

National Evaluation of the Culture Collective programme

PART ONE. 'UNPRECEDENTED AND REVITALISING' Emerging Impacts and Ways of Working: Reflections from the first year of the Culture Collective

Reporting from Queen Margaret University
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Cover image: from Inverclyde Culture Collective

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Summary of
Headline Findings

Summary of HEADLINE FINDINGS

This report presents key findings from the national evaluation research, one year into the Culture Collective Programme for most of the 26 projects undertaking their work across the country. Launched in 2021, the Programme is scheduled to conclude in October 2023. Our evaluation work has been commissioned to take place during February 2022 to October 2023.

The purpose of our reporting at this point is to:

- Provide a **snapshot of the Programme during its first phases** of activity
- Capture **an evolving picture of the projects' ways of working and notable outcomes** emerging as the projects continue to progress their work, noting that project impacts are still developing and will continue to emerge over the months to come
- Reveal **potential to build on what the Programme is achieving**, collating perspectives on what is important about the Programme for communities, creative practitioners and with respect to cultural policy.

The data sources analysed for this reporting are:

- **Workshop activities with projects and their partners** undertaken around the country in August and September 2022
- **Interim reports produced by the projects** for Creative Scotland in November 2021, June 2022 and November 2022

This document is presented as 'Part One' of our overall reporting, with the intention that the rich evidence emerging from projects can be recorded and celebrated in real time, to stand alongside what's captured later towards the end of the Programme.

Headline findings on ENGAGEMENT

Our longlist of parties that projects have been engaging or working with extends to over 600 entries. That includes arts and other organisations connected to the projects as partners, as well as the groups they are engaging or operating with.



Please see Section 3 for a preliminary breakdown of categories: our listing shows incredible reach achieved through the 26 projects. It also evidences a level of demand for this work in communities of all kinds.

What is evident is that **the projects are reaching deep into localities, engaging many communities including some of the most vulnerable groups and those especially impacted by the Pandemic.**

Headline findings on EMPLOYMENT

So far the projects in the Culture Collective programme have created 493 roles and employment opportunities, many of which are being rolled over into the next phases of the projects, along with additional posts planned by some projects.



The roles counted so far include **44 coordinator posts and 449 other paid positions.** (Where positions have already been extended, we have counted each new contract term as a separate employment opportunity)

Our preliminary research has found that:

- Projects have been able to create dedicated posts in response to local needs and conditions on the ground, due to flexibility of the programme funding
- The programme extension funding has helped projects to embed their artists and expand their reach, adapting their approaches to fit needs and requirements on the ground.
- Practitioners have been employed both in their local area and given opportunities to access work elsewhere
- The projects have also employed non-arts specialists, creating spin out benefits during the Pandemic.
- Some of the projects have also generated paid employment and development opportunities for project Participants.
- Creative practitioners have valued having agency and funds to build their own teams and contract additional support for their projects where needed
- Fair Pay and supportive recruitment practices are being progressed by the projects
- Training, mentoring and support for emerging or early career practitioners is developing the sectoral workforce, which may be an important factor in post-Covid sector recovery

Please see section 4 for details, examples and supporting evidence of the types of employment created so far through the Culture Collective Programme

Emerging Impacts from the Programme

We were asked to look for early indications of Covid Recovery for the sector, as well as impacts the Programme is having in communities. A review of the project interim reports has enabled us to identify a preliminary sense of the:

- Impacts on employed practitioners
- Impacts on how organisations are working
- Benefits of longer than usual project horizons and funded timeframes, *and*
- What's happened for communities and project participants

The headline findings below are detailed more fully in Sections 3-9 of this report.

One year in, it is already possible to see a number of EARLY POSITIVE IMPACTS OF THE PROGRAMME ON PROJECTS' WORK AND WAYS OF WORKING, specifically:

- Longer term contracts enabling flexibility of work and more embedded approaches
- Enhanced recruitment processes and fair work practices
- New, broader partnerships and connections for arts organisations and practitioners
- Non arts partners commissioning artists, some for first time
- A network focus on development and training for practitioners

Specific impacts for EMPLOYED PRACTITIONERS include the following:

- Practitioners have been supported to sustain practice during the Pandemic
- This is a level and style of support new to many practitioners
- Projects have provided a bridge for emerging practitioners into long term careers
- Practitioners at all career stages report developing skills, expertise, experience and practice
- The programme has been a stepping stone for some, already, into permanent jobs
- More paid opportunities for freelance practitioners have opened up through new partner contacts

Please see Section 5 for details, examples and supporting evidence of impacts recorded so far for practitioners and organisations in the Programme

Specific impacts for funded ORGANISATIONS' WAYS OF WORKING include:

- New doors opening for organisations to connect with local communities and groups
- Consolidating organisations' places in their communities
- New ways of programme working now starting to permeate into parallel work
- Chances to build deeper and more engaged longer term partnerships

Benefits of the Programme's longer-than-usual project horizons and funded project timeframes are already becoming apparent. Projects are reporting that being able to take projects into a second round has generated impacts enhancing their:

- Partnerships
- Relationships with communities
- Quality of engagement

Outcomes for Communities

Projects are already recording a range of outcomes for communities, including:

- *Rapid engagement with communities during the Covid crisis*, including very many vulnerable and disadvantaged people disproportionately affected by the Pandemic
- Projects being instrumental in *opening up locked down services for communities*, providing a means for getting people together again
- *Taking work into locations where accessibility would otherwise be a barrier*
- *Tackling social isolation* worsened by the pandemic
- *Empowering community voices* and confidence
- Empowering *community ownership of space*
- Providing *pathways for minority community members* to be represented
- Embedding creative voices in *strategic development and locality planning*

Please see Section 6 for details, examples and supporting evidence of impacts recorded so far for communities

Other interesting themes visible across projects include:

- Transforming spaces in communities
- Creating new, innovative spaces for cultural work
- Embedding a local Environmental Focus

These and other themes will be explored in more detail in the next part of our reporting.

ENABLING FACTORS SUPPORTING SUCCESS, as identified by the projects

An important part of our study is understanding what conditions and support most enable the success of projects like those across the Culture Collective Programme.

Our preliminary research and analysis reveals a number of key elements that projects identify as enabling factors in the success of their work. We've summarised these as:

- **Training and Support** for practitioners
- Artists' **professional knowledge and skills** being properly valued
- **Collaborations**
- **Partner Buy In**
- **Funding model** allowing for extended time, patience and flexibility
- **Connections into communities** enabling **local visibility** and **community buy in**
- Having access to **the right spaces** and facilities
- **Freedom and flexibility for the project** without pressure of set outcomes
- **Flexibility to adapt or change** where needed, and for **experimenting and exploring** new approaches
- A funding environment fostering openness and honesty with **scope to learn by trial and error**
- Feeling **trusted to deliver**, and able to be open about the project with collaborators and funders
- A **supportive cultural policy**

Conversely, elements identified as constraining factors include the absence of some of the enabling conditions above, but also a range of factors that exist beyond the control of those delivering the projects which require systemic policy solutions. These include:

CONSTRAINTS WITHIN PROJECTS	
Challenges in Relationships	Fulfilling the aspirations of the programme
Practical challenges	Encountering inertia, as a fast paced programme attempting change in a slower moving environment
Limitations in capacity	Money, and having to make budget compromises
Disconnects of various types (e.g. buy in, capacity, attitudes)	

CONSTRAINTS IN FUNDING/POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Concerns about longevity for this kind of work, which takes sustained time to develop	Existing limitations within the political or funding environment
Issues with the existing infrastructure	Complexity of the issues attempting to be addressed through the Programme
External forces: i.e. Covid, Cost of Living Crisis, Brexit	

The projects feel that **KEY FACTORS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THEIR WORK**, and to avoid policy failure, include:

- People actively engaging in projects
- Creativity being embedded in communities
- Work that is reflective of communities in Scotland
- Longevity / not parachuting in and leaving
- Permanent artistic presence (like permanent community artists-in-residence)
- Legacy: a consideration of how the work being done now will develop in subsequent years; creating a space and infrastructure for social connections that continues beyond the project
- Changing policy level conceptions of success and failure in what constitutes meaningful work with communities

In terms of **THE BEST WAYS TO SUPPORT THIS WORK**, practitioners would like to see the following funding approaches and outcomes continue as a legacy from the Programme, all of which they see as central to the success of the work they've been able to do:

- Allowing artists to have the required scope (time, space and security) to build quality engagement
- Flexibility to try thing out, change ideas and approaches where needed, and learn
- Creative freelancers having paid opportunities and being treated well
- Creating lasting alternative models for working together within the sector and with other sectors
- Peer support among practitioners, collaborations, and networks for the future

Key conclusions

It is clear that the unique, flexible, and long term support offered by the Programme has enabled the projects to make their work responsive to their place, with more meaningful community-centred engagement.

The Programme is developing what should be understood to be important cultural infrastructure – in terms of the networks and connections between the organisations, partners and artists in the project locations. Evidence from the projects shows that these (viable) networks are vital for places to be able to generate and continue this type of work.

There is evidence that projects are already maximising the value that comes from an investment of this scale. The value of the work taking place is multifaceted: for the cultural sector; for the communities they are working with; for local authorities seeking models of person-centred service provision and rapid, targeted responses to local need; and for policymakers seeking to fulfil Covid Recovery objectives by means of this Programme.

On the basis of the evidence presented in this report, we can also confidently state that the programme is already performing significantly across the aims of Scotland's Culture Strategy (see Section 11 for details)

The next part of our evaluation gathers more definitive figures at the close of the projects' programmes of work, and presents a collection of case studies to illustrate the kind of outcomes created in the programme made, possible as a result of the key enabling factors inherent in this unique funding approach.

About the
**Culture Collective Programme
and this evaluation**

1. INTRODUCTION

“Unprecedented and Revitalising”¹

This report captures a snapshot of the Culture Collective programme, most of whose projects are a year into their work, much of which is presently funded to continue until October 2023. A programme brought into being at the height of the Covid crisis to support arts practitioners and communities across Scotland with Emergency Funding, Culture Collective represents a new approach to distributing arts and cultural funding, encouraging new forms of sectoral collaboration, new third sector partnership working, and new ways of engaging with communities some of which have been necessitated by the Pandemic.

Background to the Culture Collective programme

In August 2020 the Scottish Government announced that the culture and heritage sectors in Scotland were to benefit from a £59 million **funding package to protect jobs and help the industry weather the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic**. As part of this announcement, £1.5 million was announced for the pilot Culture Collective programme to support organisations employing freelance artists to work in communities across Scotland. In January 2021, Scottish Government increased the allocation to the programme by £4.5million, to a total of £6million, and 26 projects were awarded funding. In December 2021 an additional £4.2 million was announced for the programme, as extension funding for the 26 Culture Collective projects.

Building on previous Creative Scotland programmes, and informed by a working group chaired by the National Partnership for Culture in response to the Report of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery (June 2020), **the programme focuses on community engaged creative activity, supporting participatory approaches and projects where creative practitioners and communities work collaboratively**.

Operating under the extraordinary stresses and requirements of the Pandemic, the **Culture Collective Network has pioneered progressive artist-led and community-informed approaches and partnerships**. The Culture Collective Network is viewed with great potential for **opening up new routes, models and processes for engaging communities**.

The Culture Collective Programme is relatively unique in that it has allowed those funded to design and deliver activities that respond to the particular priorities of the places they are from. Created as part of an emergency funding package, there were purposefully few pre-set outcomes for the funded projects beyond ensuring that 50% of the funding was spent on employing creative practitioners. Instead, each of the Culture Collective projects has been free to explore and respond to the values and priorities of the communities they are based in, and to work towards their partnership’s own aspirations and objectives. The result has been a rich and varied range of activities that are delivering impacts that matter to the people and places involved.

¹ Quoted from Aiseirigh Culture Collective (Skye and Lochalsh) “We consistently receive feedback from our creative practitioners which points towards **the opportunities being presented by Aiseirigh and the wider Culture Collective as being both unprecedented and revitalising**. The project has given creatives in Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in the creative industries in their local areas, with valuable job security, of particular importance to these individuals and the sector as a whole in the context of recovery from the pandemic.”

It is important to note that each of the 26 Culture Collective projects represents a programme of its own, cascading the awarded funds across their own networks of partners and employed creative practitioners. As a result, the reach of this Programme extends widely across the country as well as deeply into the heart of the communities engaged (see Section 2 for a Projects map, and Section 3 for further details of community engagement).

The purpose of this report

This report summarises the findings from the first stage of our 18-month long evaluation. As will be discussed, it is already evident that the Culture Collective programme has resulted in the engagement of an incredibly diverse range of communities and stakeholders, building networks, connections and collaborations that have the potential to be built on in future if they can be sustained. The programme has created hundreds of paid employment opportunities for creative practitioners, as well as associated roles for non-arts workers providing related services.

Looking back on the first phases of the work we are seeing that these projects were at the forefront of post-Lockdown opening up. They experienced challenges during that uncertain period of Lockdown, but were unquestionably of great value in mobilising rapidly to provide opportunities for communities to come together again, socialise and create as well as responsive approaches to local needs.

The purpose of this interim report is to provide an evolving picture of the Programme, in particular the ways of working and notable outcomes that are emerging and developing as the projects continue to progress their work.

The report offers a snapshot of what is being achieved through this unique Programme, with the figures we present evolving as we write. Project impacts are still developing and will continue to develop over the months and years to come. The scale and scope of those impacts will be affected by decisions taken regarding how and if this programme is supported going forward, however, this report offers insights into the value generated thus far and the key features of the programme that have the potential to be developed further to maximise the value for communities and artists across Scotland.

About this Research

Our evaluation team from the Centre for Communication, Cultural and Media Studies at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh was commissioned by Creative Scotland in February 2022 to undertake an evaluation of the Culture Collective programme as a mechanism for sector support and building capacity in communities. Our work began in April 2022.

The focus of our evaluation is to capture the learning from this unique project that has seen unprecedented financial support provided to place-based community oriented creative projects. It is intended to provide policymakers and funders with insights and understanding about how this way of working can help to deliver many of the aims in Scotland's Cultural Strategy, in particular because of the way in which it has valued, trusted, and supported creative people in making a unique and vital contribution to society while simultaneously recognising each community's local cultures, distinct sense of place, identity and confidence.

This evaluation is not just a study of impacts that the projects are having: it also considers how this Programme, and in particular the freedom and flexibility that it provides to those funded, has created new opportunities, encouraged new collaborations, and engendered new ways of working that can be learnt from, developed, and built in line with the aim in the Cultural Strategy to develop the conditions and skills for culture to thrive, so that it is cared for, protected and produced for the enjoyment and enrichment of all present and future generations.

Our main aim has been to understand the spirit and principles of the Culture Collective – what it has become and is evolving towards - to identify opportunities for enhancing policy and funding approaches going forward. **As part of this task we seek to identify broad impacts of the Culture Collective programme at the local level and explore the benefits of the network as an enabling factor for the projects.** We are investigating different approaches taken by the projects and their ways of working in order to identify what conditions are most conducive to success in the work that is being delivered and to reflect on what has constrained the partnerships from achieving some of what they had hoped for.

Our overall investigation is focused on working with the projects to understand the following questions:

- Given relative flexibility regarding how funding is used, what works in different places and spaces to support artists and encourage community participation?
- What do practitioners need in order for that to happen?
- What limits their ability to achieve everything they would like to?

We have looked at how projects have operated and what valuable lessons and approaches can be taken forward. **Most importantly, the evaluation seeks insights for policymakers and funders into how best to continue to support this work and these outcomes.**

Our Research Approach

This evaluation work spans an 18 month period from April 2022 (inception) to October 2023 (final reporting).

The study comprises two main parallel strands:

- **Mapping approaches and identifying characteristics**, principles and models of practice, including best or distinctive practice, challenges and optimal conditions for success.
- **Evaluating the programme** in terms of its reach, impacts, outputs, outcomes, learning and forward trajectory.

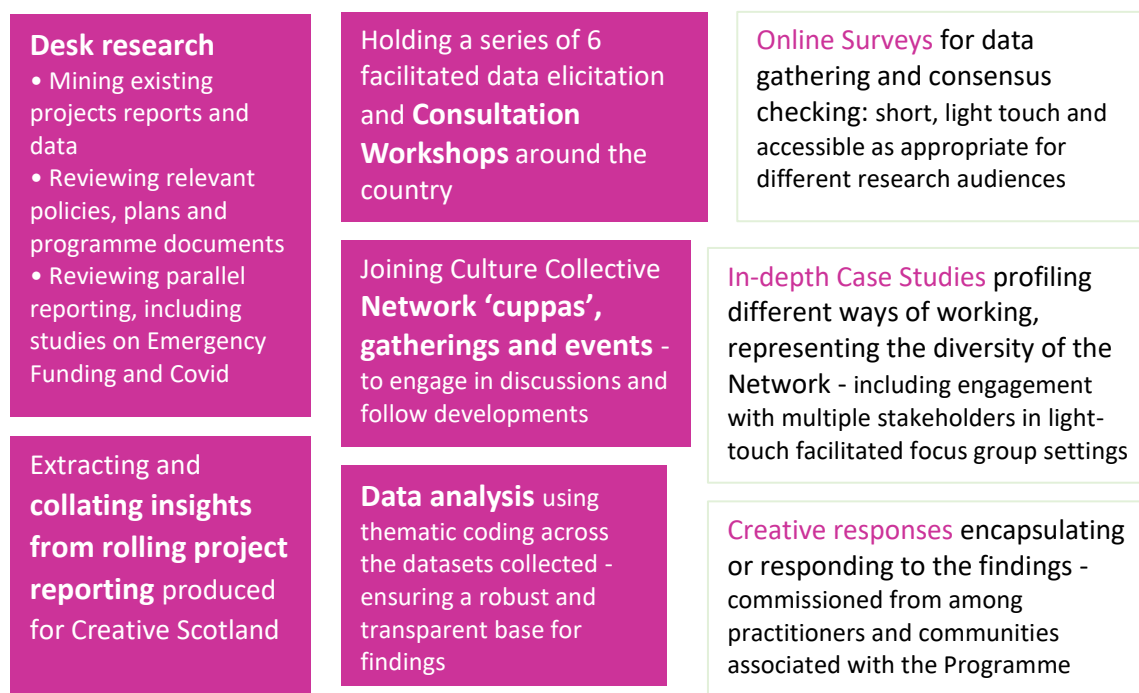
Involving the Network in framing what's evaluated

We've designed this study to capture **the most relevant and authentic factors and indicators**, but mindful that these may well differ between places and projects. It's important that these are **defined with input from Network members, acknowledge the different priorities and experiences of different places**, and are focused on capturing learning for the future development of the Culture Collective Programme. We are also mindful of ensuring a **plurality of lenses and voices** in the evidence gathered.

Our approach to gathering perspectives from different stakeholder groups includes plans to **consult projects on how best to capture participant perspectives** in their specific contexts, with a focus group on vulnerable and protected participants.

At the start of our study in March and April 2022 we joined scheduled Network gatherings and hosted discussions to explore the questions: **'If you were doing this evaluation, what would you want to show, and why?'** and **'Why is the Culture Collective different?'**

Overview of research methods and consultation activities for the evaluation



The highlighted boxes show the research stages completed at the time of this interim report.

The main data sources for this report are:

- Monitoring reports produced by the projects for Creative Scotland in November 2021, June 2022 and November 2022.
- Qualitative data generated by project delegations during our series of full-day consultative workshops conducted in August-September 2022.

Our Workshops with the Projects

We gathered delegations from the projects for a roadshow of full day workshops at accessible locations across Scotland focused on data elicitation and evaluation design.

The workshops consisted of facilitated activities and interactive discussions designed for delegations to share their experience of how their Culture Collective has been working.

We asked:

- What **factors, principles and values** are most important for their projects and partnerships
- What their projects are **aspiring to achieve**, what success would look like for them, and what failures they wanted to avoid
- What are the best **conditions to enable the successes they were hoping for** in the contexts they are working in, and conversely, **what hinders or constrains their ability to deliver their aims**

Workshops were held in:
Dundee 19 August 2022

Ayr 22 August 2022

Inverness 31 August 2022

QMU (Edinburgh) 6 September 2022

Online 6 September 2022

The purpose of these exercises was to gather the unique perspectives and contexts of each project, in a way that allows us to read across all the projects and identify shared themes without losing sight of key differences and specificities of particular places and projects. The workshops also created a valued space for delegates share their perspectives, discuss their project with partners and strengthen the network connections between different projects.

The events included time for networking and sharing and, with the exception of the events held at QMU and online, were hosted in venues associated with one of the Culture Collective projects.

Who contributed to the workshops?

We invited each Culture Collective project to bring a delegation comprising their Coordinator and at least one other (where possible, non-arts) Partner and a Creative Practitioner employed through their project, as well as any other stakeholders they thought would be appropriate to involve. **We were especially keen for partners from a range of sectors and communities to be represented**, to bring their voices to the table and shape the evaluation.

Accessibility provisions

All travel expenses for the project delegations were covered.

Where a delegation included people who would otherwise not be being paid for their time, the programme offered a stipend (set at SAU rates) to enable them to attend.

Live captioning was provided for the events and BSL arrangements were made.

A total of 87 attendees from across the Network joined us for the workshops.

- 10 of the projects included external partners in their workshop delegations
- 19 projects brought one or more of their creative practitioners in their delegation
- 6 delegations included a participant or community representative from the project

External Partners represented at the workshops included: a Food Bank, several Housing Associations, Community Development Trusts, a community writing group, a Community Garden, a Heritage organisation, a local Archive, a Therapy charity, a climate focused community-led social enterprise, a local placemaking anchor organisation and the domestic abuse charity Women's Aid.

2. ABOUT THE CULTURE COLLECTIVE PROJECTS

The Culture Collective is a network of 26 participatory arts projects, shaped by local communities alongside artists and creative organisations. Funded by Scottish Government emergency COVID-19 funds through Creative Scotland, the projects take place across Scotland and are presently funded until October 2023.

Where the projects are

The map opposite shows the locations of the lead organisations collaborating in the 26 projects. With work taking place in Shetland, Lewis and Orkney to Inverclyde, Aberdeen and Hawick, the Culture Collective programme has achieved an impressive reach across Scotland. A directory of the projects, with details of their partners and purpose, can be viewed in the meantime at the Culture Collective website. Profiles of each of the projects will be presented in our final reporting.

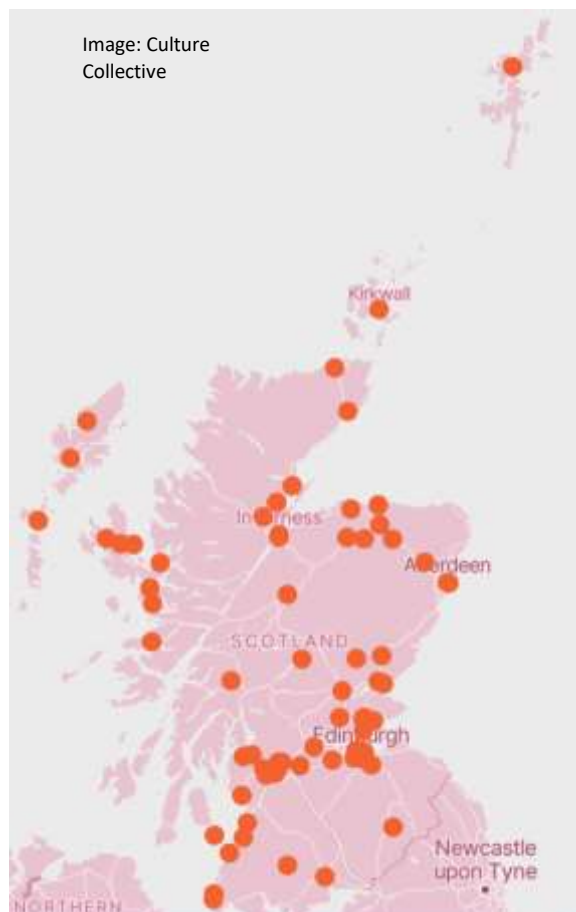
Understanding the projects' approaches and structures

The Culture Collective has, to a great extent, evolved organically in response to the unprecedented conditions of the Pandemic. Launched without an extensive list of expectations and objectives beyond supporting freelance artists and community-led cultural participation in ways that would support recovery and renewal, the programme has provided these places with a unique combination of substantial funding and relative flexibility to explore and develop progressive artist-led and community-informed approaches and governance structures that respond to local needs and priorities.

Each unique project is designed and driven by the communities of the place where it is located. Some of these places are geographically small, for example residential districts within cities. Others are more expansive, stretching across two or more local authorities.

What is important to note is that boundaries of each place were defined by the partnerships that applied for the funding, but the shared ethos across all of them is that projects they undertake must enable communities in these places to shape their own cultural life amid the challenges of the Pandemic and as we move into a period of recovery and renewal.

This responsiveness to the context of different places means that the Culture Collective programme as a whole is complex and diverse involving an extensive range of community stakeholders and partners (as detailed in Section 3 below).



Key characteristics of the projects

A particular requirement of our evaluation is to understand the ways in which these community-based partnerships for participation and creative learning are supporting the communities they are a part of to engage in cultural self-determination.

As a starting point for understanding the different approaches taken by the 26 partnerships, we considered the different ways in which the projects could be categorised, or 'grouped'. This would allow us to:

- Understand the commonalities and differences across different types of partnerships
- Reflect on ways in which the scope, scale, location or structure of the partnership has affected and shaped the ways of working they have developed and adopted
- Ensure there was breadth and variety in the projects we explore as case studies in the second stage of the research.

In addition to geographic location, our initial analysis grouped projects in terms of three factors, namely their scope, scale and structure.

Scope

Each project can be considered to have a scope that is either:

Hyper local	Where work takes place within <i>a single, defined location</i> (like a city district, or even a specific street)
Local	Within <i>a specific town or city</i>
Regional	Within <i>a single local authority area</i>
Multi regional	<i>Across several local authority areas</i>

Scale

The projects operate at different scales, which we have categorised as:

- **Single** a solo arts organisation employing creative practitioners to deliver project work
- **Small** <3 partner organisations
- **Medium** 4-5 partner organisations
- **Large** >6 partner organisations

Structure

Across the 26 projects we've identified six main structural models:

- I. Project comprising one or more *non-arts organisations employing Creative Practitioners (CPs)*
- II. Project *led by a local authority* with local arts organisations and non-arts partners, employing CPs
- III. *A single arts organisation* employing CPs to work with local communities
- IV. *An arts organisation working with cluster of non-arts partners*
- V. *Multiple arts organisations working together* on a common theme
- VI. Project developing a field of *specialist practice across regions*

All the different ways of working in partnership and with communities can result in something valuable for communities and the sector. The next stages of our research as we move forward in the evaluation will explore what's been achieved by the programme in different places and through the different ways of working, through in depth case studies of selected projects representative of the variety of characteristics above.

Outcomes emerging
from the data so far

3. COMMUNITIES AND STAKEHOLDER GROUPS ENGAGED THROUGH THE PROGRAMME

The Culture Collective projects between them have successfully engaged at the very grassroots with communities, groups and third sector partners across Scotland.



Our long list of the parties that projects have been engaging or working with so far in the programme extends to over 600 entries.²

This figure includes arts and other organisations connected to the projects as partners, as well as the myriad groups they are engaging or operating with.

The projects reach deep into their localities, engaging many communities including some of the most vulnerable groups and those especially impacted by the Pandemic. The kinds of partners, liaisons and participants that have been engaged across the Programme so far include:

- Schools
- Community Centres and Hubs
- Neighbourhood centres
- Residents associations

- Village and District Village halls
- Local cafes, shops, hotels
- Churches

- Carers centres, care homes
- Young Carers charities
- Day care facilities, family centres

- Community Forests
- Community gardens
- CICs

- Local 'Friends of' groups,
- Book clubs, writing groups, knitting groups, local choirs
- Historic sites, estates and country parks

- Community sports (football association trust, swimming pool, boxing club)

- Green spaces: Gardening clubs, Botanical gardens, community gardens

We worked with the Violence Reduction Unit, Newton Primary School, South Ayrshire Council and other partners to knock every door in Wallacetown to learn what the community needed and wanted. From these findings there has been significant impact and change making happening in the community grown from the residents. As well as the range of artistic work we have led on we have seen community gardens pop up, women's groups and a range of summer activities for young people (Ayr Gaiety Partnership, Ayrshire)

Street Level Culture Collective has developed a wide range of artistic residencies in the New Gorbals and Govanhill areas of Glasgow, connecting to communities via local Community Connector posts and Housing Associations. In the Gorbals alone, residency locations range from the local primary schools, youth centre and local community arts clubs, to a hair salon, a barber's shop, and a local chippy.

² This figure includes the core arts (and other) organisations delivering the projects as partners, as well as their local partners, liaisons and participant groups.

- Forest Trust, forest school
- Local Development Trusts and Groups
- Charities (Women’s aid, Macmillan, Home Start, Barnardos, Children First, Alzheimer Scotland and Employability charities)
- Hospitals
- Mental health services and associations
- Health & Social Care Learning disability services
- Care of the elderly wards (NHS)
- Patient councils
- Alcohol & Drugs Action services
- Suicide prevention and wellbeing charities and services
- Emergency Housing Team and temporary accommodation providers
- Food cooperatives
- Asylum seekers groups
- Muslim women’s association
- Scottish Human Rights Consortium
- Local LGBTIQ+ groups (for instance Kairos+, a community led women’s space for all women and non-binary people)
- Disability groups
- Voluntary Organisations (i.e. Tasga in South Uist, CVS in Inverclyde)
- CICs and social enterprise
- Prisons
- Scottish Violence Reduction Unit
- Universities (i.e. Robert Gordon) and Colleges (i.e. Fife)
- Local farming associations and communities

Along with local communities of all age and backgrounds, **some of the specific groups engaged** through the Programme so far include:

Young People including those with experience of homelessness; in disadvantaged areas; young carers; young black and young people of colour, LGBT youth, children under 5 and their parents, children in schools

People recovering from addictions

People experiencing domestic abuse

Residents in areas of multiple deprivation

People with autism, dementia sufferers and their families, people with **Alzheimer’s**

People with physical disabilities, people with **sensory needs**, people with **learning disabilities or difficulties**

In-patients on hospital wards, **people in care homes**

People experiencing mental health issues

People in the prison system

This preliminary listing shows the incredible reach of these 26 projects. It also evidences the level of demand for this kind of work rooted in communities of all kinds.

4. EMPLOYMENT CREATED BY THE PROGRAMME

One of the programme's few core conditions is that 50% of the funding is to be used to directly fund creative practitioners. In many cases the projects have exceeded this proportion within their budgets.

Paid opportunities for creative practitioners

This Interim reporting, representing the programme's achievements so far, is able to include indicative figures in terms of the **grand total of posts created, the range of opportunities and kinds of roles supported**. More definitive details will be possible in our Final Reporting.

493 paid
roles counted
so far

So far the projects in the Culture Collective programme have created 493 roles and employment opportunities, many of which are being rolled over into the next phases of the projects, along with additional posts planned by some projects.

The roles recorded so far include 44 coordinator posts and 449 other paid positions.³

Roles for creative practitioners include

Artist in Residence, Workshop artist, Event artist, Digital artist, Illustrator, Lead Artist, Associate Artist, Assistant Artist, Artistic Mentor, Curator, Producer, Trainee

Community Coordinator, Access Producer, Creative community worker, Communications & Engagement Officer

Sound and Lighting Technician, Technical coordinator, Photographer, Filmmaker, Documentarian, Storyteller, Musician, Soprano, Dancer, Actor, Writer, Graphic designer, Creative Researcher

• Length of contracts

The employment opportunities created in the programme range from a few days for specific activities, to 12 or 18 month contracts for creative practitioners. Central coordinator and management posts have been longer term appointments, with one project creating 24 month contracts for the Culture Collective employees.

• **Role sizes** range from 5 hours per week to full-time, with everything in between. Residencies range from several weeks, to 130 days, to one full year.

• **Kinds of contract** include part time, full time and PAYE.

In many cases creative practitioners have been able to adapt their contracts to fit their preferred working patterns.

For instance, Highland Culture Collective reported that *"some of the artists have chosen to stretch their residencies over 10 months, and [the coordinator] will work for 6 months full time and then 0.5 FTE for the final 4 months"*. This was noted as **helping the practitioners to "either transition back into freelancing, or seek another role, towards the end of the project"**.

³ This data has been collated from interim project reports returned to Creative Scotland, dated June 2022 in some cases and November 2022 in others. The data represents 25 projects (a 26th was delayed in reporting figures).

Paid Activities include

Residencies, long and short term
Community **workshops**
Community **engagement**
Creative **development**
Mentoring
Paid **training** schemes
Creative **research**
Commissioned **artworks**
Technical **support**
Design and other services
Monitoring and **Evaluation**

Artforms include

• **THEATRE** • **FILM** •
VISUAL ART • **CRAFTS**
POETRY •
ILLUSTRATION • **MUSIC**
• **TAPESTY** • **PRINTING**
• **POTTERY**

Projects have able to create dedicated posts in response to local needs and conditions on the ground, due to flexibility of the programme funding

The Art27 Scotland Culture Collective (Edinburgh) got to know diverse cultural communities in their neighbourhood and then appointed engagement officers from within the largest of those communities. This ensured that the co-ordinators employed in the project are also community reps linking their networks to the projects. Working in their first language, arguably the artists involved can also be voices for their own community.

For instance, Cultivate (Dundee and Perth & Kinross) created *“a new role of Access Producer alongside a budget to support the community and public engagement aspects of the programme, and champion/facilitate good practices for social/ climate justice across the region.”*

The EVOLVE Culture Collective (in the Seedhill area of Paisley, Renfrewshire) said: The flexibility of the funding has allowed us to experiment with new approaches such as hiring a Support Worker from the access budget to provide further assistance with our workshops with children, many of whom present challenging behaviour. She is also being paid to take part in future training and professional development to inform her practice and to share best practice.

An illustrative example where a project was able to create paid positions arising from the evolving needs of the project is Safe Harbour-Open Sea in Fittie (Footdee) in Aberdeen, whose new additional posts include:

- *Communications & Engagement Officer* – a post created in response to feedback during Phase One
- *Legacy Practitioner* – a post created to oversee a lasting legacy for Safe Harbour: Open Sea and to work with partners Open Road and the Fittie Community Development Trust to create ways to build element of the project into a more permanent presence in the community.
- *Storyteller in Residence* – a post created to continue with the story gathering started during Phase One and to support community members to undertake this for themselves and their neighbours. This post will also link with the environmental strand of the project and create a new story for the future of the community.

- *Choir Leader* – a post created to **continue to lead and build the Harbour Voices choir** that came from Phase One.
- *Social Media, Press, PR & podcasts* – expansion and extension of an existing post **to create a series of Harbour Voices podcasts.**

The programme extension funding has helped projects to embed their artists and expand their reach, adapting their approaches to fit needs and requirements on the ground

For example

- The Combine to Create project in Moray employed 6 locally based creative practitioners on long term (130 day) residencies on a freelance basis. *“The [extension funding] enabled us to offer an additional 7th residency of 76 days, shared between [an] artist duo who worked with us on the initiation phase. We anticipate this will finish at the same time as 6 long term residencies”*
- EVOLVE (Seedhill: Paisley) was enabled to sustain its work for its original 4 creative practitioners, and increase its force to 5 creative practitioners through the extension funding.

Practitioners have been employed **both in their local area and given opportunities to access work elsewhere**

Young Quines Culture Collective in Fife reported that *many staff talk about how positive it feels to be working in their local area.*

A practitioner in the Highland Collective commented: *I am from the Black Isle, and moved away to London/Glasgow 18 years ago, to train & work in the arts. I moved home at the start of the pandemic but [I] never imagined finding such a brilliant role here that suits my skills, experience and interests so well (and is full time and fairly paid)*

A practitioner in Deveron Projects (Huntly, Aberdeenshire) said: *Being an artist in residence in Huntly with Deveron Projects has allowed me time and space to develop a deeper understanding of rural issues and also to reflect on my experience as a black person of Portuguese origin in Scottish society... Working collaboratively and in response to a specific socio-cultural context has been a new and enriching professional experience that has created novel pathways for my practice.*

The Creative Islands Network reports: *for one practitioner, who moved to one of the island groups just before the Pandemic, these funds and opportunities to practice have helped them make connections and develop networks in a new place.*

Artists value having more control of building their teams and contracting additional support

For instance in the Creative Islands Network: *41 Creative Practitioners have been supported through the first year of the Creative Islands Network. This includes 27 (named) creative practitioners leading on 23 projects across the 3 island groups. Additional creative practitioners were ‘contracted’ by leading artists to deliver particular sessions or aspects of projects. It was noted in feedback that being able to ‘contract’ and work with other artists on*

The projects have also employed non-arts specialists, creating a valuable spin out benefit during the Pandemic.

Such posts include:
**Translator, Captioner,
 BSL interpreter,
 Interviewer, Event support,
 Press and PR professional,
 Social Media manager,
 Web designer,
 Content manager**

projects –and be in control of this -was a particularly positive aspect of the programme design for creative practitioners.

Fair Pay and Supportive Recruitment Practices are being progressed by the projects

For instance, EVOLVE (Seedhill: Paisley) note that their creative practitioners *“have given the core project team feedback that being hired onto this project has given them opportunities to develop their practice in a well-supported role, both in terms of finances and resources. Being paid at SAU rates means, particularly those on higher FTE contracts that they are not worrying about juggling many different roles in order to make ends meet and are therefore able to give more brain-space to their roles on EVOLVE”.*

Our final reporting will include a focus on fair work approaches adopted by the projects, exploring what learning and practices can be taken forward in this respect from the Programme for the sector and its funders

Artists feeling valued

Creative Islands Network reports *“a feeling from creative practitioners that they were valued as much as the communities and ‘outcomes’ their projects aimed to work with”*

Training, mentoring and support for emerging or early career practitioners is strengthening the workforce in readiness for post-Covid recovery

Combine to Create (Moray) dedicated many hours to *“mentoring the long term artists in residence”* and have since worked on *“a gradual shift from mentoring to their re-entering the programme as experienced socially embedded artists”*. An outcome is that they’ve identified and begun to create opportunities for them to connect into an area in the project where they didn’t yet have any live residency activity taking place, thus expanding the reach of the project.

The Occupy! Culture Collective (Govanhill: Glasgow) reported that two of their artists were working in short-term *mentoring relationships with other professional artists* and they are investigating opportunities for longer term mentoring later in the project.

Safe Harbour Open Sea (Fittie (Footdee): Aberdeen) *trained an early career Creative Producer* in leading a community choir.

Young Quines (Fife) employed 8 creative practitioners on 12-month contracts, four of whom are *emerging practitioners*.

West Lothian ARC has placed *central focus on development opportunities for its practitioners*. It was able to recruit an emerging postgraduate artist to assist the professional artist in their tapestry project for career development. In addition a *mentoring relationship* was set up for the professional artist by an experienced arts manager, along with training and networking opportunities. They plan to *“use this as a pilot, to explore opportunities to establish a more formalised offer from other partners with new artists employed on the project.”*

The Here We Are! Culture Collective (working in Ward 17, Springburn/Robroyston: Glasgow) says: *We have introduced more training for the artists and have delivered online child protection and arts and early years training by Starcatchers. We are aiming to provide a topic once a month and have opened up the training to our partners and their support workers too. We have found that relationships between the partners and artists have strengthened because of this.*

Intercultural Youth Scotland reports their Restless Creatives Culture Collective (Edinburgh) has developed new mentorship and teaching skills for their practitioners, for example their music producer whose main focus prior to the project was producing but whose expertise “grown significantly with his organizational skills, planning and mentorship” impacting him not only as a musician but in his professional profile.

Some of the projects have also generated paid employment and development opportunities for Participants

For example, in the What We Do Now Culture Collective in Dumfries and Galloway: *One of the Participants has now asked A’ the Airts for a part time job...another is now doing some editing for CT Productions [another arts partner in Sanquhar], and [our artists] hope to extend similar opportunities out to others in the group.*

The What We Do Now project also reports that *two of its participants have now been accepted onto a college course in Photography*, with feedback from the college that they joined already at a higher level than the foundation course, and places would be sought for them at a higher level.

A regular attendee of the EVOLVE project (Seedhill: Paisley) who is studying photography was given *a paid employment as photographer* for the launch of a sister project called Park Life! for publication in local media.

The core focus of work by the Create Community Wealth Culture Collective is generating economic development opportunities for participants.

The project focuses on seed funding and mentoring *new micro creative and business ventures* in the Edinburgh communities of Wester Hailes and Muirhouse, building from the project’s Craft Café for local residents:

Through the Craft Café, we have created an open regular space for people to start conversations, and the tools to inspire their creativity which has enabled ideas, skills, and products to develop.

In collaboration with local partner organisations, the project has developed a monthly, culturally inclusive Artisan Market that’s *a showcase and retail platform for local producers and creatives* as well as a new community event. The project *also hires local musicians, artists, and practitioners from its local communities* to support the events, and to “celebrate our local creative assets that flourish quietly”.

The project seeks to foster this grassroots creative economy by branching into online retail, connections with local retail outlets and external markets/events as well as its own activities. The intention is to **create a yearly showcase event and monthly markets which are managed by the community when the project ends.**

It is clear from the above that the Culture Collective Programme is simultaneously delivering work with communities and sustaining artistic careers while capacity building the sector and augmenting the skills, experience and connections of practitioners and, in some cases, local community participants.

Further professional impacts on artists are outlined in Section 5 below in relation to Sector Recovery.

5. IMPACTS ON ARTISTS AND ORGANISATIONS AND INDICATIONS OF SECTOR RECOVERY

Although the programme is still underway, with most projects more than a year into their work the projects have been able to identify positive effects arising from the programme and their reports suggest a wide range of impacts developing for the sector.

What we've looked for as relevant indicators of Post-Pandemic Recovery:

- Creative practitioners/artists retaining their career momentum and viability during the Covid crisis
- Re-connecting communities after Lockdown
- Training and workforce readiness for post-Covid work
- Practitioners and organisations being able to lever additional funding sources going forward
- Taking adapted practices and learning forward for sustainable practice in future
- Restarting (mainstream) programmes of sectoral activity

All of these are apparent in the reporting we've reviewed so far from the projects, and we will explore these indicators further in our final evaluation.

This Section of our report overviews some of the high level themes we're seeing so far in relation to arts practitioners and organisations.

It is possible to see a number early positive impacts of the programme on the project's work and ways of working in terms of their partnerships, relationships between sector and communities, specifically:

- Longer term contracts enabling flexibility of work and more embedded approaches
- Enhanced recruitment processes and fair work practices
- New, broader partnerships and connections for arts organisations and practitioners
- Non arts partners commissioning artists, some for first time
- A network focus on development and training for practitioners

These are outlined in more detail below.

Impacts on Employed Practitioners

• Sustaining practice during the Pandemic

The Follow Our Rules Culture Collective (Edinburgh and Lothians) reported that *Culture Collective funding has enabled us to support to date an incredible 70 creative practitioners. A good number of these creative practitioners are employed on an on-going basis which affords them security of employment and income.*

The length of the project has provided a stable income for six creative practitioners over the course of almost two years with unionised fees, which is a rarity in the sector [Create Community Wealth Culture Collective, Wester Hailes and Muirhouse: Edinburgh]

According to one of the artists in Govanhill in the Street Level Culture Collective: *the residency gave me the security of a regular wage, which eased certain financial stresses, which in turn allowed me to focus properly on my practice. As a result, I feel like a stronger, more confident artist.*

In the Highland Culture Collective it was noted that: *some of the artists are choosing to spread their time over 9 or 10 months instead of 8, in order to slowly return to freelance working (on other projects) towards the end of the project.*

• The nature of Programme support is noticeable by practitioners

A creative practitioner in Here We Are! Culture Collective (Ward 17, Springburn/Robroyston: Glasgow) said: *“This is the first time in my working life that I have felt supported by an organisation as an artist and it has really benefited me”*

The positive impact of having a steady contract during an unpredictable year was incredible for staff, especially in a pilot year happening during a pandemic (Young Quines Culture Collective, Fife)

• The Programme has been a bridge for emerging practitioners into long term careers

“The residency achieved the goal of preparing me for future work, I feel ready to be able to deliver workshops myself now – which I couldn’t imagine a year ago! It has changed my life and I am very grateful” (an artist in the Street Level Culture Collective, New Gorbals and Govanhill: Glasgow)

Intercultural Youth Scotland (Restless Creatives Culture Collective, Edinburgh) says: *One of our CPs has been awarded Best Newcomer in the Scottish Alternative Music Awards 2021, she was also featured as YWCA 30 women under 30. She has successfully started her own charity which is all about discussing consent, sex ed, mental illness, body image, racism and human rights. She recently hosted a festival with her charity. Not only has she developed her creative skills and been recognised for this, she has also developed her organisational skills, including applying for funding, creating budgets and creating partnerships and marketing and promotion. Her work with [the Culture Collective] has helped her build these skills and we have supported her with connections and introductions.*

]

- Developing artists' skills, expertise, experience and practice

"Having had this experience I am, both materially and practice-based, set up for the next 5 or 10 years to make more work and develop longer-term, ambitious, reciprocal and collaborative projects" [an artist working with Alchemy Film & Arts in the Teviot, The Flag and the Rich, Rich Soil Culture Collective, Hawick, Scottish Borders]

For the Art27 Scotland Culture Collective (Edinburgh), *"another key capacity building aspect for our project has been building the skills and confidence of Art27 staff. Staff have taken part in several formal and informal trainings and have been provided with career progression opportunities."*

In the Creative Islands Network, *"for one practitioner, who delivered a project in 'round one' and is continuing to work with the same community in the 'second round' of the Programme, the work she has done has not only connected different members of the community, but also opened further avenues for her as creative practitioner, including academic research and exhibitions."*

"I have found the Culture Collective Programme a really positive experience. I have grown in my practice and I have seen people around me do the same" [creative practitioner working with Toonspeak in the Here We Are! Culture Collective, Ward 17 Springburn/Robroyston: Glasgow]

Creative Practitioners are growing in their understanding of community engagement as they think of new ways to make inroads in their locations and spread the word about the project. [Young Quines, Fife]

Our creative practitioners have commented on increased confidence in their social practice and a welcome level of creative freedom throughout their contracts working on EVOLVE [EVOLVE, Seedhill: Paisley]

- Projects have been a stepping stone for some, already, into permanent jobs

The 6 month traineeship we ran through this project has resulted in the recruitment of this person to a year-round position as Project Assistant (The Teviot, The Flag and the Rich Rich Soil Culture Collective, Hawick, Scottish Borders)

Three of the Creative Practitioners we worked during Phase One are moving onto either permanent jobs, teacher training or other freelance projects (Safe Harbour Open Sea Culture Collective, Fittie (Footdee): Aberdeen)

- More paid opportunities for freelance practitioners through new partner contacts

“Artists have grown additional paid opportunities through projects by connecting with other partners” (What We Do Now Culture Collective, Dumfries and Galloway)

We consistently receive feedback from our creative practitioners which points towards the opportunities being presented by Aiseirigh and the wider Culture Collective as being both unprecedented and revitalising. The project has given creatives in Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh the opportunity to fully immerse themselves in the creative industries in their local areas, with valuable job security, of particular importance to these individuals and the sector as a whole in the context of recovery from the pandemic (Aiseirigh Culture Collective, Skye and Lochalsh)

The majority of our artists, not all, have reflected back to us that this project has had a significant effect on their work and networks locally, particularly in relation to increased confidence in a Creative Placemaking approach to working with communities that the project pilots. Some of them have found that the project has embedded their work in the region in a way they see providing long-term benefit for future work and projects (What We Do Now Culture Collective, Dumfries and Galloway)

*“The opportunity to build a new professional network with partner organisations ...has led to new collaborations and learning opportunities”
(feedback from artists in the Arts in Moray (AIM) Collective)*

“Being involved in IYS’s project and performances has opened doors to many opportunities for me, from collaborations to working with talented, artists and producers. Taking part in IYS performances has also led to other organisations and event hosts wanting me to perform for them” (practitioner in Restless Creatives, Edinburgh)

“The opportunity to work within a team for an extended period of time (12 months) gave me the time and support to make and develop relationships with local organisations and businesses as well as individual residents which continue to flourish... [It] has led to more professional opportunities for me alongside a renewed confidence in my practice” (practitioner in Street Level Culture Collective, New Gorbals and Govanhill: Glasgow)

Impacts on How Organisations are Working

- New doors are opening for organisations to connect with local communities and groups

Covid has changed how a lot of organisations work, the ease of access to them, as well as the level of engagement with young people. Our partnerships are being informed by this the new landscape and some of these relationships are different to original proposal (Young Quines Culture Collective, Fife)

The Culture Collective Programme not only aligns with our long-term commitment to community engagement as part of our core work but enhances it significantly in the potential to widen links to a broader constituency of people, communities and agencies. Importantly though, the process highlights the developed capacity to undertake this work to best impact (Street Level Culture Collective, New Gorbals and Govanhill: Glasgow)

- This work is consolidating organisations' places in their community

We have diversified audiences and have reached over 100 local groups and organisations with mutual benefit (The Teviot, The Flag and the Rich, Rich Soil, Hawick, Scottish Borders)

On an organisational level it has afforded us time to ... build stronger programmes of collaborative work which both amplifies the impact of and strengthens its sustainability. This work is an important and crucial building block to understanding how creative and cultural practice can find a clearer and more prominent place in the fabric of our society and make real some of the intentions of cross discipline working which are the focus of the Cultural Strategy for Scotland (Follow Our Rules Culture Collective, Edinburgh and Lothians)

As well as a people-led and strength-led approach, [...] through having sustained funding through the Programme we have had the ability to be a consistent and strong voice within our community and our reputation as an asset within our community is growing by the day (Ayr Gaiety Partnership, Ayrshire)

- New ways of Programme working are now permeating into parallel work

"Our capacity and output has grown significantly with our engagement work becoming an integral part of our work" (Young Quines, Fife)

The Aiseirigh Culture Collective (Skye and Lochalsh) report that: *As an organisation, the Culture Collective has allowed us to explore the limitations of our existing community engagement work in the area, and encouraged us to find new ways to work with more diverse groups across Skye, Raasay and Lochalsh. The ethos of the Culture Collective has begun to permeate throughout the rest of our work, with community engaged, collaborative projects lying at the heart of plans for the future.*

Similarly: *Covid has changed how a lot of organisations work, the ease of access to them, as well as the level of engagement with young people. Our partnerships are being informed by this the new landscape and some of these relationships are different to original proposal ...The project has helped us think more broadly about our strategy working with communities, and how we make choices that are intersectional in nature (Young Quines, Fife)*

This project has shifted how we see our relationship in our local communities, working as less of a bridge between artists and our communities but rather with artists and our communities...This Programme and the opportunities and different kinds of engagements continues to feed into our future strategy (Deveron Projects, Huntly, Aberdeenshire)

For the Sensory Collective (working in locations across Scotland), *this project allowed Independent Arts Projects to increase from 1 member of staff to 8 members of staff across the 21 months of this project, increasing capacity for an organisation which usually engages practitioners on more short-term basis. This is allowing the organisation to focus on this type of work long-term which will shape how the organisation works in future.*

Likewise: *the commission/proposal structure utilised in the Creative Islands Network programme, allowing creative practitioners and community participants to take a greater degree of ownership of projects and shape activities, is being adapted for other strands of work by Shetland Arts.*

- The Programme provides a chance to build deeper and more engaged partnerships

For instance:

Outputs produced in collaboration with partners have improved our relationships and long term mutual goals with those partners, due to the ability to work long term and with such focus. Those partners include: Border Women's Aid, LGBT Youth Scotland, Borders Additional Needs Group. Among these groups are individuals ranging in age from 5 – 85 including those with lived experience of disability and/or low income (The Teviot, The Flag and the Rich, Rich Soil, Hawick Scottish Borders).

Artlink's practice is steeped in partnership, working and the Culture Collective Programme has allowed us to build on and strengthen those partnerships – importantly it creates the headspace to allow us to look at partnerships from different perspectives (Follow Our Rules, Edinburgh and Lothians)

BENEFITS OF LONGER THAN USUAL PROJECT HORIZONS AND FUNDED PROJECT TIMEFRAME

The multi-year timespan of the Programme, longer-term funding agreements and the scale of its budget make this Programme an important precedent and are expected to be significant factors in the projects' overall impacts. Already at this stage of the Programme projects are reporting that:

- Being able to take projects into a second round has generated impacts for organisations' partnerships, relationships with their communities and quality of engagement.

For Deveron Projects (Huntly, Aberdeenshire): *The impact on our organisation is immense. This project has enabled longer term residencies, embedding artists into our organisation in a way that wasn't possible before... Culture Collective has completely changed the depth at which we can work with artists through longer, and better resourced engagements*

In Ayrshire: *Having been given time and trust to get to know a community has formed an adaptive and beautiful model of engagement. Had this opportunity not have been made available, we would not have discovered the methods we [used] working alongside people from the Girvan community and enlisting them as our guides (Ayr Gaiety Partnership, Ayrshire)*

For the Combine to Create Culture Collective (Moray): *The artists on longer term residencies have been able to take time to connect, build relationships and trust.*

Across the Creative Islands Network, *this 'second round' project, provid[ed] a chance for deeper engagement and continued relationship and legacy building. This includes training other volunteers and staff working with/in groups in creative skills and techniques, and establishing facilities and equipment that will allow groups to continue creative work even if the practitioner is not there.*

Toonspeak reports, from the Here We Are! Culture Collective (Ward 17 Springburn/Robroyston: Glasgow), that continuing into its second year *we feel that we are at such a beautiful point in the Programme. Relationships between the partners, artists and participants have strengthened and participant confidence levels have increased.*

For the Sensory Collective (locations across Scotland) *Creative practitioners working on this project have remarked that this has been such an unusual experience to have a good length of time to fully engage in careful research and development before engaging directly with participants. ...The Sensory Collective can see that the investment in proper planning will show positive outcomes in terms of the artistic process and the experience of those involved.*

For the EVOLVE Culture Collective (Seedhill: Paisley), *the flexibility of the project allowed us to shift track when initial approaches proved unsuccessful e.g. adapting workshop series into projects functioning more like mini-residencies.*

6. WHAT'S HAPPENED FOR COMMUNITIES AND PARTICIPANTS

Reporting so far from the projects records a number of outcomes for communities, including:

- Rapid engagement with communities during the Covid crisis, including very many vulnerable and disadvantaged people
- Projects being instrumental in opening up locked down services for communities, providing a means for getting people together
- Taking work into locations where accessibility would otherwise be a barrier
- Tackling social isolation worsened by the pandemic
- Empowering community voices and confidence
- Empowering community ownership of space

Outcomes in Community contexts

- **Projects were instrumental in restoring engagement post-Lockdown**

Local Authorities opening things up at different rates presented challenges for artists to engage with third sector organisations that hadn't opened up services again. What's clear from the reporting is that in many cases the projects were instrumental in that, and these projects were some of the first things that people were able to engage with again.

For instance:

The People's Parish Culture Collective (working in locations across Scotland) found when they started that *locally managed facilities were just opening up with a view to re-starting regular groups. However, many local authority run local facilities were still closed or operating with very restricted services. Additionally, some local services had been withdrawn or centralised. Some initial meetings were held outdoors, and one in a container..... A major milestone was achieving face-to-face meetings between the proposed creative practitioners and the local 'anchor organisation' partners...There was a warm welcome in each place and a lot of enthusiasm for the aims, ethos and process.*

In the Creative Islands Network two of their first events (open days / photography exhibitions) that kick-started their project in Orkney *had over 150 attendees each; so many that the police turned up at one point wondering why so many people were congregating at the venue!*

For the Arts in Moray (AIM) Collective, *working with disabled participants [in a theatre group] was a restart ... at a time when during Covid lockdown restrictions the group could not perform to a live audience and [instead engaged people through] weekly studio sessions.*

Projects found that working during the Covid pandemic meant more resources were needed for safeguarding participants:

Ayr Gaiety Partnership (Ayrshire) found during sessions that *more support is needed due to the trauma of the pandemic and [we] have been actively looking ... to provide support in some of our communities and projects in the form of counselling alongside our partner organisations. We have been looking at how we can support and safeguard staff [with] the needs and support rising from the pandemic and struggles.*

An artist in the Combine to Create Culture Collective (Moray) felt that *being able to work with people as a socially embedded artist, mindful of the theme of mental health and wellbeing in context of Covid recovery, requires they work with another person/supporter in order to feel they can hold the group in a way that feels safe and welcome for all involved, with particular regard to mental health and wellbeing.*

- Projects were able to respond to high levels of local need and demand during the Pandemic

For instance:

The Ayr Gaiety Partnership (Ayrshire) noted that *across the board that so many people wanted to reconnect that we didn't have much of a barrier in terms Covid-19.*

According to Toonspeak (Here We Are! Culture Collective, Ward 17 Springburn/Robroyston: Glasgow): *We have seen some very positive changes in a number of our service users. Their confidence has grown and will now eagerly engage in any group work or discussions, where previously they may have shied away. We wondered if participants would drop away over time, but actually the opposite happened - they all attended every session.*

In Dumfries and Galloway, the What We Do Now Culture Collective reported that: *Phase one of What We Do Now has delivered 123 artist/place hubs events. Enabling communities to take a lead was encouraged through ... activities that are focused on place development and change that is wanted [and] connecting work into local policy and place development*

- New relationships with communities are being formed through the Programme

For example for North Lanarkshire Culture Collective:

Initial engagement was through Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire's six locality anchor organisations. Meeting with each anchor organisation helped us to reach the wider community of North Lanarkshire and therefore connect faster to those organisations who have been most affected by Covid-19. For example: Addiction Support, who have struggled to engage with their service users during Covid-19 due to the lack of activities available and tech equipment needed during lockdown.

For the EVOLVE Culture Collective (Seedhill: Paisley), whose project engages people recovering from addiction, and young refugees:

Creating new informal partnerships with local organisations has allowed us to increase access to the arts and culture for 'hard-to-reach' communities", build relationships and create longer term engagement

The Aiseirigh Culture Collective (Skye and Lochalsh) received feedback that:

Having activities that don't have strict timetables has allowed those with social anxieties to participate, take breaks, or leave for periods of time without feeling like they are missing out. The collective activities, and open invitation to get involved has been the groundwork for forming new connections between people and places.

- Projects have taken work into new spaces to enable direct access where people are

All of the projects are engaged at the heart of communities, and there are many examples of different spaces and places accessed through the work (as can be seen from the lists presented in Section 3 and across the rest of this Section). Many of the projects have been working with vulnerable people whose challenges were exacerbated by the Pandemic.

The value for participants of taking work directly to them can be illustrated through the Follow Our Rules project led by Artlink whose project in Edinburgh and Lothians represents both an extension of their services on a wide scale as well as necessary adaptations for the Pandemic.

Their approach benefited a vulnerable demographic in care homes, hit particularly hard by Covid and the challenges of the Lockdown period, as these testimonies from partners they worked with show. A manager in one of the nursing homes said of the project's pop-up events on-site in their gardens:

We have been really struggling with short staffing and with Covid on top of that it is hard, so it's really difficult for people to leave the house at the moment as we just don't have the staff to support it. We don't have the staff to travel to the Thursday Live community venues, so amazingly Thursday Live performers have been able to come to us and pop up in the garden. Our neighbours [from an associated home] join us in the garden for the events too. This is brilliant, it works perfectly for us, we really enjoy it and everyone has a good time, it's relaxing for everyone; service users and staff. We'd love more.

This is mirrored by feedback from another partner which supports people with learning disabilities across Edinburgh and the Lothians:

Having concerts in the garden is just wonderful. Because of where we are we're quite isolated and people can only get out if our staff are drivers, not many are, this is hopefully changing soon. The fact that you can come to us is amazing. Everyone just loves it and are so chuffed to be involved. You really help us out with providing activity both during the hardest points of the pandemic and still now.

Artlink reported that “the joy of working together cannot be overstated. The social aspect of people gathering and working together creates a strong social glue that helps nurture and sustain peer support within the groups. After two years of varying forms of isolation, that social contact is more important than ever.”

- **Tackling social isolation worsened by Pandemic**

There are indications across the projects that their work in communities, in addition to the outcomes already discussed above, played a valuable role in tackling widespread social isolation, and which for many vulnerable groups was exacerbated by the Pandemic.

For instance:

In the Ayr Gaiety Partnership (Ayrshire) one of the creative practitioners reported: *I believe the drama club at [the local primary school] has helped the children to reconnect after Covid and increase their confidence after being so isolated during lockdown*

In Glasgow’s Springburn/Robroyston area (Ward 17), Toonspeak reported that among its participants are people who have experienced mental health and debilitating health issues: *It has been a challenge for them to leave their house and get to the group but once they are here, they absolutely love it. They have ... done some things they never thought possible and expanded their art knowledge and techniques, and got to know some wonderful human beings along the way.*

- **Projects have engaged previously under-served groups**

For instance, young people:

North Lanarkshire Culture Collective delivered workshops to Lanarkshire’s Deaf Club (cited as the only youth Deaf Club in Scotland), reporting that some young people travelled from as far as Aberdeen to attend. The project development officer stated “Some of our youths have had no communication during lockdown as zoom doesn’t work well with sign, this project will provide so much joy to them.”

In Sanquhar the project has engaged teens, a demographic not reached by main partners before, and established a ‘Sanquhar Camera Collective’. There is very little provision for youth in Sanquhar (What We Do Now, Dumfries and Galloway)

Young Quines (Fife) reported that: Many of our young people are new to the theatre arts and Young Quines has helped them develop new skills. We are bringing an opportunity that doesn’t exist in their community.

- **Empowering community voices**

The Programme sought to engage closely with communities in shaping their own cultural environment. While all of the projects have pursued this, some examples of community voices being empowered through the projects include:

The Teviot, The Flag and the Rich, Rich Soil (Hawick, Scottish Borders): they shared that one of the project’s films, *Notes From A Low Orbit* premiered at Alchemy Film and at the Moving Image Festival,

solidified how important it is for individuals to be involved in the shaping of their own narrative and to see themselves represented on screen.

In the words of one of the youth workers in Street Level Culture Collective (New Gorbals and Govanhill: Glasgow):

Govanhill and the community that live there is beautiful, powerful, challenging and truly alive, all things really. But those are my words, it's so easy and often problematic to paint a picture of a place as an outsider. It's important to recognise that the true voice of a place is spoken by the people who live its reality. There is beauty and talent here. The best of this project hasn't been the moments when the young people in Govanhill have been documented, but instead when they have picked up a bike, a camera or both - and have found a way of seeing and sharing in their own way.

For the Art27 Scotland Culture Collective (Edinburgh), a lot of our work has been to help develop, facilitate, and strengthen the work of the Sudanese Cultural Forum, organising events based around their committee's choice. *The Sudanese Community were able to take the lead in planning community cultural events such as Sudan Day Celebration, a Bazaar and a new commission from Sudanese artist Maryam Yahia Mohamed. The opening of her beautiful exhibition brought [together] a lot of different communities and other artists.*

- **Projects have opened pathways for minority community members to be represented**

For instance:

Art27 Scotland Culture Collective's (Edinburgh) work in capacity building has been approached *through catalysing change in the structure, governance, and approach of the Management Committee of South Side Community Centre. Art27 have regularly challenged the indirect discrimination inherent in the inaccessible booking and selection processes of the committee. We have been able to encourage participants and community members to go onto the board to feel they have more ownership of the space. In the past few months, we have facilitated 4 new members onto the committee, diversifying the voices and perspectives of new communities.*

Combine to Create (Moray): Through their Small Halls artists residencies, this Culture Collective has aimed to "engage with communities with curiosity, sensitivity, mutual respect and awareness of the pandemic context", including a focus on *the existing and emerging range and diversity of identities, roles and voices of people who are/are not visibly active/part of creating/making Moray's communities.*

- **Creative voices have been embedded in strategic development and locality planning**

Many of the Culture Collective projects have some relationship with local authority services, but several have also taken a central role in local authority strategic development and community planning.

For instance:

Inverclyde Culture Collective has focused its activity on *test piloting new local partnership and community projects that offer a window into new collaborative ways of working including residency and artist exchange process.*

In Stranraer the What We Do Now Culture Collective's work has *become central to the town's conversation with local people about what they want to see happen with buildings and spaces* towards the future revitalisation of the town. And Dumfries and Galloway Council have recognised What We Do Now as an *exemplar of community-led engagement for developing local Place Plans*, with the Stove network feeding into 6-weekly Place Planning Partnership meetings as part of this.

The People's Parish Culture Collective (in locations across Scotland) reports that in one of its locations particularly hard hit by Covid and the closure or withdrawal of local services and facilities, their lead organisation, local partner and project workers have become involved in *forming a new Community Plan*. They have advocated for more structural cultural planning alongside local creative activities, and perceive that *they are enabling some significant progress for the community*. Their role in this intervention informed part of their decision to extend their presence in that area using project Extension Funding.

In another of its locations, The People's Parish partners have generated some action research in direct response to *"a local desire to assess the creative and community development potential of local heritage assets"* for the wider area. The Culture Collective lead organisation TRACS has been able to connect this with its own ongoing development work on the wider creative potential of Intangible Culture Heritage (ICH).

The North East Culture Collective (Aberdeen) has been purposefully structured to ensure their projects link firmly into the Local Community Planning process and Local Outcome Improvement Plan by engaging with organisations and networks in strategic community planning areas, including health, children and young people, addiction & mental health and wellbeing. They used this to identify project working partners' links into specific communities. Core partners in their project include: Culture Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Council's Community Planning Team and Outcome Improvement Groups, Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations, and Live Life Aberdeenshire.

They report: *We have found a very open and positive response from strategic partners across the various community planning areas to developing relationships and making long-term partnerships with the creative sector. The refreshing of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the improvement projects has provided an opportunity through the NECC for the creative sector to play a greater role in this work, as new ways to deliver the ambitions of the document are being explored. These connections have opened new avenues for longer term partnerships, joint working and creative thinking and commissioning for practitioners and cultural organisations.*

Participant Outcomes and Wellbeing

Given the extraordinary range and diversity of participant groups and contexts involved in this Programme, outcomes reported from the projects are likely to be wide ranging in nature and profuse in number. These will be captured more fully in our final reporting at the close of the Programme.

However stories of change for participants are already emerging across the projects. What we present here at this stage can only be the briefest snapshot but the projects are already recording many stories of what the work means to the people engaging with it.

Some indicative, initial outcomes at this time include:

- **New skills valued by participants**

Our music producer has worked with a young rapper for about a year now. The young rapper uses the free studio regularly and attends the block. When he first started coming, he was very new to music with little to no experience. Now his skill level has improved drastically with his writing and performance (Restless Creatives Culture Collective, Edinburgh)

- **Confidence to return to work**

It has given me more confidence in myself to try new things. It also gave me the confidence to get a job after three years of unemployment (participant, location anonymised)

- **Confidence and communication**

For Alchemy Film and Arts (The Teviot, The Flag and the Rich, Rich Soil Culture Collective in Hawick, Scottish Borders) this is exemplified in relation to a sensory hub moving image installation made with Borders Additional Needs Group:

Over the past year we have been making experimental Super8 films with the Borders Additional Needs Group alongside a documentary in partnership with Scottish Autism platforming what participants want to say about their lived experiences of autism. A private screening of the films was held at Borders College before the public sensory installation at Alchemy Festival.

Feedback included a young woman's testimony that before the project she did not want to appear on film, in photographs or speak in groups and by the end of the project she felt confident walking into rooms and speaking about her lived experience. This group of participants have been impacted significantly from the isolation of the pandemic, and the positive feedback from this project evidences the impact and importance of collaborative creative projects on wellbeing, confidence building and connectivity.

- **New avenues for self-expression**

Something has opened in me - just talking about it triggered the change - I want to create more (participant, location anonymised)

I can't remember the last time I did art, I feel like a child again and I love it (participant aged 91 years, Glenboig healthy living centre, North Lanarkshire)

- Making new community connections

*A new tenant who had moved from Stirling and had been told that [his location] was a terrible place to live had connected with the artists and through them met YMCA, LIFT and Family Centre. He stayed for the whole event contributing to the consultation and **said that this was actually the best community he had ever lived in and the artwork project was going to give him a means to be part of the place he lives.** (What We Do Now Culture Collective, Dumfries and Galloway)*

- Re-connecting people experiencing social isolation

It made us all feel human again (participant, location anonymised)

Young Quines Culture Collective (Fife) shared feedback from a participant who said: *“I live in a small, isolated community where there are no buses. There is a small park but not many kids to play there. I feel very isolated because I don’t see my friends outside of school.”* The project has *“been able to connect them in with wider circles of friends and they are flourishing in sessions”*.

7. OTHER INTERESTING THEMES WE ARE SEEING ACROSS PROJECTS

We are seeing a number of other themes emerge from the Programme work, many of which will be explored further in the next phases of our research. These include:

- Transforming spaces in communities

For instance:

The Small Halls Artists in Residence (Combine to Create, Moray): *Each of these residencies has seen **artists working with community halls, and engaging people locally through their local channels and user groups**, and also reaching more widely or deeply into the community in different ways.*

Deveron Projects (Huntly, Aberdeenshire) has been working to establish Square Deal as **a creative and community hub for Huntly**. The vision is to create an **autonomous committee of community members** to run this building.

Create Community Wealth (Wester Hailes and Muirhouse: Edinburgh): *In North Edinburgh, our main engagement is the Inspiration Station which we **set up in a disused building in Muirhouse**. This started as a drop-in workshop with informal craft/art activities [and has since become] a workshop/demonstration space that people could book for free and showcase their service to the public (such as nails, hair braiding, and upcycling demonstrations)*

EVOLVE Culture Collective (Seedhill: Paisley): *Delivering **in-person outdoor events** [during the Pandemic] - in addition to ongoing regular workshops - **allowed us to create opportunities to reconnect with communities** in a way that was obvious for them and didn’t require high levels of commitment and entering enclosed spaces, which ... may have been deterrents for some people.*

Young Quines (Fife): *We are bringing an opportunity [for young people in the theatre arts] that doesn't exist in their community, and providing it in both well-loved community halls and those in need of new life... In Kirkcaldy we were able to use the disused Raeburn Hall, a central venue that the council had recently acquired, for our summer project, breathing some life back into the place.*

- **Creating new, innovative spaces**

Street Level Culture Collective has developed a wide range of artistic residencies in the New Gorbals and Govanhill areas of Glasgow. In the Gorbals residencies are embedded in unconventional places, including: portrait exhibitions in Ann's Fry (fish and chip shop), Illusion hair salon and Brazuka Barbers; and 'G5's Got Talent' events with Friends of Southern Necropolis (cemetery), *Strum For Life* (community guitar class) and *Givin It Laldie* (music class).

In addition: Create Community Wealth (Edinburgh) hosts markets once a month in the Wester Hailes Plaza. Partner organisations have also proposed making connections with city parks and council owned public spaces to develop outdoor events in 2023.

And in Dundee: The Cultivate project's Creative Practitioners have developed various approaches to engage people with climate justice through arts, culture and creativity. These include creating welcoming and safe spaces such as "a gig in a community garden, a sofa in a shopping mall, and a repair cafe in a social supermarket."

- **Embedding a local focus on environmental sustainability**

Among the examples of this apparent across the Programme are:

- Cultivate Culture Collective (Dundee and Perth & Kinross), which is engaging people with climate justice through arts, culture and creativity
- Safe Harbour Open Sea (Fittie (Footdee): Aberdeen), whose project themes include 'being a good ancestor' and facing climate crisis. The project's lead organisation Open Road is an environmentally conscious organisation
- Dance North, the lead organisation for the Arts in Moray Culture Collective, is based within the Findhorn Foundation, famous as a pioneering eco village. Arts in Moray was also involved in the opening stages of a project with Transition Town Forres Community Garden, a local charity working towards a sustainable low-carbon lifestyle.

8. ENABLERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS WORK

An important part of our study is understanding what conditions and support most enable the success of projects like those across the Culture Collective Programme.

While funding is essential to allow projects such as these to occur, there are numerous other factors that can affect how effectively that funding can be employed to deliver the intended aims and outcomes. *It is already clear that the success of the Culture Collective are not solely down to the provision of funding, but also to the way in which this funding has been distributed*, in particular the freedom and flexibility that recipients have had to respond to their local priorities while working in ways that ‘make sense’ for their context. It is also clear that the specific context of each project has affected how they have had to work, with some projects having pre-existing local networks on which to build, while others have built these through the opportunity provided by the Programme.

In our consultative workshops with projects, we asked each delegation to list *5 things that most enable the work they are doing and 5 things that constrain their ability to deliver the best outcomes*.

The themes generated through our analysis below will be explored further in the next stage of the evaluation research.

Enabling Factors identified by projects

Our preliminary analysis reveals key elements that projects identify as enabling factors in the success of their work:

Training and Support for practitioners	<p><i>“Artistic solidarity and mentoring”</i></p> <p><i>“Support from wider collective (National connection)”</i></p> <p><i>“Programme support - e.g. training and skills development”</i></p>
Projects designed and undertaken by those with professional experience and/or training, whose professional knowledge and skills as an artist are valued	<p><i>“Embedded policies in relation to artists rights and rates”</i></p> <p><i>“Money - to be paid properly for your time”</i></p>
Collaboration	<p><i>“Strong team: Talent and Skills”</i></p> <p><i>“Being part of the Culture Collective - the support of the network”</i></p>
Partner Buy In	<p><i>“Partners with local knowledge who are fully engaged”</i></p> <p><i>“Strong partnerships, with well-matched organisations working together where both benefit”</i></p>

<p>A patient, committed and multi-year approach to funding that allows time to build relationships, build projects, review the process, engage for longer with communities</p>	<p><i>“Non-restrictive funding, Autonomy, Fluidity [means we are] able to adapt and respond”</i></p> <p><i>“Budget beyond artists fees - celebration events, food, options to pay community volunteers [satisfying] Hierarchy of Needs”</i></p> <p><i>“A long term commitment to cohesive, consistent funding that includes high levels of access funds”</i></p> <p><i>“Money ...devolved to place hubs”</i></p> <p><i>“Having time to develop ideas, research, fail, adapt, respond, creating a project that is well thought out”</i></p>
<p>Connections into the community enabling Local Visibility and Community Buy In</p>	<p><i>“External partners who help with connecting”</i></p> <p><i>“Being physically present - visibility in the neighbourhood [which] leads to trust”</i></p> <p><i>“Not just about building the relationship but also finding the right groups of people to come together in the first place”</i></p>
<p>Having access to the right Spaces and Facilities</p>	<p><i>“Accessible, welcoming venues”</i></p>
<p>Freedom and flexibility for the project adapt or change where needed, and support for Experimenting and Exploring new approaches</p>	<p><i>“Flexibility - Ability to change your plans, your minds, your thoughts, the way you are working”</i></p> <p><i>“Freedom within funding has allowed us to interpret”</i></p> <p><i>“Flexibility of the fund allows you to feel like you are not pushing forward to an expectation”</i></p> <p><i>“Not necessarily feeling like we have to hit certain outcomes”</i></p>
<p>Trust in those delivering the projects and that the projects will deliver positive outcomes even if it is different from what was planned at the start</p>	<p><i>“Trust in creatives and communities to deliver locally”</i></p> <p><i>“Flexibility to give artists their own budget and supporting them to do their work”</i></p>
<p>A funding environment fostering Openness and Honesty creating freedom to learn by trial and error</p>	<p><i>“Openness to different ways of working. Working with uncertainty”</i></p> <p><i>“Knowing that it’s okay to fail and that learning from failure is valued”</i></p>
<p>A supportive cultural policy context</p>	<p><i>“Scottish Government policy about recognising cultural rights as human rights”</i></p> <p><i>“Further investment and commitment to long term investment (funding)”</i></p>

Constraints to the work

Elements that were identified as constraining factors include the absence of some of the conditions identified as enabling, but also a range of factors that exist beyond the control of those delivering the projects, requiring systemic solutions from funders and policymakers.

It is important to mention that while performing this exercise, projects highlighted both real (experienced) issues and, in some cases, hypothetical barriers to success.

The responses may be differentiated as occurring *within projects* or representing *environmental factors* as a result of the funding or political environment.

Constraints *within projects* can be listed as:

<p>Challenges in Relationships Being a relational Programme, this was paramount as an <i>enabling factor</i> for partnerships and other relationships to run well</p>	<p><i>"Complexity of the Culture Collective"</i></p> <p><i>"Finding the right people to connect with and learn from"</i></p> <p><i>"Lack of time of project partners, leading to poor communication between project partners"</i></p> <p><i>"Communications can be challenging - assigning tasks, route of project (who, when, how etc.)."</i></p> <p><i>"When a key partner doesn't 'get it' or isn't supportive in the way that is needed"</i></p> <p><i>"Gatekeepers restricting access to community groups and key people in organisations"</i></p>
<p>Meeting the aspirations of the Programme</p>	<p><i>"High expectations and pressure that come with this level of funding"</i></p> <p><i>"External pressure on communities"</i></p> <p><i>"The pressure on the people we are trying to engage with - parents, teachers, students"</i></p> <p><i>"Inexperience of working collaboratively with places and communities over long periods of time"</i></p>
<p>Practical challenges</p>	<p><i>"Difficulty finding local artists"</i></p> <p><i>"Personnel changes. Staff leaving"</i></p> <p><i>"Rural challenges of groups working in different locations"</i></p> <p><i>"Logistics of having a large team with many stakeholders"</i></p> <p><i>"Sourcing large indoor space available to the community"</i></p>

	<p><i>"Not having access to control appropriate community spaces"</i></p>
<p>Encountering Inertia as a fast paced Programme attempting change in a slower environment</p>	<p><i>"How slow things move in [our area]. There tends to be a "we'll get around to it attitude"</i></p> <p><i>"Lack of willingness to change within organisations' ways of working maintaining status quo"</i></p> <p><i>"Lack of inspiration from organisation. Bureaucracy, rigidity, micromanagement"</i></p> <p><i>"The local council not being used to a project of this size. There is a timidity to people's desire to engage"</i></p>
<p>Limitations in Capacity</p>	<p><i>"The capacity it takes to deliver a place project with long term impacts not being understood and supported appropriately"</i></p> <p><i>"Level of support co-ordinators need to deliver to a high quality i.e. management, legal, well-being for artists. Co-ordinator has to wear too many hats including contracts and training"</i></p> <p><i>"Lack of time and resources to explore and generate shared vision"</i></p> <p><i>"Lack of capacity to get together and reflect"</i></p> <p><i>"Lack of time and resource specifically for collaborators"</i></p> <p><i>"Variable capacity across the collective e.g. flexibility on working days between RFOs and project-funded areas"</i></p> <p><i>"Stretching capacity is not necessarily the most effective and quality suffers"</i></p> <p><i>"Volunteer fatigue"</i></p> <p><i>"Skills and getting access to specialist support services"</i></p>
<p>Money and having to make budget compromises</p>	<p><i>"Budget constrained by 50% budget going to artists: need to be able to support admin, resources etc."</i></p> <p><i>"50% means producing budgets are compromised"</i></p> <p><i>"Organisational capacity compromised by budget"</i></p> <p><i>"Coordinators are not as well supported financially as practitioners"</i></p> <p><i>"Pressures on funding and resources, for instance no youth worker for groups or people moving on"</i></p>

	<p><i>"Money - could run out of money to finalise project"</i></p> <p><i>"Being spread geographically both as artists and target delivery areas means less opportunity to work as a collective without consuming more time and resources"</i></p>
Disconnects of various types	<p><i>"Lack of time for volunteers and their time not matching with the artists' time"</i></p> <p><i>"Culture not valued sometimes in places you would look for partners"</i></p> <p><i>"People not buying into the type of change that Culture Collective can bring"</i></p> <p><i>"Not embracing the complexities"</i></p>

Constraints in funding/political environment came through as:

Concerns about Longevity	<p><i>"Projects becoming massively under resourced post Covid"</i></p> <p><i>"Takes time to build community then have to abandon them"</i></p> <p><i>"The time it takes to find community"</i></p> <p><i>"Time and boundaries - at some point the project has to end"</i></p> <p><i>"Uncertain longevity"</i></p> <p><i>"Lack of long term investment in the Programme"</i></p> <p><i>"Short term action (It takes a lot of time / many years to build relationships with partners & develop participant confidence with the arts"</i></p>
Existing limits of Political or Funding environment	<p><i>"Funding is usually only for constituted groups"</i></p> <p><i>"Falling into either/or politics"</i></p> <p><i>"Culture being seen as non-essential. Advocacy and influence needed across sectors / portfolios"</i></p> <p><i>"Public sector precarity and undervaluing workforce"</i></p> <p><i>"Being undervalued"</i></p> <p><i>"Pressures on community partners from council cuts"</i></p>

	<p><i>"Local authorities working in different structures and only occasionally working together"</i></p>
The existing Infrastructure	<p><i>"Arts / community orgs not being joined up / sharing resources / working to mutual benefit e.g. finding suitable spaces to access in-kind"</i></p> <p><i>"Decrease in venue spaces"</i></p> <p><i>"Lack of rural transport"</i></p> <p><i>"Public transport in our area / locality"</i></p> <p><i>"Isolation and practical transport for artists and participants"</i></p>
Complexity of issues being addressed through the Programme	<p><i>"Not being able to plan long-term (which this work requires) for community development"</i></p> <p><i>"Social preconception of art-making, and making assumptions about what communities will be up for"</i></p> <p><i>"Widespread socio-political stresses e.g. poverty, conflict, stress, communication"</i></p> <p><i>"Poverty – creating lack of confidence, lack of disposable income"</i></p> <p><i>"Systemic barriers that require social reform"</i></p>
External forces: Covid, Cost of Living Crisis, Brexit	<p><i>"Covid creating physical distance and moving events online"</i></p> <p><i>"Long term impacts of COVID (mental health, food, financial security, adaptation to change)"</i></p> <p><i>"Project delivered in context of crisis coming out of Covid, unanticipated pressures on communities"</i></p> <p><i>"Being overtaken by events - Covid, Cost of living crisis"</i></p> <p><i>"Context of Cost Crisis - funding pressures reinforce existing inequalities"</i></p> <p><i>"Heat versus eat"</i></p> <p><i>"Brexit creating conceptual distance. Creates trauma and disconnect: Questions your presence here. People left Scotland or didn't come"</i></p>

9. WHERE PROJECTS SEE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS IN THE PROGRAMME

As noted earlier in the report, an important feature of the Culture Collective, and one which all of the projects have found to be empowering and enabling, was the absence of an extensive and explicit set of outcomes that every project was required to deliver. Instead, they were free to shape their projects in response to what mattered to artists and communities in the place they were working.

To understand better what the projects were hoping to achieve, in our workshops we asked the project delegations to give their top 5 answers to the question: *What successes would you like your Culture Collective project to achieve?*

These aims are not yet what they have delivered, but rather are what they would ideally like the outcome of their efforts to be.

We also asked them to indicate *who this would be a success for* i.e. the community/their participants, themselves and their partners, policymakers. This is important, as it recognises that different things matter to different people but that projects such as these have the capacity to generate value in different ways, for all involved.

We asked: What successes would you like your Culture Collective project to achieve? And who would this be a success for?

Below are the key themes that emerged from the responses, drawing out the two central stakeholder groups in the Programme (also being the two largest groups that projects indicated in their answers): what success looks like for communities and for artists.

What success for Communities looks like for the projects

- **People engaging**; Doing something for fun/engagement / wellbeing/ a break from the seriousness of life; *“Light in the shite”* (seeing other ways of coping: enjoyment for enjoyment's sake).
- **Participants returning** every week; Feedback; Friendships; Confidence building

“Make the hall feel alive again”

- Creativity is **embedded in communities**. Local realisation of cultural rights through participation in the local area. *“A space in which we can express our cultural rights”*

“Participants becoming advocates for culture through positive experiences. Arts becoming part of their lives”

- Projects **reflect communities in Scotland and are representative** of the make-up of those communities, and artists feel they are there for the right reasons.

Someone participating who previously hadn't

- Being **able to access arts experiences** they would otherwise not have the opportunity to

- Demonstration that this community is not "too hard to reach" and that the people who live there have creativity and agency
- Evidence of **the value of art for people** in the community: Showing decision makers how art enhances people's lives
- Expression of **people's love for their place**
- **Long-term arts provision** on a permanent basis. Longevity - not parachuting in artists who do something and leave
- Permanent community **artists-in-residence**
- Challenging the perception of **what excellence is**. Expanding the dimensions of how excellence is understood. Changing who gets to decide what excellence is and who gets to make work and who it's for

**Wider representation with strategic
community development conversations**

- *"Building a really **clear infrastructure** that other people can benefit from. Weave some life back into that culture and weave some life back into that infrastructure."*
- *"Not just for the kids in the towns with critical mass"*
- **Legacy**: How the project will develop in the continuing years. Creating a space and infrastructure for social connections that continues beyond the project.
- **Transfer of ownership**, project continuation relationships

**"The journey through the sessions is more important
than a manifested physical outcome at the end"**

"Having no defined outcome - having a staging post is more important"

- **People increasingly taking charge** of their community / social lives through more access to tools, resources and skills

What success in the Programme looks like for cultural professionals

- Artists have **time, space and security to create**
- A feeling of longevity. This project helping us to **do something more long term**.

**"Having the confidence to leave the house again after 2 years
of shielding. Generally, the artists building in working again"**

- **Flexibility to try things out, change ideas and learn**
- *The opportunity to focus on a project/idea/approach long term across two years, **deepening quality***
- Modelling and **sharing new and better ways of doing things** through advocacy
- **Creating alternative models of working together**. *Art and Community, which are relevant and sustainable.*
- *Creating the **opportunity** for artists as well [as community beneficiaries]*
- *Creative freelancers have loads of **well paid jobs and opportunities** across Scotland and are treated well*

- *Having time to develop*

Meaningful work for and new relationships
with artists and participants

Partnerships

- *Seeing a start in the shift in the dynamic in terms of how we work and who we work with (wider networks as well as people) and how we work with them*
- *For the partners to develop their own art hubs (legacy)*

Networks

- *Establishment of a real and useful self-sustaining network for everyone involved in Culture Collective*
- *The Programme and practice leaves a legacy / movement and ongoing network*
- *Creative Practitioners (Artists) make connections with each other. Beginning of peer support, potential collaborations, networks for the future*

Shared knowledge & tools & support

- *Changing core practice of organisations and funders in terms of Fair Work for freelancers*
- *Artists feel and ARE valued and are connected not isolated*
- *The artists have a positive experience and are cared for (financially as well their wellbeing, socially and emotionally)*
- *The artists have had a chance to develop something - a new aspect to their practice*

Some delegations highlighted goals of their projects that they correlated with success for the Policy context. These include:

- *Art is acknowledged and understood to be a valuable asset and vehicle for change in community growth as a result of positive experiences*
- *Valuing and investing in community led and participatory arts as a core part of the arts sector*
- *Changing policy level ideas about success and failure in developing meaningful work with communities*
- *The arts are valued and integrated, and supported into policy regionally*

10. THINGS THAT TO PROJECTS WOULD FEEL LIKE FAILED OPPORTUNITIES

Just as we wanted to understand what success meant for different stakeholders, in different places, we also wanted to understand what sort of failures they were keen to avoid. In part, this provides an insight into the sort of outcomes that could undermine successes elsewhere and could ultimately affect the way that the Culture Collective Programme is perceived but those who took part, irrespective of the various other positive impacts and outcomes that are already evident.

What was evident was that many of the answers given were based on previous experience and therefore, given the differences already noted as to how Culture Collective has been set up and

managed, during the next stage of the research we will explore the extent to which these potential failures have been avoided and whether anything about the nature of how the Culture Collective has worked contributed towards this.

As such, at our workshops we also asked the project delegations to *give their top 5 answers to the question: What failures would you like your Culture Collective project to avoid?* As with the perspectives on success, we have identified the key themes evidence in their responses and present them below, categorised by the two largest stakeholder groups involved in the Programme.

Outcomes that would feel like failures for communities

Dashed expectations

- *Leave the community worse off, make promises and withdraw*
- *Leaving damaged relationships behind - e.g. partners raising community expectations and not delivering*

Lack of legacy for the work

- *Parachuting in, raising expectations, then leaving nothing*
- *Lack of legacy beyond the project (self-sufficiency, open resource, community-led)*
- *No legacy: inadequate documentation. Lack of follow through*
- *The change that was initiated stops, or dissipates*
- *No legacy - just ends, stagnation, relationships dwindling*

[Failure would be if]
"the work stops and
there's nothing else"

No change in Diversity

- *No changes in diversity in terms of who is actively part of project, who gets to decide about work and make it (i.e. only considering needs of usual suspects / existing participants / audiences)*
- *Having only people in communities that are already well served benefitting from this work (wanting to work in a broad range of communities)*
- *No new voices heard (same people)*

No enhancements in policy

- *The mechanisms for delivering cultural rights are neither sustained nor enforceable*
- *Inertia - doesn't go anywhere - it's not sustainable, tries to continue but crashes*

Failure to overcome existing barriers and assumptions

- *Failing to consider the barrier of distance and lack of transit in some areas*
- *Assumptions about interests or needs, whose terms of inclusion?*
- *Community 'cliency' relying on agencies*
- *Failure to recognise that small scale / numbers does not reduce the value of the work for those that participate*

Outcomes that would feel like failure for cultural professionals

- *No one being challenged. No experimentation. Lack of depth. No space to fail. Not learning anything new*
- No structured change for the sector in relation to artists and arts being valued
- Failure to create local opportunities for local artists
- Projects over-promising and under-delivering
- Letting the participants down
- *Losing trust of our communities [as result of communities failures above]*
- Partnerships and connections not built on
- *Lack of building and sustaining relationships - not able to continue support, not able to connect*
- *Loss of "corporate memory" ("Do we lose legacy of change when funding stops?")*
- *No more funding and legacy*
- *"Business as usual - no organisational and practice change - funding goes - not core - go back to pre CC practice"*
- *We don't make use of each other as a collective and the wider national collective*
- *Breaking people / burnout / avoiding overcoming / unfair working practices*
- *Burn out – artists need support when working with vulnerable people*

"Taking the easy option - not trying new approaches (or failing to articulate them)"

Good practice in terms of Fair Work not built on across the sector

"Having your souls crushed by the administration aspects, getting caught up with the administration and allowing your creative spark to be put out"

- *Failing to document and develop principles and values for working together*
- *Not taking learning and work forward beyond CC period. Developed projects not continuing to reach further people and bring value to more*

"Feel isolated at the end of it (specific to rural arts practice)"

Things that would feel like failed opportunities in terms of policy

- *Just another pilot with no learning, no continuation, no investment*
- *That it's a short term project by the government*
- *It all leads to nothing of recognised value to communities, policy, Scotland*

- *Don't grasp and maximise the opportunity to articulate the value and approaches to a range of sectors - regeneration, health, justice etc.*
- *Inauthenticity of successes/measures, i.e. quantity over quality.*
- *Failing to recognise that there are other measurements of success, and failing to look or learn from others in the art world.*
- *Failing to consider the legacy of the project. There is a need to consider the document all of it in a way that is authentic.*

“Failing to acknowledge the complications that so many community arts projects have”

**Concluding remarks and next steps
*for this evaluation***

11. WHAT CAN BE SEEN ALREADY IN THE PROGRAMME

This high-level, initial analysis undertaken for this report shows that there have been many positive outcomes apparent even at this early stage in the work being undertaken by the projects in the Culture Collective Programme. An important dimension to note is that these outcomes are different in different places because they speak to their local context. The unique, flexible, and long term support offered by the Programme funds has allowed the projects the scope to meaningfully make their project responsive to their place.

The value of the work taking place is multifaceted, for the sector; for communities; for local authorities seeking models of person-centred service provision and rapid, targeted responses to local need; and for policymakers seeking to fulfil Scotland’s Cultural Strategy and Covid Recovery objectives.

On the basis of the evidence presented in this interim report, we can confidently state that the Programme is already performing significantly across the aims of the Culture Strategy. The ambitions and aims of the Strategy are shown below.

A Culture Strategy for Scotland: Vision		
Ambition 1. Strengthening culture	Ambition 2. Transforming through culture	Ambition 3. Empowering through culture
Develop the conditions and skills for culture to thrive, so it is cared for, protected and produced for the enjoyment and enrichment of all present and future generations	Place culture as a central consideration across all policy areas including: health and wellbeing, economy, education, reducing inequality and realising a greener and more innovative future	Continue to celebrate Scotland's extraordinary cultural contributions
Value, trust and support creative people - for their unique and vital contribution to society and the economy	Open up the potential of culture as a transformative opportunity across society	Extend the view of culture to include the everyday and emerging, the established and more formal
Encourage greater openness and diverse cultures to reflect a changing Scotland in the 21st century		Extend opportunities that enable people to take part in culture throughout their lives
Foster international collaboration and build on Scotland's reputation for cultural excellence		Recognise each community's own local cultures in generating a distinct sense of place, identity and confidence

A central outcome so far is that the Programme is developing what should be understood as important cultural infrastructure - that is the networks and connections between the organisations, partners and artists in the project locations.

In some cases these were there already and the Programme has supported them being strengthened and built on; in other places it took time to establish such connections, but they are now there as a

result of the Programme and have the potential to grow. **Evidence from the projects shows that these live, viable networks are vital for places to be able to generate and continue this type of work.**

There is evidence that they are already maximising the value that comes from an investment like this, having created tangible foundations to work from and with, and enabling work to be amplified through these connections and networks. Without these foundations each new project would have to start from scratch and their reach diminished accordingly. As such these networks can be seen as cultural infrastructure - maintained in the same way as cultural spaces. It might not always need to be at this level, but **the view through our consultations is that to let all these new networks wither away again would represent a waste of the long term potential** of the investment that has already been made.

Commentators from two of the projects contributed these statements, articulating important messages about the Programme, providing some apt thoughts to carry forward as we close this Part One report and move into the next phase of our evaluation.

“The post pandemic reality impacted on delivery at every stage and imbued the year with a heightened sense of responsibility to make the most – and best – of the opportunities this funding facilitated. I have seen residency activity deliver creative connections that generate hope - which supports motivation and can provide a lifeline when people are struggling. A robust support structure for artists to be effective in communities is, I believe, intrinsic to realising this positive impact” (Street Level Culture Collective, New Gorbals and Govanhill: Glasgow)

“This work is an important and crucial building block to understanding how creative and cultural practice can find a clearer and more prominent place in the fabric of our society and make real some of the intentions of cross discipline working which are the focus of the Cultural Strategy for Scotland” (Follow Our Rules, Artlink, Edinburgh)

12. WHAT'S NEXT IN THIS EVALUATION

Part One of our reporting is primarily intended to identify key themes emerging from the data we've collected and analysed thus far. The next part of this evaluation is about exploring and understanding these themes in more depth. We'll be asking: What do the sort of impacts that have been described here look like in different places? How much of the hoped for successes are materialising? What can be learnt about the ways in which different types of projects have approached responding to their local context, and how has this Programme helped them to avoid the sort of limitations they have experienced in the past?

The next phase of our evaluation research gathers further data to build on the insights that have been generated so far, and we'll be looking to capture:

- Final figures from the projects on employment and community engagement
- Stories of impact for participants, communities, creative practitioners, partnering organisations and other Programme stakeholders

- Illustrations of key enabling factors in action, showing what can be achieved when such conditions are in place
- Different ways of working across the Programme *and*
- Perspectives on what the Programme has created that can build sector practice for the future, enhance modes of funding support and stimulate further policy support

The next stages of our research take the form of Case studies and Surveys. Where possible we will also analyse headline findings from evaluation outputs created by projects themselves.

Case studies are being selected from across the Programme to profile in detail different forms of working and partnership, highlighting the diversity of the Network. The case studies each illustrate a distinctive way of working with partnership and engaging with communities, exploring what the projects have been able to achieve, prominent enabling factors and what they see as the conditions for success in that context.

The set of Case studies represents a sample range of:

- Project scales: hyper-local, local, regional, multi-region
- Locations across the country
- Contexts and intended purpose
- Communities engaged

They will illustrate the kind of outcomes possible within a funding framework like that of the Culture Collective Programme.

We'll explore:

- Key enabling factors in action
- Distinctive ways in which projects have worked
- Ways that practice or partnerships have been enriched
- Ways that communities are engaged and empowered to shape cultural life

The case studies will not say 'this is the best way' but 'here's one interesting approach that might be adapted'. Multiple stakeholder perspectives onto the Programme will be reflected through each of these profiles.

Programme-wide surveys for data gathering and census checking key points from our consultative research will generate comprehensive programme data and enable us to consensus check core insights and findings across the Network as a whole.

This Report was prepared by: **Rachel Blanche**, Senior Lecturer in Cultural Policy and Director of Research for the Culture Collective National Evaluation, with Professor David Stevenson, Dr Anthony Schrag, Alice McGrath, Bryan Beattie and Caitlin McKinnon, March 2023

