

ACCESS TO ARTS 2007-2008

NEW HORIZONS



EVALUATION REPORT

Cover illustration

Access to Arts visit, Antony Gormley's 'Another Place' on Crosby beach

Oil pastel in sketchbook, by Framework participant

Photographs of artwork, workshops and visits by Nicci Wilson, Jo Wheeler and participants.

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ACCESS TO ARTS

A programme of workshops and visits for vulnerable people

June 2007 - July 2008, Nottingham, UK



Developed and delivered by

DOUBLE IMPACT

with

FRAMEWORK and CITY ARTS

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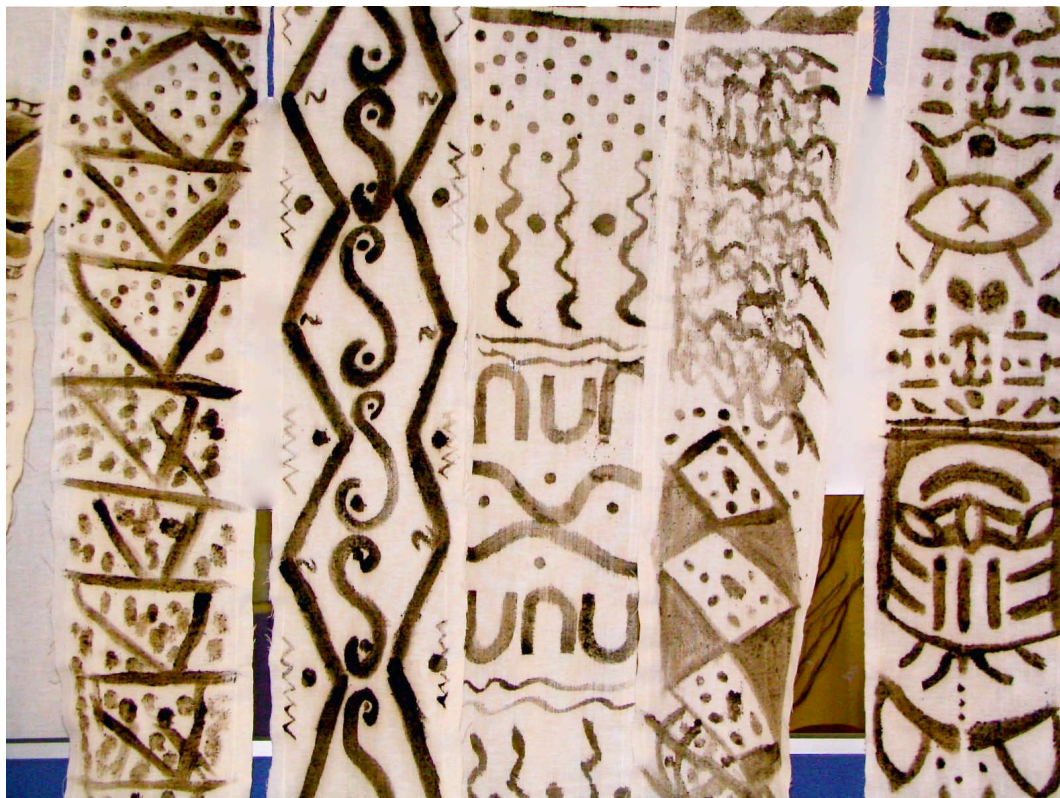
Nottinghamshire County Drug and Alcohol Action Team



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FOREWORD

Arts Council England's mission is to promote 'great art for everyone'. That can only be achieved through the imagination, creativity and commitment of the organisations we support. Naturally, most of those produce and present the arts and strive for excellence in their work. But those that focus on the second half of our mission – enabling everyone to have access to the best art we have – are no less important. Without an engaged audience, great art touches no one.

The work of Double Impact is critical to the lives of its users. The word transformation is over-used nowadays but the support people get through Double Impact does have a transformative effect on their lives, helping them find security, stability and the prospect of a better future. A key part of that change is to be part of the ordinary social life of the community in which they live and to enjoy the everyday pleasures of life in a great city like Nottingham.

Feeling welcome in the local cinema or theatre, knowing how to find galleries and what they offer – these are normal experiences for many people, but not for everyone. Double Impact's 'Access to Arts' programme has aimed to make them normal for some of those who are on the margins of the city, vulnerable people with difficult lives. It has aimed to help them learn about what art offers to audiences, spectators and to those who create it. And in doing that, the programme has aimed for the highest standards.

This report gives an account of the programme's development and the results for those who took part. It richly demonstrates the importance that art can have in people's lives – for its pleasure, its interest, its difference and, above all, for its capacity to make meaning. The sense of inclusion that some of the participants describe in the following pages is so important to them because it goes beyond having access to venues to take in access to meaning. It is real inclusion in the artistic and cultural life of the community.

The programme's achievements are inseparable from the ambitious standards it set itself. The idea that art needs to be made easy – to be 'dumbed down' in today's jargon – to attract new audiences is false. Giving people access to the second-rate is no favour. Double Impact aimed to open up the best of Nottingham's artistic offer to its users and was unafraid to go further in that goal, for instance in arranging a visit to the Tate in Liverpool.

The rigour with which the work was evaluated is another aspect of that ambition: few community projects would invite an academic expert such as Professor Helen Simons to support their critical reflection: the results are evident in the following pages.

The 'Access to Arts' programme shows what can be achieved, indeed what is being done to extend participation in the arts in England today. Such opportunities are still not as widespread as they should be: we have a way to go before great art is truly for everyone. But through the work of creative practitioners and organisations such as Double Impact, we are getting closer.

François Matarasso
Chair, East Midlands Regional Council
Arts Council England

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Programme

Access to Arts is a programme of visits to arts venues, supported by creative art workshops, designed to increase the independent use of these venues in Nottingham by vulnerable and socially excluded people. The programme had its origins in a previous initiative by Double Impact of visits to arts venues and artist-led workshops, which was important for introducing many participants to arts events for the first time. Regular participation in the programme enabled individuals to increase their level of engagement and retention with the service and make progress towards their personal goals related to reduced substance abuse, education and employment.

The Access to Arts programme was designed to build on this success and the learning gained by participants, staff and artists. It moved the focus from separate arts' workshops to integration into mainstream arts services, increased the involvement of excluded people in existing arts provision and offered support to arts organisations in meeting the needs of vulnerable people. The programme was a partnership between Double Impact, Framework and City Arts, all in Nottingham. It was funded by Arts Council England East Midlands, Nottingham Crime and Drugs Partnership and Nottinghamshire County Drug and Alcohol Action Team. This evaluation report presents the findings of this one year programme, which engaged 83 participants between July 2007 – July 2008 and was commissioned by Double Impact.

1.2 Key Findings

1.2.1 Impact on participants

Independent Access to Art Venues

One of the aims of the programme was to increase independent access to arts venues. Feedback confirmed that many participants were inspired by the programme to organise visits independently with friends, family and through the new friendship groups developed during the programme.

Enhanced Confidence

Participants spoke candidly about their new sense of self-worth, and the confidence they gained to engage or re-engage in social life and to explore artistic expression. The significant factors which contributed to this positive experience were the staff, the organisational support of the programme and the positive dynamics of the group.

Power of the Group

A critical factor in the development of their confidence was the encouragement and energy generated by the group itself. This was a powerful motivator throughout. It provided opportunities in a safe environment for personal exploration, sharing of experience, social engagement and personal creativity.

Creativity

Encouraged and inspired by the visits to creative spaces, guest artists and programme staff, participants came to value their personal creativity and their ability to appreciate artistic activities of others. Contributing to arts events and exhibition spaces in the city gave added focus to the workshop programme, and encouraged participants' confidence in their own self-expression. For many, in using the workshops to explore, this led to a sense of belonging and reconnecting with the 'culture of their city'.

New Horizons

The programme also had an impact on participants' future development. Many were stimulated to continue visiting arts venues and expressed interest in exploring in the workshops other creative mediums such as music and performance. Some were inspired to continue their artwork alone or in groups. Others were motivated to engage in further formal education.

1.2.2 Impact on arts venues and partner organisations

The venues which offered support and resources welcomed their involvement in the programme. Two are keen to develop the relationship further and in future offer additional practical workshops. Awareness training sessions were offered to four venues but only taken up by one, due to staffing limitations. The value participants placed on venues differed; this was a matter of personal preference for the art form as much as the particular show or exhibition.

Partners valued their investment and feedback from participants. Both Framework and City Arts indicated that Access to Arts complemented their existing activity and they would welcome developing partnership further.

As a new programme it was at times a challenge to accommodate partners' different practices, management and resources. Several factors have been identified as key priorities in shaping a future programme of this kind. These include strengthening the referral process, the partnership agreement, communication between partners, and enhancing the strategic role of the steering group.

1.2.3 Management and organisation of the programme

Planning for participants' high support access needs was difficult in part because some visits were confirmed before the list of participants was known. However moderate access needs were always accommodated. With the exception of a few minor incidents, ground rules around substance and alcohol misuse were followed.

Opportunities for previous participants to return to the programme as peer volunteers provided an additional and different kind of support to the group. Their energy and enthusiasm for the programme offered further motivation and inspiration for participants.

Attendance at the visits programme began to decline after the first six months, this was addressed by more information about the value of the programme, reminders each week and allowing participants to sign up more than once.,

Despite the programme's efforts, the link between the workshop and visits was not as straightforward as anticipated. However combining the two activities for a final visit worked well, and participants and coordinators have both made suggestions on how to develop a stronger relationship between the two activities in the future.

2 ACCESS TO ARTS

2.1 Background

Access to Arts was a programme designed to increase the independent use of arts venues in Nottingham by vulnerable and socially excluded people. The programme had its origins in a previous arts initiative promoted by Double Impact. Double Impact is a non-statutory drug and alcohol agency founded in 1997 and recognised by Nottingham Crime and Drug Partnership as the main after-care treatment provider in the city. It provides a personalised support service to people with problematic substance use. The service includes access to individual support, housing advice, education, personal development, vocational and non-vocational training and health related interventions. Since 2004, arts have been a key element in the programme.

Prior to the Access to Arts initiative, in January 2006 an artist-led workshop programme was started with funding from Arts Council England and the Nottingham City Drug & Alcohol Team. These workshops, now a core part of the Double Impact weekly programme, attracted high numbers of participants and generated a sense of energy, achievement and belonging within the group and the organisation as a whole. A number of visits to arts venues were introduced from the start and, while challenging, became important in introducing many participants to arts events for the first time.

Regular participation in this programme enabled individuals to increase their level of engagement and retention with the service and make progress towards their personal goals of reduced substance abuse, education and employment. A sense of shared purpose and passion developed within the group with a readiness to embrace new possibilities and broaden horizons.

The Access to Arts programme, inviting a new partnership with City Arts and Framework, was designed to build on this success, the learning gained by participants, staff and artists in the programme, and extend the involvement of excluded people in existing arts provision. Crucially it moved the focus from a separate activity of arts workshops to integration into mainstream arts services. It also offered support to arts organisations in meeting the needs of vulnerable people.



2.2 The Participants

The vulnerable people who were part of the Access to Arts programme stemmed from three constituencies – Double Impact, Framework, and City Arts. Double Impact service users are people recovering from problematic drug and alcohol use. Framework service users are homeless or

insecurely housed. City Arts works with inner urban community residents, young people and mental health service users. For further details of these organisations see Appendix 1.

The difficulties these groups face is the main challenge to providing and managing a programme of engagement with the arts. Vulnerability is not restricted to any one group or kind of person. They may be younger or older, more or less educated, more or less physically able, more or less stable. The lives of some of these participants are at times chaotic. Some need medication, social contact or support to overcome difficulties. Those who joined the programme came from mixed backgrounds, different levels of education and a range of ages (from 18-67). These participants are re-building and re-shaping their lives, and their interest in arts activities provides a focus for that re-engagement. Other than this shared interest, it is not possible to make assumptions about what any one group in the Arts to Access programme is like, who might return for the next session, or whether individuals will have the same frame of mind over an extended period.

Working with these individuals requires an ongoing relationship to engage them in a process of connecting with the arts and realising aspirations that range from enjoyable social activity, through individual creativity to bringing a critical presence to mainstream arts.



2.3 The Programme

The programme was structured in a series of weekly visits to leading arts venues in the city, scheduled in blocks of six weeks, see Appendix 2; supported by weekly arts workshops for Double Impact service users, for a list of the workshops see Appendix 3. The visits programme aimed to provide support to enable participants to access and experience local arts venues and services. The idea of linking the visits with the workshops was to inspire and motivate participants to engage with their own creative expression. The visits programme ran from August 2007- July 2008 and introduced 56 people from the joint target group to arts venues and events in Nottingham. (Some also attended the workshops along with other Double Impact participants). It was supported by a steering group which met after each block of six weeks.

The agencies and art venues worked together to provide a rich creative experience for participants. Each had different roles in this collaborative process.

The arts venues aimed to enrich participants' understanding of the visits through their involvement and the education resources provided.

The agencies provided support to the arts' venues including Awareness Training for arts venue staff on approaches to receiving, working with and building an audience among vulnerable and excluded groups.

The artists in the workshops encouraged awareness of arts through engagement with different art forms, and development or rekindling of participants' creativity.



2.4 Organisation of the programme

The programme was supported by a Co-ordinator who organised the visits, maintained contact with participants and offered information about venues, events and transport to encourage interest and facilitate access. Emphasis was placed on making the visits informal and accessible encouraging enjoyment, discussion and debate. To support attendance the visits coordinator sent a text or telephoned through details of the coming visit each week as a reminder to each participant.

Each visits programme offered twelve places - four spaces for each referral partner. Each partner also set up a reserve list in case people dropped out. It was up to each partner organisation to decide how to fill their four places. A referral form included information about participants' expectations of the programme, how often they visited arts venues, their skills and interests, mobility needs, and other issues that could affect their participation.

The form also asked participants to sign up to the programme's ground rules:

- Not to use alcohol or non-prescription drugs before, during or immediately after the programme visits.
- To be sensitive and respectful to each other and to staff supporting the programme.

For virtually every visit a talk, tour or activity was organised to make the most of the experience and to enhance engagement with the art form. This included talks with dancers, curators, directors and local artists about their work and practice. A collective project journal (one of the evaluation methods) was introduced at the beginning of the set of visits in which participants could draw or write about their experience or portray it through photographs. Each visit was followed by a café visit to relax and discuss what they had seen and heard and use the project journal, and receive details of other arts events.

The programme was also designed to link the visits closely with the workshop programme at City Arts and Double Impact, and to explore joint themes. The Workshop Artist attended at least one visit per six-week slot and took ideas back into the workshops to develop with the group. On several occasions she also devised practical activity inspired by the nature of the visit. This included land art in the grounds of Newstead Abbey and mapping journeys around the City Centre inspired by the Shifting Ground Exhibition at Angel Row Gallery. Initially the workshop sessions at Double Impact were only open to Double Impact users, but towards the end of the year the Workshop Artist offered four shared workshops open to participants from City Arts and Framework.

Outputs from the Programme were disseminated in four ways: through exhibitions of work created in the workshops and held in December 2007 and July 2008, a website, this evaluation report and a regional conference, July 2008.



2.5 The Evaluation

The evaluation reported here documents the experience of participants in the Access to Arts Programme and the effects that it had on arts venues and partner organisations. It was primarily a self-evaluation conducted by the Double Impact project team supported by a consultant independent evaluator. The evaluation was designed to maximize gaining evidence on the experience and outcomes for all participants but particularly the target group from all three agencies. It involved a range of both qualitative and quantitative methods including questionnaires before and after each cycle of visits, interviews, observations and feedback from participants, partners and venues, group discussion, group journal, photographs, examples of participants' artwork and a digital film.

The evaluation takes the form of a portrayal of the experience and impact of the programme on the target group, venues and partner organisations. It has three major purposes - to celebrate the experience of the programme, to inform potential funders about its worth and to guide decision-making about how to improve and shape future initiatives of this kind.

Underpinning the choice of methods and approach were the following assumptions:

- A range of data gathering instruments (both qualitative and quantitative) would be necessary to capture the experience of participants;
- Involving participants in the data gathering process would be empowering and facilitate understanding their experience;
- Creative methods would capture more of the participants' experience than words alone;
- Given a year-long programme structured in six week slots, where continuity of participation was uncertain, emphasis would have to be on short or medium-term outcomes.

Data gathering took place at several points throughout the programme, at the beginning to document prior experience, at the end of each cycle of six week visits and at the end of the year-long programme. Case profiles of individual participants provide in-depth accounts of experience while the questionnaire data examines benefits for the wider group and explores the experience of the venues and organisation of the Programme.

2.5.1 Evaluation design

The main aim of the evaluation was to document the experience of the participants in the Access to Arts programme and provide evidence of its usefulness to inform future policy decisions. Specific objectives were to:

- Identify whether participants' involvement in the Access to Arts programme enhanced their confidence to access arts venues more independently as a result of the programme and whether it had any impact on creativity and independence in their lives;
- Assess the role of the creative arts workshops in the programme;
- Identify what impact the programme may have had on arts venues and partner organisations.

2.5.2 Key questions

The key questions the evaluation addressed were:

- What was the experience and impact of the programme on the participants?

- How did the visits programme impact upon the participant's own creativity?
- What was the impact of the programme on the arts venues and the partner organisations?

2.5.3 Database for evaluation report

Data for the findings which follow were based on 49 preliminary questionnaires on registering for the programme and 43 questionnaires after each cycle of visits (for various reasons - joining the programme late or leaving the final visit early - a few participants missed filling in these forms, the percentages in the text refer to percentages of those who returned the questionnaires,) five in-depth profiles of participants, written responses to questions on impact and organisation from the partner organisations, excerpts from the group journal, observations of the visits and post-visit discussions by participants and the co-ordinator, photographs of art work and the digital film. All the photographs and artworks have been produced by participants in the programme and all comments in italics stem from them, except where stated otherwise.

2.5.4 Ethics

The evaluation adopted a participatory approach to the collection and analysis of data underpinned by the ethical principles of collaboration, confidentiality, negotiation, and accessibility. The exact procedures adopted were as follows:

- Confidentiality was maintained throughout in interviews, observations and recording of experience.
- Participants are not named in the report, only their role designation is used. Where it was not possible to anonymise participants, as in the profiles for instance, clearance was sought from the individuals concerned and permission to use them has been granted.
- Permission was given by the group for the inclusion of excerpts from the collective journal.
- To ensure accuracy and fairness, aspects of the report that affected particular groups were shared with them for the opportunity to comment on their observations in the context of reporting.
- In the interests of furthering learning about the programme the final report is available to all participants, partners, other arts and health organisations and the wider public.

The report was written and produced by Double Impact's Access to Arts team with support from the independent evaluation consultant Professor Helen Simons. The independent consultant evaluator helped ensure that the evaluation was conducted and reported accurately, honestly and fairly according to the Guidelines for Good Practice in Evaluation of the United Kingdom Evaluation Society. Copyright of the report lies with Double Impact. The Findings are reported in three sections Recruitment, Experience of Participants and Venues and Partners.



3 EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 Recruitment

3.1.1 Take-up

Eighty three individuals from three partner organisations took part in Access to Arts. 56 people attended the visits programme, 51 attended the workshops and 27 attended both. 42 group visits (to 14 arts venues) and 52 art workshops were held during the year. Registers showed that over the course of the programme 41% of participants accessed 6 or more visits. For the final visit of the year to Liverpool there were 23 participants from both the workshop and visits programme. The programme created 139 days' work for 20 artists, staged 3 public exhibitions, and in addition gave a presentation and collaborative workshop to a national conference for drug related service organisations and a one day seminar sharing the findings of the evaluation to a wider regional 'Arts & Health' based audience.

3.1.2 Referral

Initially it was envisaged that for each of the six-week programmes different participants would be referred. This happened over the first three programmes, but then participant numbers began to drop. To address this the steering group agreed that previous participants could sign up to the programme again and that the reminder text would also ask participants to positively affirm their place before the visit. If people could not attend, their place could be offered to others on the day and the opportunity, and in some cases a purchased ticket, would not be wasted. The fact that participants had to actively verify that they wanted their place on the programme or it would be given away also served to emphasise the value of the opportunity to participants. The new system, although more time consuming for partners and the coordinator, worked well, and numbers increased.

As the programme continued more participants who had been on one six-week programme wanted to sign up for further visits. By the end of the year the twelve spaces for each visit were being filled by a core group of twenty people who were regular participants or reserves for the last three programmes.



3.1.3 Support

Support needed to be put in place early to meet one of the aims of the programme - to include all vulnerable individuals who wished to attend. This was a difficulty in that the programme usually had to be confirmed before the list of participants and their emotional and physical access needs were known. The additional support the partners agreed to provide for participants where needed did not always happen, placing too much responsibility on the co-ordinator to find solutions for occasional participants with particularly high support needs. For example the programme attempted to support a person with severe epilepsy who had to cope with up to twelve fits every day. It was felt that for his own safety he would need one-to-one support to attend, which could not always be guaranteed by the referring organisation. Participants with moderate additional needs were always accommodated, transport was offered and prior notice given when part of the visit was not accessible.

Ground Rules

The ground rules set up at the beginning relating to alcohol and substance use were challenged on six occasions over the course of the year, but with no serious consequences. On three occasions, despite the referral process, it was because participants were unaware of the no alcohol ground rule. To address this, ground rules were reiterated at the beginning of each six week programme and with each new set of participants.

Volunteer Support Workers

A successful development of the programme was the inclusion of previous participants as volunteers supporting the group from programme three onwards. Each was CRB checked and given a brief about their role. These volunteering placements provided additional support and energy to the group as well as the opportunity for the volunteers to take on more responsibility in their lives.



3.2 Experience of Participants

3.2.1 Visits to venues programme

Expectations

Before joining the programme participants were asked what benefits they hoped to achieve through the programme. Sixty-nine percent (69%) indicated that they wanted to learn more about art: one was *'intrigued by history'*; another wanted to gain a *'better understanding of theatre'*; and a third *'to get better at drawing'*. Gaining *'insight into the unknown'*, *'getting inspiration'* and *'expanding experience'* were also mentioned. The following participant had a longer term and dual aim.

'Excitement – to help motivate me with my own art in the future. Getting a sense of achievement from these activities and participation in them. To help me in structuring my time with drugs and alcohol.'

Of the remainder, 20% signed up for reasons more connected with socialising and meeting new people, as another participant from City Arts notes:

'Going somewhere with people not on my own, not being scared of lots of people, going to places I might not normally go... something to talk about.'



Independent access

One of the objectives of Access to Arts was to increase independent access to arts venues by vulnerable people. This was an ambitious task especially in a short term programme of six week slots or even two six week slots (some participants signed up more than once). Double Impact users indicated before the programme started that there were barriers to accessing arts venues in the city. Many, they said, were *'too expensive'* and *'unwelcoming'* and they had *'no information'* about what was available.

Many of the target group were isolated through the breakdown of family and social networks so, 'not having anyone to go with' was a further reason. Some indicated that depression and inertia had prevented them from having the motivation to go out, with 68% saying that before the programme they rarely or never visited a cinema, art gallery museum or theatre.

By contrast, at the end of the programme 71% said that they felt more confident about visiting new places. What contributed to this change of attitude was greater understanding of what was on offer, as the following participant notes: *'I would definitely visit the playhouse, cinema and art galleries in the future. I wouldn't have before as I wasn't aware of what goes on.'*

Acknowledgement that arts were accessible to all was also a factor, observed here by volunteer Janie:

'One of the group put it this way when asked afterwards about her impression of Tilting the Mirror, a poetry performance at Lakeside: "I had the impression that it was too high brow for me in the university campus, and I don't belong there because I'm just a common sort of person. It dispelled my myths and normalised it and made me feel yes, this is a place for me. I wouldn't have felt like that previously. It has really opened things up. I will visit again, yes." I believe that this is what Art is for; it gives us all an invitation to have an opinion.'



Returning to the venues

On completion of the programme participants were asked if they would return to venues again. Of the five most visited venues in the programme, 85% said that they would return to Nottingham Playhouse; 82% would revisit the Castle Museum and Art Gallery; 81% would return to the Broadway Cinema and 81% would revisit The Art Organisation.

There is evidence to suggest that participants are taking this initiative. For example, The Art Organisation has become a place for a number of participants to visit frequently. Feedback from the venue's staff and participants indicates that several programme participants are now visiting the tea bar and accessing other activities there on a regular basis.

A positive outcome that involved other venues was cited by the Learning Support Worker at Framework:

'I have had verbal feedback from a learner, saying that since being on the programme he has started to visit the theatre and cinema regularly. He is now looking at starting a club within his hostel where residents go to shows as a social group. At the moment this is all being self-led and motivated through the Access to Art course.'

However there was one venue that some participants were unlikely to visit again. This was because a front of house staff member spoke inappropriately and upset a member the group. This participant said that she might return to the venue again, but as an illustration of how important a positive welcome is, another said she would never return specifically because of that staff member's attitude.

The above was an isolated incident and other venues inspired some participants to return with their families. One was keen to talk about how he had spent a great day with his teenage grandchildren when he took them to see the graphic comics exhibition at the Castle after seeing it with the group. Being the instigator of a family activity, suggesting where to go and having knowledge and opinion to impart had given him a boost.

Motivation to see exhibited work

Independent access was further facilitated by the exhibitions that were part of the programme where participants' creative works were on display. The Art Organisation was chosen as a venue for the 'Me Myself and I' exhibition, and pieces from this show were later exhibited in Nottingham Castle Museum's 'Meet You At the Lions' - a gallery about Nottingham life and people. Participants returned to these venues taking friends and family to view their work on public display.



Support from friendship groups

Finally independent access was generated and maintained through the friendship groups that developed in the programme. Staff on the visits had aspired to make the occasion relaxed and accessible, establishing a positive group atmosphere and encouraging social interaction. As a result friendship groups formed and they organised trips to the theatre and cinema for themselves. Several participants bought unlimited cinema passes and met regularly to see films together. Janie and Susan here comment respectively on what this has meant for them.

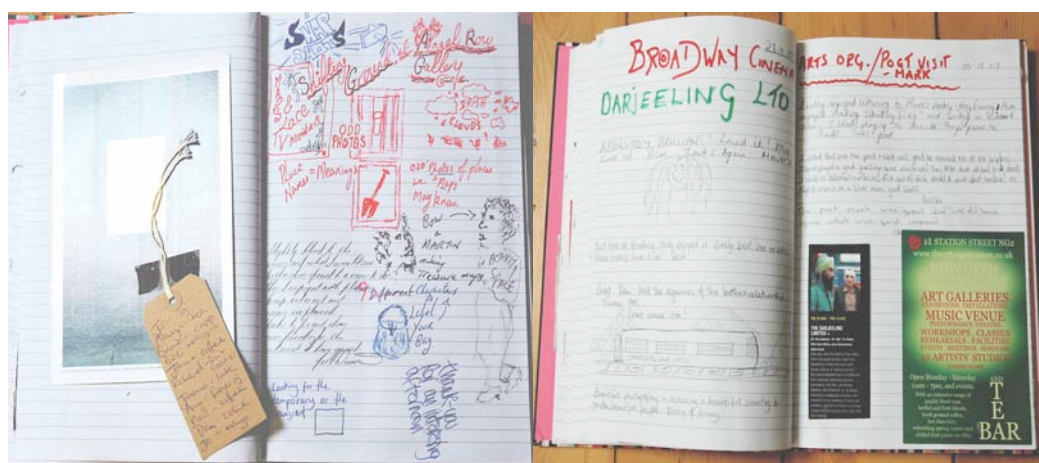
'These visits are very sociable, for years after coming out of my family breaking up I was desperate to find a social life, desperate. Within these groups you can find a social life. You might say I want to see that play next week do you want to come? and you've got a companion to go and do things with. For the cinema now I've got two friends, who've been to these groups, we got some cards and we go to the cinema together.'

'It's opened my eyes. Now I've met a friend (name) she's got a drink problem, yes, but we get on just like that. And I've also met another girl (name) and I've been out for meals with her on occasions, it's been marvellous.... I think the friendships will last, I think they will.'

The City Arts Creative Projects Manager also noted that some participants had attended exhibitions of their own accord or with friends and family since the programme, highlighting, here again, the significance of the group support and new friendships formed within the programme.

Confidence

Helping participants gain confidence was a key part of encouraging independent access. This was achieved in a number of ways - through the friendships that developed, the group itself, the sharing of experience, and the structure of the programme. Initially some participants were diffident about attending some venues and shy about sharing experience in the group or participating in the project journal. But by the end of the programme 92% said that they were more motivated and 89% that they felt more confident.



Asking questions and expressing opinions

With encouragement participants became more vocal and confident in asking questions and expressing their views, as Janie observed *'I believe this is what art is for; it gives us an invitation to have an opinion'*. This was also noted by the co-ordinator, and partners, one of whom observed:

...I can definitely say that I have seen some of the participants come out of their shells, being quiet initially but more vocal after going on the programme and more confident commenting on the arts and getting involved in more arts activities' (Creative Projects Manager, City Arts)

Gaining confidence from the group

Many participants gained confidence from the group experience itself. For some it was gaining confidence to express their opinions in a safe environment, for others it was more a question of finding or rediscovering a sense of self worth.

What facilitated this process was the consistency in group membership, the support of the Visits' Coordinator who helped participants overcome initial anxieties of being in unfamiliar environments with unfamiliar people and the talks and staff at the venues who genuinely welcomed the group.

'Going with a group is really good, if people are a bit resistant, nervous or shy. The whole group bolsters you, it's friendly, a few laughs, jokes or whatever, and together with the enthusiasm of the people that introduced the art. I've come away a couple of times and thought that's absolutely fantastic.' (Simon)

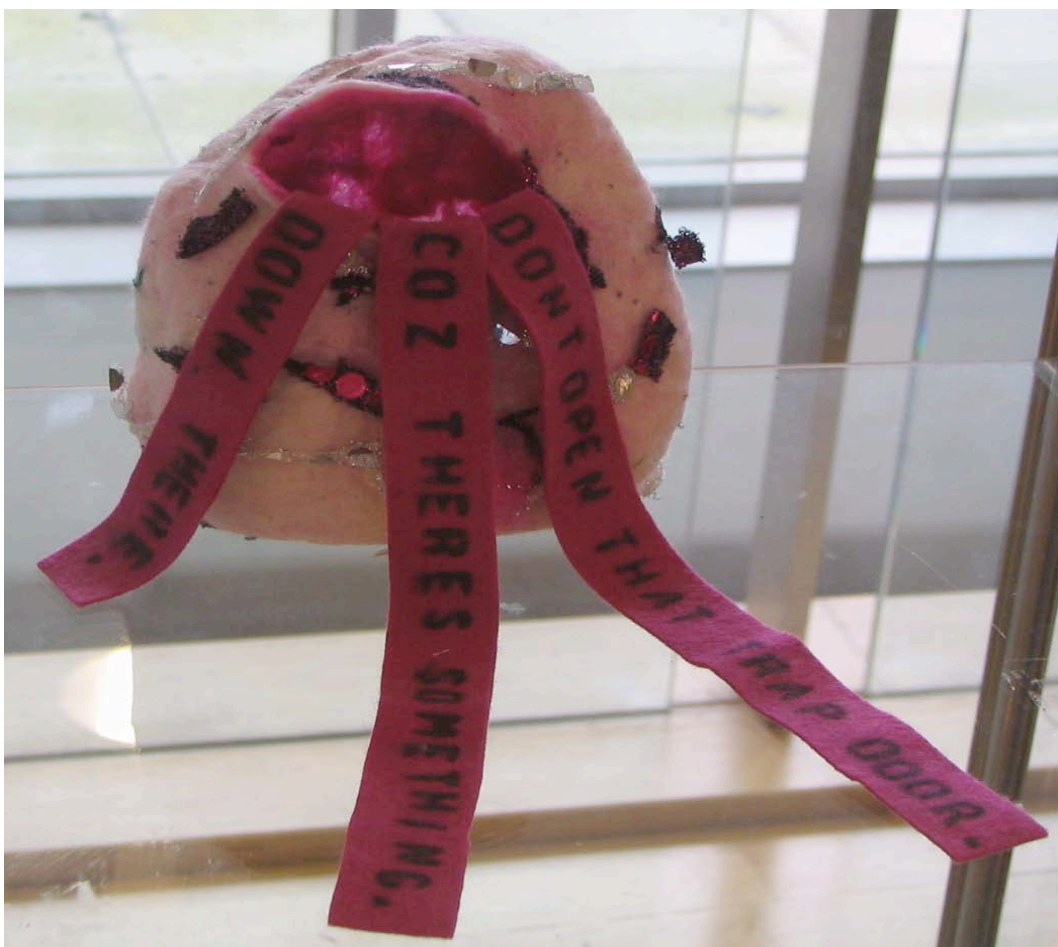
Socialising for many was a vital part of the programme, and on several occasions participants indicated that going to the café after the venue visit provided an opportunity they didn't have elsewhere to talk about arts with other interested people. A participant who later went on to volunteer with the programme commented:

[the best thing about the programme was] 'feeling comfortable with a group of strangers! So cool to be able to talk about art etc with people equally engaged.'

The diverse nature of the groups (of different ages and vulnerabilities) worked well. The coordinator observed that there was a good atmosphere and camaraderie in the group and that they were accepting, listening and supportive of each other. This in turn built confidence as the following participant wrote:

'It has made me feel confident 100% to get on with people and engage in conversation, and not isolate myself which I used to do.'

This group confidence was also observed by the venue staff. On more than one occasion curators and artists made unprompted comments that they had really enjoyed talking with the group, and that they were the most engaged, lively and inquiring group they had ever met.



Structure facilitated confidence

The structure of the programme itself - having a place to go each week - was a critical factor in giving participants confidence in meeting and talking with people. For many these visits were a way of filling their time with positive activity. Due to previous addictions, housing, or mental health issues, many were leading isolated, sometimes disordered lives. Having something structured to do on a Wednesday afternoon, to get out and about and access a provision that wasn't related to personal problems had value for them as something diversionary, social and positive. By the end of the programme 68% said they felt more confident in meeting new people.

While *'keeping out of trouble'*, as one of them put it, may have been part of the reason for joining the group, the additional benefit was the confidence it gave them to value their opinion and feel part of a community.

'I feel more confident about going out, talking to people. I want to enjoy the summer instead of sitting in my house hiding away from the world stoned.' (participant /volunteer)

'[It helps] to focus on healthy things, places to go rather than harmful things which people's habits have taken them to. Places where you can go and walk along and chat and say I don't like that or I do like that. But you've got an opinion which is valid and it makes you count, you count then you are part of the community, the city community. I go and see a lot of films. It gives me topics of conversation, to mix in a group, I've got things to say.' (Janie)



Active participation

From the outset participants were encouraged to get involved with the planning of the six week visits and workshops through written and verbal means. After each six week visit programme a planning meeting was held at The Art Organisation facilitated by Access to Arts for participants and partner organisations to input into the steering of the programme. The meetings were well attended, six on average for each meeting. Two programme participants commented that, even though they didn't have a place on the next visits programme, they felt more than happy to give their time to contribute back to the project.

These meetings also offered a further opportunity for participants to feedback their experience of the programme and help make decisions for the programme - suggesting possible visits, offering ideas for resources e.g. the 'access to arts extra' (a leaflet of cheap and free arts activities), ways to integrate workshops and visits and ideas for future development. The latter included an independent arts space/studio/shop/garden, opportunities to collectively sell work and training for participants in fundraising and arts management to help facilitate these plans.

Support of co-ordinators and volunteers

Support for participants to engage in the programme from the Visits Co-ordinator and Workshop Artist was greatly helped by the activities of the volunteers. One of the volunteers who had particularly enjoyed using the project journal took on the role of encouraging participants to maintain journal entries. Another supported individuals with mobility issues in the use of lifts and ramps. One volunteer, from Framework, was accessing a Learning Mentors' Programme with the organisation, supporting service users to become peer-support volunteers. Her placement with Access to Arts complemented this and contributed to her completing the programme.



Creativity

Engagement with creativity

A second major objective of the programme was to engage or re-engage participants with their own creativity and 60% said before joining the programme that an expected benefit was to learn more about art. Both the visits programme and the art workshops were inspirations to this end. By the end of the year 83% of participants said they had learnt more about being creative as a result of their involvement. The talks during the visits by dancers, curators, directors and artists about their work and practice were seen as particularly inspiring as the following two participants comment.

'Really enjoyed today. Seeing the sculpture and painting work by the artist who gave a talk has inspired me to look into going back to college.' (comment in the project journal after seeing the Golly! exhibition at the Surface Gallery)

'I really enjoyed doing something I always wanted to do but would never think of doing given the choice! It was extra special to get to meet and talk to the dancers after the show.' (comment in the project journal after seeing the New English Contemporary Ballet at Nottingham Playhouse)

Creative documentation of experience

A digital camera was available for each visit for participants to document their experience, and this was well used. Three participants in particular found they had a real enthusiasm and talent for taking photographs and one was inspired to sign up for a photography course. The project journal introduced at the outset was initially only used by a few but it was not long before others, often inspired by one of the volunteers, began to take ownership of it. The pages include poetry, sketches, photographs and notes taken from the talks.

Link with creative arts workshops

The aspiration to link the visits programme closely with the workshop programme at City Arts and Double Impact was more difficult to programme than anticipated, with only 40% of Double Impact participants accessing both workshops and visits. However the practical sessions inspired by the visits were welcomed by the group, with requests for *'longer visits and more creative sessions with focus'*. The four shared workshops at the end of the programme open to participants from City Arts and Framework worked well.

Future involvement with the creative arts

Quite a number of participants indicated that they would continue to find avenues to express their creativity when the programme ended. The following comment sums up what for many was an outcome of engagement or re-engagement with their creativity. *'I am hooked on arts and will now not think twice about getting involved in anything in the future.'*



Janie's story reports her re-engagement with the arts perhaps epitomizes the positive outcomes a programme of this kind can have. Janie is a mother, a grandmother and carer. She has been

interested in the arts since childhood. Her father was an artist. He often took her to galleries and she has keen memories from childhood of dancing and listening to music while her father painted. She has been singing with Streetwise Opera for three years now, enjoys writing poems and performing them locally and recently had joined a visual arts group. But before joining Double Impact she was in a different, more troubled space.

The following is an account in her own words of what reconnecting with her creativity meant to her and for her future life.

Janie's Story

I first came across Double Impact some years ago, being signposted by Nottingham Womens' Aid. I had been in a great deal of distress and as I started to take control of my own life, I identified that I was looking for a way to take my life forward away from my troubles. The Art groups were the first place to help me feel at ease and I am still thrilled to have my work included in public exhibitions.

During the summer months a couple of years ago, a group of Double Impact members formed 'Loose Enders' which I consider to be the forerunner of Access to Arts. We would regularly meet up in order to visit a variety of city centre attractions and events. When it came to an end a few of us signed up for the Cineworld Unlimited Card and we regularly get together to see a film or three. It keeps us out of trouble.

I have personally gained confidence and made valuable friendships while working and experimenting with different artistic mediums. Although engaging in the present I was given support, direction and time through which to learn how to express myself. I'm aware that I'm approaching 50 and I'm thinking how much life have I got left in me. What's left at the end of it? There is art left. Art and artefacts, plays and performances and the memories of them and of those with whom we shared our discoveries. One of our group isn't with us anymore but his art is left. You could see that he was happy with what he was creating, he was so inspired by these programs; and able to leave something behind for his family, he was doing okay and he is sorely missed...

When the Access to Arts program first started I enjoyed each and every session being sure to make my mark and a comment within the pages of the Stripey Book [reference to the group journal]. I enjoyed sharing the impression the trips and the art we were viewing had made on me. Although I would not have chosen some of the venues visited through this programme. I had my eyes opened at a few venues. I was transported back in time and newly acquainted with countless species of life in the grounds of Wollaton Park, I had to adopt technical thinking with the photography at The Art Organisation and I was moved to tears at Madame Butterfly at The Theatre Royal...

The Access to Art Workshops were an essential part of the program, balancing the mixture of artistic stimulation of the individual and then allowing the creativeness to flow out at the workshops. Many times we saw something in a gallery and said to ourselves, "I can do that." The Ceramics Workshop, The Willow Workshop, The Pyrography Workshop and The Liverpool Trip all gave us the chance to try our hand at a new thing and show something of our own back to the world we have been watching...

I observed first hand, how people were able to mix freely without judgement or criticism, because it's not about the substance or the illness or where we live it's about the Art and the creativity and appreciation that lurk within each and every one of us. The Art unites us.

New Horizons

From the evidence in the interviews, questionnaires and observations, the Access to Arts programme has been successful in broadening the horizons of the majority of the participants, challenging and changing perceptions of what art is and can be. For many it offered a new way of seeing.

'If my daughter asked me [in the past] I'd just go to the Castle, we would look at all the pictures they meant nothing to me, then we went round the gardens and came home and that was it. But now I look, I look. Now when we go to the Castle with the arts group you really go up to them [the pictures] and look at them.' (Susan)

It also helped to break down barriers - for participants to realise that they can access different kinds of art in the city, including opera, poetry recitals, ballet and theatre. The value participants placed on venues differed, and one or two visits were not appreciated by a few. But on the whole the variety of the programme allowed individuals to connect with the art form that engaged them most, as well as encouraging them to have and share an opinion and be open to new experiences and opportunities. The City Arts Creative Projects Manager said:

'I feel the programme has certainly given participants a diverse range of opportunities to experience different and new art forms and [they] have been both interested and some, a bit turned off by some of the exhibitions... this however has led to participants being able to access a new critical language of the arts that begins to challenge some of the art work that is shown in the public realm.'



Janie here shares her experience of the opera, though the emotional impact she describes was also commented upon by several others.

'I wouldn't have chosen to go and see an Opera, Madame Butterfly, though I do sing. I was so pleasantly surprised I even recognised some of the Italian because of my singing. With the subtitles, and the humour, the sets – it took you to a different realm altogether.... It was emotionally powerful; it touched me in ways I wouldn't have expected.'

Simon, who has now returned to full time work, said that the programme not only motivated him to do further study, it was an emotional and imaginative stimulus for his life.

'I can come over as a confident person, but the thing is ... it stimulates the imagination, boosts confidence, it's a great motivator....I'm thinking of doing an Open University [course] even. I'm hungry for knowledge. But in the future I'm going to do something I really enjoy, not for work, and it's all come from the arts programme.'

Reconnection with the culture of the city

In a different vein, several participants stated that the programme had enabled them to see what the city had to offer and to understand what they are a part of. Seeing society and culture as something that they could contribute to, and that their contribution was legitimate and valued has motivated them to re-engage with life and society. In fact, several commented that they belonged to their city again, felt included and were now exercising their right to access its public spaces.

For Janie there have been considerable outcomes. She now performs with Streetwise Opera who organised her current volunteer placement with Nottingham Playhouse. She also volunteers as a support worker for a city youth project, and has just secured a place on an acting course with a local FE college. Another participant has signed up to a film studies course at Broadway Cinema. Amongst the Double Impact participants who regularly attended the programme, and who the evaluation was able to track, two more are now in voluntary work, nine are attending college courses and one is back into full-time employment. Although it is difficult to attribute the extent of the programme's influence in these achievements over other factors in people's lives, some of their individual testimony helps to indicate its value:

'I saw the changes made, as very shy and un-confident people came out of their shells and began laughing, debating and chatting away while taking photographs and recording their feedback. Being valued as someone who counts in today's society has often seemed a rare thing to a lot of people who have taken part in these sessions' (Janie)

The final visit of the year invited anyone who had attended either the workshop or the visits programme to a trip to Liverpool in its year as European Capital of Culture. Twenty-three participants attended visiting Tate Liverpool and the Anthony Gormley sculptures on Crosby beach, and recorded their experience in sketchbooks. A digital film including participants' drawings, comments and photographs was produced to celebrate and share the experience of the day.



3.2.2 Creative arts workshops programme

Purpose and organisation

The workshops were designed to be creative and challenging, working with the participant to enrich and extend their understanding and making of art. This was seen as distinct to art therapy which addresses an individual's problems using creative activity. The workshops explored personal creativity and encouraged access to local arts provision. The drop in weekly sessions ran at Double Impact and included an introduction followed by either individual or group work.

The Workshop Artist co-ordinated the weekly creative workshops with specialist artists every four weeks - for example a drummer, a potter, a cartoonist - to lead the session. This provided an opportunity for participants to experience new art forms, meet local artists and expand the repertoire of the programme.



Through a variety of means - post-it wish lists, one to one interviews, group discussions, questionnaires, a weekly journal and a comments box - participants were encouraged to help plan and direct the workshop programme. Initially the group chose familiar visual arts and crafts, despite being offered the choice of performing arts. However over time, through relationship building, gaining trust and confidence, they became open to new experiences and began to appreciate creative experimentation with different art forms.

Throughout the year opportunities for linking the workshops with local arts venues and events were developed with suggestions and decision-making from the group. Seven such links were established, details are in Appendix 3.2.

Experience of creative workshops

As with the visits programme, the workshops attracted a range of Double Impact participants, with various skills and experience with the arts. Some were returning to the arts after experiences of Art College and further education, others exploring their creativity for the first time.

The workshop sessions provided a positive, supportive and relaxed atmosphere, emphasising the experience of participation, whilst working with professional artists and resources to achieve work of quality that participants were proud to exhibit. Participants frequently commented on the social and supportive aspects of the group. Friendships were made during the workshop programme, and the Workshop Artist observed that on several occasions participants encouraged each other to attend the visits programme.

Over the year a group sense of pride and support of each others' achievements developed. Participants related that they liked '*meeting new people*', '*the chat and the banter*' and '*seeing others' great work*'. Also valued was '*never feel[ing] judged [which] means I'm free to enjoy*'.

And Janie commented that

'These workshops have been really good, for people from the trips to come to put their hands on, because on the trips you don't get the opportunity to produce your own. People walk round thinking oh well that's just the experts who have done that, I couldn't do that; but see, I know that I can and I know everybody can.'

'They are so important because it makes people feel more normal, not that they are the people with mental health problems, drug and alcohol problems, homeless problems; it makes them feel not excluded. Even if they have no money there are still places they can go, life doesn't finish because they have very little money, it's not all about material possessions. Art can be made with just junk for instance.'



Managing a drop-in group

Managing the dynamics of a drop-in group and the workshop environment was at times a challenge. Some participants preferred a quiet space to work; others wanted a lively environment of chat and music, as the following feedback by three participants suggests:

'I didn't mind today's session but I was a bit put off by someone's constant talking. I prefer quiet art sessions.'

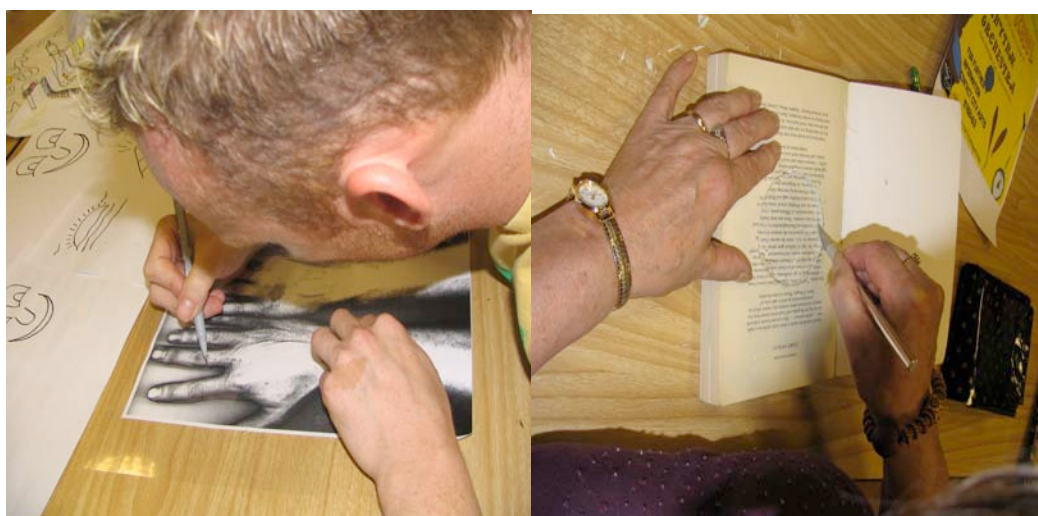
'I like verbally challenging art sessions myself!'

'I found the art work was very relaxing – I liked the music too!'

Learning to work in a group and making decisions about how the workshop space should sound and feel was in itself a learning experience. When asked if they had learned anything about themselves, over half of those who attended the workshop sessions responded that they had learnt skills related to working in a group, for example, *'I need to have more patience'* and *'how to listen better'*.

Over the year a core group of thirteen participants regularly attended with over thirty other individuals dipping in and out. Participants appeared to really welcome the drop-in nature of the workshops. With health and other issues affecting many of their lives, the flexibility was appreciated. One participant returned to the workshops after six months in a residential rehabilitation unit, and commented:

'I'm gutted I've missed so many classes because you've been doing some brilliant stuff – I'm really glad to be back.'



Creativity beyond the workshops

Participants were encouraged to continue the creativity and self-expression they had shown in the workshops outside of the group sessions. Each participant was given a sketch book on attending their first workshop. Most were taken home and used to sketch, write down ideas, and collect resources. Some participants regularly brought them back into the workshop to share with the group. The Workshop Artist noted, through observation and participant comment, that the books were appreciated and made participants feel that they and their self expression were valuable and valued by the group and by Double Impact. Sketch books were also successfully used on the Liverpool visit, which proved an effective way of linking participants' own creativity with their visits to art venues - something to be explored in future programmes.

At the end of the year's programme participants were asked what other art forms they would like to explore, and the top responses were for drama, music and poetry. One commented that she particularly appreciated the focus of working over a number of weeks to complete a piece of work, and working to deadlines to complete work for exhibition. She recognised that she was learning skills of patience, commitment and time management transferable to work situations. For another, starting and completing a piece of work was a real achievement, *'I've never finished a piece of work in my life before – I'm well proud'*.



Sharing their creative experience

Participants also shared accounts about how they had proudly displayed their work at home, making presents and cards for family and friends and carrying on creative activity.

'My panic attacks have stopped now since coming here and I do creative stuff at home now as a hobby.'

The opportunities provided throughout the year for linking the workshops with local arts venues and events served to showcase and celebrate participants' art work publicly, giving a real sense of achievement as well as opportunity to be included by and contribute to the City's culture. Here are observations of the value of this public exhibition of participants' work from three different individual perspectives.

From the participants:

'Thank you to all the Arts staff for helping me and loving me! I feel very proud of myself for seeing some of my work being exhibited in this lovely display.'

'The exhibitions, other people are looking at it [the artwork] and going oooh look at that, and that is where it touches you, then you see.'

From a visitor to the 'Me, Myself and I' public exhibition at The Art Organisation:

'A wonderful show of work, full of ideas, skills and fun – I love that the people who made this artwork put so much of themselves in to it and created some powerful, meaningful and memorable pieces.'

From a Double Impact board member recounting a conversation with a participant at a steering group meeting:

'He told me how excited he was when the publicity leaflet for the art workshops exhibition arrived from the printers with his work – a self portrait- shown on it. "That's the best thing I have ever done", he said. He was so pleased, he went round to his mum's house, though it was too late at night to see her, and put it through the letterbox. She rang him straightaway the next morning. He was very happy. He said he had never done anything that had made her proud before. His mother came to the exhibition opening, and now has the self portrait he made at her home.'



3.3 Venues and Partners

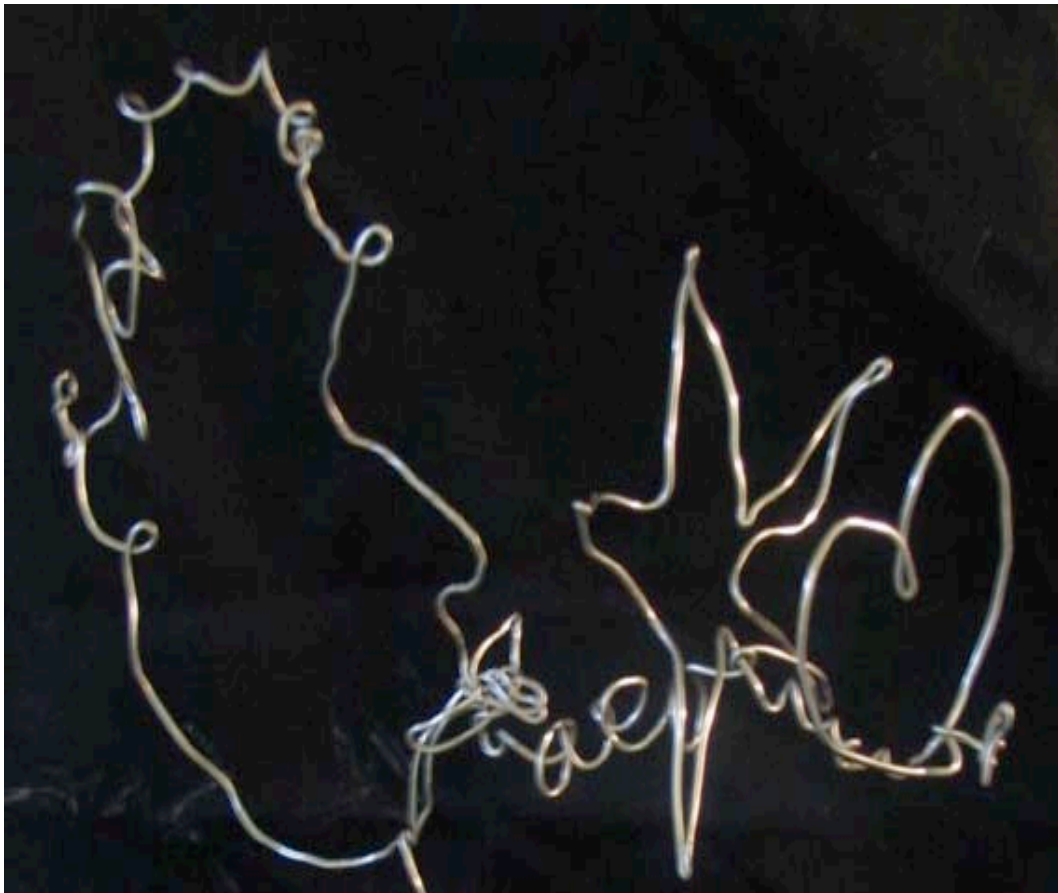
3.3.1 Experience

Venues

The venues reported that they had found this an easy programme to be involved in, and it was welcomed as an extension of what they already do for example at Broadway. It contributed to audience development at Nottingham Castle Museum and Gallery and Wollaton Hall and education activity (Playhouse).

The visits also fitted into their existing programming, and they were pleased that on most occasions, the curator or education officer was able to give introductory talks and to offer free or substantial discount on tickets. Two venues (Castle Museum and Gallery and The Playhouse) identified further ways to contribute in the future with extended participation in practical workshop activity dedicated to this group. There was one negative experience with a front of house member of staff, but on all other visits staff were welcoming and supportive.

Double Impact offered Awareness Training to front of house and education staff at each of the main venues to raise confidence and awareness of issues that need to be taken into account when welcoming vulnerable groups into these settings. Only The Castle Museum and Gallery took up the offer. Other venues said scheduling training sessions and providing cover for a number of casual staff were a barrier to accepting this opportunity. Feedback from those who took part in the training was positive.



Partners

Framework and City Arts were approached to take part in the programme because of their similar work to Double Impact with vulnerable groups, and each had a third of places on the visits programme. This offered a first step in wider, sympathetic social contact for participants, a more diverse audience group for the venues and for partners, and the chance to add supported visits to partners' own projects.

Partners supported the co-ordinator and participants by sharing provision of a second staff member for visits, and this provided a direct link for feedback to their organisation. It was quickly identified that there was also a role for volunteers - a benefit for the volunteer as much as the programme. There is scope for further initiatives of this kind with mentoring and placements already being developed within partner organisations.

Both partners reported that Access to Arts complemented their aims and activities:

'The Access to Art programme has fitted into the ethos of the Academy [Framework Learning Support] very well and what we are trying to do with our learners. It looks at breaking down barriers to learning and accessing services. At the Academy we have been able to use the program to engage with learners for the first time, and move them on to other learning activities. It also added more exciting substance to learners' learning path, helping with their motivation and confidence. I feel that the working partnership has been a very valuable thing for the Academy and is something we should carry on in the future.' (Learning Support Worker, Framework).

'This programme has definitely complemented our current programmes and arts provision that we deliver at City Arts. The format of the programme is not something that we have been able to offer at City Arts before on this scale. We have been able to signpost a large number of our adult participants onto the programme and this has resulted in participants across programmes getting to know one another and being aware of wider possibilities available to them, both within City Arts and with other organisations.' (Creative Projects Manager, City Arts).



Management

The programme was a Double Impact proposal, with outline agreement from venues and partners in place to seek funding. It was recognised that venues and partners would be learning how to work together to deliver the programme whilst each accommodating the needs of different practices, management and resources.

The implementation of the programme required shared aims, and it was challenging for organisations as well as for individuals to respond to the demands and choices that needed to be made to ensure the smooth running of the programme. These included making decisions about referrals, delivery, planning, programming, communication and training. Such collaborative working was necessary both to implement the programme and to facilitate one of its aims - to actively involve participants. Good new working relationships between eight organisations have been established, and others are developing with a further seven organisations.

Though there is always limited time available for organisations to talk together, attention to several aspects of delivery have been identified which may be helpful in the future. These include defining robust referral processes, the potential for use of the steering group for direction beyond the programme and the importance of prioritising communication when dealing with issues that arise.

Increased desire for involvement in the development of the programme is a welcome outcome for Double Impact, and in-depth collaboration with venues and partners will greatly increase future possibilities and ambitions for the programme.

'I think the programme has been successful for many of the participants taking part. However I have also felt that there have been lost opportunities for partnership working on a more strategic level... [I think] the Steering Group could have been a little more strategic in their planning by working towards a more structured agenda for future sustainability, [and] lessons learned for future partnership/participatory development.' (Creative Projects Manager, City Arts)

'I think it's been a worthwhile and additional activity this year which I've personally enjoyed leading on. However, it felt that it was a programme that was somewhat 'foisted' upon us and that we weren't part of the original concept or consultation. I think active theatre work over a significant period where clients participate would be potentially more beneficial to them than just coming to performances.' (Education Officer, Nottingham Playhouse)



3.4 A final word from participants

The above findings indicate many of the positive outcomes that can be reached in a programme of this kind to re-engage vulnerable individuals with their creativity, develop friendships and establish ways in which they can re-connect with cultural events and spaces and rebuild their lives. The findings also indicate how providers can develop the programme further to enhance the creative experience for these individuals. The central part of the evaluation has tried to capture the impact of the programme on the participants for whom it was designed. It seems appropriate to leave the last word with two of them, who express here what many conveyed was the value and significance of this programme.

'I was thinking about how good it has been. It's so enjoyable, but also it's serious. It is an experience that can aid you. It's a healing. I will not forget those two or three days of euphoria, after The Playhouse. I have never felt as enthusiastic about anything for years and years. It regenerated me. I was bubbling over for days about it; it had such an impact on me. It probably kick-started me. I felt a part of that world.' (Simon)

'I observed first hand how people were able to mix freely without judgement or criticism, because it's not about the substance or the illness or where we live, it's about the Art and the creativity and appreciation that lurk within each and every one of us. The Art unites us' (Janie)



4 WHERE TO NEXT

4.1 Impact of outcomes on the organisation and its future work

4.1.1 Brief summary of outcomes

The evaluation of this programme has demonstrated a number of positive outcomes for the participants that suggest it would be helpful to extend such a programme to other vulnerable individuals. It has demonstrated, for example, the powerful effect that engagement in the six-week visits programme and creative workshops had on participants' confidence and creativity even where participants only attended one block of the six week workshops. This gained or regained confidence has enabled many to get out and about again, to reconnect as one of them put it with the '*culture of their city*' and to publicly display their artwork.



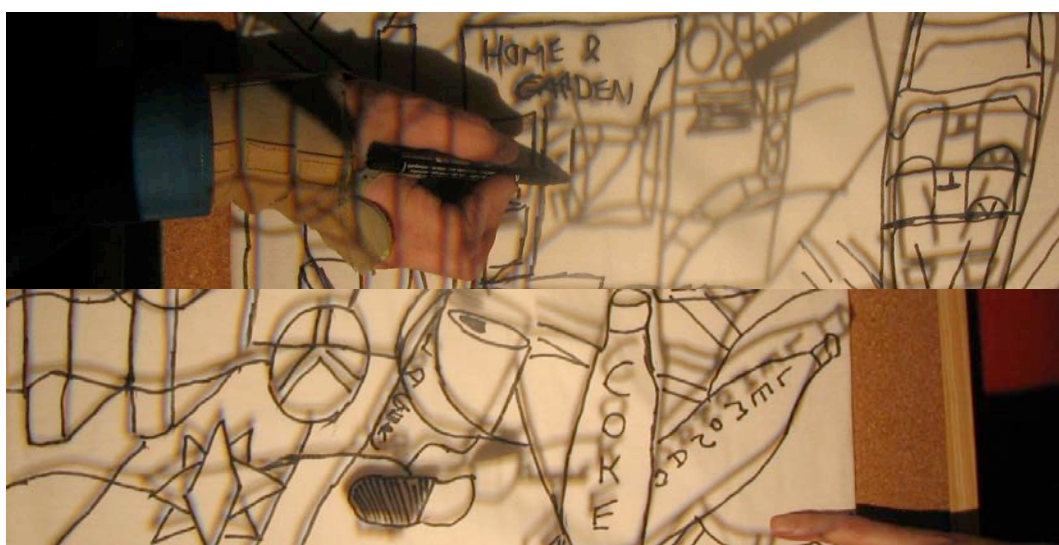
What helped in this process was the group experience. This was a strong motivator both for the visits and the creative arts workshops. Participants emphasised the importance of the social side of this programme. Many made new friends and this has been a critical factor in enabling individuals to access the venues independently - one of the major aims of Access to Arts - and engage collectively in exploring different art mediums. Some individuals have also revisited the venues again by themselves or with family members.

The evidence from the evaluation has also raised a number of organisational issues that could enhance any future programme of this kind. Learning about partnership working has been gained during the programme, in several aspects of planning, delivery and resources. It has highlighted, for instance, the need for more support both at partnership level and the one-to-one support required to help particular individuals visit the venues. It has indicated that time given to communication of aims and needs at all levels of partner organisations strengthens practice and enables ready response to both problems and opportunities. It suggests there may be scope for greater take-up by venues of awareness training, and the addition of practical workshops at the venues.

4.1.2 Implications arising

Given participants' enthusiasm and the value they said the programme had for their creativity and their lives, it would be helpful to find ways of:

- Extending the visits programme for this group as well as new participants;
- Extending the weekly creative arts workshops for all in the programme.
- Establishing an independent arts space for continuance of this creativity, independently or in friendship groups;
- Gaining resource support to facilitate and enhance the use of this independent arts space;
- Providing follow up information on arts provision to encourage ongoing access in the future;
- Involving venues more in the planning to strengthen their engagement.



On the management and organisation side, there are also implications:

- Time needs to be set aside at the beginning to discuss and establish a working partnership agreement. Factors to consider in such an agreement include ensuring adequate staff support from all partners, defining a robust referral process and establishing an effective line of communication between partners concerning participants' support needs.
- Strengthening the role of the steering group and using it more strategically to work towards future sustainability.
- Given the value the partners noted in the experience of their service users and their perceived value of the partnership, there is scope to develop it further and possibly include further partners.

4.1.3 Future developments by Double Impact

The experience of this programme during its year and the findings of the evaluation indicate that there is a demand, and potential for developing further provision, for access to the arts. Double Impact has reflected on the findings of the evaluation and intends to incorporate many of the implications arising into the next phase of development. This will strengthen ideas for further development already under consideration.

Initial development will focus on improving the quality, delivery and outcomes of the programme itself through building in the implications above from the evaluation with a particular emphasis on extending the programme to others and, if resources permit, increasing the number of workshops and visits to arts venues.

Secondly, attention will be given to the establishment and use of a neutral independent arts space in the city for which participants can take varying degrees of responsibility through mentoring and volunteering according to their own changing confidence and needs. Having a dedicated art space will enable participants from each partner organisation to explore an extended range of skills over a period of time, and creative work can be developed in more depth.

This will help to:

- Extend the self-help creative and friendship groups that developed in the programme to forward the long term aim of renewed engagement in creativity and independent access to arts in the city.
- Facilitate constructive activities for participants at times of low provision such as evenings and weekends.
- Meet Double Impact participants' frequent requests over the years for '*more time and more space*' in which to explore their creativity.

Thirdly, work will be undertaken towards establishing and supporting clear pathways into mainstream educational and volunteering opportunities.

This will:

- Formalise, enhance and maximise the existing opportunities and future potential for participants in building on the benefits they have gained;
- Help the process of connecting people to mainstream education, social activities and potential employment.



5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Double Impact would like to thank the individuals noted below for their support and contribution to Access to Arts. There are others who for confidentiality reasons cannot be named but to whom the programme is dedicated and indebted. These are the participants who took the courage and risk to join the programme and engaged whole heartedly with it. Sincere and warm thanks to them all for their participation, response and contribution to the evaluation

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Nottingham Playhouse

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The Art Organisation

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View From the Top Gallery

Katie Brosnan
Jeanne Boothe

Visiting workshop artists

Andrew Tebbs

Sally Lemsford

Brick

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Arts Council England East Midlands

Nottingham City Crime & Drug Partnership

Nottinghamshire County Drug & Alcohol Action
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Partners

Double Impact

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Framework

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Tash Gilmore
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6 APPENDICES



6.1 The Partner Organisations

6.1.1 Double Impact

Double Impact is a non-statutory drugs and alcohol agency founded in 1997 and recognised by Nottingham Crime and Drug Partnership as the main after-care treatment provider in the city. Double Impact provides a personalised support service to people with problematic substance use, which includes access to support from key workers, housing advice, education, personal development, vocational and non-vocational training and health related interventions. Since 2004, arts have been a key element in Double Impact's programme. For more information about Double Impact visit www.doubleimpact.org.uk and www.doubleimpactarts.org.uk.

6.1.2 Framework

Framework is Nottinghamshire's leading provider of housing, support, training, care and resettlement services to homeless and vulnerable people. Framework is a registered charity, a company limited by guarantee and a registered social landlord.

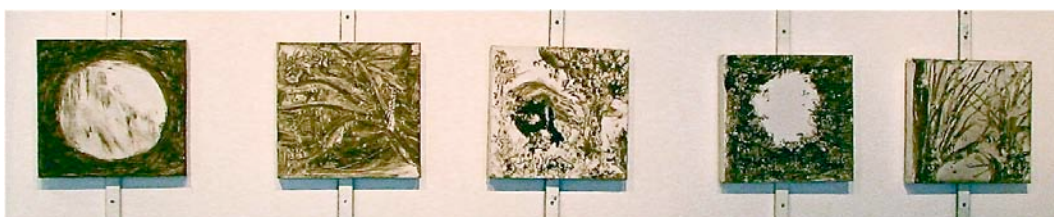
Framework also provides learning delivery and information, advice and guidance to its service user. These come under the umbrella name of 'The Academy'. The Academy was established early in 2005 to deliver learning programmes with a contract co-financed by Nottinghamshire Learning & Skills Council and the European Social Fund. The contract is to provide learning programmes for 'hard to reach' individuals, including homeless people and those vulnerable to mental health, alcohol and substance misuse and related problems. Participants in the programme were referred from this part of the service. For more information about Framework visit www.frameworkha.org

6.1.3 City Arts

City Arts is an innovative participatory arts organisation based in Nottingham and was formed in 1997 from Nottingham Community Arts (established in 1974). The organisation delivers high quality arts opportunities within communities and focuses on:

- Developing core programmes of work that are community-led and partnership based, particularly work with young people at risk and arts and health programmes
- Providing professional development and employment for artists working in community settings
- Working in partnership to deliver initiatives that contribute to social inclusion
- Adopting an inclusive approach to mainstreaming cultural diversity throughout the programme
- Engaging in regional initiatives that promote the work of the participatory sector

All of the projects are funded through vibrant partnerships with key organisations, including Arts Council England and Nottingham City Council. For more information about City Arts visit www.city-arts.org.uk



6.2 Access to Arts weekly visits 2007 – 2008

6.2.1 Profile of Venues and Visits Programme

Over the year the visits programme established a relationship with five leading arts organisations in the City to support the programme by providing regular opportunities for visits throughout the year.

Broadway Cinema is Nottingham's leading independent cinema with four screens, café bar and restaurant, studios and offices for film and media companies. The arts centre provides a focus for people and communities to make, show and see a wide range of world cinema, video and new digital media. Broadway's education programme includes film introductions, talks and courses for anyone interested in learning more about cinema.

Lakeside Arts Centre is the University of Nottingham's public arts centre presenting a varied programme of music, dance, theatre, visual art and family events. Set in the grounds of the University's Highfields Park and boating lake the centre includes the Djanogly Art Gallery, Recital Hall and Theatre, the Walker and Weston Gallery spaces as well as two cafes. Lakeside has an extensive and varied education programme hosting a range of workshops, summer programmes, lunchtime talks and recitals.

Nottingham City Museums and Galleries department of the City Council manage many of the city's historical buildings, collections, gardens and parklands. These include Nottingham Castle Museum and Gallery, Wollaton Hall and Newstead Abbey, with impressive permanent and temporary exhibitions of collections, artifacts, traditional and contemporary arts programmed across the sites. The department has a strong focus on learning and access with an extensive education programme, connecting local community to the museums and galleries as centres for life long learning.

Nottingham Playhouse is the region's leading repertory theatre programming a host of performances including plays, comedy, dance and music. The Playhouse has a strong tradition of commissioning new works both in the form of original writing and more recently in the form of traditional pantomimes written and produced by former artistic director Kenneth Alan Taylor.

Opened in 2006 **The Art Organisation** at 21 Station Street is a relatively new art space for the city. The venue offers opportunities for arts to the community, classes, workshops, artist studios, exhibitions and the promotion of local and national artists and their artwork. Facilities include traditional darkroom printing, photography, screen-printing, textiles and sewing and a tea bar hosting exhibitions and art related events. Redevelopment has started on three further buildings on Station Street to house further creative opportunities and spaces.



6.2.2 Programme One

August 2007

- 8th Introduction to programme; talk and tour of The Art Organisation.
- 15th 'Pulp Fiction' exhibition and talk, Nottingham Castle Museum and Gallery.
- 22nd 'Shifting Ground' exhibition and talk, Angel Row Gallery.
- 29th 'Flying Scotsman' film and welcome talk, Broadway Cinema.

September 2007

- 5th 'A Sense of Place' installation and artists talk, Newstead Abbey.
- 12th 'Burial at Thebes', welcome talk before the play; followed by talk and tour of the theatre, Nottingham Playhouse.

6.2.3 Programme Two

September 2007

- 26th Introduction to programme; talk and tour of The Art Organisation.

October 2007

- 3rd 'Michael Clayton' film and welcome talk, Broadway Cinema.
- 10th 'Slava's Snow Show', theatre performance, Theatre Royal.
- 17th 'Golly' exhibition and artist talk, Surface Gallery; and 'Frame in Mind' talk and exhibition as part of Mental Health Awareness Week, View from the Top Gallery.
- 24th 'New English Contemporary Ballet', ballet performance and after show talk with dancers, Nottingham Playhouse
- 31st Nottingham Castle Museum and Gallery's permanent collection - a talk in the Long Gallery and tour of the stores, followed by a tour of the Castle's Caves.

6.2.4 Programme Three

November 2007

- 14th 'Robin Hood' and Long Gallery exhibitions and talk, Nottingham Castle Museum and Gallery.
- 21st Wollaton Hall, costumed tour; and Nottingham Contemporary Artists Network exhibition and talk at the Yard Gallery.
- 28th 'The Darjeeling Ltd' film and welcome talk, Broadway Cinema.

December 2007

- 5th Poetry Prayer Flags workshop at The Art Organisation.
- 12th 'Lament & Celebration', Penelope Shuttle poetry readings at Lakeside Arts Centre.
- 19th 'Dick Whittington' Pantomime and post show tour and talk, Nottingham Playhouse.



6.2.5 Programme Four

January 2008

- 16th Introduction to programme; plus tour of building and darkroom demonstration, The Art Organisation.
- 23rd 'Once Upon a Time in the West There was Lace' exhibition and talk, Yard Gallery, followed by a guided tour of Wollaton Hall.
- 28th 'No Country for Old Men', film and public talk, Broadway Cinema.

February 2008

- 5th 'Madame Butterfly', Opera North, Theatre Royal.
- 13th 'Glimpse III - Nottingham's Islamic Collection' talk and handling session, Nottingham Castle Museum and Gallery.
- 20th 'Tilting the Mirror' live literature performance, Lakeside Arts Centre.

6.2.6 Programme Five

March 2008

- 5th Introduction to the programme, Young People's Photography exhibition, plus talk, The Art Organisation.
- 12th 'Ruinatation: Photographs of Rome', exhibition and welcome talk, 'Lost Horizons' exhibition and 'Birds, Beasts and Flowers' exhibition, Lakeside Arts Centre.
- 19th 'The Kite Runner' film and welcome talk, Broadway Cinema.
- 25th 'Noughts and Crosses' play and pre show talk, Nottingham Playhouse.

April 2008

- 5th 'One in a Hundred', Aiden Shindler exhibition and public talk, View from the Top Gallery.
- 9th Welcome talk, tour and making land art at Newstead Abbey.

6.2.7 Programme Six

April 2008

- 23rd Introduction to programme; plus 'Finding England' exhibition and artists talk, The Art Organisation
- 30th 'On the Waterfront', play and pre-show talk, Nottingham Playhouse.

May 2008

- 7th 'Something That I'll Never Really See', exhibition and talk, Nottingham Castle Museum and Gallery
- 14th Wildlife of Wollaton Hall exhibition and talk; and tour of Wollaton Hall.
- 21st 'Theatres of Life: Drawings from the Rothchild Collection at Waddeston Manor', exhibition and talk; and Wheels of Fortune: the Story of Raleigh Cycles exhibition, Lakeside Arts Centre
- 28th 'Lars and the Real Girl', film, Screen Room cinema.

6.2.8 Programme Seven

June 2008

- 11th Introduction to the programme at The Art Organisation; and a tour of the Nottingham Trent Degree shows, including Photography, TV and Film Design, Theatre Design and Textiles at several sites in the city.
- 18th 'Jerwood Photography Awards', exhibition and talk, Lakeside Arts Centre.
- 25th 'Tom's Midnight Garden' play and pre-show talk, Nottingham Playhouse.

July 2008

- 3rd 'Gustav Klimt' exhibition, Tate Liverpool; and 'Another Place', Anthony Gormley sculptures, Crosby Beach.

6.3 Access to arts workshops and activities

6.3.1 Access to Arts weekly workshops 2007 - 2008

June 2007

21st Communal portraits
28th Appliqué squares

July 2007

5th Tin-dot embossing
12th Resist Dye
19th Gallery talk
26th Messy mosaic pots

August 2007

2nd Mosaic tiles
9th Photography collage
16th Journey pillows
23rd Embroidery onto pillows
30th Painted signposts

September 2007

6th Signposts
13th Assemblage
20th Signposts, Mental Health Awareness Week Display
27th Caricatures

October 2007

4th Self-portraits onto mirrors
11th Wire figures
18th The Big Draw
24th 3D figures
31st Mod-roc & papier maché figures

November 2007

8th Pop-art portraits
15th Pop-art
22nd Pop-art
29th Mendhi tattoos

December 2007

6th Prayer flags poetry
13th Me, Myself and I exhibition opening
20th Drumming

January 2008

3rd Power shields
10th Shields
17th Silk painting & acetate drawings
24th Pyramid paintings for 'Light Night'
31st Pyramids

February 2008

7th Printing conference folders
14th Printing
21st Mono & block printing
28th SLR photography

March 2008

6th Photography darkroom processing
13th Polaroid manipulation
20th Clay pots/ tiles & glazing
27th Polaroid boxes

April 2008

3rd Photomontage bags
10th Clay vessels
17th Wollaton Park land art
24th Willow weaving structures

May 2008

1st Earth painted curtains
8th Felt pods
15th Sewing curtains
22nd Carving and flock books
29th Resin casting into books

June 2008

5th Pyrography doors
12th Exhibition preparation
19th Exhibition finishing off

July 2008

3rd Liverpool Day Visit



6.3.2 Access to Arts exhibitions and activities 2007 - 2008

September 2007

Mental Health Awareness Week launch
The Royal Centre, Nottingham

October 2007

The Big Draw event
The Broadmarsh Shopping Centre, Nottingham

December 2007

Me, Myself and I, Access to Arts group exhibition
The Art Organisation, Nottingham

January 2008

Light Night, City event
Market Square, Nottingham City Centre

February 2008

Life Beyond Drug and Alcohol Treatment,
Double Impact, National Aftercare Conference, Nottingham

March – May 2008

Me, Myself and I – part 2, Access to Arts group exhibition
Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery education display

July 2008

One Door Opens..., Access to Arts group exhibition
The View From the Top Gallery, Nottingham



6.4 Case Profiles

6.4.1 Simon

Simon used to be in the RAF and was an engineer in the Gulf War where he also took part in Pantomime theatre and played in Riyadh Concert Orchestra. He has always had an interest in the creative arts and had visited museums and galleries in Dublin, Paris and Madrid.

He is now employed having retrained for new technology. His creativity was re-sparked by the Access to Arts Programme and he now enjoys drawing and writing poetry. Also he has recently created a power point presentation of his poetry and web pages for a website he designed. He recognizes that one of his *'greatest healing tools is probably my own writing'*

He first became involved in the Access to Arts programme via a suggestion from one of the volunteers at Double Impact - *'A watershed, you could call it'*. While he was committed to all the activities and venues - as he liked to be *'in the thick of things'*, he was most impressed by Burial at Thebes at the Nottingham Playhouse and Cult Fiction, a graphics comics exhibition at Nottingham Castle Museum and Gallery

Talking about Burial at Thebes, he said:

'The sound, the singing, I couldn't stop talking about it, I told my daughter my son my friend'...

'We had an introduction, the theatre director came and met us, he was absolutely fantastic, the people who were usually very very quiet were asking questions, that was at the start of it so he was the motivator. Everyone felt at ease, everyone was involved.'

The visit to the exhibition at The Castle had a flow on effect. He took his grandsons and daughter to see the exhibition after seeing it with the group.

'We went on the Saturday, we had a good day out, had tea there with the family and everything'

The workshops were central to his enjoyment of the programme. He particularly liked the montages and had helped set up the exhibition [at Waterstones]. In fact he said *'It all started with the workshops, in the small workshops people create for themselves, then go and see the other things, they can see it three dimensionally'*. He had also been involved in making a film that shows the work of Double Impact.

Simon has stopped writing while settling into his new job, but he now sees himself, not only as an engineer, but as a person with creativity. He wants to do more study and participate further in the arts. *'I'm thinking of doing an Open University [course] even. I'm hungry for knowledge. But in the future I'm going to do something I really enjoy, not for work, and it's all come from the arts programme.'*

He would like to continue with the programme but now that he is working, he could only do weekends. He said that that if something was set up at weekends he *'would jump at the chance'* pointing out that his *'worst day is Saturday. Sunday I'm fine doing meetings or seeing family. Saturday used to be pub day... watching sport.'*

'I would like to be learning sketching, drawing faces, perspective; I would love to be taught the rudiments, the techniques of drawing.'

Simon had little doubt as he says above that his renewed interest in the arts and his creativity had stemmed from his participation in the programme. It had been of huge benefit to him in four specific ways.

First through the enjoyable group experience it provided.

'Going with a group is really good, if people are a bit resistant, nervous or shy. The whole group bolsters you, its friendly, a few laughs, jokes or whatever, and together with the enthusiasm, genuine enthusiasm of the people who introduced the art. I've come away a couple of times and thought that's absolutely fantastic.'

Secondly through the enjoyment he experienced and noticed in others.

...' you can really see the enjoyment. I was thinking about how good it has been. It's so enjoyable, but also it's serious. It is an experience that can aid you. It's a healing. I will not forget those two or three days euphoria, after The Playhouse, I have never felt as enthusiastic about anything for years and years, it regenerated me. I was bubbling over for days about it, it had such an impact on me. It probably kick started me. I felt a part of that world'

Thirdly through the healing it provided.

'I can come over as a confident person, but the thing is - this is healing people. It stimulates the imagination, boosts confidence, it's a great motivator.'

And finally through the affirmation of his family.

'The brilliant thing is my son and my daughter think what I've done (AA) and where I go to (DI) is absolutely brilliant. My daughter encourages me now - oh dad there's a writers' group here dad. I'm tending to put work in the front of it but now I'm starting to prioritise, because I need to do something in the evening. I've tasted the enjoyment and I want to do something, at least once a week.'



6.4.2 Susan

Susan is a mother of three who worked as a shop assistant while raising her children and caring for her elderly parents. She is now retired. She was widowed 3 years ago, after 10 years being the full time carer for her housebound husband, a former miner who suffered from emphysema. Life had always centred round the family and home, but now living alone, she said *'Now it's TV - that's my soulmate, the soaps.'* Though living independently Susan has mobility difficulty with her hips and makes use of a walking frame.

Susan first took part in arts activity through a stall in a local market, where City Arts were inviting passers by to make paper windmills and join up to a weekly arts workshop. She gives it a high priority in her routine and values the social and creative activity; seeing it as valuable time for herself.

'It's a day out - they pick you up and bring you home; because I don't walk very well, I have a walker. I've been ever since. My friend doesn't go any more but I carried on. 3 years, never missed one, I look forward to that, Thursday I get up, get my breakfast, I don't do any cleaning, nothing - Thursday's my day at the arts.'

Though she went to the cinema when younger, and took her children to pantomime at The Theatre Royal, before joining the programme Susan did not visit arts venues at all.

'Never. The kids came round once and said Mum we're taking the granddaughter to The Castle would you like to come. I went. We would look at all the pictures, they meant nothing to me, we went round the gardens and then came home and I thought no more about it.'

But during the Access to Arts Programme

'... now I look, I look. Now when we go to The Castle with the arts group, there's so many different things, you really go up to them and look at them.'

Seeing opera for the first time was a powerful experience,

'In Madame Butterfly two of them came out crying because it upset them that much, tears were rolling down their faces, but they enjoyed it, but how sad it was. That was the first one I've ever been to. There's another world out there.'

Another visit also provoked new insight.

'At The Castle, the talk was on the Asian side, of all their works - the pottery, the brasswork and everything. With me being surrounded by them because there's only 10 of us on this road now, they are all Asians so you don't know what's in their houses. But then when I saw that, it made me realise - perhaps so-and-so's got that next door to me, that opened my eyes.'

Some things about joining the group were a personal challenge,

'When I first went I didn't know whether to talk to the people I was with because I didn't know them. And when I listened, they'd all got problems, I'm a fortunate one I have got no problems at all with anything. If I want anything my family buy it, you see. Listening to them with the drugs, the alcohol, the money problems I thought well, shall I open my mouth? Shall I talk to them? And I was frightened to talk to them, I didn't know whether to approach them so I just tagged along you can say.'

and there have been real benefits; some social,

'Meeting people – and different sorts of people to what I'm normally meeting, understanding other people. When you're out there with people you just talk don't you? You don't realise what problems they have. I'm sorry for them really, the state that some of them are in.'

'It's opened my eyes. Now I've met a friend, she's got a drink problem, yes, but we get on just like that. And I've also met another girl and I've been out for meals with her on occasions, it's been marvellous. I think the friendships will last, I think they will.'

and some creative,

'I went to the Saturday and Sunday making pyramids workshops for Light Night. It was different for me and different people again. Then we went on the Friday to Light Night, the three of us met up for that, and we went for a meal.'

'I make cards, all my own cards. I used to just lick and stick and now look (shows a 3D Madame Butterfly card). I was thinking of going on to watercolour next. Doing backgrounds myself and then making cards with them. I've done watercolour once before, I'd have to do it on my own at home, but I think I will.'

Without a group co-ordinator, not everyone would continue, Susan feels,

'No way. I don't think people would attend. She [the co-ordinator] phones us up the day before, because some would forget.'

The programme had been a great motivator in changing things for her socially and creatively

'Yes, now if I wanted to see something I'd go. I think I would yes, to be in different surroundings, seeing what is out there and not just in my little world.'

6.4.3 Bill

Bill has usually worked as a general labourer, but has taken training for re-employment in the last couple of years. Now that he is over 50, he wants to do different work and is applying for hospital voluntary work to build up experience. He has a flat of his own and sees his mother most days. He likes meeting people and being active. He is part of a group that works an allotment, attends a weekly computer course and a monthly walking group as well as the arts workshop at City Arts.

Bill joined the programme from City Arts, he has attended their Hostel Liason Group arts workshop group for nearly 2 years, going every week.

His interest in the arts started at school. Painting was his favourite subject. He also enjoyed going to films when younger. However that was a long time ago, he said, and before this programme, he had not been to arts venues at all.

Bill attended every one of the six visits in the programme he was part of and he would have liked to have continued. He said that he really enjoyed the Caves Walk after the visit to the Castle, and the Snow Show at The Theatre Royal particularly, *'the atmosphere when all the snow came down at the end, and the clowns. It was a very lively show.'*

About the film, Michael Clayton at Broadway he was less enthusiastic - *'a bit boring*, he said, *'I found it boring'.*

His favourite was the art at Waterstone's gallery and he made a return visit.

'You know when the exhibition was on, about 2 days after I came back and took photos of them with my camera. I showed my mum and she said she thought it was interesting, she's interested in what I do each day.'

What really mattered to Bill was the sharing of views on the art the group saw together. This was an important part of the experience.

'A very good thing about it was after, when we had a drink at the end of it, you know discussing it, when we had a coffee. That was very interesting.'

But equally it was the company and friendship of the group and the routine that made it such a valuable experience.

'It's nice to get out for a few hours, instead of looking at four brick walls in the flat. I'm a bit on the shy side, you know, I'd sooner go in a group. Things to entertain yourself, it's something to look forward to every week.'

Bill does not yet see himself going to arts venues independently.

'I wouldn't go on my own, no. Better to have an organiser, someone with experience about it all. I think it's well organised, when you know what's happening each week.'

He would have liked the programme to continue for longer emphasising in particular its benefit for vulnerable people.

'It was really worth coming to. You get to know new people. Seeing new things, what's going on that I most probably wouldn't have gone to on my own.'

'I think it deserves to keep on going. It's good for people who suffer from depression and mental health problems; it gets them out and about for a few hours each week.'

6.4.4 Janie

Janie has always had a keen interest in the arts. Her father was an artist and he took her often to galleries. She has been singing with Streetwise Opera now for 3 years and enjoys writing poems and performing them locally. She is a member of Theatrescape (City Arts), a local amateur theatre club, and had recently joined a visual arts group. She had also joined a library book club to do more reading, and though she enjoyed it, found it quite tough to keep up and felt left behind. She has dyslexia and this may have been a factor. She also sees a lot of films with the unlimited card –

'It keeps me out of trouble. It gives me topics of conversation, to mix in a group, I've got things to say.'

Janie became involved in the programme through the Double Impact Arts Workshop group. Though she would not have chosen some of the venues visited, she said she discovered places were different to her ideas or memories of them. Wollaton Hall for example,

'I was so pleased it reopened my eyes. It took me back hundreds of years and really inspired my imagination, in all sorts of ways. I'm glad I didn't miss that trip.'

She wouldn't have chosen to go to an opera either, even though she sings. Of Madame Butterfly, she said

'I was so pleasantly surprised I even recognised some of the Italian because of my singing. With the subtitles, and the humour, the sets - it took you to a different realm altogether and I cried in the first half and the second half. It was so powerful emotionally. It really touched me in ways I wouldn't have expected.'

Her most favourite visit was to Broadway.

'The chap there spoke about films in a different way that I'd never thought about. And talked about qualifications, and I was thinking there's lots of life in me yet and there's things I want to do.'

However the three visits that were most memorable were Burial at Thebes at Nottingham Playhouse; Glimpse III at Nottingham Castle Museum and Gallery - speaking of this visit she said

'It was the artefacts they brought out. The shield that was so old and had been used in battle, it took me back to that time and I saw things in a different light again.'

What she found of most benefit in the programme was finding out about new places and offers where they may have cheap nights or free events.

'I want to know about it and spread the word, to make it a community spirit, more. To focus on healthy things, places to go rather than harmful things which people's habits have taken them to. Places where you can go and walk along and chat and say I don't like that or I do like that. But you've got an opinion which is valid and it makes you count, you count then you are part of the community, the city community.'

Janie was aware that there were still lots of things she wanted to do.

'I'm aware that I'm approaching 50 and I'm thinking how much life have I got left in me. What's left at the end of it? There's arts left, art and artefacts, plays and performance and the memories of. One of our group isn't with us anymore (telling of a participant's sudden death) but his art is left. You could see he was happy with what he was producing, that he was inspired by these trips; he was able to leave something behind for his family, he was doing okay.'

She also intended to do some photography for her dad, her friend and her eldest son who was in hospital, 'I'll be sending him one of these (art workshop exhibition) leaflets with my work on it and say - I did that

What also inspired her were the exhibitions and the workshops.

'The exhibitions, other people are looking at it (the artwork) and going oooh look at that, and that is where it touches you, then you see. It makes you vulnerable, it's a big step but it's an important one people must

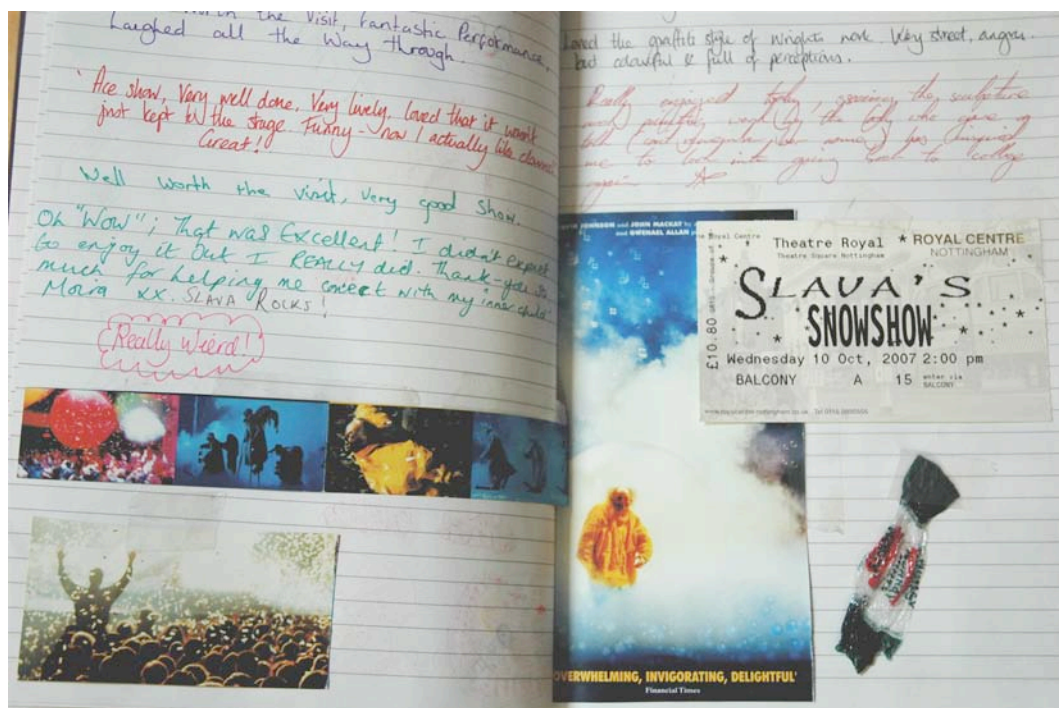
take to rebuild their lives. But they are with others not all alone. Art is there to bring up emotions, and invite comments'

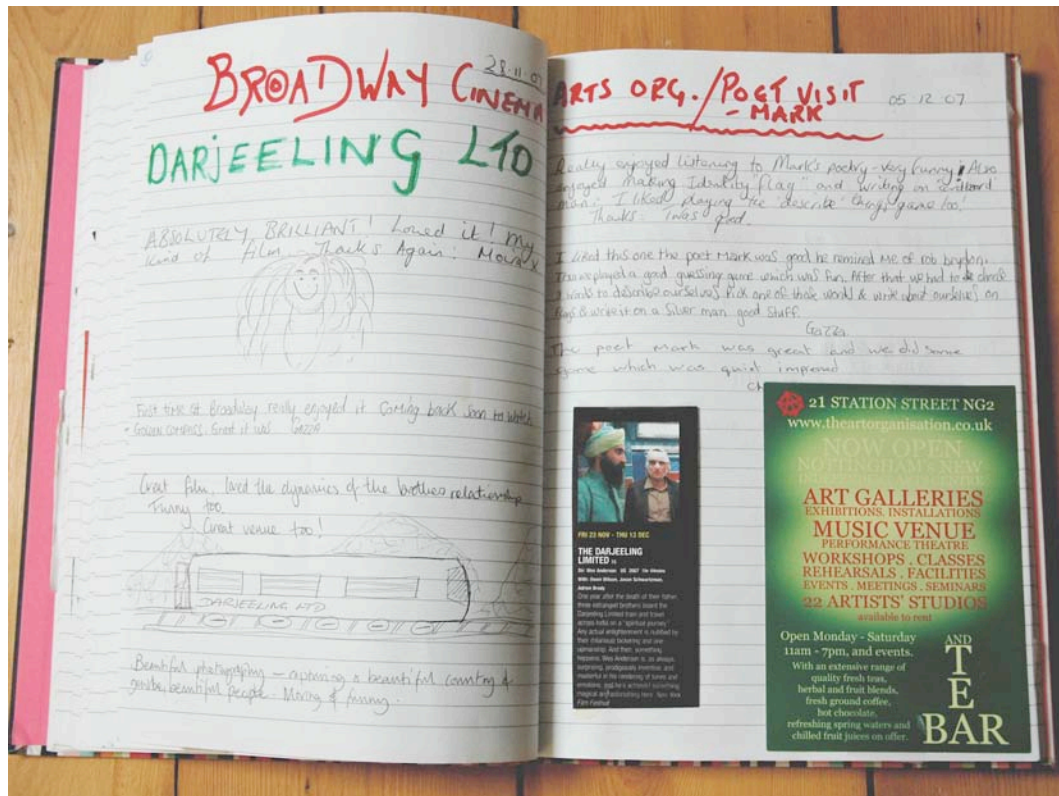
'These workshops have been really good, for people from the trips to come to put their hands on because on the trips you don't get the opportunity to produce your own. People walk round thinking oh well that's just the experts who have done that, I couldn't do that; but see, I know that I can and I know everybody can.'

'They are so important because it makes people feel more normal, not that they are the people with mental health problems, drug and alcohol problems, homeless problems; it makes them feel not excluded. Even if they have no money there are still places they can go, life doesn't finish because they have very little money, it's not all about material possessions. Art can be made with just junk for instance.'



6.5 Project journal pages





6.6 Seminar and Exhibition

6.6.1 One Door Opens

To mark the end of this phase of Access to Arts, a one day seminar was hosted by Double Impact on July 18th 2008, at View from the Top Gallery in Nottingham. It was held with the private view of 'One Door Opens...', an exhibition of participants' recent artwork presented at the same venue.

The day was an opportunity for Access to Arts to share outcomes of the programme and key findings of the evaluation to date. It was also an opportunity for wider discussion of development possibilities in this area, with a focus on partnership, working with vulnerable people and addressing wider strategic priorities.

The seminar was attended by Access to Arts participants, partners and venues, and others interested in the work. This included regional participatory arts organisation, EMPAF; Nottingham City Council; Groundwork East Midlands; National Treatment Agency and several local arts projects and artists.

The programme and report were presented by Eleanor Youdell, Jo Wheeler and Professor Helen Simons, supported with contributions from two participants. A short film by Carol Crowe of the Liverpool day long visit and workshop was shown. Workshop activity for the seminar was led by Nicci Wilson and participants to contribute into the exhibition 'One Door Opens...'.

Following this, speakers from a wider background gave a very positive context for taking programmes like Access to Arts forward, and shared ambitions to build on its achievements. The concluding plenary session resulted in several initiatives that were identified, including:

- Building on relationships across existing activities and delivery (eg Nottingham Museum and Galleries visiting groups/Access to Arts/Lost Artists Group) for participants to share resources, their experience and contribute to development.
- Initiating relationships between key arts organisations (eg venues, projects and departments) to enable a citywide arts infrastructure/arena to create change.
- Identifying where activity relates to priorities in Local Area Agreements.
- Creating shared citywide projects between existing activities and delivery.
- Presenting Access to Arts at Turning the Tables, the EMPAF/Mailout national participatory arts conference.

There was interest in the programme from Nottingham PCT; Nottingham University; Nottingham County Council; Charnwood Arts; Government Office East Midlands and other local arts projects and artists unable to attend on the day.

The private view was very well attended by participants, artists and staff from partner organisations. Participants brought family and friends to see their artwork in exhibition. The exhibition was also visited by members of the public throughout the week. Many commented on the quality of the artwork and the growing confidence it showed; the range of artwork and media explored was also appreciated.



Double Impact
4 Shakespeare St,
Nottingham, NG1 4FG