback
• Teacher feedback
• Launch event participant feedback

School 1 observation: Lesson Six - Homosexuality and homophobia
This was a mixed group of 19 students in Year 10, who were moving up to year 11. The session was delivered by a PSHE teacher and a Youth worker who adapted the lesson plan provided in the toolkit. The lesson focused on Introduction to
Homosexuality and the teachers facilitated the discussion. Young people were interested in the subject matter, drama was used minimally as the teachers appeared to be a little unfamiliar with it as a medium. The students spoke about enjoying the two sessions previously delivered by the facilitator and some felt that lessons like this should be delivered every two weeks, as RSE is important. Students said that it was better to act it out as they would be more likely to remember it. Alongside those that enjoyed the drama were others that preferred a focus on RSE being factual. It was noticeable that boys dominated the session.

School 2 observation: Lesson Five - Sexual coercion and exploitation
This was a group of five Year 10 young women. The session was delivered by the facilitator. The lesson was based on a ‘hot seat’ exercise which encouraged discussion of issues such as pressure to have sex, waxing of bodily hair, role models and gendered relations. The young women were interested and engaged and had a mixed response to being asked to act out a character in a scenario. One student was keen to play the parts and discuss the issues arising, others were more reserved but all did become more relaxed, took part and enjoyed the lesson. They were all positive about the drama when asked for their views at the close of the session, feeling that it had encouraged them to respect others, to communicate with others, not to be influenced by the opinion of others, and not to be pressured into doing anything that they did not want to do.

In both of the schools the location and space provided was typical of a school classroom. The use of drama gave the students an opportunity to talk about their experiences (first and second hand) and reflect on their own thoughts based on the role plays designed for the lesson, contained within the toolkit. There were a range of ways in which young people got involved with the lesson and role plays, from working in a larger group to working in pairs. In both lessons the research team observed, the use of drama appeared to provide an opportunity for the lessons to be student led within the prescribed framework already set out in the lesson plan. Students’ participated in playing characters. Once the characters were sketched out students were encouraged to ask questions of the character which then led to discussion. Some ideas were explored in greater depth for the students in small groups.
while some thrived in the larger group, giving everyone an opportunity to express their views.

It was clear that time constraints within the school setting were an issue, the session needing to take place within a timetabled slot of either a single or a double lesson. Some of the students had a lot of comments, bringing in personal experiences of themselves and others. This delayed the pace at which the lesson could move but was nevertheless important if the lesson was to be influenced by the students themselves. Feedback (referred to briefly above) on the use of drama in RSE was captured by the research team, in one school at the end of the session using post cards, at the other a second visit was arranged where the lesson focused solely on capturing young people’s feedback on flip chart and postcards. This method allowed the research team to evaluate the short term outcome of the drama based lessons. Any longer term outcomes cannot be gauged without returning to gain feedback at a later stage.

*Student feedback captured on flipchart*

The research team aimed to capture young people’s immediate responses to the drama workshops, the main messages of the lessons and their views about the use of drama as a tool for discussing relationships and sex. As the examples in Figure 9 demonstrate, feedback was mixed.

Figure 9 Examples of students’ views captured on a post card
Generally, young people engaged positively with the characters in the lesson plan scenarios, asked questions of each other in character, debated and discussed sensitive topics. Some people felt that they were not confident enough to take part. Others stressed that young people are often more knowledgeable than adults may realise about such issues and they also commented that drama made the lessons fun and involved the students. Teachers commented that the lessons were easy to deliver, with a need for training for some teachers, and found ‘hotseating’ to be a powerful way of enabling students to actively engage with and own the process of the lesson. One teacher said: ‘the sessions were fun and it was interesting to see the girls develop socially and in confidence. The films helped to provide a valuable insight into the issues that teenage women face’.

Within the classroom setting there was less time to build trust, develop relationships and get to know each other, than in the earlier part of the project which involved the young mothers. However, young people within schools are also quite used to the pace of change which occurs during the school day. Nonetheless in the following extract from an interview with the workshop facilitator a way of highlighting some of the key issues relating to expectations of what such a resource might achieve are offered:

Facilitator . . . I was conscious that I would write some lessons and deliver some lessons and hopefully these would be disseminated across all the schools of Coventry . . . I am realistic about the expectations because you can’t imagine that a lesson or six is going to change the mindset of a young person in the heat of the moment . . . it would be naive to think that. I think that some young people will engage with it. I think that some members of staff will engage with
it fully. Some young people from that initial six will move on to make their own discoveries, and through the resources on the website ‘Respect Yourself’, some will sign up for the C card and some will say ‘yeah but that was just at school.

Drama, therefore, is a tool in the RSE armoury which can be used and adapted according to the skills and experience of the facilitator. The lessons were very much guided by the facilitator but directed by the responses of the young people resulting in a large amount of peer to peer learning taking place. There will inevitably be differences related to who is delivering the lessons in terms of skills, confidence and personality, but this resource does not only involve covering the relevant issues or imparting information but is also about encouraging young people to think, act, and reflect for themselves.

In summary, there are differences between using drama over a series of workshops, with an opportunity to build trust and rapport (such as in the earlier part of the project) and delivering drama based lessons within a school setting, where there will inevitably be constraints in relation to timetables, the skills and confidence of facilitators and the priority that Relationship and Sex Education is given within each school. Discussion which took place at the Creative Gymnasium ‘Under Pressure ‘Relationships and Sex Education Launch Event shed further light on these issues but also offered constructive feedback and suggestions which demonstrated that such issues are not insurmountable when there is a commitment to making it work (see Short Evaluation (Appendix 2).

As the workshops with the young people and the older people groups developed over time it became apparent that there was benefit to be gained from focusing on an intergenerational theme.
Intergenerational work

Four intergeneration workshops were held and final session brought two groups together at the Belgrade Theatre. The intergenerational workshop sessions were evaluated through observation and the final session was evaluated through a focus group and photographs of the interaction between older and younger people. All participants talked about the experience being new, they all looked forward to meeting new people, it was fun, but the young people were also nervous. Following the session they said that it had challenged stereotypes that young people hold of older people and older people hold of young people, meeting each other had changed their perceptions:

I feel that some older people may think us young parents are bad parents because we are younger and I have a few stuck up noses from older people on buses or in shopping centres when my daughter is having a tantrum or running around, like she was the other day, but it has changed my perception that... some older people are nice!

Figure 10. Photographs taken at the intergenerational workshop held at the Belgrade Theatre, where older people and young people acted scenarios together:

There was, however, some disappointment expressed regarding the length of the session, it was felt to be quite short at 1 hour and both groups would have enjoyed
more time to work together. The older people felt that being involved in the Creative Gymnasium project had helped to reduce their isolation and it had been enjoyable:

...looking at four walls you get sick of your own company and it’s nice to do something.

When asked whether the participants would come to such a project if it was run on a longer term basis by the Belgrade Theatre the young women said it depended on what time it was on and whether they could access childcare. Both are important factors to be borne in mind when planning projects which hope to engage with young parents, a professional from Valley House explained further:

They’ve had a taste of the intergenerational stuff and they really liked it and it helped because it was at the Belgrade but it was only about 40 minutes and it takes a lot of planning of childcare for their children and transport and travel for a 40 minute session or maybe it was an hour but that it potentially an hour either side for a 1 hour session. So you’re actually asking a lot, a lot more than you would of any other group potentially. You need to think about your child – have they been fed? Do they need a packed lunch with them? Have they had their nap? There’s a lot more to it than just getting there.

These comments were made in light of this partners’ experience of working with young mothers and illustrate that they may be keen to engage with new opportunities but within the context of their busy life, additional considerations will need to be made when planning projects.

The intergenerational work was of value as it led to a shared understanding amongst people of different age groups. It was an opportunity to explore similarities and differences in experiences and to appreciate the ways in which both older people and young mothers are sometimes perceived negatively by wider society.
Cross study Findings

The cross study findings comprised the following themes:

- Gaining access
- The value of arts-based activities
- Working and learning together
- Intergenerational work

**Gaining access**

The focus of the study was on targeting the harder to reach people, people at risk of social isolation. For example, one of the management team at the Belgrade Theatre explained:

> I would have expected to work, particularly with the 50-plus groups, with a very diverse group of people. It would have been very easy for us just to go with existing groups through Age UK, but I was very insistent that we worked in different areas of the city, with groups of different ethnicities. So I suppose that was an anticipated outcome, but would also have been something that was up for question because it’s hard to be reaching the groups of people that don’t want to access the work. So Black minority groups aren’t so easy to bring into the theatre, say. But we did end up working with an Asian group. We ended up doing significant work with men’s groups to try and get them involved. In the end, as anticipated, it was largely women, so that’s something to work on. But we did try work out in Tile Hill, to really broaden the background of the participants.

It was recognised that young fathers as well as young mothers may have benefited from involvement in the drama based workshops. Young mothers were encouraged to invite their partners to take part, no men chose this option. A representative from Belgrade theatre reflects here on efforts to gain access to young parents and to young people within schools:
Our main partner in that strand of the work – the City Council – put us in touch with Valley House, and they were immediately supportive of the project and interested init. They committed, significant resources, in terms of staff and childcare. So that kind of buy-in from the organisation gave a lot of support for the young people. So that bit went very well.

Getting in contact with the schools was hard. Getting individuals within schools to buy into the project, to pilot the resource, was tricky. I don’t know if that was to do with the time that they were approached or the subject matter. I think people are quite jumpy about that subject matter, and doing anything radical with it is a little bit scary [unclear] try to present it in that way. But you mention theatre and sexual health, it maybe begins to suggest something that’s a bit challenging from the norm, which some people may be worried about, because Coventry has a high level of teenage pregnancies and an issue with its sex and relationship education.

The task of getting the 50 + participants on board from the target population was in many ways achieved as a result of the partnership work with Age UK Coventry, in particular through the use of networks that Age UK had already established throughout the city, through which promotion of the project could be offered. The Community Development Team Leader, for Age UK Coventry was keen to support the project from the start:

From the very beginning I was thinking as staff, as gatekeepers, we should not put obstacles in the way. We should be as open as we possibly can to any new idea that the Belgrade and their staff give us, because if any blocks are there then that’s going to hinder success. So we have to be as engaging and open as we possibly can be.

Considerable effort was focused on accessing different wards within the city to promote the project and offer taster sessions. As well as the Age UK networks and friendship networks, adverts went in the local paper, and the workshop facilitators visited community centres, churches, and used word of mouth. Yet getting to the
most vulnerable, marginalised, isolated people was a challenge, especially when
working with other restrictions of time and financial support and the achievement of
the project aims. What is noted is that the lead-in time to the project was challenging
and that by the time the project began the end was already in sight.

The value of arts-based activities
As researchers the team explored in depth what it was about ‘drama’ per se that had
been so valued by participants, as opposed to other media such as cooking or a
walking group, it was however evident that drama was perceived to support
participants’ opportunities to develop skills, share experience, learn, increase feelings
of confidence and self-esteem as well as highlighting areas of personal challenge.
Drama it appeared to be most successful when time and space for developing rapport,
trust and relationships was allowed. However, importantly, participants also
appreciated being validated through contact with theatre professionals who
demonstrated respect, took time to listen to the participants’ ideas, provided space for
reflection and had expectations of commitment. Drama was thus a valuable tool in
exploring values and attitudes and in addressing both physical and mental health and
well-being. Furthermore, it drama was an appropriate intervention tool for addressing
health and well-being through its focus on encouraging sociable activity. Drama was
used as an indirect approach to address health issues and sensitive issues and was an
important way of reaching and engaging with young people. The intense workshops
made a positive difference to the lives of the young mothers involved and their
children. The evidence from our evaluation indicates that drama workshops
positively affected the health and well-being of the young parents. However, it is
important to note that across both the settings of schools and Valley House strong
opinions were held about drama which tended to influence young people’s initial
expectations, as they felt that they were unskilled and were nervous and concerned
about being judged or excluded. For some this was initially intimidating.

The value of arts based activities were also evident in relation to the following cross
study themes:
- The opportunity to try new things: the workshop content offered participants opportunities to develop material for a public performance, create digital stories, work with a film maker.
- To take risks: for example through public speaking and sharing personal material.
- The sense of achievement offered through selected tasks: participants both young and old shared the sense of pride and satisfaction achieved by being able to share personal material through creative means, produced to a high standard, that could be appreciated by others.
- The ability to use different forms of communication: Participants’ voices were heard through creative writing, the production of educational resources, movement, film, performance.
- The importance of sharing stories and listening to one another: across both strands of the project participants spoke about the value of sharing personal material with others and the sense of voice and presence within their respective groups and wider communities this experienced provided.

**Working and learning together**

The evaluation indicates that working and learning in partnership contributed to professional development when partners shared their practice and enabled all those involved to recognise the strengths and positive outcomes of partnership working. For example, the Valley House staff learnt from the workshop facilitator, the workshops facilitator and the film maker learnt from their interaction with the young women. School staff learnt from their observation of the facilitator and young people learnt from their peers. The researchers also learnt from one another. It was noted that it was important to draw on the strengths of other organisations. However, what was also particularly pertinent was that each organization involved was able to draw on the strengths of the other organisations involved. For example, a member of the management team at the Belgrade Theatre noted:

> Working with Age UK and working with Valley House enabled us to run the project within a year, because they had that access, they had that trust, they had the relationship, they had the knowledge. And I think if you can bring those
things together, then the impact is very powerful, and I think that’s worked very well on the project.

Working and learning together as a theme not only related to the partners involved in the project and the sharing of their respective wisdom and expertise, but for participants too it was evident that the project influenced relational shifts at a personal and group level. This can be summed up in terms of the following cross study themes:

- The support offered to individuals by the wider group in the sharing of personal material
- The validation group members offered one another in everyone’s efforts to contribute; this extended to audience feedback and the praise received from the public performances
- The complementary skills participants brought: it was evident that some participants emerged as leaders whilst others were content to take less prominent roles. Participants came with a range of skill, ability and confidence in terms of public speaking, creative writing, being in front of an audience or a camera, yet as a collective the group participants’ relative skills worked together in an harmonious way.
- The humour and the sadness: it was evident that taking part in the project was an emotional experience for many of the young parents and the 50+ participants. Yet, despite the sense of loss and sadness the sharing of experience brought, participants remarked upon how the tears were tempered with laughter and a genuine caring approach from peers.
Discussion

This section of the evaluation report discusses 4 key areas that are worthy of further reflection and consideration in relation to future studies and funding, namely: Health and well-being, Engagement and Partnership working.

*Health and well being*

Participants shared their health had not changed, but their wellbeing had – yet when questioned further, it did appear there was some contradiction, if it was related to reduced medical intervention such as participants having visited the GP less, then these data do not support this, however, data suggest that the involvement in drama and related activities helped reduce pain, increased energy and enhance mood. It is evident the relationship between the arts, health and well-being remains diverse and includes a wide range of practices, communities and contexts. A number of authors have attempted to structure the relationship between the arts and health. For example, Dose (2006) suggested four categories: arts in healthcare settings, community arts for health, medical humanities and arts therapies and McNaughton et al (2005) presented the arts/health diamond (Figure 11). The first dimension focuses on engagement with the arts and the second on individuals and their personal well-being or working with groups and communities.

Figure 11: The Arts and Health Diamond (McNaughton et al. 2005).
The research team suggest that the model by McNaughton et al (2005) best represents the Creative Gymnasium project. However, we would also argue that this is still an underdeveloped field of research activity and that there remain difficulties involved in evaluating arts and health practice, given the range of art forms, the diversity of healthcare and community settings, and the diversity of individuals participating as well the breadth of health interventions possible and available. However, in terms of the focus on the health and well-being the research team suggest that arts-based inquiry is important as both a process and a product, as Simon and McCormack have argued:

In a field currently dominated again by technical-rational and reductionist models of inquiry there is a need not only to continue to advance the case for qualitative inquiry but also to develop “new” ways of evaluating.

(Simons and McCormack, 2007:307)

_Engagement_

Whilst engagement was a strong theme across the project it is important to note that there were different notions of engagement as well as participants who chose to leave the project. Engagement here reflects participation in the project by all those involved and encompasses both the positive and negative experiences of the
participants and the extent to which participants were engaged in arts-based activities that contributed towards the desired outcomes of the project. Whilst it was evident that the majority of the 50+ participants and the young parents engaged positively in the workshop programmes, not everyone who started the sessions completed them. Individuals did leave, however, only small numbers. Two women from the 50+ strand who had attended the first 10 week set of workshops from the city centre group decided not to continue to be involved in workshops for the ‘Shine On’ performance. It was evident the extra time and commitment to attend rehearsals and the added pressure of performing did not meet with their needs and wishes.

Engagement occurred at macro, meso and micro levels in terms of engagement with the theatre and city, intergenerational engagement and individual engagement. For example, most participants felt part of their city’s creative organisation and there was a sense of community cohesion that emerged. Participants met with people they otherwise may never have had contact with. There was also a belief that engagement occurred, resulting in a reduction in isolation for the young people making the film and those involved in the 50+ productions. On the young people side of the project Creative Gymnasium was an ambitious project, both in terms of working intensely over a period of weeks with a small group of young women, all of whom were mothers, to address their health and well-being needs, and also working with an aim and purpose to develop a resource to be used with other young people. There were potential opportunities to link the two elements of the project more clearly – for example, by training the young mothers to deliver some of the sessions within schools, but there were limitations to doing this. Overall, the project successfully engaged young women who could be identified in policy-terms as ‘hard to reach’, ‘isolated’, and ‘marginalised’ and brought them together to form a group, which developed a strong bond. The innovative approach encouraged reflection on the young women’s own physical and mental health and well-being and that of their children. In this way, and as demonstrated in the previous themed sections, the project had an impact on the participants, on organisational practice and, through the creation of the resource, will also have a wider and longer lasting influence.

**Partnership working**

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Partnership working within the project in the main has been positive in many respects, enabled by regular steering group meetings with all the key stakeholders being invited, regular updates regarding the different intervention strands, regular feedback about the evaluation of the project by the research team and the submission of an interim report. The newly formed partnerships with Belgrade theatre brought together in this project showed evidence of the benefits of collaborative working, particularly with Age UK. Nonetheless, it is also important to recognise that there are challenges involved in partnership working and steps need to be put in place to avoid tensions. The Creative Gymnasium project was conceptualised as a partnership between the Belgrade Theatre (delivery organisation), Coventry City Council and Age UK. When bringing partners together in such a project it is important for all to be clear about the aims, objectives and potential outcomes and, almost inevitably, there will be some tensions in relation to infrastructure, agendas and delivery. Some of the challenges emerging from the young people part of the project were associated with different understandings of how the overall project might advance. Belgrade, as the lead partner, expected that all partners would engage at all stages. Involvement from the City Council’s Strategic Unit at the outset had clearly influenced the direction which the project took, being focused on enhancing RSE provision, which meant that there was less scope for the project to develop organically or fluidly, as with the 50 plus group, as the outputs had already been decided. However, it appears that the City Council’s understanding was that they would play a key role at the outset and envisaged engaging throughout but were unable to engage as fully as they had envisaged. There were implications for the project which needed to be managed particularly in terms of delivery of the sessions within schools.

The following messages are important:

- Clear communication channels are central to effective working, such as knowing who to contact in the event of requiring financial support, and responding in a timely manner to such requests. This can be a particular issue when working with voluntary sector organisations, where costs need to be met in order for the organisation to function.
Minimising bureaucracy in decision-making is important when working directly with people so that engagement is both meaningful and equitable. Outputs such as performances or digital stories involve a huge amount of personal investment and this makes it all the more important that commitment needs to be made to keeping people informed, communicating clearly and regularly, and avoiding raising expectations.

All partners noted differences in organisational culture that brought challenges at the outset.

What was of note was that successful partnership working requires partners to fully commit; when key strategic partners are unable to commit, for example, to attending steering group meetings, this can be a barrier to progressing a joined-up, partnership approach to a project.

The way in which the workload of the Belgrade facilitators was divided (50+ and young people) had both advantages and disadvantages, and this will be reflected upon in Belgrade’s report to the funder.

Summary of key findings

The findings to date from across the study appear to indicate 8 important features:

1. Engaging in drama and arts activities provided forms of creative encounters and processes that were valued by participants. Examples include the development of a new and broad set of relationships which encompassed peer to peer, individual and facilitator, individual and family as well as between audience and the wider community. Such interactions amongst participants extended beyond the creative process and influenced the roles, relationships and routines of participants’ everyday lives.

2. Participants’ skills and confidence were influenced in a positive way by taking risks, for example in sharing personal material, public speaking, and generally doing things that previously individuals did not think they could do, or had
opportunity to do. Such risk taking however was experienced as fulfilling and rewarding.

3. Participants believed they gained a greater sense of agency, voice and presence in their community. This occurred through the creative process and products developed, such as digital stories, educational materials and public performances.

4. The skill set of the workshop facilitators was a core contributor to effective participant engagement, for example, a facilitator who was generous, considerate, encouraging, with expertise in interactive and participatory performance encounters, and who demonstrated the ability to encourage and value participants’ ideas and contributions.

5. The connection with the respected theatre company added both kudos and value to the drama and arts activities.

6. Partnership between organisations and sharing of (established) networks and contacts can help support ‘new’ projects in achieving their outcomes in a timely way, for example by inviting participation from individuals already engaged or known to services who may be perceived to benefit.

7. Effective partnership between stakeholders (including participants) needs to be a continual process of negotiation, discussion and reflection for all those involved in the project. This should include the ethical handling of data and or project outputs and their use and availability beyond the lifetime of the study.

8. Participant gains were evident from both an immediate and medium term perspective; however, due to the short timeframe of the project it was not possible to give indications of any long term benefits, as these have not been demonstrated to date.

Evidence and recommendations from the project, in combination with new partnerships established, will contribute to the Belgrade’s delivery of arts activity to the older adult population, this group becoming a key part of the delivery.
infrastructure of the city. In terms of young people, whilst the Belgrade are already working with youth theatre groups and schools, this project allowed them to work with schools in a new way and to offer an opportunity to young mothers, a group that would not traditionally be included, or perceive drama to be open to them.

Theatre, movement and performance have been used to target social isolation across a number of communities and settings with a range of people. The outcomes have enabled participants to;

• Experience pride, accomplishment and presence
• Develop awareness of their own strengths and future potential
• Increase social networks
• Develop creative and personal skills
• Enhance their health and well-being
• Express themselves in a safe, supportive environment
• Explore real life issues in an indirect way
• Build on and develop verbal skills, movement and non-verbal forms of communication, as drama does not rely on literacy
• Become empowered
• Experience value in being associated with the Belgrade Theatre and opportunity to work with a professional team

Suggestions for further research and practice

1. A comparative study of similar populations in different areas of the country (for example comparing those in areas of perceived poverty with those of perceived privilege in the 50+ age group)

2. Undertaking a study to explore wider (gender) issues around young parenting particularly in relation to seeking young male perspectives

3. The commissioning of a longitudinal study (2-3 years) that will examine long term benefits of drama and arts activities for improving and maintaining physical and mental health and well-being
4. A study that will explore issues around the similarities and differences’ between stakeholder and participants relative wants, views, needs, requirements and outcomes when using drama and arts activities to examine health benefits.

5. Undertaking arts and drama based inter-generational work with younger and older people over a period of 2-3 years to focus on relationships and learning from each other.

6. What this evaluation is unable to capture is the project’s impact on any subsequent behaviour related to sexual health, and it is suggested that this would be an area for future research.

7. Further research is needed to examine how different contexts influence study outcomes. (For example, if established groups respond more positively to drama and art interventions than groups which are newly formed and have relied on diverse means of recruitment, or groups held at a theatre as compared to in a community centre of school).

8. Piloting a range of ways of delivering RSE drama based lessons, some focused on schools and others focused on venues outside of school.

Conclusion
The findings revealed that participants’ engagement in an artistic occupation was self-validating. Further, theatre and performance provided opportunities for diverse marginalised members of a community to connect and participate in a shared activity and transform their views of themselves and others. What is of note is the importance of space and place within this project, that is, the participants found a place to express themselves, to be themselves, to find out things about themselves and to feel respected members of their community. Moreover, the opportunity to produce credible public performance was also emphasised, to create and have support to do this from a professional artist as a workshop facilitator. The evidence and
recommendations from the project, in combination with new partnerships established, has contributed to the Belgrade Theatre’s decision to seek funding in order to support the possible make an on-going commitment to the delivery of arts activity to the 50+ population; this group being a key part of the delivery infrastructure of the city. The research team has used creative ways of disseminating the findings of this evaluation (Appendix 3) and communicated the outcomes of the evaluation through creative media has often been very persuasive and informative (McCormack and Elliott, 2003). In summary the finding so this evaluation acknowledges Townsend’s perspective that:

Empowerment is enabled when people demonstrate mutual respect, promote positive interdependence, share risk and responsibility, encourage hope and build trust in themselves and others.’

(Townsend 1996: 182)

References


Edwin Mellen

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http://www.americansforthearts.org/information_services/research/policy_roundtable/006.asp (Accessed 8.3.12)


Social Exclusion Unit, (2004) Mental Health and Social Exclusion: Social Exclusion Unit Report,


Appendix 1: The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) list of statements and scoring system (based on Tennant et al., 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>None of the time</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>All of the time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I’ve been feeling optimistic about the future</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I’ve been feeling useful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I’ve been feeling relaxed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I’ve been feeling interested in other people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I’ve had energy to spare</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I’ve been dealing with problems well</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I’ve been thinking clearly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I’ve been feeling good about myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I’ve been feeling close to other people</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I’ve been feeling confident</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I’ve been able to make my own mind up about things</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I’ve been feeling loved</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I’ve been interested in new things</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I’ve been feeling cheerful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scores
Appendix 2 Creative Gymnasium ‘Under Pressure ‘Relationships and Sex Education Launch Event 18.10.12 Short Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool kit/ Lesson Plans</th>
<th>Digital Stories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Great resource, realistic</td>
<td>• Films very powerful...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Being introduced to package</td>
<td>• I wish one of the films (which were really good) had been from a male point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The resources are excellent- lots to process</td>
<td>• Realities of videos are good- makes the scenarios real</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good to feel it will be used in schools, that it has legs, experiential element, really useful</td>
<td>• Seeing them from pupils point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Quality of DVDs stories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of Session</th>
<th>Format for Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Perhaps give <code>packs</code> out before lunch so we had chance to review content (albeit quickly)</td>
<td>• Time to think and discuss with people around you and hear feedback rather than just whole group discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evaluation should be towards end of session, flow of session was mixed up</td>
<td>• Opportunity to <code>network</code></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information packs should have been given at the start of the session/ before</td>
<td>• I liked hearing from all the different people involved in the project, not just one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunity to meet people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactive Section of Session</th>
<th>Content of Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Liked interactive aspect, overall very good</td>
<td>• Chance to talk on a wide range of classroom experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Testing out lesson plans</td>
<td>• Finding out about the fears of practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I like being actively involved, not just watching, staying in our chairs</td>
<td>• Helpful, rich group discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More time on the mini activities to work through them and see what happens!!</td>
<td>• Discuss issues...charming ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ICT nightmare</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People Attending</th>
<th>Further Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Wish more schools were here</td>
<td>• How will support be put into place to enable this?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3 Dissemination


