

TECH2503-17 Community Media Production

Workshop Twenty-Four: Creative Evaluation of Community Projects

Six creative ways artists can improve communities

From income inequality and unemployment to poverty, education and healthcare, communities around the world are facing critical challenges that require creative ideas and solutions. Any of these challenges could use an artist's mind, a creative question or a critical thinker to help us find our way to a more healthy and just future. Artists can illuminate truth, offer transcendent experience in a far too literal world, challenge us to feel, and connect us to our common humanity.

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/2015/feb/12/creative-ways-artists-improve-communities>

Basic Group Techniques

This section provides some simple ideas to help groups work more effectively:

- Icebreakers
- Recording
- Using and creating maps
- On-site and small group discussions
- Brainstorming
- Rounds
- Mind mapping
- Workshopping

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/run-a-project/community-project-guidelines/basic-group-techniques/>

Informing and Educating

Examples of informing and educating might be:

- Sharing the vision, values and goals that inform your project's design and future operations
- Keeping the community up to date on the process and progress of the project's development
- Providing information about opportunities for further consultation and participation.

Many of the methods for informing and educating are able to reach many people at once, providing a good way to kick-off a community process, and to keep neighbourhoods updated on a periodic basis. Some methods include:

- **Newsletters/Flyers:** These can be dropped off on postal walks to all households and businesses in a neighbourhood. A good way to widely advertise a schedule of consultation events or timeline for construction.
- **Information Sessions/Town Hall Meetings:** At these meetings the project team makes an informative presentation, with an opportunity to answer questions from the audience. As with all community consultations, those who come to meetings are usually the people who are most interested and impacted. If a project is controversial or contentious, this format can provide an opportunity for opponents to dominate the discussion.

- **Information Open Houses:** These sessions are typically held over the course of an afternoon and evening, and are a drop-in format, with information boards and staff on hand to answer questions. This format can be useful in diffusing anger, mistrust or opposition, by providing a very tangible way for people with concerns to be heard, and to have a true one-on-one conversation about the project. It is important for all staff to be well-versed and consistent in the messages provided to the community, so that there is no inconsistency or confusion created. It is also recommended to provide opportunities for feedback, so that people can think about what they learned and provide considered comments by email, mail, etc.
- **E-Bulletins/Social Media Updates:** These depend on gathering a list of email addresses and subscribers, and is a good way to provide ongoing information to those who have already attended consultation sessions.
- **Hoarding and Signage:** Once your project is under construction, it will require some kind of protective hoarding, which provides an opportunity to include images, information, website addresses, etc. Hoarding at ground level can become an opportunity for art by local artists or neighbourhood kids, which can tie into your community event program.
- **Community Events:** Consider participating in already-organized community events such as sidewalk sales and festivals. Have an information table and perhaps some project-related activities for young people in the community. Flyers, postcards, info sheets, renderings, etc., are good props to have on hand for neighbourhood events. You can also create your own community event, perhaps an open house and tour of your project site pre-renovation.

Gathering Input and Understanding Local Needs and Issues

Gathering local input may be useful to the project team to help understand community needs and issues, determine the best design and program of the building, or to get feedback on preliminary ideas. It is also a great way to test the market for a new business or operating model, or for new programming ideas. Some consultation methods to consider:

- **Interviews/Focus Groups/Roundtable Discussions:** These are face-to-face meetings, either one-on-one or in small groups (up to 12 people). They can focus on one main theme or question during the project planning, or they can be used early in a project to seek advice from community leaders and learn about any opportunities and threats to the project. It is often wise to mix people of different backgrounds and perspectives in these sessions, to enable different viewpoints to be heard. It also helps provide an appreciation among community stakeholders of the various trade-offs and balances that need to be taken into account when making project decisions.
- **Email/Web Surveys:** These can be accessed through your project website or sent to your mailing list. Surveys need to be carefully constructed so that you can easily compile and interpret the answers. Free online survey tools include Survey Monkey, Zoomerang and ESurveysPro.
- **Request for Expressions of Interest**
The Request for Expressions of Interest (REOI) is a briefing document that may be used as a tool to stimulate and assess interest in a project and to solicit useful information from interested parties. [Click here](#) to find out more about this tool and how Artscape uses it in the pre-project development phase.

Seeking Discussion and Direction from the Community

You may wish to seek community direction on the vision for your project, specific design elements,

programming goals, opportunities for public art or animation of public spaces, or other forms of participation. You may want to discuss with the community the use and time allocation of a community-accessible space. If you've chosen your tenants or building users, you may want to seek their advice and direction with respect to design and program requirements, which will ensure that they will be able to make best use of the space provided to them. Methods include:

- **“Visioning” Charrette:** A visioning charrette is a technique for consulting with some of the most interested community stakeholders early in a project. It typically involves full-day, intensive meetings, whereby municipal officials, developers, organizational leaders, community members and potential tenants are invited to gather and discuss issues, challenges and desires related to the project. A successful vision charrette achieves a shared vision and helps to defuse potential confrontational attitudes between different community stakeholders by providing a common understanding of issues, opportunities and challenges. This process is also extremely useful for identifying potential threats that could arise later in the project. A charrette can also help the project team understand the steps required to arrive at the shared vision.
- **“Design” Charrette:** Similar to the visioning charrette described above, a design charrette is used to solve a complex design problem, often at the neighbourhood scale with a focus on how the physical parameters of your project intersects with the rest of the local community. It requires thorough preparation of drawings and design limitations by the project team, and can last a full day, or even two days, depending on the level of complexity and detail you are seeking from the group.
- **Roundtable Discussions:** As noted above, these are ideal for groups of 12 or less, with a mix of perspectives and viewpoints. At this stage of consultation with the community, it is best to limit the topic to one main question or theme. Often you will want to invite those who have been most involved, as well as those who may have outstanding concerns on the particular topic you are seeking to address.
- **Small Group Workshops:** These are ideal for groups of 20 to 30 people. Small workshops are similar to but less intensive than a charrette, and can be useful for larger groups or if there is more than one related topic to cover. It begins with a presentation and question/answer period, and the participants are then divided into smaller groups to discuss specific questions. The groups can all have the same question(s), or each group can be asked to discuss a different question. A facilitator for each group keeps the discussion moving and on track. Each group records their main points and then reports back to the larger group near the end of the session. The reports are typically recorded on a flip-chart and then distilled later by the project team. As above, your aim is to invite those with the most to contribute, and those with ongoing concerns.

<http://www.artscapediy.org/Creative-Placemaking-Toolbox/Who-Are-My-Stakeholders-and-How-Do-I-Engage-Them/A-Guide-to-Engaging-the-Community-in-Your-Project.aspx>

Capacity Building Programme - Final Report LARC Thrive, April 2010

In January 2010, The Hamilton Project was commissioned by LARC Thrive to undertake a 12 month community capacity building programme (CBP) for community and arts organisations based in North Liverpool. The aim of the capacity building programme was to develop ways in which the organisations could provide arts and cultural projects in collaboration with each other and apply for funding to deliver the projects. The objectives of the programme were to:

- Support community programme managers in developing viable project ideas for using culture to address regeneration objectives.
- Identify current levels of funding knowledge and activity in participating organisations.

- Develop understand of basic fundraising skills for project managers and long term volunteers.
- Identify funding sources relevant to cultural programming that the organisations are not accessing and provide practical support for community project managers and community organisation directors in applying for them <http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/LARC-Capacity-Building-Final-Report.pdf>

This year, Bristol Women's Voice researched and developed our biggest policy document to date, the Bristol Wo-Manifesto: Our Call for Parity, which is available to view on our website. Evidence tells us that women in general experience disadvantage, and that some women are more disadvantaged than others. Our wo-manifesto identifies six key priorities for change and makes a call to action for all who have a stake in the future of Bristol. The six key priorities identified in our Wo-manifesto are:

Power: to bring about change in public, private and political institutions in the city to ensure gender balanced leadership. To ensure that the city's key organisations hear, understand and respond to the needs of all women.

Health and Social Care: to improve the health and wellbeing of Bristolian women of all ages through action and influence underpinned by research. To raise the profile of women's health and the importance of taking a gendered approach in all aspects of health promotion and service planning and delivery, to secure equal opportunities for women to enjoy good health.

Safety: to make Bristol a city free from any form of gender-based violence by becoming a Zero Tolerance City with:

- A greater understanding of gender-based violence
- Enhanced specialised and appropriate support services that adequately meet the needs of all women
- High quality work on prevention, education and understanding of gender-based violence, gender
- stereotyping and discrimination.

Education: to ensure that education fully utilises the potential of girls and women, and that the education of all young people (girls and boys) builds values and behaviours that lead to a more equitable society.

Housing: to ensure that the needs of women in relation to housing are met, and in particular that the needs of women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are understood and addressed. Bristol faces a housing crisis, which is having a particular impact on women and forcing them into homelessness. Rising rents, insecure tenancies and lack of affordable housing are forcing families to leave the area where they have childcare and family support networks. The housing needs of women fleeing domestic violence must be prioritised.

Economy: to enlist the skills, creativity and experience of women to deliver Bristol's potential to be a leading European city and to tackle the economic and social exclusion of women on low incomes in Bristol.

<http://www.bristolwomensvoice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/annual-report-2015-16-low-res.pdf>

Soundart Radio – Web Reporting

We find out about the world through the media - how to define ourselves, who to trust, what to buy, how to vote, what to believe in. Media is a powerful force, and yet often funded by advertising. For advertisers, stereotypes are powerful and effective. We need corners of our culture to be kept free from commercial interests.

Many of us don't fit in to the expectations we feel society has of us. We feel inadequate, pigeon-holed, unacceptable. It's easy to say 'blame the media' but there is no such one thing as 'the media', just many individuals working in many organisations. Any of us can be 'the media' and step up to make sure our point of view is heard.

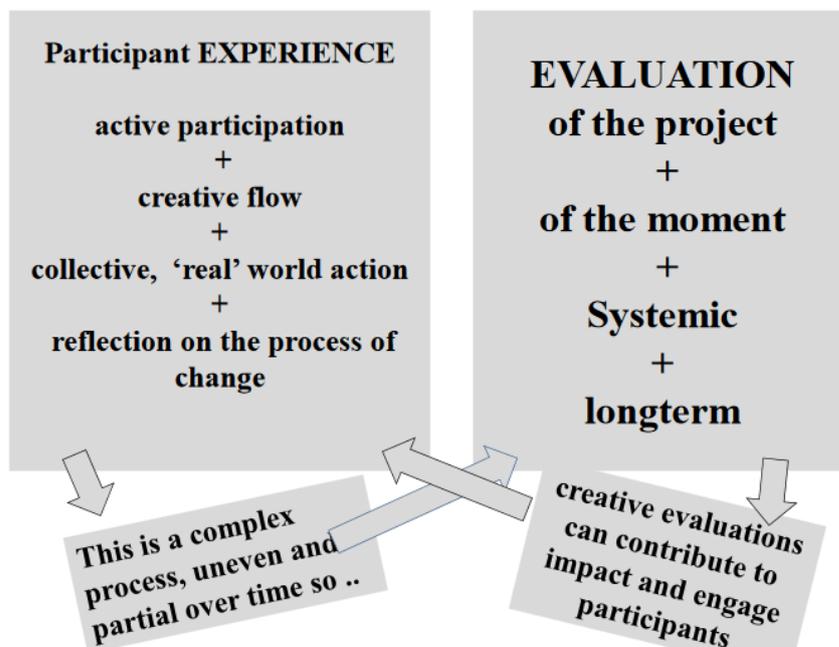
In the radio studio we are safe to express ourselves. The audience is invisible, and we do not feel their judgement. Yet we are performing, we are focused on our task, speaking and listening to the best of our abilities. Our radio persona can be just ourselves - but our best selves. The audience can walk away, tune out, if they wish, without that affecting our performance.

Some of the people who find Soundart Radio have not found another place where they are welcomed and accepted. As we grow in confidence as radio presenters, meet one another and collaborate, things change in our lives, and our expectations of what we can achieve is heightened.

Most of the radio we hear on BBC or commercial channels is extremely slick. Listeners hear a polished-up version of the world. We take to the airwaves nervous and confused at times, there are off mic moments, silences, muddles. To the listeners, we are broadcasting - "you are ok as you are."

It's nonsense to talk of 'hard to reach' people. People outside the mainstream are not hard to reach, they are just easy to reject. <http://www.soundartradio.org.uk/community/>

“Making and Doing: Creativity and the Evaluation of Impact in Creative Community Projects”



It is possible to link changes such as increased wellbeing and social cohesion to participation in creative projects in a number of ways (Helliwell, Putman, 2004). In our research, for example, participants in Imagineer Production's six-month carnival costume-making project made the link to their own feelings of increased self-confidence, to increased volunteering, to improved wellbeing. In a subsequent Focus Group, convened three months after the course, they gave examples such as "feeling strong enough" to challenge local teenage vandals on the estate. In this project, we used a wide range of visual and creative evaluation techniques, including visual journals. Techniques of reflection, individual and collective, were built into the course activities. http://iafor.org/archives/offprints/ecah2013-offprints/ECAH2013_0349.pdf