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Future Stages Discussion Document
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Creating Change, Imagining Futures: Participatory Arts and Young People 'At Risk'

Part 1: Introducing the Context of Participatory Arts

Part 2: Policy Intersections in Participatory Arts in the field of Social Justice

Part 3: Practice

Part 1: Introducing the Context of Participatory Arts

Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it.
Augusto Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* (1992: xxxi).

Introduction:

'What is art?' and 'what is social change?' are two debates that have intersected at various points in discussions about the role of art in society. Both questions set off important conversations about the possibilities and limitations of identifying what counts as art and what kinds of impact can be made. At heart, however, is the need to understand how creativity, aesthetic problem solving and non-verbal communication respond to and engage with the political realm. Instead of maintaining false distinctions between the value of art as aesthetic and its potential as a tool of social cohesion, this discussion document opens up questions about practices that operate in the realm of community-engaged, participatory work with children and young people 'at risk' of offending.

Methodologies:

The research comprised of literature reviews relating to the overlapping policy agendas, and implications for the strategic direction of the sector. The following kinds of documents were consulted: white papers, government briefings, arts practitioner reports, external arts evaluations, international case studies, academic books and articles, as well as good practice guidelines.

The materials are underscored by the author's 15 years of experience in arts in criminal justice contexts as both academic researcher and practitioner in over eight countries. The materials are critically assessed in order to tease out the most valuable findings as well as highlight recommendations for future activities so that the Future Stages network can proceed from the ground already broken by documentation of practices, evaluations and research that precede them.

The report considers how good practice guidelines are well developed for adults and young adults in relation to participation in arts interventions. It thus seeks to integrate additional sources of what works for children in the current policy and practice landscape in order to promote dialogue and discussion about the future of arts interventions with young people 'at risk'. The 'discussion points' featured at the end of each section are proposed as starting points for practitioners and partners to explore in the process of reflecting on 'what works'.

Introducing the Network: Creating Change

The Creating Change network developed by Future Stages identifies a group of practitioners already delivering valuable participatory arts practices across the UK. Participant organisations share practice and develop strategies to promote and advocate for the sector. Their grounded expertise and experiences have been shared in a range of interventions while this report is a scoping of current policies and informing practices. As such it is an attempt to lay the ground for developing sustainable, coherent approaches to developing the future stages of participatory arts with children and young people 'at risk'. The network has actively recruited core members that use a range of art forms, including dance, music, drama, visual art and multi media.

Reducing truancy and exclusion levels and early intervention are important parts of government social inclusion, education and health policies. Meeting the needs of young people making the transition from primary to secondary education emerged as a central concern for many Ovalhouse partners. The Future Stages 3 year programme aims to equip participants with transferable life skills and to support participants to access further education.

Future Stages is a participatory arts intervention programme supporting those 'at risk' of social exclusion and offending. The programme is specifically designed to support young people from disadvantaged circumstances who find themselves on the brink of exclusion or other crises due to social exclusion, deprivation and risk factors. Working in partnership with local authorities, schools and pupil referral units, the project aims to give young people effective lifelong tools that they can use to maximise their strengths and build resilience and so break the cycle of deprivation not only for themselves but also for their communities.

Future Stages is a programme of work based on 10 years of experience of running *Back on Track* which is a drama programme working with young people 'at risk'. The organisation focuses specifically on early intervention work, prevention, intervention and transition for young people between the ages of 5 – 12.

Future Stages addresses social exclusion in the young. Often mainstream services tend to neglect those young people most 'at risk'. Experience has shown that young people respond well to a creative process that engages their interest and supports their motivation. There is a need for a creative methodology to address early intervention and personal and social skills development as well as workforce development equipping non-arts professionals with accessible methods for working effectively with people 'at risk'.

Aims of the Discussion Document:

- To situate the work of the Future Stages Project within a wider context;
- To identify the intersecting policy debates relating to the delivery of arts with children and young people excluded from mainstream educations, and at risk of offending;
- To highlight the relevant findings from current research;
- To provide points for debate and discussion related to participatory arts practice;
- To identify similar participatory theatre practices with young people;
- To illuminate lessons and articulate best practice from the network;
- To consider the role of impacts and evaluation.

Definitions and Acronyms[1]

ACE: Arts Council England
DfES: Department for Education and Skills
DTO: Detention or Training Order
ISSP: Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme
LSU: Learning Support Unit
MALAP: Multi-agency looked after partnership
NEET: Not in Education, Employment or Training
PRU: Pupil Referral Unit
YOI: Young Offender's Institution
YOT: Youth Offending Team (Probation)

Child or young person:
In criminal law a child is 10-13 years old, and a young person 14-17.

Child:
The Children Act 2004 uses the term to mean a person under the age of 18, but includes 18, 19 and 20 year olds who have been in care or have learning difficulties. In legal terms therefore "children" includes young people.

Juvenile:
Juvenile justice is a common term for justice as applied to children. Juvenile is defined in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 as a person from 10-16 years. The juvenile secure estate refers to the range of secure facilities for accommodating young people aged 10-17.

Looked after Children and Young People
Children and young people who are in the care of the Local Authority, which may acquire parental responsibility, and who may be placed, long or short term, in residential children's homes or foster home placements.

[1] Sourced from Abbott, R. (2005) 'Arts and Social Inclusion' Helix Arts. Newcastle: Arts Council North East.

Young People 'At Risk':
This phrase places children or young people in relation to predictors of future 'offending behaviour'. These risk factors are related to criminogenic monitoring, but also intersect with wider issues relating to social exclusion.

Mapping the Field of Participatory Arts

Helix Arts[2] has outlined some of the current groundwork in defining participatory arts. Firstly, participation relies on a defined intent as well as collaboration between artists and at least one person – but often groups of people. There is a spectrum of socially engaged participatory practice from community-based projects such as Ovalhouse's to large-scale public art works such as Suzanne Lacey's work. The spectrum approach outlined by Toby Lowe suggests a differential between constant negotiation of roles and responsibilities in the projects. The form of participation and engagement that is modelled in the Future Stages project incorporates:

- Degree of engagement with 'the public' or a specified community of participants: use of dialogic approaches, exchange and negotiation;
- Authorship: collective, evolving, processual;
- Duration/ sustainability: longer term, partnership based;
- Ethics: informed consent, developed together.

There is the need for debate about the values and efficacy of participation because of the possibility that community or the art form could be undermined by sloppy or unethical project design. Therefore, the debate between Grant Kester (2004) and Claire Bishop (2006) provides valuable overview of the wide range of practices that claim the term 'participatory'. Within this wide field, there are large scale, community engaged projects that involve participation nominally in the pursuit of an artist's vision. On the other hand (in Kester's approach), there are projects in which authorship of project meanings are shared and negotiated over time. While coming to consensus about the implications and limitations of single terms is important, the finer points of Bishop's arguments about large scale art projects are different territory to the Future Stages paradigm.

In the UK over the last 20 years, participatory arts have gained prominence in learning and community based contexts as interventions offering:

- alternative models of communication;
- prioritising collaboration and effective teamwork in 'process' over 'products',

[2] Lowe, T. (2012) 'A Quality Framework for Helix Arts' Participatory Framework'. Newcastle: Helix Arts.

- providing safe spaces for exploration (where failure is acceptable – even necessary);
- developing wider repertoires of behaviours;
- valuing broader forms of knowledge and skills than traditional academic contexts;
- and offering affective (emotional) rewards.

Arts organisations have developed partnerships with a wide range of organisations and service providers, using creative methodologies to work towards achieving outcomes relating to social change. In many cases, these revolve around developing resilience and greater awareness in areas as diverse as neighbourhood renewal (Carpenter, 2003; Coalter, 2003; Shaw, 2003); wellbeing (Ings *et al*, 2011); integration into mainstream education (Wilkin *et al*, 2005; Ings, 2004) as well as projects relating to inclusivity and community building (Leicester YOS, 2009) and the hospitable integration of refugee and asylum seeking communities (Barnes, S., 2009; Kidd et al, 2008). Alongside this is a vast archive of research materials on arts in the criminal justice system.[3]

As Frances Rifkin outlines, the term 'participatory theatre' (PT) is used to cover practices referred to variously as Applied Theatre or Drama, Community Theatre, Workshop Theatre, etc. The practice ranges between work with a performance focus to process based work aimed at personal group and/or social development. It takes place in a wide variety of employment, political, social and community settings and practitioners come from a variety of backgrounds. Practitioners may be professional theatre performers and directors, dedicated trained facilitators, or professionals from other backgrounds e.g. social work or education. Participatory theatre is internationally associated with radical and popular theatre forms such as Theatre in Education, Young People's Theatre, Forum Theatre (Theatre of the Oppressed) and Theatre for Development.[4]

At the core of the model of participation in this report is the belief that, through participating in the arts, people can identify new paradigms for expressing their responses to change in the world around them and find a sense of belonging. These newly found capacities extend across skills acquisition, new knowledge, changing attitudes and developing behaviours.[5] Arts practices open up possibilities in ways that formal mainstream education activities (for example) do not. This is not simply because art is about freedom, chaos or silliness, but in fact, because there is a discipline, focus and centre to be identified in arts practices that 'feels different' to the rules and regulations of a classroom. Art forms make use of various embodied practices that require concentration, self-awareness, awareness of space and other people and an understanding that all actions have consequences. These practices, developed over time, can foster a sense of the following transferable skills:

- Increased confidence
- Emotional Literacy
- Group work and co-operation
- Ability to relax
- Focus (often manifest uniquely to the arts discipline)

[3] See Escape Artists, 2006; Hughes, 2005; Ings, 2004; Miles & Strauss, 2009.
[4] See Rifkin, F. (2010) 'The Ethics of Participatory Theatre in Higher Education: A Framework for Learning' [online] Available at: http://78.158.56.101/archive/palatine/files/ethics.pdf
[5] See Coalter, 2001; Jermyn, 2001; Matarasso, 1997.

- Awareness of alternative behaviours.[6]

Bringing children and young people whose behaviours have resulted in temporary exclusions from mainstream education together in order to rehearse both empathy and productive ways of being together is valuable work. Research has demonstrated that engaging young people in productive activities can contribute to altering offending behaviour by providing new social networks, demonstrating positive attachment relationships and establishing meaningful routines.[7] The arts have been widely proven to contribute to strategies that 'work' with children and young people who may be otherwise hard to reach.[8] Youth Justice has undergone significant changes in recent years – notably in the 'what works agenda' – and the desire to create alternatives to custody.[9] Yet, there are still challenges for practitioners working to integrate children & young people 'at risk' of offending into mainstream education. Partnerships between agencies working with young people and arts organisations have made significant steps in engaging and motivating participants.

The conviction of the practitioners delivering these interventions may sound idealistic, yet it is also grounded in evidence that the transformation of ideas, skills and behaviours through arts participation is possible.[10] However, as this exploratory report demonstrates, this evidence needs to be understood as partial and contingent. Evidencing 'change' is complex, time consuming and requires a range of impact assessments. Thus, while anecdotal evidence is both compelling and convincing, the wider necessity for evidence-based practice to influence policy drives the need for constructing appropriate tools. The charitable organisation, Spurgeons, works with vulnerable young people. They say:

> *There are pressures on children and young people, that seem to grow ever stronger and, we are led to believe that the authority of parents, school and the police continues to wane, increasing numbers of children are facing the challenges of drugs, bullying, abuse, poverty and family breakdown... alone. Often school is one of the first places where children living with these problems are identified. Many children, overwhelmed by their problems, act-up or act out in a bid for attention or a cry for help. Children seen as 'trouble-makers' may become isolated or be excluded from mainstream*

[6] See ACE (2005) 'Access, Participation and Progression in the Arts for Young People on Detention and Training Orders: Research Report 38'. London: Arts Council England; and TIPP (2006) 'What's the Point?: Using Drama to Engage Young People at Risk'. Manchester: Arts Council England, North West.
[7] Cooper, K., Sutherland, A. & Roberts, C. (2007) 'Keeping Young People Engaged: Improving Education, Training and Employment for Serious and Persistent Young Offenders' London: Youth Justice Board (2007: 16).
[8] See ACE 2008; Burton, 2010; Cooper *et al*, 2007.
[9] See Cooper et al (2007: 16). Also see Arts Alliance (2010) 'What Really Works?: Arts with Offenders'. London: Clinks.
[10] See Peaker & Johnston, 2007; and Rideout, 2010.

> *schooling. When this happens the risk of them becoming involved in criminal activity grows.*[11]

If we are faced with an increasing number of excluded young people, alongside increased cuts in services and provisions that may otherwise have supported families and schools delivering activities to channel destructive energies, there is greater reliance on other community-based practices that augment and support the good work offered in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and Learning Support Centres (LSCs) across the country. The Youth Justice Board identifies education and creative stimulation as key factors in reducing the risk of excluded children engaging in offending behaviours.[12] The next two sections point towards the policy contexts informing participatory programmes.

Contexts: Social Exclusion[13] & The Big Society

In the current context, there are issues relating to the uncertainty over capacity to engage young people and children in light of cuts to essential support services. The current agenda of David Cameron's 'Big Society' also has a deep influence on how risk indicators are likely to be missed. Finally, the related de-professionalisation[14] of community based development work – including participatory arts – must be noted, since there are fewer resources to employ trained individuals and a context in which voluntary work is necessary. While volunteers are valuable, the research demonstrates the need for trained, supervised staff to undertake facilitation and strategic roles in this kind of intervention.[15]

Shirley Brice Heath offers the following provocation to practitioners and researchers seeking to demonstrate the value of the arts with young people at risk.

> *Explanations supported by theory and research from across the disciplines address the need to think and to think hard about where and how the arts and young people fit together and in concert with moral reason, societal inclusion and environmental justice. To do otherwise is to risk denying the benefits that can come from the ingenious insights and seemingly endless energies and imaginative powers of the young.* (2008: xv).[16]

To take Heath's idea further, participatory arts projects ought to find ways of self-evaluating how their agendas, the agendas of funders and partners intersect and result in certain kinds of practices. Sometimes, support for the participatory arts remains effective on a micro level, without challenging the very notion of inclusion or exclusion. In a

[11] Adapted from: http://www.spurgeons.org/excluded-young-people-at-risk-of-offending/
[12] YJB (2006) 'Barriers to Engagement in Education, Training and Employment'. London: Youth Justice Board.
[13] Davis, J. 2005. 'The Social Exclusion Debate'. *Policy Studies.* 26(1): pp. 3 - 27.
[14] De-professionalisation refers to the turn towards volunteering in relation to social welfare in the wake of austerity.
[15] See Participation Works (2011) 'Participation: Standards, Evidence and the Big Society'. [online] Available at: http://www.participationworks.org.uk/resources/participation-standards-evidence-and-the-big-society.
[16] O'Brien, A. & Donelan, K. (eds.) (2008) *The Arts and Youth at Risk: Global and Local Challenges*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

convincing account, Sheila Preston suggests that the 'problem' is that indicators of social inclusion/ exclusion do not challenge the binary in and of itself.[17]

> *Considering the politics of inclusion […] requires a careful look at the different social and moral and political implications assumed by the term. Ruth Levitas identifies three notions of inclusion: the redistributive discourse (RED), the social integration discourse (SID), and the moral underclass discourse (MUD). She explains that 'the three discourses differ in what the poor/excluded are seen to lack: in RED they have no money, in SID they have no (paid) work, in MUD they have no morals' (Levitas 2003)* (cited in Preston, 2011: 253).

The issues raised by Preston in relation to the problems of social inclusion discourse allow practitioners to reconsider how interventions inevitably reinforce some of these models. Awareness can serve to unpack the good intentions of 'applying' curative functions of the arts to social problems; and ask practitioners to consider both immediate effects and longer term impacts. Having raised this rather thorny issue – that feels rather like a call to action – the remainder of the report proceeds with the understanding that there is indeed necessity and value in the approaches of participatory arts. The call for reflexivity about the position of practitioners engaged in social justice merely suggests the need for robust project planning, monitoring and support for staff.

Contexts: Children and Young People 'at risk'

The Children Act 2004 is the legal underpinning for, which sets out the Government's approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. It is clear the arts are being seen as a key element in the national strategy. The *Every Child Matters* framework aimed to give all children the support they need to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being.

When it comes to children who present indicators of risk behaviours, or have been excluded from school for disruptive behaviours, or who are under supervision orders, there are significant challenges to ensuring that the aims of the *Every Child Matters* agenda

[17] See Preston's compelling research on a participatory project with young people in London: Preston, S. (2011) 'Back on Whose Track? Reframing Ideologies of Inclusion and Misrecognition in a Participatory Theatre Project with Young People in London' *RiDE: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*. 16(2): pp. 251 – 264.

are met. This is most often related to tensions arising from schools lacking resources to retain pupils' interest and maintain productive working relationships between school pupils and teachers. Several research initiatives have demonstrated the need for partnership delivery to tackle antisocial behaviour, or conduct disorder (Stevens *et al*, 2006).

In their influential book on young people participating in arts activities, *Arts in Their View: A Study of Youth Participation in the Arts,* Harland *et al* refer to the difficulties related to participation straddling different policy domains (1995: 2).[18] There are several intersecting policy agendas that are relevant in relation to Future Stages since its aims incorporate creativity and arts education as well as reintegration into mainstream education. Other arenas include local authority infrastructure and provision.

Children and young people in PRUs often indicate they feel 'stuck' in unhelpful patterns of behaviour, triggered into angry, destructive, and sometimes abusive 'acting out'.[19] The intention of Future Stages is to facilitate behavioural change and ultimately aim for social inclusion, in which the participants feel able to contribute meaningfully to their own education, onward training and home environments in a productive manner. Just as the policy agendas intersect, so too, it is necessary to consider the intersecting needs of the cohort of children and young people who may display several of the following indicators of 'risk':[20]

Adversity in backgrounds, including victimisation in home environments, such as:

- Parents or carers who are alcohol or drug dependent;
- Parents or carers who are violent;
- Young people who may have mental health problems.

The most high-risk children and young people may present challenging behaviours at home and in school, such as:

- Anti-social behaviour in the community;
- Abusive and threatening behaviour;
- Offending behaviours such as carrying offensive weapons. (Scottish Children's Reporter, 2012).

There are also concerns that arise from children's alienation from school. Some of this disaffected relationship with teachers and progression in education relates to increased pressures of standardised testing. Researchers from the Institute of Education identified sustainable, professionally managed drama activities as an engaging alternative to the pressures of the classroom. Their report highlights a worrying and counterproductive feature of primary education that prioritises teacher-led instruction over children's active learning. They suggest a particular point of disengagement related to increased monitoring and testing in the Key Stage 2.

[18] Harland, J. Kinder, K. & Hartley, K. (1995) *Arts in Their View: A Study of Youth Participation in the Arts.* London: NFER.
[19] See Bergman & Hewish, 2003; Ings, 2004; Johnston, 2010; Rideout, 2010.
[20] Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (2012) 'High Risk Young Offenders: Fact Sheet'. Available at: http://www.anguschildprotectioncommittee.org.uk/pdfs/scra/HighRiskYoungOffendersFactSheet.pdf

> *In Key Stage 2 and beyond, children lose their sense of control over their learning, and increasingly lack confidence in their abilities. It is not then surprising that a proportion of young people, especially those who find that they 'fail' according to school criteria, revolt against the system and indeed vote with their feet* (Turner et al, 2004: 6).[21]

The suggestion that it is the education system, based around targets and testing that is alienating, rather than the children's behaviour that is the problem, places importance on the diagnostic labeling of children as 'at risk' for not coping with the pressures of education. Diane Conrad offers a problematisation of the term 'at-risk', by asking us to view the wide picture:

> *The term is commonly used in education as well as health care and criminal justice, to talk about youth who do not meet society's expectations. We are eminently concerned over youth dropping out of or failing at school, engaging in behaviour detrimental to their health or committing crime, based on the implications these youth behaviours have for economic sustainability. This attitude, however, is based on a deficit model that blames youth, their families and communities for deficiencies, focusing on ways that they need to change. It is rarely acknowledged that the predicament of "at-risk" youth is a symptom of larger social problems – that school factors and social structures might actually contribute to putting youth "at-risk"* (Conrad, 2006: 2).

The participants in Future Stages are children and young people who experience marginalisation as a result of personal circumstances often relating to home environments. The child's experiences of parenting, family or community attachments often causes a lack of a sense of security. This, coupled with other factors such as learning difficulties, traumatisation and mental health correspond with an alienation from mainstream school environments which rely on normative socialisation. What is more, schools do not always have the experience or resources to manage with children who present multiple behavioural challenges to classroom management. Children and young people 'at risk' often demonstrate some of the following behaviours. They:

- May have experience of conflict, violence and uncertainty;
- Have difficulties interacting with others in appropriate ways;
- Resistance to trying 'new' activities[22];
- Poor concentration and difficulty in engaging with long discussions about art form practice;
- Sudden changes in mood;

[21] Turner, H., Mayall, B., Dickinson, R., Clark, A., Hood, S., Samuels, J., and Wiggins, M. (2004) 'Children Engaging with Drama' London: Social Science Research Institute, Institute of Education.
[22] Some of these pointers are taken from Rideout, 2010: 8. *Criminal Justice: An Artist's Guide*. London: Arts Alliance.

- Low-level repetitive behaviours eg. chatting about issues 'off-task' or over talking;
- Limited cultural and/or social horizons;
- Limited articulacy;
- May 'act out';
- May thrive on (negative) attention;
- Struggle to collaborate;
- Like to say 'no'[23];
- Enjoy undermining or questioning authority.

While this provides a challenging context for structuring participatory interventions for groups of young people, trained professional arts practitioners, in collaboration with teachers and other supportive staff from PRUs can develop inspiring, challenging and transformational activities. These participatory sessions begin to shift the dynamics of destructiveness, self-critique and isolation. They can also provide a model of peer support and collaboration that is generative rather than destructive.[24]

> *The creative approach engendered by drama has the capacity to reveal other social perspectives and other social behaviours* (Turner, 1997: 191).[25]

This work takes time, and is demanding on all participants and facilitators. The subsequent sections make the case for the sustainability of this work, in which extensive monitoring and evaluation can be undertaken in order to track the effectiveness of the participatory arts as intervention. What remains in this section is to point towards the ambitious aim that underpins much participatory work in the UK: that is, the belief that engaging children young people in creative learning experiences can provide clearer pathways to integration and social cohesion within communities.[26] Some of these intentions are underscored by the emancipatory pedagogic vision of Paolo Freire (1970) who challenged the traditional modes of learning and teaching. Some of the active, engaged pedagogic practices that inform participatory arts propose that:

- Participatory arts offer opportunities to 'rehearse' alternatives (Boal, 1979; 1995; 2002);
- Engender respectful attitudes towards differences of opinion or conflict (Fine & Macbeth, 1995; Rohd, 1998; White, 2012);
- and encourage creative problem solving (Johnston, 2010).

In addition, the development of a set of art-form specific skills may result in longer term training or employment opportunities (Newman *et al*, 2001). In this sense, the arts provide the tools for imagining, rehearsing, and building pathways towards a future that might otherwise remain limited.

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[23] For valuable insight into this cohort, see Johnston, C. (2010) *Drama Games For Those Who Like to Say No*. London: Nick Hern Books.

[24] 'Many children become involved in crime because of intense peer pressure, which often shows itself in the form of bullying or marginalisation'. McCarthy et al (2004).

[25] Turner, Jane. (2007) 'Making Amends: An interventionist theatre programme with young offenders', *Research in Drama Education*, 12(2): pp. 179 – 194.

[26] See Wilkin, A. Gulliver, C., Kinder, K. (2005) *Serious Play: An Evaluation of Arts Activities in Pupil Referral Units and Learning Support Units.* London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

The intention of Future Stages, and similar projects, is to develop a context in which previously disaffected population groups feel willing and able to contribute to meaning-making in the wider civic sphere. Activities encourage participants to see themselves, and the world(s) they inhabit, with different eyes; as well as to try different ways of being and belonging through metaphor, scenarios and imaginative possibilities.[27] In other words, participation in the arts is directly connected to the building of robust, democratic participation in society. In this sense, the value of participatory arts – in partnership with education – is that they offer repertoires of inclusive, community-building activities that move beyond the aims of superficial behavior-change and towards a deeper sense of skill and achievement.

Discussion Points:

- How do we understand participation?
- What purpose does participation serve? (for the young people? For the artists? For the wider community?)
- Can we articulate assumptions about the project art form? (specific benefits)
- What agendas does the project correspond with? (health & wellbeing/ community cohesion/ reintegration/ big society/ reducing (re)offending)
- How do the art form practices relate to the 'problem'?
- How can we challenge the label 'at risk' in project design and delivery?
- How can partnerships share practices so that creative achievements do not remain in workshops only?

[27] There is a rich literature source on the participatory arts. See Appendix A.

PART 2: Policy Intersections in Participatory Arts in the field of Social Justice

Having briefly outlined the context of the Future Stages project, this section turns to the policy agendas related to participatory arts with young people 'at risk' of offending. At their core, participatory arts tend to use expertise and art form in order to work towards social aims – often driven by the desire to move towards social change. [28] This desire, offset against the pressing concerns of our time, must then be measured against indicators of 'success' or 'failure'. The final section - part 3 - offers an overview of the challenges faced by practitioners in relation to ethics, evidence and evaluation.[29]

Working Towards Change/ Transformation

> *The theatre becomes a medium for action, for reflection but, most important, for transformation/a theatre in which new modes of being can be encountered and new possibilities for humankind can be imagined* (Taylor, 2003, p. xxx).

Under the social inclusion agenda, participatory arts in a range of community-based contexts grew with resources and support for projects. As a result, there is a rich seam of literature – much of it evaluation-based – that attempts to make the case for the arts as a valid, valuable and effective methodology for attending to a range of 'problems' related to social exclusion; namely the intersecting issues of poverty, disenfranchisement, social isolation, and prejudicial exclusions based on ethnic background, sexuality or disability, for example. If practised by trained professionals, and resourced adequately, these sources claim, the projects provide compelling stories that attend to the transformative power of the arts. One indicative example is included here:

> *Through the arts, many of the young people on orders with the YOS, and particularly those on the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme have managed to channel their talents and complete meaningful activities in a way that they have enjoyed. Enjoyment is an idea that often seems to not quite fit our image as punitive, yet if a young person can gain the confidence to remove themselves from offending via drama, music, sketching, painting or dancing, this must be noted and promoted!* (Youth Offending Service, 2009: 47).[30]

There are at least three vectors of change that are addressed in literature:

- **Personal change** - making new friends, being happier, more creative and

[28] See Matarasso, 1997; and Balfour, M. (2009) 'The Politics of Intention: Looking for a Theatre of Little Changes'. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*. 14(3): pp. 347-359.
[29] Belfiore, E. (2002) 'Art as a Means of Alleviating Social Exclusion: Does it Really Work? A Critique of Instrumental Cultural Policies and Social Impact Studies in the UK' *International Journal of Cultural Policy*. 8: pp. 91 – 106.
[30] Leicester YOS (2009) 'Challenging Offending Behaviour with A Creative Twist'. Leicester YMCA. Available at: http://www.leicesterymca.co.uk/YOS%20ARTS%20BOOKwithlinksandspread.pdf

confident, a reduced sense of isolation, more people taking up training, change in offending behaviour (Coalter, 2001; Harland *et al*, 1995; Matarasso 1997; Mountford & Farrall, 1998; Thompson, 1999).

- **Social change** - more cross-cultural community understanding, stronger sense of 'locality', bringing different groups together, improvement in organisational skills (ACE, 2005; Cooper *et al,* 2007; Matarasso, 1997; Shaw, 2003; TIPP, 2006)
- **Educational change** - some evidence of improved school performance as well as enhanced attitude to learning (Ings, 2004; Newman *et al*, 2001; Turner *et al*, 2004; Wilkin *et al*, 2005).

(extended and adapted from an original list from Newman *et al* 2001: 12)[31]

One of the sub-divisions of personal change that is central to the participant group is that of challenging and re-modelling risk behaviours. Practitioners have provided ample accounts of methodologies and tools that account for theatre practices that can attend to challenging offending behaviours. Many of these offer descriptions of how to develop a safe creative space in which children and young people can be encouraged to attend to emotions, narratives and ideas that might be difficult to articulate. This occurs over time, and by using standard skills in participatory theatre, including whole group exercises, individual role play and group scenarios as well as sessions that are modelled on the creative therapies.[32] Landy and Montgomery propose that change can be understood in the following realms: pedagogic, political, or therapeutic. Interventions are thus constructed around the three interweaving areas of cognition, consciousness and behaviour (2012: xx).

Evidencing Change: Issues in Evaluation

Whilst every evaluation report provides compelling anecdotal evidence about individual and group transformation – for example from uncommunicative behaviours to demonstrating effective teamwork by staging an exhibition – the main challenge to arts projects is that they are inevitably short term and that robust monitoring and evaluation are often not adequately resourced.[33] The need for robust evaluation is further evidenced in the instrumental turn taken by several projects (and research) on participatory arts.[34]

[31] Newman, T., Curtis, K., Stephens, J. (2001) 'Do Community-based Arts Projects Result in Social Gains? A Review of Literature'. Available at: http://www.barnardos.org.uk/commarts.pdf
[32] See Bergman, J. & Hewish, S. (2003) *Challenging Experience: An Experiential Approach to the Treatment of Serious Offenders.* Oklahoma: Woods N Barnes.
[33] See Hughes, J. (2005) *Doing the Arts Justice: A Review of Research Literature, Practice and Theory.* Canterbury: The Unit for Arts & Offenders; and Miles, A. & Clarke, R. (2006) 'The Arts in Criminal Justice: A Study of Research Feasibility.' Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change: University of Manchester.
[34] The use of the word 'instrumental' relates to Matarasso's binary 'use' vs. 'ornament', but also relates to the cynical practice of participatory arts practices merely following policy agendas rather than informing them. See Bishop, 2012.

This is a dual challenge, then – to both restore the inherent qualities of the arts to programmes and interventions as well as ensuring that the reporting on such programmes allows for valid, verifiable data that moves beyond anecdotal accounts of 'change' in the moment so that results might inform policy.[35]

When Matarasso offered an argument about the place of the art form in relation to the instrumentalisation of the arts in participatory settings in 1997, it is doubtful that he could have predicted the extent to which companies, partnerships and practitioners would be stretched to demonstrate value and impact in the terms of commissioners. Claire Bishop lays the responsibility at the feet of New Labour who:

> *instrumentalised art to fulfill policies of social inclusion – a cost-effective way of justifying public spending on the arts while diverting attention away from the structural causes of decreased social participation, which are political and economic (welfare, transport, education, healthcare, etc).* (quoted in Roche, 2006).

A cogent example here is the recent New Philanthropy Capital report 'Unlocking Value: The Economic Benefit of the Arts in Criminal Justice', which was commissioned to explore the 'value' of theatre based programmes in the lives of ex-prisoners. The report considers the effectiveness of theatre participation in relation to reducing reoffending, and potential for future employment; with the aim of demonstrating that the theatre 'intervention' saves the government over 5 times what it would otherwise cost to incarcerate recidivists annually.[36] The report states a fundamental disconnect between the job arts organisations can do within criminal justice and the system itself: 'While government targets are built around an end- offending- arts organisations tend to focus on the means- personal, social and emotional skills. What is often lacking is a clear theory of change and evidence that links one to the other' (2011: 10). The tendency to demand an economic cost-benefit analysis of the 'value' of interventions can serve to reduce the value to quantitative data. This report highlights an ongoing struggle in the arts – having to justify their terms in the language, and with the values of other paradigms. Although the results may compel future funding of such work, the consideration of return on investment seems to occlude the other, more nebulous values that pervade theatre programmes.

Jenny Hughes' overview of arts practices in criminal justice settings in the UK examines the many issues identified as threats to arts delivery in prevention, in secure settings, and in re-integration contexts. Specifically, it explores the lack of professional best practice and standards in the sector, and the 'roles within the administration and implementation of the intervention' (2005: 51). She also considers the need to justify the use of arts in a system aimed towards reducing offending, and the issues of 'proof of effectiveness' that have elsewhere (Belfiore, 2002; Ings, 2004; Jermyn, 2001 and Matarasso, 1997) been shown to be difficult to quantify. This has particularly been the case within the system of attainment targets that pervades education and correctional services, under stress from

[35] Etherton, M., & T. Prentki. 2006. 'Drama for Change?' Prove it! Impact Assessment in Applied Theatre'. *Research in Drama Education* 11: pp. 139-55.
[36] New Philanthropy Capital. (2011) *Unlocking Value: The Economic Benefit of the Arts in Criminal Justice*. London: Arts Alliance. The figures relating specifically to children and young people are not included in this report, but in general, the argument supports early interventions to solidify alternative pathways other than 'offending'.

government to respond to reduction of numbers, and without budget or resources to support the facilitation of 'soft skills'. Hughes' contention is that the research practice around theatre in criminal justice is weak, and asserts the need for technical and conceptual review, but acknowledges that the reflexivity of many theatre practitioners working in prisons is valuable in developing theories of change within this context (2005: 9-11). She also sees arts interventions in criminal justice as a foundation for the 'government's drive to tackle social exclusion' (2005: 13). She says

> *The arts are seen as an effective response to the need to innovatively engage offenders, many of whom have had negative experiences of formal education, in learning experiences. The arts are seen as an effective means of re-engaging disaffected groups and bringing about a state of 'readiness to learn' through the development of self-esteem and basic personal and social skills* (2005: 39).

Escape Artists generated a report on the range of theatre practices in criminal justice contexts across the UK which offers a mapping of the practices across the UK (2006). The report exposes the methods employed by the companies, yet fails to examine critically what could be seen as problems and possibilities in the models used. Unlike Hughes' overarching report which examines policy, institutional culture, as well as theoretical informing principles, 'Barred Voices' is less rigorous, and serves as a broad overview of the field.

Michael Balfour suggests that the cognitive-behavioural approach favoured by institutions, and which underlined the TIPP Pump! and Blagg! programmes is constrained by its disconnect from informing 'grand narratives'. He says 'the personal construction of the world becomes more than something that is learnt and unlearnt; it is something influenced by common ideologies held by different groups of people determined by social formation like class, gender, race, and age' (2000: 15). Talking about violent male behaviour, Balfour's examination of the pro-feminist perspective shows that merely focusing on 'triggers' and 'provocations' is a disempowering view as it does not insist on the perpetrator taking responsibility. In this model, proposed by some cognitive-behavioural (CBT) regimes, shows the perpetrator may understand the trigger of anger, yet still perceive a legitimate reason for it . In other words, though the training asks participants to find alternatives to expressions of anger, CBT models do not always demand that they examine the assumptions underlying initial perceptions of the triggering situation. The narrative inscribing masculine domination remains intact in this mode. In other words, a violent incident 'is his way of restoring order and authority to any threatening situation' (Balfour, 2000: 16).

Arts and Criminal Justice: The Pressure of 'Desistance'[37]

With the change in government from Labour to the Conservative/ Liberal Democrat coalition, there has been a turn, in policies related to the criminal justice system, to an assessment of 'what works' and additionally a programme of 'payment by results' (Arts Alliance, 2011; McNeill et al, 2010). While the question 'what works?' makes sense in relation to overcrowding and the rates of recidivism[38], it nevertheless means that institutions are compelled to engage in more stringent measuring and accounting of every programme. This means that the wide range of projects that had proliferated under the Labour government's 'social inclusion' (Matarasso, 1997) policies now need to justify themselves in order to maintain resources. Some of the claims for arts interventions in criminal justice contexts as one strategy that 'works'.

Arts programmes are seen to offer a

> *non-traditional, non-institutional, social and emotional environment; a non-judgmental and un- authoritarian model of engagement; and an opportunity to participate in a creative process that involves both structure and freedom* (Peaker & Vincent, 1990: np).

Furthermore, McNeill *et al* state that engagement in the arts can help to develop new relationships (with peers, and with the prison regime). On a wider level, they suggest that the arts often provide the means of imagining different future pathways in which (ex-) prisoners form different social identifications and rehearse different lifestyles. However, they point out that arts interventions are not likely to deliver concrete and realisable sentence plans in light of the complexities of resettlement needs, but that they 'may help foster and reinforce motivation for and commitment to the change processes that these formal interventions and processes exist to support' (2011: 10). Both sets of claims hint towards the difficulties of the 'place' of the creative participatory interventions into social and educational aims that rely on institutional collaboration.

An important report concerned with the value of participatory arts in relation to desistance from crime is 'Re-imagining Futures: Exploring Arts Interventions and the Process of Desistance', published by the *Arts Alliance* (2013).[39] Although the research focuses on adult offenders, the findings are indicative of the ways arts processes serve wider social justice, reintegration, and sustainable behavioural change agendas. Some of the findings that are valuable in the development of work with children and young people are that:

- Participation in arts activities enables individuals to begin to redefine themselves, an important factor in desistance from crime;

[37] The section on The Pressure of Desistance is adapted from Walsh, A. (2014) 'Performing (for) Survival: Aesthetic Tactics of Incarcerated Women', unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Northampton.
[38] Recidivism refers to the rate of return to incarceration, or in other words, the percentage of prisoners who return to criminal activities *and get caught*. It is a word that engages with institutional 'effect' by measuring to what extent prison 'works'. The concept is slightly different from desistance in criminological literature, which engages with affect, in the sense that it is ex-offenders' agency that is under investigation. See McNeill et al, 2010.
[39] See Bilby, C., Caulfield, L., & Ridley, L. (2013) 'Re-imagining Futures: Exploring Arts Interventions and the Process of Desistance'. London: Arts Alliance.

- Arts projects facilitate high levels of engagement. This is significant because many individuals in contact with the Criminal Justice System have struggled to engage with productive activities in the past. Participants must engage in order to be able to redefine themselves. Engagement in arts projects has also been shown to lead to greater participation in education and work-related activities;
- Arts projects can have a positive impact on how people manage themselves during their sentence, particularly on their ability to cooperate with others – including other participants and staff. This correlates with increased self-control and better problem-solving skills;
- Engagement with arts projects facilitates increased compliance with criminal justice orders and regimes;
- Arts projects are responsive to participants' individual needs. Current policy documentation on commissioning services to meet offenders' needs highlights the importance of responsiveness in meeting diverse needs (2013: 6).

However, despite the rewards and benefits of participatory arts in the amelioration of social problems, projects ought to maintain critical reflexivity of the limitations of arts interventions.[40] The suggestion here is simply that practitioners acknowledge the multiple vectors of need faced by individuals in participatory arts contexts. It is neither possible nor feasible to suggest that single arts interventions operating in silos can impact on the individual's longer term 'offending' behavior. The following section includes critical considerations that help to define the potential outcomes of projects with children and young people 'at risk'.

Critical Considerations: Project Management

There are numerous accounts of 'successful' projects working with the client group. However, practitioners and evaluators need to bear in mind that the definitions of 'success' and 'failure' or the measures of achievement need to be carefully determined. Young people and children who have already been labeled as 'at risk' have often internalised feelings of 'failure', and may act out. 'Success', for them, may be measured by the extent to which a session can be disrupted, or how quickly someone else can be distracted, bullied, or triggered to respond.[41]

- Without sustainable, long term projects the participatory arts have limited

[40] See Prentki, T. (2003) Save the Children? – Change the World. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance.* 8(1): pp. 39-53 and Thompson, J. (2003) 'Doubtful Principles in Arts in Prisons', pp. 40 – 61 in *Teaching the Arts Behind Bars*. Edited by R.M.C. Williams. Boston: Northeastern University Press.
[41] See Cooper et al, 2007; Lowthian & Linehan, 2012; McCarthy et al, 2004.

potential[42]

- Participation in projects is often not entirely voluntary, and there may be levels of resistance to participation[43]
- The arts need to work carefully against the tendency to be seen as punitive (especially if participation is related to DTOs)[44]
- Practitioners must be able to reflect on their own expertise and limitations
- Arts programmes work best with effective partnerships (including PRUs, training providers, YOTs and other services)[45]
- Projects need to be able to 'track' participants after interventions in order to maintain accurate data on effectiveness of programming if there is to be any accurate understanding of the impact of participation on desistance
- And be able to use existing relationships with partners to signpost to alternative services.

Sometimes 'change' and transformation are too lofty as goals – and indeed, the measure of success for one participant may be that they participate in the whole session without losing patience and becoming angry. Practitioners will be well aware of the small victories that constitute significant achievements in every session – but evaluation may well overlook such achievements.[46] Balfour suggests that the debate on participatory arts turns on a telling point:

> *not that the tension between the aesthetic dimension and the utilitarian is not experienced by most practitioners, but that the articulation of that practice often eschews a discussion about the value of aesthetics. Caught in the habit of writing too many field and evaluation reports, the concentration is on proving the social efficacy of the work, rather than analysing the affect of aesthetics. The artistic dimension therefore is often relegated to the second division, a footnote to the value or purpose of the project* (2009: 356).

There is no singular, objective framework for enumerating success in the participatory arts. This is both the strength of the approach and the cause of some suspicion amongst commissioners. Yet, there is certainly the possibility to integrate both the unique qualities of arts into evaluation as well as ensure that there are compelling stories relating to measurable 'results' – an exemplar of which is Richard Ings' report 'Creating Chances' (2004); and more recently, the evaluation of Dance United's 'The Academy' (2009). In light of the importance of asserting the unique capacity of the arts to engage, through aesthetics, metaphor and imagination, the following section departs from the policy pressures on the arts and turns towards the multiple benefits and values of participation.

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[42] See White, J. (2012) 'DM&E Tip: Participatory Theatre Design and Evaluation.' *DM&E for Peacebuilding*. [online] Available at: http://www.dmeforpeace.org/discuss/dme-tip-participatory-theatre-design-and-evaluation.

[43] Johnston (2010); Lemos (2011: 24).

[44] Thompson, J. (1999) (ed.) *Prison Theatre: Perspectives and Practices*. London: Jessica Kingsley. Thompson (2003) entreats practitioners to avoid the performance of punishment which pervades the context of prisons, and thus casts a shadow on any performance based project in prisons: for whom is the performance? How will the prisoners be viewed? He says that we need to examine 'how our performances relate to other performances of punishment and check that they do not display prisoners to the further delight and voyeuristic pleasure of the crowd' (2003: 57).

[45] See ACE (2005); Clinks (2013); Wilkin et al, 2005; Wilson, (2010); YJB (2006).

[46] See Balfour, M. (2009) 'The Politics of Intention: Looking for a Theatre of Little Changes' *RiDE: the Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*. 14(3): pp. 347 – 359.

Discussion Points:

- What kinds of change or transformation are relevant in our project?
- How might we begin to understand change processes?
- How can we document change in order to monitor and evaluate? (both for the benefit of project accountability and to provide a map of targets and outcomes for participants)
- How does political discourse and policy impact on our aesthetic/ pedagogic choices?
- How do we interrogate the concepts of social exclusion/ inclusion while delivering projects?
- What kinds of evidence are valuable? (for us? For the PRU/ School? For funders?)
- How does the concept of 'value' indicate a political position that needs reflexivity?
- How do theories from criminal justice impact on our practice?

Part 3:

Making Sense of Participatory Arts Practice

Strengths of Participatory Arts Approaches

> *We can use the concept of roles and the language of drama to help us understand the factors influencing who becomes a habitual offender and how he [sic] might, if so inclined, leave behind such a destructive role*
> (Baim, 2006: 142).[47]

The participatory arts generate a range of new contexts, repertoires and scripts for children and young people. They can be seen as offering pathways out of the limited and limiting roles 'at risk' children see as defining them. What is most beneficial is the quality of specific projects, and of participants' voices to describe and evoke the benefits of participation.

In addition to referring to evaluations, sharing events, performances and exhibitions by children and young people, it is worth considering the weight of materials published by practitioners and researchers on the strengths of the participatory arts.[48]

Many of the documented approaches that have been published in relation to theatre with offenders are adaptable for groups of young people. This is because offending behaviours are often associated (in adults) with issues relating to maturity, learning difficulties, social adaptability and self-awareness. Thus, the practitioner – centred manuals for effective practice include tasks and exercises that cater for people presenting with similar difficulties and needs as children and young people 'at risk'. With care, the arsenal of practices outlined in Bergman & Hewish, for example, offer a detailed and well-supported framework that can be utilised with younger participants.

Specific examples include:

- Playful cooperative games and exercises (common to many participatory arts practices)[49]
- Mask work (as practised by Geese Theatre)[50]
- Direct improvisation dealing with 'risk' scenarios[51]
- Creative Groupwork[52]
- Forum theatre/ Theatre of the Oppressed techniques[53]
- Creative sessions built on the principles of Restorative Justice[54]

[47] Baim, Clark. (2004) 'If All the World's a Stage, Why Did I Get the Worst Parts?'. pp. 139- 160. *Theatre in Prison: Theory and practice*. Ed. Michael Balfour. Bristol: Intellect.
[48] Note the weight falls on participatory theatre practices here, but most of these insights are applicable to other performing arts (dance, music) as well as some of the visual arts such as participatory photography.
[49] For just one example see Rohd, M. (1998). *Theatre for Community, Conflict & Dialogue: The Hope is Vital Training Manual*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
[50] Baim, C., Brookes, S. & Mountford, A. (2002) *The Geese Theatre Handbook*. Winchester: Waterside Press.
[51] Johnston, 1998, 2010; Thompson, 1999.
[52] Mountford, A. & Farrall, M. (1998) 'The House of Four Rooms: Theatre, Violence and the Cycle of Change'. pp. 109 – 126 in *Prison Theatre: Perspectives and Practices*. Edited by James Thompson. Jessica Kingsley Publishers: London.
[53] Boal, 1979, 2002; Burton, 2010; Hughes & Wilson, 2004; Marin, 2010; Saldaña, 2010.

These techniques demand that practitioners work from a basis of understanding group dynamics, interpersonal psychodynamics. A skill is also the ability to adapt – both during sessions and to use self-reflexivity to ensure that there is progress from session to session.

The published manuals on techniques related to young people presenting behavioural difficulties often include valuable advice for practitioners relating to planning, session management, and indicate the kind of support structures necessary for successful, long term engagement with this client group.[55] What is important is that drama processes do not imply fixed, absolute solutions, but rather use techniques involving dialogue, consensus building, reflection to work on collective problem solving. This relates to good practice models of ethical engagement in participatory arts.

> *Like dreams, the experiences of offending can appear to be chaotic, out of control and extremely frightening. When an individual recollects a dream or life experience there are often gaps or blank spaces, moments where it is unclear how we have arrived where we are. Through the process of drama, memories of such experiences become stories that can be controlled and made sense of and the gaps resolved. The young people […] have often lost a part of their childhood that allows for play, or skipped crucial parts of their development towards adulthood; again, the drama process invites them to play and through play enables them to revisit and fill in these gaps* (Turner, 2007: 187-188).

Filling in the Gaps: Telling the Story of How Participatory Approaches Work

This section outlines some of the values and skills associated with participatory arts that are particularly important in the development of resilience, creativity and self awareness in projects with young people. These ideas are grounded in practice methodologies and demonstrate the importance of trained professionals delivering the programmes. In this section, it is at the level of project design/ management and facilitation that the values are considered. In the subsequent section, the participants' values and skills development are outlined.

It is important that projects are constructed around a sense of '**safe space'**. This emerges as spatial – for example, as participants enter the workshop/ session space

[54] See Turner, 2007.
[55] Hillman, G. (1996) 'Artists in the Community: Training Artists to Work in Alternative Settings'. Americans for the Arts.

there is a signaled shift in atmosphere with the use of music, colour, greeting rituals. Safe space is also constructed as a set of mutually defined (and revised) behaviours that include respect, the negotiation of ground rules, etc. These might begin, for example, with a discussion on voice levels if a participant becomes agitated by sudden noises.

Participatory arts fulfill a developmental function in the attempt to **build the capacity** of individuals, groups and communities with the potential to empower, strengthen and energize (Sloman, 2011). Capacity building refers equally to specific practical skills as to developing emotional literacy, empathy and the ability to articulate feelings, thoughts and desires in constructive ways. They are also focused on **strengthening community cohesion**. While often targeted on individual and small group needs, the ultimate intention of participatory arts (as opposed to arts therapies) is wider social acceptance, integration, and cohesion.

The participatory arts often aim to **give voice to marginalised groups**, challenge power structures and advocate for change.[56] They are inherently political, responsive to social change, and engage with needs as they are identified. The arts – when platformed in public such as through public performance, invited sharings, community events or though disseminating research results – can make visible the exclusionary factors that cause social problems, and mobilise support for wider mechanisms of change. In this, arts products can serve to **raise awareness,** and arts processes often seek to instigate **behavioural change**.[57]

A further benefit of the arts is the capacity to develop the voices of young people in order to include them in **decision-making processes.**[58] The degree of self-awareness, confidence and ability to articulate thoughts and feelings that can result from participation can be encouraging for young people, who learn that it is not merely possible, but necessary for them to be involved in planning and implementing their own pathways towards integration.

Some of the values and skills provided to participants include the seemingly oppositional notions of order through creativity. Arts processes require participants to become accustomed to **order and structure appropriate to the artform**. For example, many drama based sessions begin with a welcoming circle exercise that is consistent, achievable, and marks the beginning of the session. Some technical sessions require participants to engage with items, objects or materials in a specific order. The artforms contain inner logics, into which the participants become inducted. There is flexibility, but the structure offered that is inherent to artforms can be convincing – even for disaffected, alienated children or young people.

By contrast, the arts provide opportunities for participants to be **experts** - thereby challenging the paradigm of adults always appearing to be 'right' when they may feel they are criticised for being 'wrong'. This model has been widely used in drama in education,

[56] Marken & Taylor (2001).
[57] CapeUK (2012).
[58] See British Youth Council (2010) 'Services that Support Young People's Participation' http://www.participationworks.org.uk/files/webfm/files/resources/k-items/byc/iguide_services_that_support_participation.pdf; and Cleghorn, N. Kinsella, R. & McNaughton Nicholls, C. (2010) 'Engaging with the Views of Young People with Experience of the Youth Justice System'. London: National Centre for Social Research.

pioneered by Dorothy Heathcote.[59] The choice to highlight and focus on what expertise young people already have is empowering and affirming; but practitioners can also craft situations in which facilitators use role techniques to model certain relationships in which 'authority' is flipped on its head.

Yet, from the behavioural perspective, it is evident that young people 'at risk' thrive from knowing there are boundaries, and exactly what is acceptable or not (Pan 2012b). Participatory arts can provide a means of developing emotional literacies such as **understandings about boundaries**. These can relate to repetitions of appropriate body language, or what physical touch is appropriate. These boundaries can be confirmed through ritualised repetition at a whole group level, modelled through metaphor, or internalised as a self-reflexive process. The arts therapies suggest that artforms allow for a particular kind of **focus** or identification (See Lemos, 2011: 40). This is about how learning a sequence of gestures or moves, for example, requires a kinaesthetic concentration that is – at base – a relationship between cognition and the individual's body.[60]

What seems to be unique to arts processes is their ability to demarcate a creative, collaborative **time and space** in which individual participants can become absorbed, and be 'transported' from their everyday realities, which are otherwise characterised by a sense of difficulty and '**chaos**'.[61] The capacity of arts processes to engender feelings of calm not otherwise experienced by participants; or to encourage a sense of mutual joy; or of enthusiasm for achieving a task are all outside from participants' day-to-day feelings about home, school, or their community. This is why it is often useful for arts activities to be conducted in neutral spaces or spaces that can be made to feel utterly different from 'normal'. There is thus value in preserving this time and space as a long term, sustainable source to which people can return for the sense of 'escape'.

Research on young people 'at risk' demonstrates that it is often a sense of chaos, hopelessness and a lack of direction that leads young people to 'act out'.[62] In this, the arts are valuable in the ways they encourage understandings of mutuality, empathy, and interdependence. These ideals are often experienced first in the body – through games and exercises – rather than being discussed on a verbal level. Thus, participants have already collaborated in a warm up activity without realising it. Practitioners will tend to construct activities that shift from (mildly) competitive to collaborative in order to engage different ways of working together. Each strategy requires individuals and small groups to define and deliver solutions to creative problems. These could be simple exercises such as how to ensure that all participants remain 'whole' and undamaged on

[59] See Wagner, B. (1979) *Dorothy Heathcote: Drama as a Learning Medium*. London: Hutchinson.
[60] See Miles & Strauss, 2009 for their description of *The Academy*.
[61] See Ings, 2004. Most arts in criminal justice sources reflect on the sense of 'escape' offered by the arts. See Escape Artists (2006).
[62] Johnston, 2010.

an ever-shrinking newspaper island (Johnston, 2010) or more complex imaginative scenarios that operate through metaphor. These modes of work prioritise **cooperation** and a sense of **personal responsibility**. Often, these are achieved because they are approached obliquely – through narrative necessity.

Even so, participants begin to rehearse a sense of **personal responsibility** – for example through improvisation and role-play (Bergman & Hewish, 2003; Johnston, 2010; Thompson, 1999). The satisfaction of contributing successfully to an improvisation – even when the intention is to make others laugh – is nevertheless underscored by the ability to give and gain; in other words to generate reciprocal relationships.

Many drama interventions will engage with group role plays or scenarios in which there is direct attention paid to situations of conflict (Rohd, 1998), or indeed, offending behaviour (Thompson, 1999). These will often be explored through techniques adapted from Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed in which activating scenes demonstrate triggering situations, into which a spectating group of peers can then intervene to propose alternative models, different reactions, or more satisfactory outcomes (Boal, 2002; Rohd, 1998) They literally rehearse different ways of being, giving an insight into the notion of **choices and consequences**. Although the scenes are often realistic, there is the added benefit of the fictional frame that helps provide a sense of distance. In other words, the children can intervene into someone else's story to offer **transformative** potential solutions. In the process, they rehearse change for themselves and others.

By participating regularly, young people may find that attending points towards additional opportunities, further training, or access to services otherwise unknown. Participatory theatre especially deploys **metaphors of journeys and pathways** that can be valuable for young people as they construct (imaginatively at first) the solid ground related to skills acquisition that can lead to a sense that there are indeed pathways to future possibilities. These could relate to accessing training that may lead to further opportunities using related skills.

A further value of participation is the development of **resilience and robustness**. 'Acting out' might be a consequence of deep sense of insecurity, vulnerability to criticism and a fear of being rejected. Participation in the arts promotes and encourages resilience. Good sessions allow children to practice, fail and try again, and to recognise that they have the strength to do so (and that other people don't mock their failures).[63] Indeed, creative arts can foreground 'failure' as 'success' – for example in reverse races in which the slowest 'wins'; or by using a 'failed' improvisation as a starting point for discussion about why there are many ways success can look and feel like if we are authors of our own stories.

The participatory arts model different kinds of relationships for young people, in which commitment, trust, openness and communication are prized. Projects often generate informal **mentor relationships** in which achievements are mapped and benefits are reflected back to participants. By building awareness of creativity and the arts, children and young people can **generate a wider sense of community** and belonging. They may feel more able to access arts and culture institutions, or feel initiated into a

[63] Turner et al, 2004: 74.

collective. This is especially the case when public presentations or sharings platform the results of creative processes.[64]

Robert Landy says:

> *Drama and theatre cannot stop violence or global warming or cure AIDS or mental illness. But drama and theatre workers can address profound personal and social issues by facilitating the transformation of complex realities into vivid, provocative metaphors. And by enabling [participants] to engage with the metaphors and to see themselves and their worlds in new ways* (in Landy & Montgomery, 2012: 246).

To summarise, participatory arts projects demonstrate the following competencies and values:

For Programmes

- Creating safe space (includes risk)
- Build the capacity of individuals, groups and communities with the potential to empower, strengthen and energize;
- Strengthen community cohesion;
- Give voice to marginalised groups, challenge power structures and advocate for change;
- Awareness raising and behavioral change;
- Developing the voices of young people in order to include them in decision-making processes

For Participants:

- Artform specific order and structure
- Challenging frameworks (flipping authority)
- Developing boundaries
- Focus (what is called identification in arts therapies)
- Time and space
- Ability to manage 'chaos'
- Cooperation
- Personal responsibility
- Choices and consequences
- An understanding of transformation
- Metaphors of pathways (accessing training that may lead to further opportunities using related skills)
- Resilience and robustness: Good practice both assumes and encourages these. Good sessions allow children to practice, fail and try again, and to recognise that they have the strength to do so (and that other people don't mock their

[64] Bamford & Skipper, 2007; Carpenter, 2003; Shaw, 2003.

failures).[65]

- Mentor relationships
- Building awareness of creativity, the arts (i.e.: wider sense of community, and access to institutions locally).

Ethics & Participatory Theatre

It is necessary to consider what constitutes ethical practice in project design, delivery and evaluation (Rifkin, 2010). It is often the case that participatory projects assume they are being conducted within ethical guidelines because of their 'good intentions'.[66] Yet, there is the need to prioritise ethics and discuss any gray areas with practitioners, managers and partner organisations at different points in project implementation. Some of these ethical practices have been outlined by experienced participatory arts practitioners. They include:

- Choice: participants' agenda not pre-empted;
- Respect: developed via creative process, modelled by Facilitators;
- Equality: with groups having little experience, through creative process;
- Safety: focus on present/future, no requirement to disclose;
- Tutor competence: support and training, shared perspectives.
  (Source: Barnes, 2009).[67]

In work with children and young people already engaged in offending behaviours, what is paramount is the consideration of safety in relation to PRU rules and regulations. It might be important for facilitators to have access to specific (relevant) information necessary to understand about children's offending behaviours that would help to keep other participants safe. In this regard, projects should consider:

- Whether and how offending/ behavior backgrounds are disclosed;
- How such information is kept/ shared with facilitators;
- Whether facilitators are given specialised security/ safeguarding training;
- How facilitators reflect on potential vectors of behaviour in the group dynamic.[68]

These become ethical questions, because practitioners cannot always know everything. There are times when a bullying incident may have happened in the PRU and drama facilitators are not aware of it, and pick up on some subtle dynamic that may or may not be bullying.[69] Often, the creative context of the work will allow for practitioners to smooth over ruffled feathers. After all, young people 'at risk' often deliberately provoke negative responses. There are other occasions, however, in which it would be necessary

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[65] Turner et al, 2004: 74.
[66] See Balfour, 2009.
[67] See Barnes, S. (2009) 'Drawing a Line: A Discussion of Ethics in Participatory Arts with Young Refugees'. *Participatory Arts with Young Refugees.* London: Ovalhouse.
[68] The valuable manuals from arts in criminal justice practitioners prove very helpful here: See for example Baim et al, 2002; Hillman, 1996; Peaker & Johnston, 2007; Rideout, 2010.
[69] See an education pack on bullying: Godfrey, A. (2011) 'Talking to Her': A Resource for Teachers and Young People' NYT. [online] Available at http://www.ideastap.com/Upload/UserGeneratedMedia/c73006de-d29d-4a04-bb5e-52d698d8843feb.pdf

to 'use' disclosures or moments of conflict as sources of deeper discussion, feedback or analysis. These could happen in small groups or the whole group – and could, with skilled facilitation, occur through aesthetic framing. In other words, by distancing the 'real' conflict from the 'fictional' conflict, the participants might be able to gain more perspective on implications. The space for ethical considerations is critical because it concerns the potential for moments in participatory processes to be productive or destructive in the ways they unravel over time.

The main discussion points arising in this report relate to the 'placing' of participatory arts practices: within art contexts, in relation to prevailing policy concerns and within the young people's everyday framework of needs of education and care. The table below suggests differing approaches to framing participatory work.

Ethical What is privileged is the nature of engagement, participation & the outcomes for participants. The focus is on the experience.	**Aesthetic** What is privileged is the outward facing product, the degree of excellence or skill demonstrated. The focus is on the form.
Use The project fulfils a specific function or attends to an agenda identified either by: a. current funding trends b. specific engagement with community-identified concerns The art form is seen to have a particular, practical, measurable effect on the issues identified.	**Ornament** The project upholds the specific possibilities of the art form as the defining feature, rather than the implied spin-off benefits.
Process There is emphasis placed on the 'making' and 'doing' phase of learning or mastery, rather than on the 'presenting'.	**Product** There is emphasis placed on the public presentation of work.
Journey Involvement is considered to be a mutual journey undertaken alongside others, in which the importance is on the experience of the creative journey.	**Destination** Involvement is determined by a fixed outcome or destination that can be achieved.

Child's Development The focus includes reflexivity about each child's personal and social development. (This requires extensive monitoring and evaluation and must engage partner expertise).	**Social Norms** The focus is on the successful adoption of social norms.
Individual Focus This approach allows for an individual focus in which children's responsiveness and behavioural changes are noted.	**Community Cohesion** This approach values the development of 'community' through adopting roles and following regulations.

To summarise, these concerns appear as binaries – but it is more useful to consider a spectrum that offers a broader scope of the 'place' of projects. Participatory arts practitioners need to be able to engage in open, reflexive discussions about where their own practices sit in the spectrum of possibilities. Despite characterising these in oppositional terms, there is no intention to specifically cast one side as bad or good, but rather, as fulfilling differing functions in the intentionality of projects.

Discussion Points:

- How do we construct aesthetic journeys of possibility for the participants?
- How do we balance between risk and safety?
- What do we consider to be ethical practices?

Conclusion:

This discussion document has presented a range of issues that arise in pursuit of ethically defined participatory practices. There are evidently important discussions to be had, and ongoing debates around the intentions, progression and sustainability of projects. These relate to the social and political 'place' of the projects. In addition, such discussions must make account of documentation, monitoring and evaluation practices.

What is evident is that there has been a growing interest in participation, as well as the constant refinement of aesthetic and ethical practices that surround such projects. The Creating Change Network offers a space in which the necessary debates can function to point towards future pathways for the sector. The arts' capacity to increase emotional resilience, as well as confidence and articulacy about decision-making is discussed in this document.

One future pathway that is evidently valuable is the partnership with local authorities and children's service to target young people in care. Schofield *et al* (2012) consider the importance of offering children in care a range of opportunities to engage in activities that provide stability and a sense of cohesion as they navigate the emotionally turbulent status between individual uncertainty and a place in the community.[70] Future Stages proposes a sense of possibility, an imagined future, and as such, challenges the very idea that children and young people who are deemed to be 'at risk' have an inevitable, tragic outcome.[71] Rather, Future Stages aims to provide opportunities towards creating and anticipating altogether more hopeful, creative, and constructive futures for young people.

[70] Schofield, G. Ward, E., Biggart, L., Scaife, V. Dodsworth, J. Larsson, B., Haynes, A. & Stone, N (2012) 'Looked After Children & Offending: Reducing Risk and Promoting Resilience'. [onlone] Available at http://tactcare.org.uk/data/files/resources/lac_and_offending_reducing_risk_promoting_resilience_execsummary_080112.pdf

[71] McCarthy, P. Laing, K., Walker, J. (2004) 'Offenders of the Future?: Assessing the Risk of Children Becoming Involved in Crime & Antisocial Behaviour.' Research Brief No RB545. June 2004. Available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RB545.pdf

Appendix A: References

Note: this list includes relevant sources that are covered by the intersecting policy and practice agendas in this project.

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Appendix B

Selected companies and organisations whose participatory arts programmes include work with children and young people at risk of offending.

Note: this list is not exhaustive, and deliberately includes a mixture of established organisations and local, community based voluntary organisations. There is a bias towards theatre-based organisations.

Arts Alliance
Promoting arts in the criminal justice system. This is an umbrella organisation that delivers training, hosts events and provides access to an evidence library that is extensive, and growing.
http://www.artsalliance.org.uk

Citizens Theatre - Platform 2:10
Platform 2:10 is a performance project in HMP Barlinnie delivered in partnership with Motherwell College. This is the second multi-artform project that Citizens Learning has delivered in Scottish Prisons this year, as part of the Scottish Arts Council funded Inspiring Change initiative.
http://citz.co.uk/learning/info/platform_210/

Clean Break
Women whose lives have been affected by the criminal justice system. Clean Break delivers an artistic and an education programme, based in purpose built studios in North London. They work primarily with adults, but have delivered projects with young people, notably Miss-Spent Youth.
http://www.cleanbreak.org.uk

Dance United: Lives Transformed through Dance
National organisation for young people who have been offenders or are at risk of offending. Of note is their project 'The Academy' serving young people on probation orders in the North of England.
http://www.dance-united.com

EMPAF: East Midlands Participatory Arts Forum
Regional network for sharing good practice in participatory arts. Their website includes toolkits, training opportunities and case studies as well as a discussion forum.
http://www.empaf.com

Engage: In the Visual Arts
A Membership organisation that promotes access and participation in gallery education.
http://www.engage.org/home

Escape Artists
Theatre for prisoners, ex-offenders and people at risk of offending.
www.escapeartists.co.uk

Fine Cell Work
Fine Cell Work is a social enterprise that trains prisoners in paid, skilled, creative needlework to foster hope, discipline and self esteem.
http://www.finecellwork.co.uk

The Forgiveness Project
UK based charity that uses storytelling to explore how ideas around forgiveness, reconciliation and conflict resolution can be used to impact positively on people's lives, through the personal testimonies of both victims and perpetrators of crime and violence.
http://theforgivenessproject.com/about-us/

Geese Theatre Company
Drama and theatre for offenders and people at risk.
http://www.geese.co.uk

Generation Arts
Supporting marginalised communities through theatre.
http://www.generationarts.org.uk

Good Vibrations
Good Vibrations is a registered charity that helps prisoners, patients in secure hospitals, ex-prisoners and others in the community to develop crucial life and work skills through participating in intensive Gamelan (Indonesian bronze percussion) courses.
http://www.good-vibrations.org.uk

Hay in the Parc (Hay Festival Behind Bars)
HMP/YOI Parc, as part of the festival prisoners perform some of the work they've produced.
http://www.madeleinemoonmp.com/df97ccf3-5827-c1b4-ed06-65303c2c8636

Helix Arts
Based in Newcastle, working with young people in the North West of the UK across art forms.
http://www.helixarts.com

Immediate Theatre
They work with young people and communities in Hackney and East London to ensure access for all to arts activities that break down barriers and engage people in debate.
http://www.immediate-theatre.com

Intermission Youth Theatre
Through Drama Intermission Youth Theatre engages young people from London's inner-city communities who are at risk of offending or who lack opportunity.
http://www.iyt.org.uk/about.php

Koestler Trust Arts by Offenders
One of the largest arts charities in the UK dealing with cross arts through a national competition, as well as a mentoring service.
http://www.koestlertrust.org.uk/index.html

Lyric
The Lyric is unique within the theatre ecology of the UK with their dual commitment to producing the highest quality contemporary theatre, alongside nurturing the creativity of young people.
http://www.lyric.co.uk/about/young-people/

Music in Detention
Music In Detention (MID) works through music to give voice to immigration detainees and create channels of communication between them, immigration and detention staff, local communities and the wider public.
http://www.musicindetention.org.uk

National Alliance for Arts Health and Wellbeing
Resources, good practice and commissioners of research on arts, health and wellbeing nationally.
http://www.artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk

Oddments Theatre Company
Oddments has been working in conjunction with the on-going work of prison Chaplains for over a decade now, taking the Christian message into nearby prisons including The Verne, Dartmoor and Portland Young Offenders Institution.
http://www.oddments-theatre.co.uk/main/content/prisons

Only Connect
Provides training, support and creative opportunities to help prisoners, ex-offenders and at-risk young people.
http://www.onlyconnectuk.org

People's Palace Projects
People's Palace Projects (PPP) is an independent arts charity that advances the practice and understanding of art for social justice and is based at Queen Mary, University of London.
http://www.peoplespalaceprojects.org.uk

Pimlico Opera
Since 1991 Pimlico Opera has worked in 13 prisons, taken more than 50,000 public into prison. 1,000+ prisoners have participated, 9,000 prisoners have seen a show.
http://www.pimlicoopera.co.uk/prison/

Playing for Time Theatre Company
Playing for Time stages plays with prisoners and undergraduate students working together. Based in Winchester.
http://www.playingfortime.org.uk

Rideout
Rideout (Creative Arts for Rehabilitation) was established in 1999 in order to develop innovative, arts-based approaches to working with prisoners and staff within U.K. prisons
http://www.rideout.org.uk

Roughshod Theatre Company
Riding Lights Roughshod has a long history of touring to prisons and offers full-scale performances and theatre workshops in prisons and young offenders' institutions.
http://roughshodtheatre.wordpress.com/on-tour/prisons/

Safe Ground
Safe Ground works to reduce the risk of offending and re-offending using drama.
http://www.safeground.org.uk

Second Shot
Film and theatre production company based within HMP & YOI Doncaster, with serving prisoners and ex-offenders.
http://www.secondshot.org.uk

Synergy Theatre Project
Working with prisoners, offenders and ex-offenders. They also create specific works for young offenders at young people at risk of offending.
http://www.synergytheatreproject.co.uk

Ten Ten Theatre
Theatre workshops in young offender institutions and community settings with a Roman Catholic ethos.
http://tententheatre.co.uk

Theatre for Youth Inclusion
Arc Theatre creates powerful drama for vulnerable young people. We work with underachievers, persistent truants, those excluded or at risk of exclusion, young offenders and many others in a range of challenging social settings.
http://www.arctheatre.com/education_youthinclusion.html

Tin Horse Theatre
Tin Horse Theatre had started work with young people from London who are homeless, vulnerable or at risk
http://www.tinhorsetheatre.co.uk/

TiPP, theatre to promote change
Theatre for prisoners and ex-offenders and community settings.
http://www.tipp.org.uk/tipp/

Additional Resources:

Knowle West Media (2010) 'Demanding Conversations: Socially Engaged Arts Practice in a Changing Political Climate' Website of Conference Proceedings with links to online resources. Available at: http://www.demandingconversations.org.uk

Author's Bio:

Aylwyn Walsh is a practitioner and researcher working on the arts, politics and social change. Aylwyn is a lecturer in performance studies at the University of Lincoln and artistic director of Ministry of Untold Stories. Her work is concerned with exploring the intersections of interdisciplinary methodologies through performance. She has worked as writer in residence in male and female prisons and YOIs in the UK and South Africa. Recent publications have included work on arts in healthcare for *Research in Drama Education* and the *Journal for Applied Arts and Health*. She published on street art in *Journal of Arts and Communities* and work on prison theatre in *Contemporary Theatre Review, Total Theatre Magazine, Women in Prison Magazine, Prison Service Journal,* and *Theatre Topics*. Book chapters have appeared in the *Sarai Reader 0.9: Projections* and *The Arts of Imprisonment: Essays on Control, Resistance and Empowerment* as well as *Performing (for) Survival: Theatre, Crisis and Extremity* and *Performances of Crisis, Capitalism and Resistance*. For Ministry of Untold Stories, she evaluated Mark Storor's *For the Best: Liverpool.* Her PhD focused on women in prison, and she is a fellow of the HEA.