

ABOVE & BEYOND

overview report

a Paul Hamlyn Foundation funded project, 2019-2023



**COLLECTIVE
ENCOUNTERS**



Image description: a group of men and women smiling to the camera outside of a theatre

Introduction

This final report documents the journey taken during Above & Beyond, Collective Encounters' four year project, delivered March 2019 - March 2023. Above & Beyond was established to address three aims:

1. Embed long-term cultural production and cultural activity in marginalised communities
2. A more resilient organisation
3. A more resilient participatory arts sector

A participatory Project Advisory Group (PAG) was set up in year one to steer the creative process and outcomes. Identifying an aim and framework for this activity with the Collective Encounters team:

To connect and celebrate community while sharing and understanding the challenges being experienced by different groups

The project plan anticipated two similar cycles, embedding grassroots theatre for social change projects in three areas in Merseyside: Years one and two in

Bootle and Birkenhead, years three and four in Knowsley. This process would employ desk research and creative research, local outreach and partnership development, leading to a touring theatre for social change production and legacy of community-led practice locally.

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), which was beginning to spread in the first year of delivery, could not have been predicted.

Above & Beyond sought to establish and embed practices that would support resilience for the communities, Collective Encounters and wider participatory sector, with the first two years providing a foundation and the final two years focussed on applying the learning in a new community and sustaining the legacy of community activities and the quality, reach and impact of the company's ongoing delivery.

The interim report, produced Spring 2021, provides details about evaluation design and analysis of delivery towards the planned outcomes associated with each project aim in the first two years with recommendations to consider:

- **Wider use of the resources and creative work produced**
- **How formalising new procedures can support consistency, without constraining the company's responsive approach**
- **How unpredictable, rapidly changing circumstances continue to influence delivery**

This final report provides a narrative summary of the community-based process and accumulated learning, it shares creative tools, outcomes and testimony of those involved at each project phase, mapping these against quality indicators co-created with participants.

The division of the report into the four chronological phases, reflects the evolving learning required to respond to the changing circumstances, interspersed with creative outcomes linked to project themes of community, isolation, struggle, hope.

The conclusion brings these elements together to share what has been achieved and how it will inform future activity for Collective Encounters.

A note on evaluation

The Project Advisory Group, an evolving group of participants and partners, have been involved key decisions throughout, recruiting Claire Sharples to support evaluation (and other members of the project team), devising the Theory of Change for the creative output and shaping the final report by identifying important aspects to highlight; encouraging the chronological focus; collating case studies and creative examples for accessibility. While contributions have differed from those anticipated due to pandemic, each stage of their input and feedback have been invaluable in defining and refining the project evaluation.

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The smell of the Mersey A hidden scenic beauty Unappreciated place

Make it Happen, Group Haiku



Image description:: a group of men and women sitting on chairs grinning and putting thumbs up to the camera



An aerial photograph of a coastal region. A large body of water, likely the Mersey River, occupies the left and top portions of the frame. A narrow, dark strip of land, possibly a causeway or a small island, extends from the mainland into the water. The mainland is densely packed with buildings, mostly in shades of grey and brown, indicating an urban or industrial area. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

PHASE ONE

OUTREACH IN BOOTLE

AND BIRKENHEAD

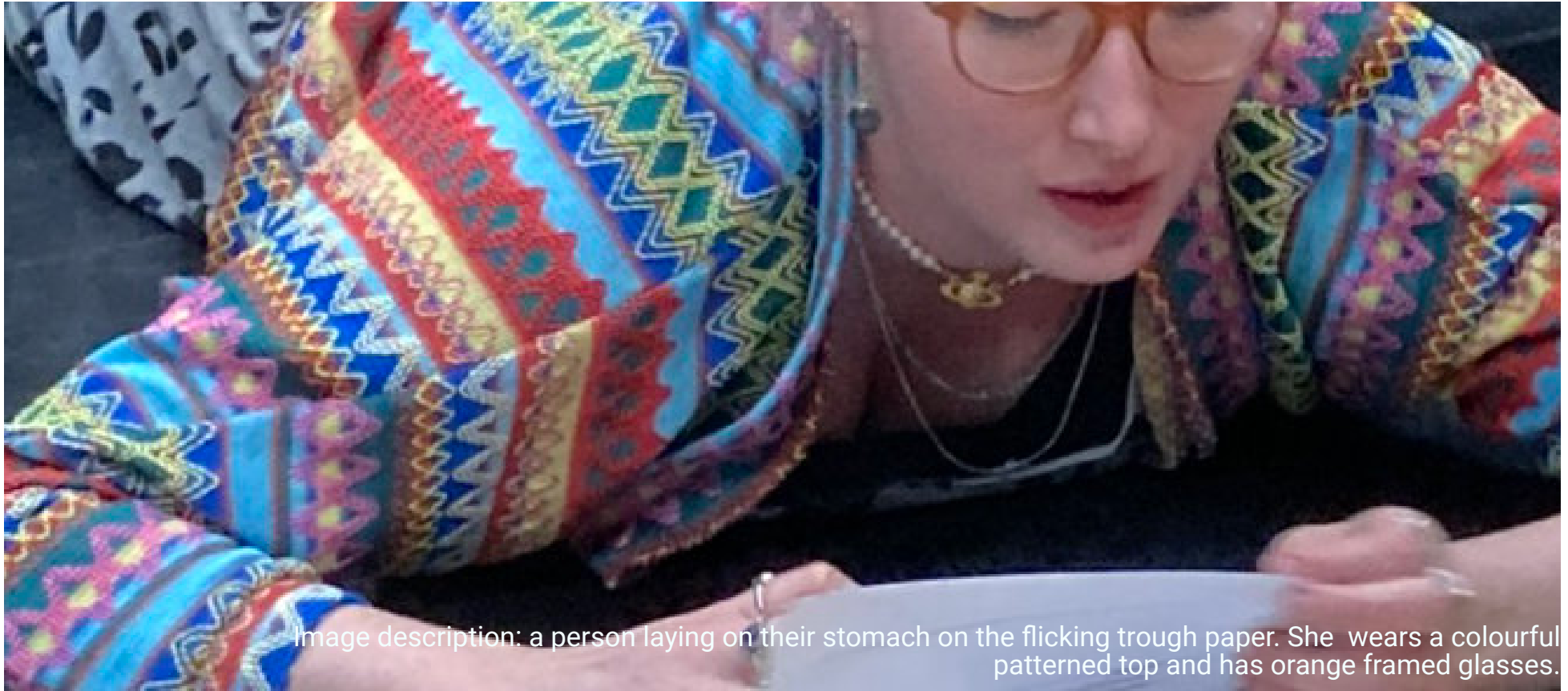


Image description: a person laying on their stomach on the flicking trough paper. She wears a colourful patterned top and has orange framed glasses.

My confidence was non-existent, I didn't think I had any creativity in me, I just sat and watched, hoping I wouldn't be noticed, but I was.

ABOVE & BEYOND PARTICIPANT

Above & Beyond was designed by Collective Encounters' Executive Director, Annette Burghes and Outreach Director, Abi Horsfield, who were tasked with establishing connections and setting up activity within the communities of Birkenhead and Bootle, to ensure that the Theatre for Social Change delivery was responsive and collaborative.

The outreach process gradually built knowledge and presence, through:

- **Desk research:** establishing an overview of the local communities and infrastructure.
- **Qualitative creative research:** getting to know the communities: psychogeography drifts and street interviews in Birkenhead town centre and The Strand in Bootle, asking two fundamental questions:
"What issues are important to you?"
"Does theatre have any place in telling your story?"
- **Connecting with partners:** Offering taster workshops to different groups (one-off interventions, up to four workshops), leading to four-week residencies in both communities, in Bootle Library (October-November 2019) and Royal Standard House, Tranmere, Birkenhead (January - February 2020).

- **Establishing the core Theatre for Social Change groups:** Regular weekly groups at Strand by Me, Bootle Strand and Royal Standard House, Tranmere, Birkenhead.

These iterative steps of community engagement and creative development supported the inclusivity and relevance of this work. Feedback and perspectives shared by organisational partners and individuals that engaged in workshops informed the course of the project, with the PAG reviewing and steering creative decisions at key stages. Abi Horsfield worked closely with partners and networks to encourage skill and resource sharing beyond the immediate project activities. Key learning from the first year of the project:

- **Buld up relationships with organisations and communities** – you need to listen and take on the expertise of people who have been working in a community for a long time – It is about creating works that complements and works with what is already in place and not trying to reinvent the wheel. This takes time, energy, resources, and commitment.

Build up relationships with organisations and communities – you need to listen and take on the expertise of people who have been working in a community for a long time – It is about creating works that complements and works with what is already in place and not trying to reinvent the wheel. This takes time, energy, resources, and commitment.

Be flexible, one size doesn't fit all - the offer to organisations and individuals must be responsive. The thinking was to facilitate one workshop in each organisation and invite participants to the residencies, the reality was different. Often two or three visits and workshops were needed to get people feeling able to share their ideas in a creative way

Have a Project Advisory Group - they help steer and shape the project and act as a litmus paper to check that the work was relevant, well-pitched and needed. Also, to co-create work with and lead the evaluation process.

Time – It is about creating works that complements and works with what is already in place and not trying to reinvent the wheel. This takes time, energy, resources, and commitment.

BIRKENHEAD



COMMUNITY

Community like a coin has two sides

Inclusion-friendship- mutual respect

Working together

vs

Dereliction -anti social behaviour

Thoughtlessness

Being kind to each other-listening-communication

Integration

vs

isolation-afraid to walk out at night

let's make our community strong-acceptance and love

Looking out for everyone

Poem produced by group at St. Pauls, Prescott.

BOOTLE



To identify **local themes** at the start of the project people were asked two questions: what issues are important to you? Does theatre have any place in telling your story?

Through the street interviews and initial contact with groups, the issues that people identified as being important to them included: -

- Poverty,
- Not being heard by local councillors
- Drugs
- Crime
- Not feeling safe at night,
- Scooters on the streets
- Regeneration.
- Isolation

These issues were taken to the outreach workshop, where they were explored creatively and added to, struggle and survive became the collective themes.

People wrote poems, created scenes, and made manifestos that spoke of their struggles.

Interestingly in both Bootle and Birkenhead when people were asked if theatre had any place in telling their stories, people said yes, but they didn't want theatre to only focus on the negatives. One woman said, "Yes theatre has its place, but we don't need to see theatre that show us how hard our life is, we know that as we are living it, we want theatre of hope."

During Lockdown people wanted to create a piece of digital theatre, that touch on struggle, but they wanted it to be uplifting too which is how The Legend of the Mernix, came into being. It focused on finding hope in the amazing people, groups and organisations that work in the community, trying to make a positive difference.

In Knowsley post lockdown, people identified isolation as being the main issues, they explored this and looked at how connectivity and community could be the antidote to this.

As the outreach work came to an end and we looked at themes for the final piece it became clear that Isolation, Struggle, Community and Hope encompassed all that had been explored.

An aerial photograph of a coastline. A large, dark blue body of water occupies the upper half of the frame. A prominent, forested peninsula with a jagged coastline extends into the water. The lower half of the image shows a lighter-colored, sandy or rocky shoreline with some sparse vegetation and a few small buildings or structures visible in the distance.

PHASE TWO

LOCKDOWNS



Image description:: Zoom still image of nine people. They are all looking at the camera and counting with their fingers



The plan was for the Bootle and Birkenhead groups to merge into one in April 2020, but Covid-19 interrupted that idea. This meant it was a period of experimentation and accommodation. Collective Encounters worked to adapt creatively, find ways to support vulnerable participants and exchange learning with the wider participatory arts sector. In Abi Horsfield's own words, "Above & Beyond was in a positive place when Lockdown started, there were two core groups and strong partnerships with organisations in community. In the first weeks all the participants and partners were contacted and spoken to about what support they might need; digital audits were also carried out with participants to see if they had access to the internet so they could participate online. On April the 9th we had had a PAG meeting and on the April the 15th we were delivering drama sessions on Zoom. As the Bootle and Birkenhead groups had not met in person, we ran the sessions in two separate groups until June 17th when we brought them together. Some people chose not to participate on Zoom, these people were telephoned every fortnight for a check-in. As the group grew in confidence on Zoom, it was decided to do a scratch

project. In November 2020 a digital piece of theatre called 'Lockdown' was shared with an invited audience".

The Project Advisory Group discussed things that they felt the final evaluation report needed to highlight. What stood out as particularly important for many was the vital and changing role and delivery approaches during the extended isolation of the pandemic.

"It needs to include how you brought normality into our lives on Zoom"

"The transitions, from the person in a room to Zoom... how drama is something people look forward to now, and through lockdown it was something to get out of bed for".

"Connectivity – how isolated we were and how Zoom was like have friends round for coffee with the added bonus of being creative"

"I realised how good arts and creative stuff, really helps your mental health"

During the first lockdown, emerging artists were supported through a micro-commission open call

Just sat here crying at this by @NathanPowell141. So simple and beautiful. Made me think about duty - beyond like what we are told "success" is in life we have a duty in this world to make everyone else's life easier and more beautiful. What else are we doing? - **Tweet about Small Gifts, Nathan Powell**

GREEN OCEANS

by Tom George

OUR GRASS ROOTS

by Emily Garrett

THE SOUND OF OUR LOCKDOWN

by Aisling Leyne

THANK YOU

by Amber Akanu

A COMMUNITY ACTION MANIFESTO

by Heidi Henders

COMMUNITY POWER

by Immy Llewlyn

QUEER LETTERS

by Antony Scott

WE ARE STARDUST

by Dora Colquhoun and Jonathon McGuire

SMALL GIFTS

by Nathan Powell

COMMUNITY POWER COAT

by Kate Reilly James

<https://collective-encounters.org.uk/above-beyond-micro-commissions/>

ISOLATION

Left out

Alone

Depressed

Anxious

I withdraw-I don't eat-self harm

Headaches-stomach pain

Crying-silent darkness

control-coercive control-bullied

I'm told what to do


Cut off-locked in-shy

Brave-I'm lonely in a crowd

Trapped in my own world

Darkness

Poem produced by group at St. Pauls, Prescott.

An aerial photograph of a coastal region. A large, irregularly shaped bay or inlet is the central feature, surrounded by land. The land is a mix of green and brown, suggesting vegetation and possibly some urban or developed areas. The water in the bay is a deep blue. The overall image has a high-contrast, somewhat grainy quality.

PHASE THREE

JANUARY 2021 – JANUARY 2022

Collective Encounters continued to run participatory projects throughout lockdown, supporting creative exchange with other groups and the production and exchange of experimental digital participatory theatre outcomes. Having developed confidence and expertise, the group were ready to begin work on a public piece that could be shared within ongoing restrictions.

“In January 2021 we advertised for a digital film maker, the PAG were involved in creating the advert, interviewing, and appointing Caitlin Strongarm. This was the first step in the creation of The Legend of the Mernix. The group were still not meeting face to face as people in the group were shielding and as a company the decision was made to stay working digitally.” Abi Horsfield

The group began work devising, creating characters and scenes. During March the script, by Sarah Thornton and Abi Horsfield, was produced with group edits and approval. Members of the PAG were involved in production, creative and marketing meetings.

An intensive two-weeks of production period, 12– 23 April 2021, followed by editing and music composition, resulted in Legend of the Mernix. This ambitious hybrid

project of two intersecting digital journeys and accompany walking tours in Bootle and Birkenhead was launched locally on 3 June 2021 and nationally on 8 July 2021.

From June 2021, outreach began in Knowsley, with desk research into the communities and psychogeography drifts with the core group. The group co-produced all creative aspects of the Legend of the Mernix, devising and performing characters, creating the animated drawings and audio recording.

“My favourite things in the Mernix were being trusted to make music and encouraging others to play music for specific video.” Participant

As part of an exchange with Collective Encounters Women in Action and two groups from Active Inquiry, Edinburgh, sharing a film about what we do and our communities before online workshops together, June 2021.



**THE LEGEND OF THE MERNIX, a digital quest and walking tour
showcasing Bootle & Birkenhead produced by Above & Beyond
participants in winter/spring 2021**



legendofthemernix.org.uk

STRUGGLE

Struggle with life

Struggle to get up in the morning

Struggle to wash my hair

Struggle to write

Struggle with love

Children

Struggle to reach out

To understand

≈To make the right decision

There is a lack of food

A lack of money

A lack of the ability to like myself

Difficult friendships

Mental health

Physical health

Learning differences

Pain

Lack of respect

Struggled to pay the bills

to say no

It is hard not to take on the world and other people's problems

Struggle to get clothes that fit

Self-image-weight

The struggle is to be perfect in an imperfect world

Poem produced by group at St. Pauls, Prescott.



PHASE FOUR

KNOWSLEY OUTREACH

Outreach activity launched in **Knowsley** followed the same process of desk research, psychogeograph drift and street interviews leading to partner connections and taster workshops. Due to the size of Knowsley, three focus areas were identified: Prescot (Bryer Road Estate), Huyton and Kirkby.

An outreach session at ABC Boxing Club, Kirkby in November 2021, resulted in two interviews, planned sessions in January 2022 with Southdene Community Centre women's group, Kirkby were cancelled, with the group disbanded due to COVID-19. Despite limited tasters, residencies were launched with three partners: St. Pauls and Knowsley Veterans in Prescot and Minerva Womens Group, Huyton, delivered between January and November 2022.

The climate for this relationship building work was more challenging following the pandemic:

- People were not willing to engage with street interviews attempted in Huyton and Kirkby
- Community centres running groups, including existing partners, all responded was that it was too soon for outside agencies and were still limiting numbers.
- Home-working was still wide-spread and many groups and networks were suspended. Offers of

online workshops were not taken up, with feedback that telephone contact had been the main link during lockdown due to digital poverty.

- Cancellation and postponement was common.

Following a taster in January with a high level of participation, a monthly workshop was delivered with St Pauls, at which four poems were created.

Minerva Women's Group and Knowsley Veterans also had a programme of workshops after initial challenges relaunching the group after restrictions.



On 5 February 2022 the group began to meet face-to-face on Saturday, alongside the weekly online workshops. The renamed 'Adult Theatre for Social Change' company met once a month, then every three weeks and, from September 2022, fortnightly. Abi brought elements from in person and weekly online sessions to encourage exchange, as well as theatrical responses to the work being produced by the community activity.

Partners have also enabled the group to perform and interact with wider contexts and audience, moving from internal online cabarets to public events. The group were working on a performance for early 2023.

Community **legacy** was central to Above & Beyond's aims. While long-term embedding of activity was disrupted by the pandemic, Collective Encounters have offered a range of support including training, volunteer mentoring and strategic steering:

- Training sessions were delivered with community partners to encourage staff and volunteers use of creativity for fun, to build a group, for sharing issues and for evaluation.
- Continued engagement with Sefton Borough of

Culture Active Enquiry and Sefton Performers network. Creative Evaluation training was delivered in November 2022.

- Establishing a creative network with Imaginarium Theatre company, Prescott, to encourage creativity and share resources.
- Abi Horsfield continues on Swan Women's Centre Board, on the Heritage Project steering group in Sefton, in COP on the Wirral.
- Partner organisation are requesting further work and residencies to embed creativity and Theatre for Social Change practice.

The Community Chronicles was the culmination of the four years of outreach work done in Bootle, Birkenhead, and Knowsley. The script was developed by the core group and written by Abi Horsfield. The piece was performed by thirteen group members and a band of three to an audience of forty-nine.

It was a new style of participatory theatre made up of four chapters, each exploring one of the ideas that had been identified as being of particular importance in the communities. The chapters were titled: Isolation, Struggle, Community and Hope. Each chapter was a performed provocation to get the audience thinking, these provocations were followed by a facilitated tabletop activity, which got the audience to explore and respond.

The provocation around **isolation** consisted of a series of five monologues that were developed in community outreach workshops, they were titled: Trapped, Alone in a crowd, Isolated in a relationship, A carers story and The recently bereaved:

Actor one: -

A carer 's story

Alone in a space of caring, just me and my mum, I care out of love, but I'm lonely. As her needs grew, I had to leave work, I moved in with her and my relationship died. Friends called, I had nothing to say, so I stopped answering the phone. Sometimes in the evening, when she is tucked in for the night, I sit with the radio off, listening to the clock ticking, I find it strangely comforting.

The audience were asked to talk about what loneliness meant to them and then create a table statement, which were shared as part of the performance. There statements included:

- "It starts with you, there's a stigma and culture of not talking, social media doesn't help. we need to empower the individual, publicise community and support. realise you give as much as you get - empower the individual to reach out."
- "Time, care, resource"
- "Isolation – check on your neighbours, communicate, volunteer, community groups provide a listening ear."

The second chapter **struggle** was a tug of war with words that physicalised and vocalises the struggle to survive in

the UK today – the audience were asked to create a poem of paragraph, and these were performed back to the audience using playback theatre methods.

Chapter three, **Community** used the holding form of a radio talk show, with songs and testimonies celebrating connection, it included a song written by a community member in recovery:

Singer: -

Everyone thinks you just put the drugs down.

If only.

You're always a prisoner in your own mind.

Unhappy.

Walk a day in my shoes if you want to.

Judge me.

Restricted confused isolated and scared.

Tiny.

I'm on the outside looking at life happening around me.

Loveless and desolate loneliness crucifies me.

I'm worth more than this I've learnt to say no.

Connecting.

Eyes wide open limitless hear the
birds sing.

I had to change people, places
Playthings.

Celebrating, reconnecting.

Celebrating hear the birds sing.

Celebrating, reconnecting.

Celebrating hear the birds sing.

The audience were asked to write on slips of paper the answer to the question; what makes a strong community and what makes a community strong? These were placed in boxes and then on the outside of the boxes, one word of phrase was written, the boxes were then brought to the front of the stage and piled up. Here are some of the answers that were given to the question.

- A good relationship with neighbours, being polite and friendship.
- A willingness to listen to one another.
- Understanding and acceptance of different cultures and backgrounds and beliefs
- Unity - people sticking together.
- Breaking bread and sharing food brings people together.
- Compassion and kindness



**“The show was amazing, I am so grateful to this programme for doing the work that this community needs, thank you”.
COMMUNITY CHRONICLES’ AUDIENCE MEMBER**

Image description:: a room full of people sat around tables talking and writing on paper

- I hope to see a fairer world sooner rather than later - I can work with communities, campaign for justice and vote.

Every member of the audience engaged and participated, the Community Chronicles this is some of the feedback:

- Emotive, challenging, and beautiful, I am inspired.
- Fantastic participate re elements, loved the topics, keep the work coming.
- There were parts where I felt like you have speaking about me fantastic production. Thank you, inspiring as well.
- A great participatory way of sharing ideas and offering hope on issues that are very important to the voiceless.
- Love the audience participation and all the stories.

It was evident that the style of Community Chronicles worked to combine performance and meaningful audience participation. As a company reflecting after the sharing, we are going to continue to explore this style of theatre and develop it further in future productions.

HOPE

*We hope for a better world and a positive future
We look forward with faith that things will get better*

*Success to get a job-to not give up
change-
hope for health and life and love
Praying*

*Hope to make one person smile -
To know I have succeeded in one thing today*

*Hope for a more compassionate, empathetic, loving society
Where people are not afraid to shine
To be able to support others in their darkness*

*For a name
to be acknowledged for who we are
hope that our kids will grow up in a better place
A perfect world-no racists or discrimination or judgement*

Poem produced by group at St. Pauls, Prescott



QUALITY PRINCIPLES

EVALUATING QUALITY

Collective Encounters Quality Indicators and Quality Evaluation Framework were reviewed 2021-2022 to ensure these remained relevant and current. Members of the team and participants were invited to directly reflect on what's important and how this is defined and compared with evaluation feedback from community and sector partners and participants to ensure the final principles support what is valued.

The result is a set of six principles that extend the existing indicators and can be used to inform all aspects of Collective Encounters practice.

We apply the following principles to our work:

- **Inclusive and Relevant**
- **Responsive and Collaborative**
- **Creative**
- **Challenging and Provocative**
- **Empowering**
- **Developmental**

These can be applied to all dimensions of our work:

Process (Quality): These principles have underpinned the **participatory theatre processes**. They can also define our

approaches to **outreach and engagement** (connecting with individuals, infrastructure and partner networks) **pedagogy** (development programmes, facilitation and training), evaluation and research, advocacy and communications, management and governance

Product (Quality): Quality creative outcomes helps us share, celebrate and validate the people and stories that contribute to our work. These principles direct our programme content and resources, advocacy and communications materials and outputs for evaluation, research, management and governance

Platform (Appropriate): The context in which we first engage and stage on which we share work has a significant influence. The principles guide use of physical, digital and hybrid environments and the contexts in which we connect with participants, partners and audiences.

People (Change): Our social change indicators identified the individual and collective changes that TfSC can enable. These have been integrated within the principles to define how the agency of individuals, communities and wider society, as the source and subject of TfSC are addressed in our work.



INCLUSIVE & RELEVANT

INCLUSIVE & RELEVANT

Platform

The environment is safe, accessible, and helps to level the playing field for those involved.

Process

Equity, clarity and accessibility: Everyone is treated fairly, their contributions are valued and their differences are respected, aims and objectives are set with those involved and affected to ensure that they are relevant and follow a clear and appropriate approach.

Product

Content, form and aesthetic are accessible and relevant to those involved

People

Confidence and wellbeing: self-esteem, self-belief and optimism are boosted, physical and/or mental wellbeing are supported through personal development and achievement.

Social connection and cohesion: Connections and understanding developed across groups, forming new networks and relationships and respect for cultural differences.

Improved provision: Community and strategic partners make positive changes to services, reflecting and involving lived-experience and learning shared.

Key words: Access, Adapt, Appropriate, Celebrate, Connect, Current, Diversity, Equality, Equity, (Excluded), Experience, Fairness, Kind, Important, (Ignored), (Marginalised), Pertinent, Respect, Representation, Solidarity, Stories, Support, Target, Together, Understanding, Value, Voice, Warmth, Welcome

PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

One of the aims of Above & Beyond was to create a Project Advisory Group (PAG) made up of participants and partners, to support and steer the project, meaning decisions about the direction the creative outcomes and evaluation would reflect the concerns and interests of those identified as beneficiaries and the geographic communities in which the work was being delivered.

By Summer 2019, the PAG had been recruited from existing participants and new partners, working with the Collective Encounters' team to appoint the external evaluator (Claire Sharples), before being brought together to collectively define an aim for the creative output. The group (of four Radical Makers[LINK emerging artists] and two community partner representatives) came together with the Collective Encounters team, to review street interview feedback and create a logic model, identifying the activities and outputs (and assumptions and indicators) that would underpin their aim to: *"To connect and celebrate community while sharing and understanding the challenges being experienced by different groups."*

Time was spent interrogating potential evaluative methods and a programme toolkit of principles and methodologies produced, to enable the PAG and creative team to employ these in the ongoing evaluation and development of the project.

The Covid-19 pandemic redirected the capacity and priorities of the team and PAG towards replanning approaches to outreach and delivery, and meant that more involved roles gathering feedback (leading interviews, observation and creative evaluation) were reduced. However the PAG continued to convene and evolve (to include newer members of the communities in which Above & Beyond was being delivered), shaping creative outcomes and reviewing programme aims and approaches to ensure that they remained relevant.

QUALITY INDICATOR EXAMPLE



Five hands all clenching fists joined in a circle



“Make it Happen are here for everyone in the local community. We have been involved with Collective Encounters for a number of years, recognising the community had stories to tell and that Collective Encounters were very proactive at working with individuals struggling to have a voice.”



RESPONSIVE & COLLABORATIVE

RESPONSIVE & COLLABORATIVE

Platform

Targeted: Extends and deepens engagement to meet different stakeholders and audience

Process

Adapted to the individuals, groups, context and subject matter and guided by participants with a strong sense of ownership
Lines of communication and influence are open to nurture collective creative processes, decision making and procedures that offer consistency while being flexible and responsive where necessary

Product

Content, form and aesthetic reflect the diversity and plurality and common interests and concerns of those involved, shaped for the audience and context

People

Identity and belonging: Individual identity and experience is valued and belonging formed or found within the wider group or community; there is an increased sense of pride in the group or community

Policy: Positive and self-defined representations in public/ social/political policies.

Key words: Diverse, Experience, Common, Cause, Rooted, Ethics, Communities, Together, Share, Explore, Difference, Connections, Disciplines, Sectors, Cultures, Countries Equality, Power, Relations/Dynamics, Respect, Co-Creation, Democratic, Voice, Participation, Belonging, Involvement, Representation. Empathy, Identity, Intention

COLLABORATIVE OUTREACH

Collective Encounters outreach and practice as research approach gradually develops connections and understanding:

- Desk research: Identify background data and local partners.
- Creative Engagement: Psychogeographic drifts and street interviews.
- Taster sessions with local partners.
- Extended residencies.
- Bringing together a core group of participants to develop creative outcomes

These steps allowed relationships to develop gradually, with Collective Encounters to address individual concerns, identifying collective themes and issues, sharing information and shaping the project in response to this learning:

“It became clear that there had been other organisations that had parachuted into communities, so there was some resistance to us being there from certain quarters.” Abi Horsfield

“ Working in this area for the last 17 years we have had lots of companies and organisation do things on 'Knife Crime', 'domestic Violence' 'Hate crime' ' mental health' etc. in order to raise awareness - but people here don't need to raise awareness - they live it - they need to be built up, told they have power and given the opportunity to exercise it - unless there is an audience to hear their voice they are just shouting in the dark and it does more damage. Is there an outlet for voice to be heard? Even our local authorities etc. know all the above but have little power due to cuts etc to do more than they are? Systemic change comes about through changing mindsets - and people here do not need to be told how bad things are - but how great they are - and then they need to be heard by people who will make change - government/ philanthropists etc.”

QUALITY INDICATOR EXAMPLE



Collective Encounters' collaborative and responsive approach allayed these concerns, providing a space to explore and express common challenges, without limiting focus to only these. Individuals who wanted to engage further (partners and participants) were invited to the Project Advisory Group, which defined the aims for the creative process and product.

"The outreach workshops were designed to stimulate participant responses to the issues that were important to them, providing content to inspire and inform the final production. They included the creation of manifesto's and 'soap box' moments, poetry, games, characters and 10-line plays." Abi Horsfield

"You get people engaging in a way that no one else has, they loved doing the poetry and talking about what is important to them, it would be great to learn your techniques."

Rev Kim, St Paul's Prescott, January 2022

Sometimes more practical solutions were required to support community engagement, and Collective Encounters adapted to provide partners with tools and resources, training and development. Two examples include Creative Fridays and the partner training offer:

CREATIVE FRIDAYS

During the lockdown, contact with the partner organisations in Bootle and Birkenhead identified useful support that Collective Encounters could offer them and their participants.

Several organisations wanted to reach out creatively to their communities, which resulted in the development of ten "Creative Friday" sheets, with creative activities and stimuli that people could do at home either on their own or with family members.

These sheets were sent out weekly to over 100 people in the community via email and WhatsApp.

"This led to some of our partners asking if we would develop some creative training so they could look at injecting creativity into their work." Abi Horsfield

QUALITY INDICATOR EXAMPLE



CREATIVITY IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

"I wish I could get the group being creative like you do"

Zoe, Manager at the Kindfulness Coffee Club, July 2021

Partner organisations shared that they would like to be more confident at using creativity with their participants. This led to the development and delivery of four training workshops in February - March 2022.

Workshop topics were guided by the requests made by partner organisations and designed to be stand alone. Participants could attend just one or gain different skills from each workshop:

- **Creativity for fun:** Offering playful creative exercises, encouraging people to have a laugh without feeling self-conscious.
- **Creativity to get group members sharing ideas:** Focused on asking the right questions, using creativity to build confidence in having and voicing opinions and enable people to feel that their ideas are of value.
- **Creative evaluation:** Nobody enjoys filling out forms, this session focused how to evaluate peoples' experiences through creative exercises and share experiences a wider audience.
- **Creativity to build a team:** - this focused on creative ways to

build teams and activities that encourage people to work together.

The exercises used in the workshops were collated in a resource to take away and use to guide delivery in the community. Each workshop was facilitated in a different location, to maximise access, visibility and travel between community partners, reaching individuals beyond those who initially registered an interest

In the first session a staff member in the building, engaged with the training and contacted Abi Horsfield following to share that she led a creative exercise with a group she works with, and they loved it. In the another workshop, one of the participants was reluctant and negative about the process but by the end was engaging fully and enjoying the creativity, even though it was outside of her comfort zone.

This practical training provides partners with tools that can be applied and shared more widely and is an area Collective Encounters intend to develop further.

QUALITY INDICATOR EXAMPLE



Image description:: Two people stood up looking at each other deep in conversation. The picture is in black and white and there is a brick wall and railings behind them



“When commencing the project, we didn’t truly appreciate the impact it would have on our participants. Abi in everything she does goes way above and beyond to adapt, to ensure every participant is comfortable, that the activities are fun, engaging and inclusive. Abi has opened doors for our programme that we never considered before.”

An aerial photograph of a coastline. A large, dark, forested landmass is on the right, with a body of water to its left. The water is a mix of blue and green, with some white foam visible near the shore. The sky is a pale blue. The word "CREATIVE" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters.

CREATIVE

CREATIVE

Platform

Environments and staging are rooted and appropriate, while exploring varied, unusual and surprising spaces and approaches.

Process

Creative: the process involves artistic and creative opportunities; it is exciting, fun and enriching; it increases understanding and appreciation of theatre and the arts.

Product

High quality: Aspirational in aesthetic and exciting, inspiring, inventive and ambitious in the communication of ideas.

People

Personal expression: Freedom to experiment, play and re/imagine is embraced and valued.

Community creativity: Individuals and communities are more able to express and explore their creativity and have greater confidence in being creative.

Network support: Civic organisations are supported and encouraged to embed creativity in community practice.

Key words: Absorbing, Artists, Aspiration, Co/Create, Change, Do, Delight, Entertain, Engage, Enrich, Envision, Excite, Express, Exploration, Freedom, Fun, Imagine, Inspire, Perform, Play, Risk/Fear, Non-Judgement, Quality, Rehearse, Reimagine, Surprise, Think, Unusual

WALKSHOPS

How do different places make us feel and behave?

The term psychogeography was invented by the Marxist theorist Guy Debord in 1955 to explore this. Psychogeography describes the effect of a geographical location on the emotions and behaviour of individuals.

Psychogeographic drifts were part of the research into the Above & Beyond communities with creative responses (poems) shared in outreach workshops for other groups to respond to creatively.

Aim: To see a place with new eyes and explore personal responses to the environment

Time: 40 minutes - 2+ hours

Equipment: Your pre-planned route and materials to document the experience (eg. pens, paper, cameras)

1. Before you go, pick a starting point and pre-plan the turns your route will take.
2. Arrive at your destination and begin your drift, following your instructions and taking note of all you experience.
3. Take time to consider, and encourage others to consider, what is seen, heard, smelt, and the wider sense of place and the feelings it evokes.

4. The walks, conducted alone or with others, gather subjective responses to the environment. Some of this may be factual details or questions, it will also reflect the associations each individual makes.
5. These responses can stimulate a shared conversation following and be shaped into poems and other creative responses, with these continuing to be used to inspire activity in future workshops.

QUALITY INDICATOR EXAMPLE



SHARE YOUR STORY

Aim: To get people creating theatre from their own stories

Time: 15 – 20 mins

Equipment: Pens and paper

1. Split people into pairs, each one labelled A or B.
2. Ask A to tell a story of the time in their life they have encountered an issue (usually a theme discussed and agreed with the group earlier).
3. Encourage them to tell the story in full describing where it happened what the feelings were what the actions were, as a detailed story.
4. Once A has told their story, B can then tell their own story about the issue.
5. Once they have both shared, ask them to pick one of the stories and use it to create a 10-line play. Each line of the play must start with a third person pronoun and verb. Offer the example 'She said...' 'He did...' 'They thought...'
6. When they have created their 10-line play they are going to find a way to perform/share it with the group, including the full line. Eg. "They said..."

People do struggle with this at first, but it is a really great way to get people devising in a structured and safe way.

They can see the results and see the experience in the abstract, once removed from their original story. An example of a play about a woman who was a rough sleeper and was attacked on the streets.

He said "Oi Scum"
She did nothing
He walked towards her
She did nothing
He kicked her
She did nothing
He laughed
She did nothing
He walked away
She wiped the spit from her face

QUALITY INDICATOR EXAMPLE

MY MANIFESTO

This was an exercise in many of the Above & Beyond outreach workshops to encourage people to think about the issues that were important to them and to use this information to shape the next phases and focus of creative workshops and outcomes.

Aim: To get people to think about what issues are important to them and to make pledges for change

Time: 15 Minutes

Equipment: Pens and paper

1. Start by exploring what is meant by the term Manifesto. We often associate them with elections and political parties, but they can be adopted by any organisation or group. A useful definition is “a written statement of aims, beliefs and ideals/policies”.
2. Explain that you want people to create their own manifesto; it can be a manifesto for a time period, e.g. a manifesto for the year, about the local community or a specific focus.
3. Ask people to name their manifesto, and then imagine three things that are important to them, they can be personal, local, national, or international. Encourage people to be creative, and use their current experiences.

People can write in prose, or create poetry, pictures, or a mixture of all of them. People can decorate them too, so they become beautiful works of art.

When people have created their manifestos, you can ask them to share them, either with the group, or in pairs. The manifestos can be put on the wall, used as stimulus for discussions or scenes - and shared with a decision maker. You could create a group manifesto, getting each person to add one section.



QUALITY INDICATOR EXAMPLE



CHALLENGING & PROVOCATIVE

CHALLENGING & PROVOCATIVE

Platform

Finds new terrain and meets audiences in surprising, unusual ways and/or settings that create new encounters or encourage different perspectives

Process

Challenging: Everyone is encouraged to voice opinions, share experiences, ask questions and explore ideas that they might not otherwise have done; Trying out new ways of tackling issues

Provocative

Stimulating audiences to think in new ways, to question inequality and the system, offering new insights and calling people to action

Product

Provocative: Stimulating audiences to think in new ways, to question inequality and the system, offering new insights and calling people to action

People

Attitudes: People think about things in new ways, being more open-minded and questioning. Gaining a better understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens and feeling able to speak up for things that matter to them. Perceptions of marginalised groups are improved; awareness of prescient issues increases

Culture: Positive change organisations, operations and groups/ community mindset.

Key words: Change, Choice, Better, Fairer, Powerful Tool, System, Inequalities, Challenge, Debate, Conversation, Provoke, Action, Power, Politics, Dynamics, Relations, Under/Represented, Exclusion, Marginalised, Discrimination), Systemic Change, Argument, Opinion, Voice, Choice. Understanding, Making Strange, Unexpected.

Image description:: Two people have their arms around each other looking towards the camera. They each have a hand up to their mouth shouting. There is a neon sign behind them saying 'Strike' Picture credit:MADS MAX FURY ROAD @slayerfest_98



COST OF LIVING

They say increases
Shopping bill increased
petrol bill increased
Gas, electric bill increased
Billionaires cash accounts increased

It's a worry for me and others
Uncertainty
Driving is a luxury
Heating is a luxury
Eating well is seen as a luxury
Is it a luxury to be alive now?

What's going to happen?
Mind is exploding with worry

Benefits stay the same
Hardship got worse
Winter setting in
We ask for decreases, we need decreases

They decreased funding for the NHS
Is this the tip of the iceberg?

He said: what are we going to do?
she said: what can we do it's hopeless
he said: I'm afraid to put the lights on
she said: I've got to go to food banks now
he said: I'm scared to put the heating on
she said: I can't feed my kids
he said: I go to the library to keep warm
she said: I ride the buses to keep warm
he said: nobody's got any answers
she said: why don't we help each other.

Struggle

People are struggling and the government are out of touch
We're paying the price for their mistakes, it's not right
Having to choose to eat, heat, or pay the rent
Tents on the street ever present
They advocate food banks
The poor helping the poorer
social supermarkets stop the stress of rising prices
the queues around the block

I ask myself will I get through winter
thankful some mild weather
as I sit in the dark, wrapped in my heated blanket, they're jumping off the shelves,
my radiators' stone cold.

local charities giving out blankets and small grants for fuel
campaigning for change, a real living wage, a general election
generosity of neighbours

Am I a lucky one?
It makes me think what about the older people, the poorer people, the homeless people

Where is the hope?
Where is the hope?
We try hard but it's not coming.

Image description:: a group of people sitting on chairs in a large room holding placards with various slogans on to highlight violence against women





EMPOWERING

EMPOWERING

Platform

Connects with communities and extends their voice and reach, creating greater ownership of more areas, extending reach and scope of impact and supporting routes to action.

Process

Making sense of the world, individuals place and the power dynamics at play. Investing in relationships and resources, to support different ways of thinking and doing, elevate and encourage.

Product

Important: in helping us to make sense of our place in the world, lifting the audience above the realm of the day to day, offering something beyond simple entertainment; and holding the possibility of change.

People

Empowerment: people feel that they have had their voices heard, that their opinions matter and they have the capacity to bring about changes. Horizons are widened and expectations lifted, with an increased sense of self-determination.

Political engagement: Increased democratic participation, from voting to local activism and involvement in decision making.

Key Words: Action, Activists, Left-Behind, Race/Few, Odds, Realities, Expose, Champion, Rights, Status Quo, (Challenge), Alternatives, Change, Rehearse, Possibilities, New, Play, Voice, Transformative, Motivation, Opportunity, Power, Politics, Relations, Dynamics, Responsibility, Conscientious, Elevating, Important

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONY

I've had so many highlights and lightbulb moments with Collective Encounters.

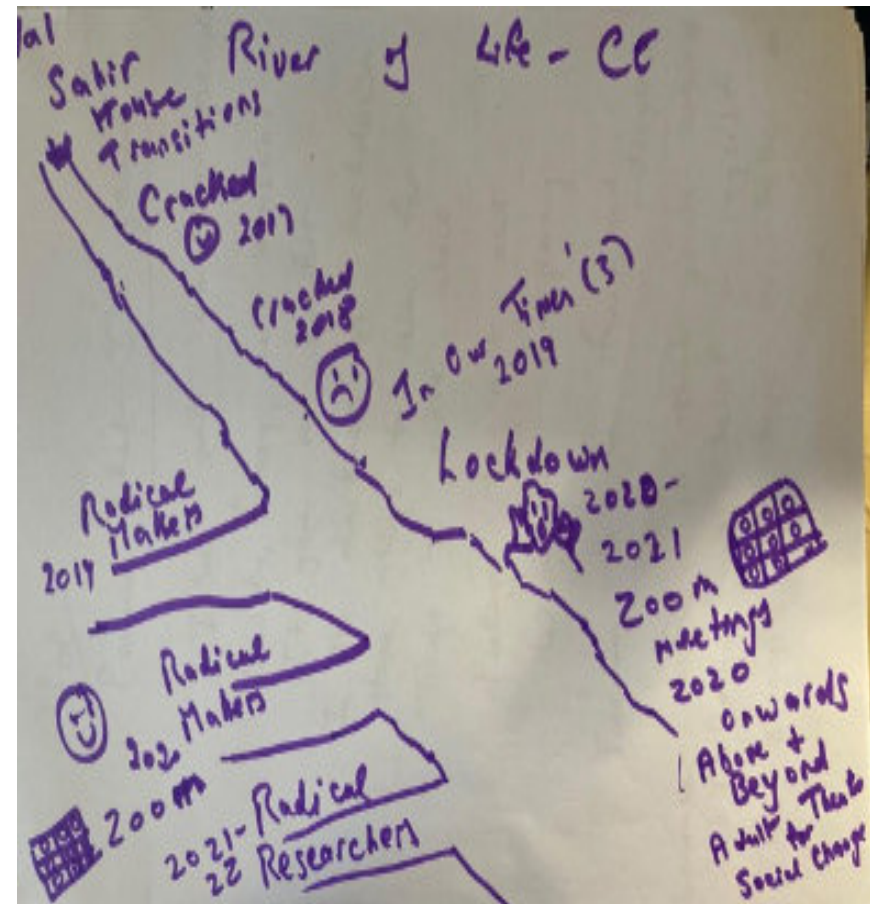
I think the first time one came was when I was acting in Cracked for the first time.

I didn't know how I would fit in, I was much older than most of the others, but I was determined to have a go.

I have always been able to make people laugh, and I thought I would use this.

Abi gave me some wonderful lines about selling my used knickers on eBay, some people might have been embarrassed, but I thought "What the hell" and I came out with the words and it certainly raised a laugh. The feeling of satisfaction it gave me was tremendous.

Another highlight was what Matty, and Aidan encouraged me to do a playwriting course. I got great satisfaction about creating characters and setting scenes.



QUALITY INDICATOR EXAMPLE

PARTICIPANT CASE STUDY

Carolyn joined the core Above & Beyond group after seeing another Collective Encounters project opportunity advertised in Autumn 2020. The group was working on the hybrid production the Legend of the Mernix, and Carolyn immediately got involved in the project, employed existing skills in new ways and picking up new skills during the production of the piece. She shared her experience:

The initial project I applied for wasn't suitable for me, so they directed me towards Above & Beyond and I am so glad they did! I was involved in the whole creative process. I also composed the music. I had an interest in making music for theatre, but no experience, it was wonderful to be trusted to create the music with some brilliant support from Aidan. I loved composing the music, especially using words the group had come up with to create the shanty, I felt so happy and proud. I enjoyed creating music to go with the videos for each section, letting the storytelling inspire the music. The project was amazing. I loved how Abi guided us in creating the story and characters, how we expanded them and developed their stories – this process made us own the Mernix, our final project which looked brilliant online. I knew nothing about animation, it was fun to create in this way with Caitlin (the filmmaker that the PAG members recruited to support the production]. I liked taking photos and videos and them being used in the project. Overall, I gained confidence both personally and creatively from being involved. It was empowering doing creative things I had never tried before. I feel Collective Encounters has expanded my creativity and helped my self-confidence, now due to work I am unable to be there I really miss that. My favourite things in the Mernix were being trusted to make music and encouraging others to play music for specific videos, narrating Suzanne's story and the creative process: coming up with ideas and characters, gradually expanding one little detail, story, or character each week until we had a whole story. Reading the amazing script, it felt so true to what we had devised. I have loved sharing ideas with other people and turning them into all kinds of creative things it's made me think in new ways. It is a joy being creative with other people.

QUALITY INDICATOR EXAMPLE



PARTICIPANT TESTIMONY

Throughout my time with Collective Encounters, I gained friends, qualifications, expanded my creative abilities and opportunities I completed

- Radical Makers
- Confidence through creativity
- Above and Beyond is ongoing

When I searched the highs and lows
Of the waves of the net
COLLECTIVE ENCOUNTERS popped and
I thought "What the heck" (Happy)
I have waited for years to grow and nurture
My arty nature through arty play because
Of the past Vultures.
I was low, feeling down
In my pain, looking for the stick to grab
And hold on to, to pull me out of the
Quicksand.



QUALITY INDICATOR EXAMPLE

An aerial photograph of a coastal region, likely in the United Kingdom, showing a large bay with a prominent headland on the right. The land is a mix of green fields and brownish terrain, with some buildings visible. The water is a deep blue-grey. The word "DEVELOPMENTAL" is overlaid in large white letters.

DEVELOPMENTAL

DEVELOPMENTAL

Platform

Adapts to take advantage of changes and developments (spaces, technologies, socio-political) while ensuring access for the broadest audience. Negotiates new, complex spaces to maximise reach and distinctiveness.

Process

Offers opportunities for progression, the chance to develop new skills and affects positive changes. It reaches out to new partners, funding streams and relevant areas of work.

Product

Technically accomplished: demonstrating an appropriate level of technical expertise, sound production values and seamless delivery and adapting to new technologies.

People

People have learned new, or enhanced existing skills (inter-personal, life, creative etc). They may have improved coping strategies and increased knowledge. The scope of local provision and practices is increased to reduce external limitations.

Key words: Excellence, Development, Learn, Share, Extend, Deepen, Enhance, Dream, Future, Impact, Art. Feedback, Guidance, Motivation, Person-Centred, Accessible, Adapt, Support, Rigour, Dynamism, Ambition

NEW GROUPS

Above & Beyond was designed to be a developmental programme. The funding, over four years, was part of Paul Hamlyn Foundation's 'More and Better' remit and supported Collective Encounters' aspiration to extend their community based practice, organisational resilience and reach, and the networking and knowledge sharing of the wider participatory sector.

Information about the sector facing programme learning shared in response to lockdown [and work with community partners is available, including commissions produced across platforms and addressing themes that could not have been envisaged at the point of design, such as responses to global crises (pandemic, BLM, climate emergency), developing practice and technologies..

The experiences of individuals that joined the company during the period, demonstrate some of the developmental journeys that were supported individually and collectively. Community outreach activity offered tasters to build connections and awareness:

'with a one-off workshop people would only give stock answers to the questions and for many people who had not participated in the arts since school it was too short a process for them to have the confidence to be creative.' Abi Horsfield

People who participated in taster workshops were invited to the residencies and then the core group. This process reached people who had not previously been aware of the company or TfSC, supporting integration with longer-term participants, as part of the core group, PAG and other programmes of interest and relevance to each individual.

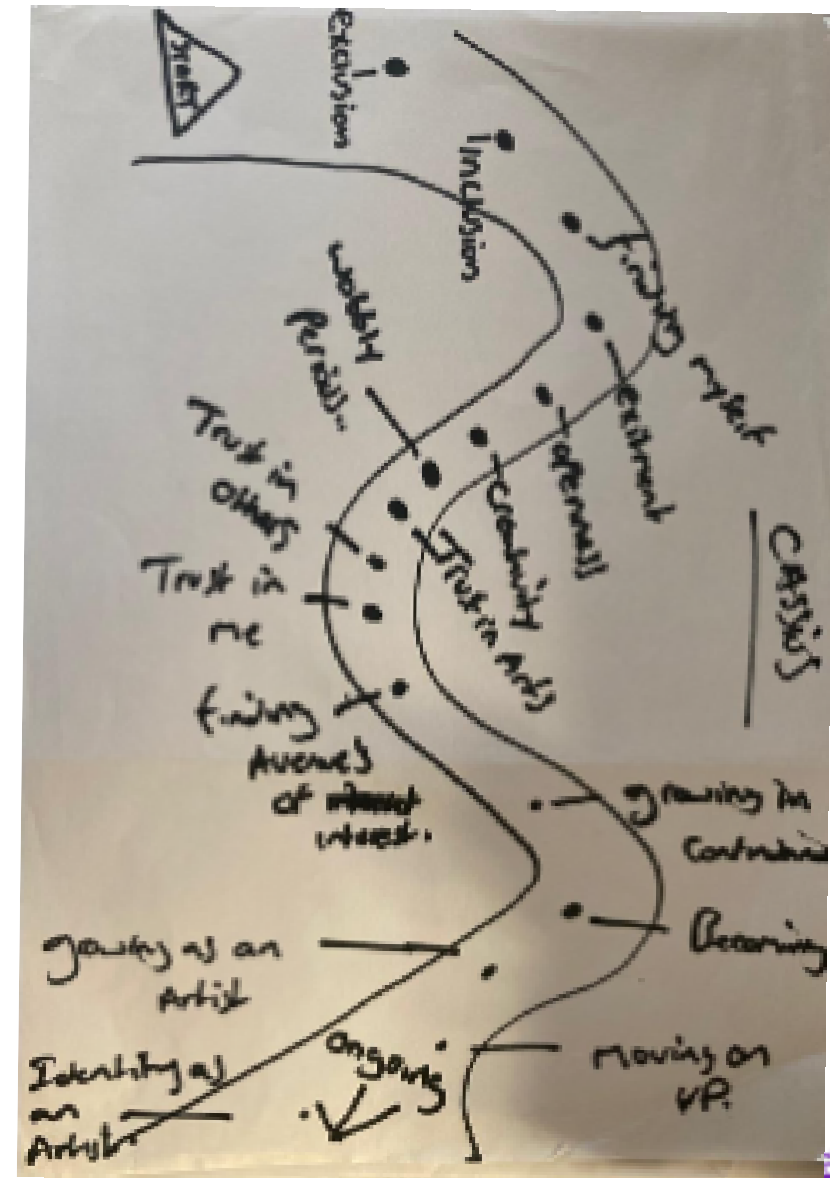
Group members creative articulation of their journeys share some common threads despite differing origins and diverse experiences:

- A non-threatening and non-judgemental arena, encouraging exploration and connection.
- Being stretched and challenged, a degree of pressure.
- Meeting the challenge, surprising themselves with their own capacity.
- Seeking further opportunities and connections

QUALITY INDICATOR EXAMPLE

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONY

To be on the outside and just simply drift away.
To be accepted and loved and want to stay.
To voice an opinion and listen and have lots to say
Is my development through others that creates
who I am.
To know I'm valued and know I can.
To see an endless, boundless sky.
Without limits that grows so high up on high.
Knowing my passions are listened to, as I do to
others.
I'm no longer hiding beneath the covers.
I'm alive, I'm free in this western world.
I will shout, I will scream, I shall be heard.
Above all else though it may sound absurd
I'm whole when I'm with others who are like me or
not moving with the herd.



QUALITY INDICATOR EXAMPLE

An aerial photograph of a vast, rugged mountain range. The peaks are covered in a thick layer of snow, contrasting with the dark, rocky slopes. A small, calm lake is visible in the lower-left foreground, reflecting the surrounding landscape. The overall scene is one of natural grandeur and isolation.

CONCLUSION



Above & Beyond was designed as a programme offering Collective Encounters the opportunity to review and extend their Theatre for Social Change practice over a four year period. The Covid-19 pandemic, and necessary learning and adjustment that took place due to its impacts, had a significant effect on planning and delivery. The connections and capacity afforded by the programme funding and initial outreach were refocussed to address the changing needs, circumstances and priorities of the various stakeholders, within the parameters of planned outcomes and the company's remit and expertise.

Project outcomes focused on the associated beneficiary
For individuals and communities:

- Access and engagement by marginalised individuals
- Marginalised groups experience the personal and civic benefits of participation
- Continued access and participation

Activities undertaken to achieve access and engagement shifted from in person, localised outreach to the online platforms and resource sharing, with the Collective

Encounters team developing the skills appropriate for using these platforms and addressing access barriers .

Supporting the social and emotional effects of the pandemic and lockdown became the most immediate priority, with marginalised groups experiencing these disproportionately. The local links that had been developed proved crucial for the ongoing trust, understanding and dialogue required to arrange alternative provision. While the medium and long term outcomes have been affected, all targets for reach and engagement with activities were met in first year, indicating appropriate project design, understanding of delivery contexts and employment of appropriate methods, drawing on prior experience and expertise within the team. These activities have developed and sustained foundations that continue to provide valuable legacy potential, from cross-borough training networks to strategic steering, encouraging community creativity and theatre for social change practices to continue being supported locally.

The Project Advisory Group, identified that creative outcomes should result in:

- Positive connections and shared understanding across

the community.

- Sustainable connections.
- Different groups being brought together.
- Different areas being brought together.

Despite changing timelines and formats (group merger, hybrid delivery and digital presentation) with discussion with the Project Advisory Group, these creative outcomes remained the same.

The core group comprised members of different groups and communities, with the Legend of the Mernix offering a physical and digital journey across these different areas, sharing varied and common experience through a script based on real lives and experiences, shared via group devising processes during workshops and performed by members of the group .

Activity will continue with participants via the Adult Theatre for Social Change company (as well as other programme strands and the Project Advisory Group, providing wider organisational steering) and with partners, developing and

delivering community training and other responsive guidance and provision.

Collective Encounters sought organisational development, through:

- A highly skilled workforce and diverse governance team
- Increased evidence base on the social impacts of the organisation.
- Increased profile and recognition as a leading provider of theatre for social change.

Long-term and more recent participants have taken an active role in the board and joined the staff team, with Collective Encounters working to balance meaningful engagement, diversity, representation and the skills, experience and expertise required to ensure organisational relevance and resilience. Learning within and beyond the immediate team is central to programming and research decisions.

Through delivery of the programme, work has been undertaken to review the Quality Evaluation Framework, looking at the rationale underpinning the principles and their continuing relevance to Collective Encounters' practice (as articulated by the team and participants). Initial work to

providing an open forum bringing those in the sector together to engage around a range of common issues and concerns and share practice, for those connections to develop organically over time, through regular attendance and pursuing potential partnership opportunities.

Evaluation and research activities during this period have gathered examples of individuals and groups that have overcome significant set-backs and challenges, supported by their involvement with the Theatre for Social Change creative practices, and connections made during the process; going on to apply their learning in their communities. The action learning approach established at the outset has been instrumental in responding to changing circumstances and gathering diverse feedback to instruct the varying ways Collective Encounters' intervention can support and further enable this.

While this report concludes the formal four-year programme cycle, plans that build on these foundations continue: For participants, through the activities of the Theatre for Social Change company, Project Advisory Group and network; with partners, through continued network engagement, project

development, training and expertise sharing. Internally, the work to review structures, frameworks and working models will support the continuing evolution of this work and the exchange of learning via network activities.

Collective Encounters are a small team, working in agile and adaptable ways, prioritising the responsibility they have for the individuals and communities with whom they work and benefitting from the expertise and contributions of all those with whom they engage.

During the four years of Above & Beyond, the team has developed and delivered activities and creative outcomes responding to the programme aims, despite adverse and unpredictable conditions for participants, partners and the organisation. The necessary changes made in response to the pandemic have prevented Collective Encounters embedding activity over the longer period intended, while the scope of the companies practice, as research and supporting social change, has evolved in unexpected ways.

The integral building blocks of the company's structure and practices have been stretched and strengthened throughout

the programme, through planned and unplanned challenges. There are opportunities to continue what has been initiated and return to develop deferred plans, with the benefit of the and learning that's already taken place, and to nurture the multitude of new connections and ideas catalysed by the process. Collective Encounters is well placed to identify priorities and work closely with a wide network of collaborators to ensure the resource and expertise is available to support future activity and deliver meaningful interventions that support social change.



Core Group

Keith, Marie, Bea, Paul, Andrew, Val, Janet, Heidi, Carolyn, Faye, Nicola, Diane, Cristina, Sean, Tina, Dude, Eleanor, Kimberly, Karen, Kim, Tom and Plantey, Kathleen, Aimee, Michelle, Wendy, Diane, Maxine, Marian, Jack, Marta, Mark, Tamara, Jenny, Phillipa, Nancy, Cassius, Sandra, Liz, Richard, Megan, Garry, Susanne, Debbie, Sheree, Steve.

Participatory Advisory Group Members

Brian – Core group member – Knowsley, Arthur – Community member Bootle, Karen – Shared reading organisation Bootle, Becks - St James's Centre Birkenhead, Andrew – Core Group Member – Birkenhead, Val - Core Group Member - Liverpool, Tim – Community Member - Birkenhead, Sheree – Core group - Birkenhead, Nicola – Core Group Member – Birkenhead, Marie - Core Group Member – Bootle, Keith - Core group member - Knowsley, Zoe – Kindfulness Coffee Club Bootle, Kim – Core group member - Knowsley, Sasha – Community member - Knowsley.

Community Partners

Make it Happen, In another Place, Minerva Women's Group Huyton, Aged Veterans, Everton in the Community, Kindfulness Coffee Club, St Pauls Prescot, Spider Project, Community Connectors Rock Ferry, Involve Northwest, Sefton OPERA, Ykids, Wirral COP, Tomorrows Women, SWAN women's centre, St James's Birkenhead, Open Door Charity Red Cross, Refugee Action, Imaginarium, Sefton Library Service, Sefton CVS, Regenerate, North Park Community Gardens, MYA Space, Wirral Arch, Knowsley Council Arts Team, Strand by me, Wirral Change, Bootle Liferooms, Orrell Trust, Venus, Wirral Hospital School.

Artists

Legend of the Mernix: Catlin Strongarm – Digital film maker, Carolyn - Composer, Aidan Jolly - MD, Sarah Thornton – Co-writer, Abi Horsfield - Co-writer and director. Community Chronicles: Aidan Jolly - MD and Composer, Jaydev – Musician Drums, Pete – Musician Bass player, Abi Horsfield - Writer and Director.

Collective Encounters Team

Annette Burghes Executive Director, Wendy O'Connor Programme Manager, Tessa Buddle Co-Artistic Director (Women and Youth), Aidan Jolly Co-Artistic Director (Research lead), Marianne Matusz Co-Artistic director (sector Development) Abi Horsfield Co-Artistic director (Creative Communities), Elanor Kilroy Youth Participation Producer, Michelle Richards Associate Lead Artist, Claire Sharples Evaluator



**COLLECTIVE
ENCOUNTERS**