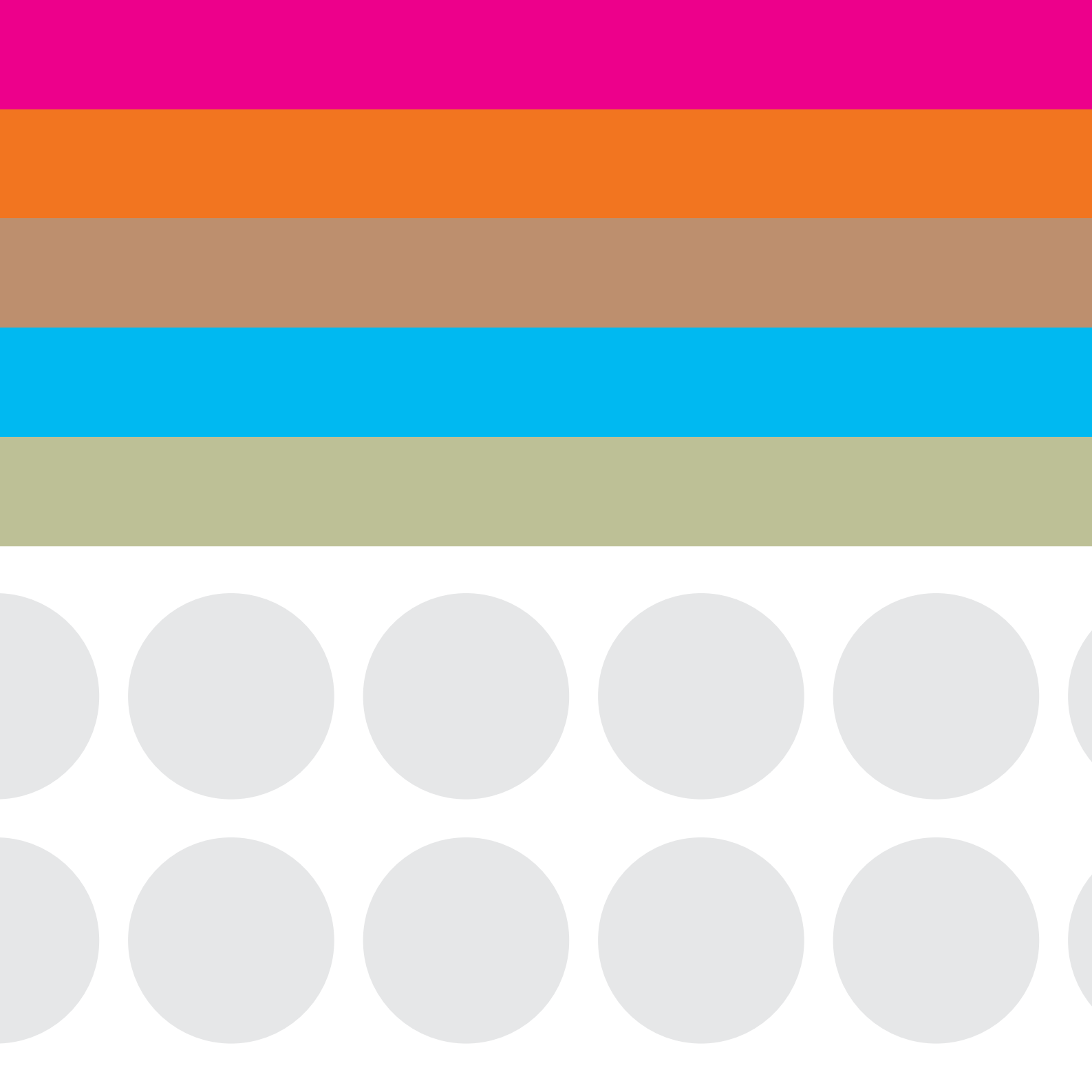
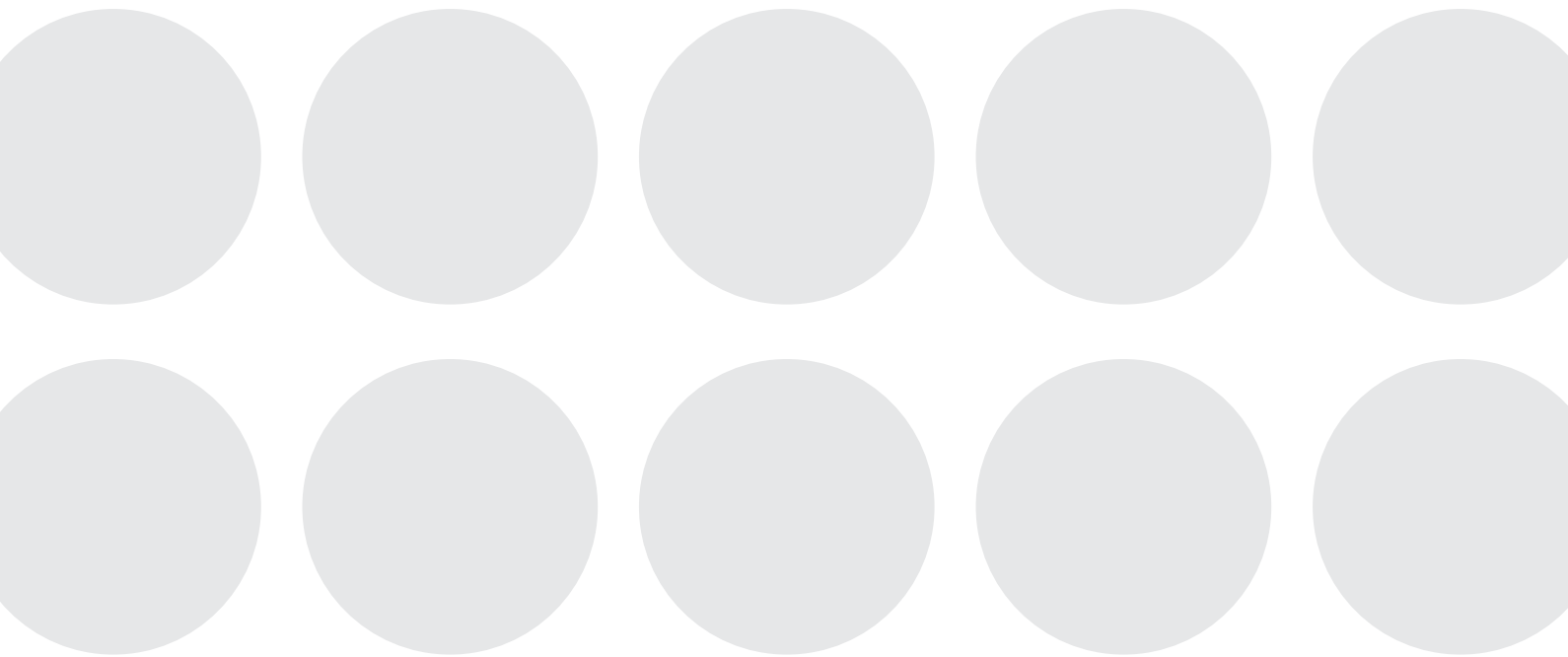


BooksConnect2





BooksConnect2



This publication is based on an evaluation commissioned by The Society of Chief Librarians East Midlands and prepared by the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) in collaboration with Nicky Morgan, East Midlands Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (EMMLAC)

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ISBN no 1 898489 37 8
Published by RCMG
September 2004
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Design by Tom Partridge

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Section 1: The Books Connect initiative

The aim of Books Connect was to nurture the formation of innovative, library-led partnerships involving museums, archives and arts organisations to develop new audiences and new venues for creative activities inspired by books, words, stories and reading.

Books Connect was conceived as a national pilot to demonstrate the potential for libraries and arts organisations to work together in the light of the findings of the report *Public Libraries and the Arts: Pathways to Partnership* commissioned in 2000 by the Library Association and The Arts Council of England. The report suggests there are significant benefits to be gained by libraries and arts organisations from partnership working, particularly in audience development, marketing and the provision of venues. Books Connect sought to explore this potential.



Books Connect 1 - books and reading as a launchpad to develop new audiences and new venues for reading-inspired creativity

The first phase of Books Connect, during 2001-2002, was a collaboration between the Society of Chief Librarians East Midlands, Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), East Midlands Museum Service (EMMS), East Midlands Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (EMMLAC) and The Reading Agency.

All nine local authority areas in the East Midlands participated in Books Connect 1 and developed their own projects. The initiative involved:

- Establishment of a regional steering group of stakeholder representatives
- Appointment of a part-time project co-ordinator seconded from one of the participating authorities
- A network of individual local authority area project co-ordinators
- Libraries taking the lead role in each project, using the region's existing reader and literature development infrastructure
- An icebreaker event to introduce project co-ordinators to a range of potential partners from arts and cultural organisations.

Project ideas and contact details were exchanged, and project co-ordinators were encouraged to nurture the new partnerships after the event

- A workshop following the icebreaker event at which partners joined together in geographically-based partnerships to agree projects and submit proposals to the steering group
- Assessment of individual projects by the steering group linked to the release of funding
- Evaluation.

As the project developed, new partnerships evolved. In particular, museums emerged as significant regional partners through the support of the East Midlands Museums Service (EMMS).

Books Connect 1 attracted funding from the Arts Council of England through the Regional Arts Lottery Programme, CILIP, EMMS, and support from each of the nine local authorities in the East Midlands.

Successful project outputs for Books Connect 1 included:

- The delivery of 13 varied cross-sectoral arts, libraries and museums projects involving different art forms, venues and local partnerships
- The development and launch of a dedicated website (www.artsandlibraries.org.uk) which includes a national database of arts and libraries exemplar projects
- An online toolkit, *Creating Partnerships*, to support good practice in reading-based partnership development (www.artsandlibraries.org.uk/creatingpartnerships)
- A national conference featuring some high profile speakers and attended by a representative cross-sectoral audience
- A structure and framework of local partnerships on which to build in Books Connect 2.

Books Connect 2 - building on the momentum

The second phase of Books Connect, during 2003-2004, involved nine projects - one in each of the local government administrative areas of the East Midlands region. Books and reading acted as a catalyst for:

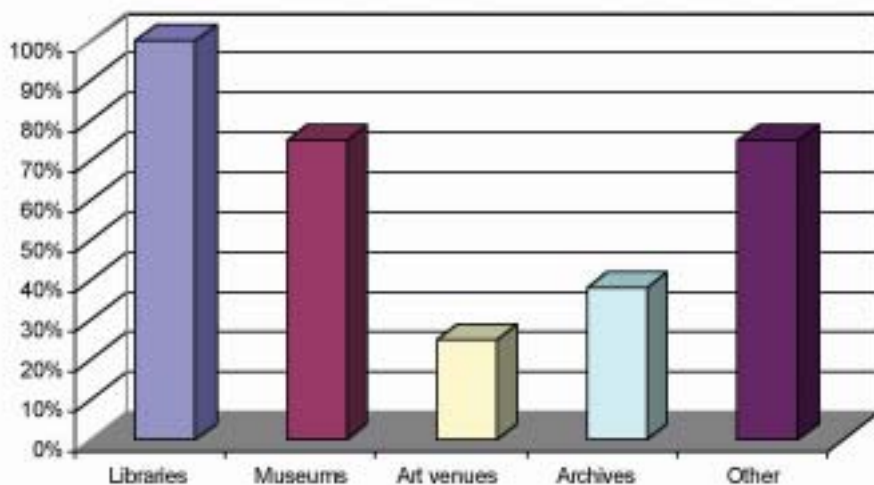
- Opening up the use of libraries as community venues to wider audiences
- Developing sustainable, creative, community-based partnerships between libraries, museums, archives and arts organisations
- Gathering evidence of how words and reading can draw communities together and help foster community cohesion.

Books Connect 2 built on the momentum of the first phase by:

- Building on the established partnerships
- Broadening partnerships to include archives
- Focusing on activities rather than being performance-based
- Focusing on community cohesion.

The focus on books, reading, words and stories was a response to the unquestionable need for people to have more than basic reading and literacy skills in order to operate effectively in today's society. Books Connect 2 was about finding creative ways of making reading dynamic, pleasurable, exciting, relevant and appropriate to peoples' lives, and increasing their confidence in reading. Although the routes to using books, words and stories are diverse and do not always give a high priority to reading, the development of reading skills nevertheless forms an essential part of each project.

Books Connect 2 built on the partnerships already established in Books Connect 1, but with the addition of archives as project partners. Several projects in the first phase used oral history, reminiscence, and archives as resources, and the value of the contribution of archives to Books Connect has been recognised by widening the partnership base in phase 2.



Base: 8 projects

Figure 1: Organisations involved in Books Connect 2 partnerships

The project management format for Books Connect 1 of steering group, project co-ordinator and library-led network proved effective and so was used again for Books Connect 2. The icebreaker and workshop events, which proved successful at stimulating cross-sector thinking, promoting the project framework and developing partnerships, were also repeated.

The different funding streams for Books Connect 2 reflect the success and impact of Books Connect 1.

MAIN FUNDERS

East Midlands Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (EMMLAC)

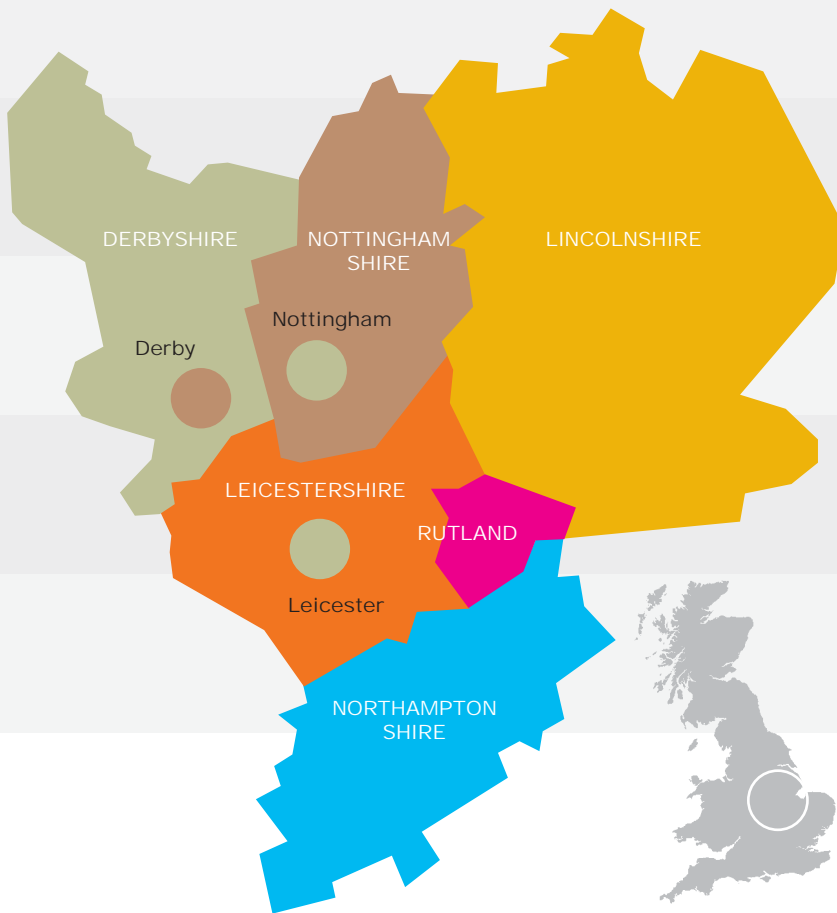
Books Connect supports cultural organisation cross-domain working which EMMLAC as the Regional Agency for museums, libraries and archives in the East Midlands, works to advocate. EMMLAC was also interested in the impact of cultural and creative activity upon individuals and communities

Arts Council of England - East Midlands (ACE-EM)

Grants for the Arts scheme - to support work with local artists and arts organisations

Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)

National body funded Books Connect through the Books, Reading and Learning strand of the action plan from *Framework for the Future*, the Government's ten-year vision to transform public libraries (www.culture.gov.uk). Funding was allocated for the dissemination of Books Connect nationally to encourage other regions to adopt its methodology



The East Midlands

Despite being the third largest region in England, the East Midlands has the second smallest population - about 4.2 million

About 80% of the population lives outside the three major cities - Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. The 2001 Census indicates a continued population drift within the region from the inner city to the suburbs and market towns

The unemployment rate is relatively low - 4.5% in 2002 compared with 5% for England and 5.2% for the UK

Approximately one quarter of those living in the East Midlands have poor literacy and numeracy skills. This figure is slightly above the national average

Regional Context

The East Midlands region consists of four unitary authorities - Derby City, Leicester City, Nottingham City and Rutland; and five counties - Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire.

In the East Midlands there are:

- 370 public libraries including 61 mobile libraries
- 140 museums
- Five local authority record offices, one university archive, and two specialist archives - the Media Archive of Central England and East Midlands Oral History Archive

Objectives

The main objectives of Books Connect 2 were:

- To increase access to creative book- and reading-inspired activities in a variety of venues across the region
- To develop new and lasting partnerships between libraries, museums, archives, and arts organisations which would harness and stimulate the creativity of each of the partners
- To use the partnerships to foster community development and cohesion by encouraging individuals and groups to share cultural experiences
- To explore new ways of evaluating the impact of creative activity on participants.

Evaluation

The Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) at the University of Leicester collected both quantitative data to compare the levels of activity in phases 1 and 2 of Books Connect; and qualitative data to determine the impact of participation on individuals.

In order to collect rich and persuasive evidence of the impact on individuals, the steering group also selected four of the nine projects to be the subject of in-depth case studies. The assessment criteria included the potential sustainability of the projects, partnership development, and contribution the projects to community cohesion.

The selected projects involved work with different types of communities:

- The transient population in a multi-cultural, inner-city area of Leicester, many of whom had only recently arrived in the city (Crafts in St Matthews, Leicester City)
- Residents of a socially mixed suburb of Nottingham (Sherwood Voices, Nottingham City)
- Rural and post-industrial communities in South Derbyshire (Fields and Tunnels, Derbyshire)
- Two isolated and diverse groups of people in Nottinghamshire - travellers and prisoners (Ways of Telling, Nottinghamshire)

The evaluation process, which involved working closely with the project co-ordinators, also revealed how the projects focused on creative ways of making words, stories, reading and books relevant and appropriate to participants' lives and had made a significant impact on their experiences.

The evaluation of the impact on individuals was carried out using the generic learning outcomes (GLOs) from the Inspiring Learning for All framework (www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk), launched by the MLA in March 2004.

Generic learning outcomes

The GLOs have been developed by RCMG on the basis of deep knowledge and long experience of the power and potential of learning in museums, archives and libraries. Learning through culture has its own unique character - with emphasis on the inspirational and motivational aspects of learning through participation in cultural activity and on the contribution that culture can make to the development of self and personal identity. There are clear links between the GLOs and the overarching objective of Books Connect 2 - to show how activities inspired by books and reading, and shared cultural and creative experiences, can contribute to community cohesion.

The GLOs are grouped into five categories:

- 1 Knowledge and understanding
- 2 Skills
- 3 Attitudes and values
- 4 Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity
- 5 Activity, behaviour and progression.

The project co-ordinators for the four case-study projects worked with RCMG to familiarise themselves with use of the GLOs and devise evaluation tools (such as questionnaires, interviews, and comments cards). The idea was to enable them to collect evidence of the learning impact on participants and to analyse the collected data, using the five categories of GLOs to provide evidence of the depth and breadth of participants' learning experiences.

GLOs

Knowledge and understanding

- Knowing about something
- Learning facts or information
- Making sense of something
- Deepening understanding
- How museums, libraries and archives operate
- Making links and relationships
- Using prior knowledge in new ways

Skills

- Knowing how to do something
- Intellectual skills
- Information management skills
- Key skills
- Emotional skills
- Social skills
- Communication skills
- Physical skills

Attitudes and values

- Feelings and perceptions
- Opinions about ourselves (eg self esteem)
- Opinions or attitudes towards other people
- Empathy, capacity for tolerance (or lack of these)
- Increased motivation
- Attitudes towards an organisation (eg a museum, archive or library)
- Positive and negative attitudes in relation to an experience
- Reasons for actions or personal viewpoints

Action, behaviour, progression

- What people do
- What people intend to do
- What people have done
- Reported or observed actions
- Change in behaviour
- A change in the way that people manage their lives, including work, study, family and community contexts

Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity

- Having fun,
- Being surprised
- Innovative thoughts, actions or things,
- Creativity
- Exploration, experimentation and making.
- Being inspired

Section 2: The key findings

The timescale for Book Connect 2 was short - it was launched at the icebreaker event in May 2003 and the nine projects were completed by May 2004 - but the results are impressive and the projects have clearly built on the partnerships and momentum established in the first phase.

Participation

- Over ten times more people were involved in Books Connect 2 than in Books Connect 1. A total of **3,617** people took part in the nine projects, whether as participants or audiences, compared with 340 for Books Connect 1
- 119 staff were involved from across the cultural sector compared with 90 for Books Connect 1



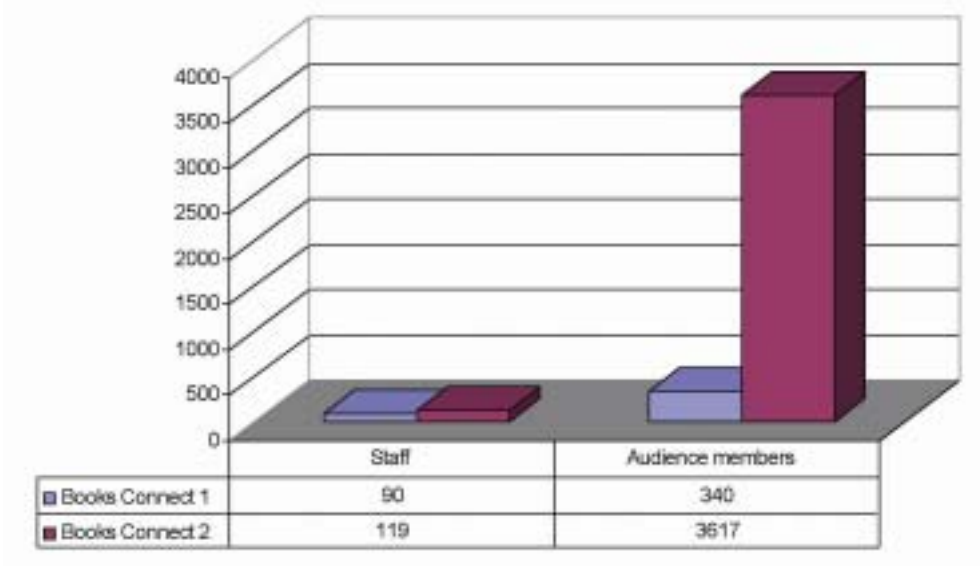
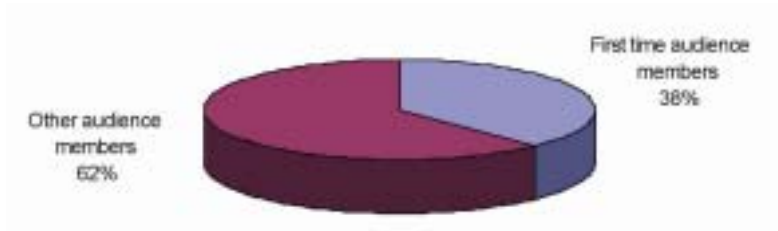


Figure 2: Increase in numbers of staff and audience members for Books Connect 2

- 1,367 people joined audiences at project events for the first time, approximately 38% of the total.



Base: 3,617 audience members

Figure 3: First time audience members as a percentage of total audiences

Artists' input

- A total of 53 artists participated in projects, compared with 37 for Books Connect 1. They also spent 1,435 days working on Books Connect 2. This is a major increase compared with the 90 days input for Books Connect 1, and reflects the emphasis in Books Connect 2 on workshops rather than one-off events.

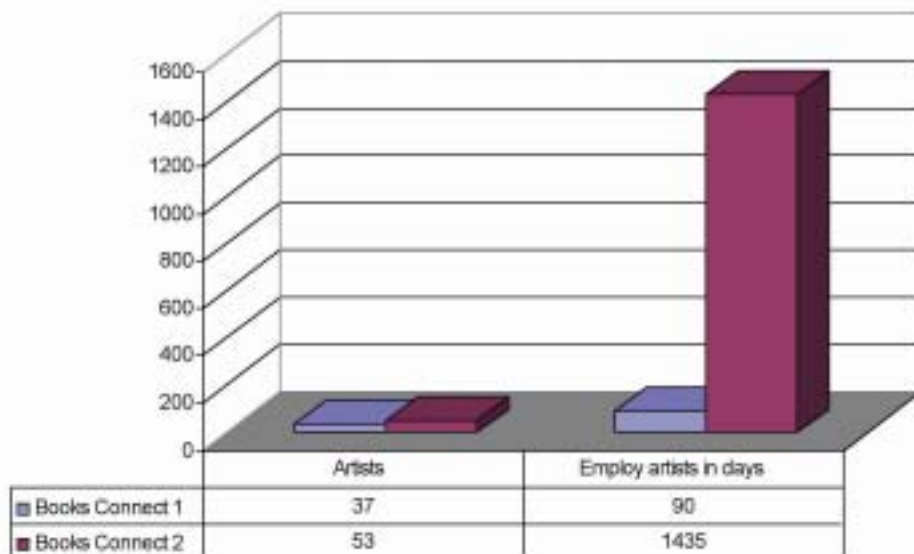
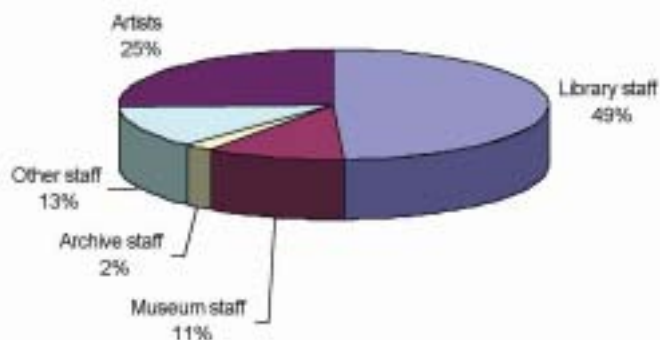


Figure 4: Increase in numbers of artists and number of days employed for Books Connect 2

Sectoral and social diversity

- Those involved with running the projects came from across the cultural sector - 49% were from libraries, 25% were artists, 11% were from museums, 2% from archives, and a further 13% from other organisations such as Family Learning, Prison Education, and Leicestershire Rural Partnership.



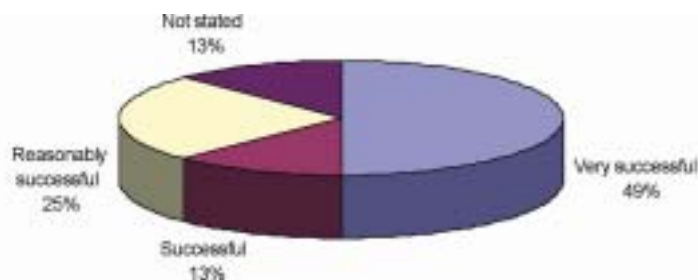
Base: 208 staff / artists

Figure 5: Percentage of staff involved in Books Connect 2 from across the cultural sector

- Books Connect reached out to a number of diverse audiences and work was undertaken with participants of a wide range of ages, experiences and abilities including the elderly, infirm and housebound; economically and socially disadvantaged individuals; school-aged children and young people; rural and urban communities; and isolated communities of prisoners and travellers.

Achievement of aims

- 62% of project co-ordinators thought they had been successful or very successful at meeting their project aims.

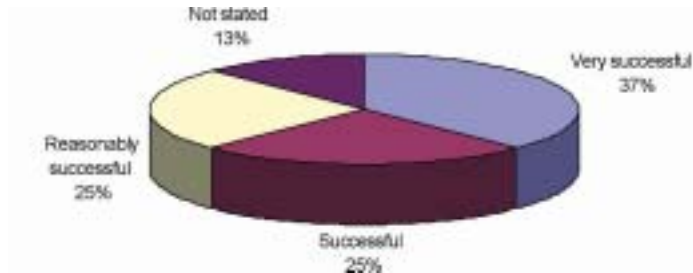


Base: 8 projects

Figure 6: Was the project successful in terms of meeting project aims?

Outcomes

- 62% of project co-ordinators thought that cross-domain working was successful or very successful.

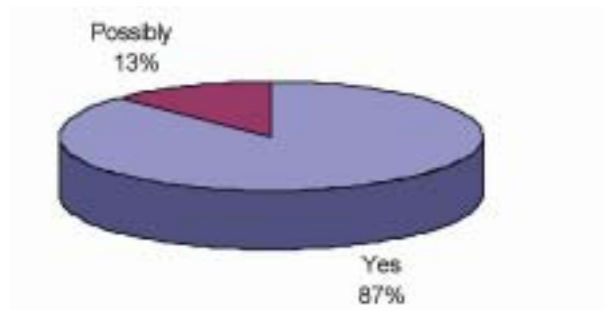


Base: 8 projects

Figure 7: Was the project successful in terms of cross-domain working?

Sustainability

- 87% of project co-ordinators thought that cross-domain partnerships created through Books Connect were sustainable and would be happy to seek further opportunities for collaboration.



Base: 8 projects

Figure 8: Were the cross-domain partnerships created through Books Connect sustainable?

- All project co-ordinators felt that being involved in Books Connect 2 had led to new skills and experiences for library staff, including community awareness and knowledge; developing community partnerships; understanding the needs and cultural differences of partner organisations; and working on a larger scale.

There were a greater number of outcomes from Books Connect 2 than from Books Connect 1:

- 14 new products were produced or commissioned compared with nine for Books Connect 1
- There were 44 exhibition/performance days compared with 32 for Books Connect 1
- 86 education sessions were run for users compared with 31 for Books Connect 1.

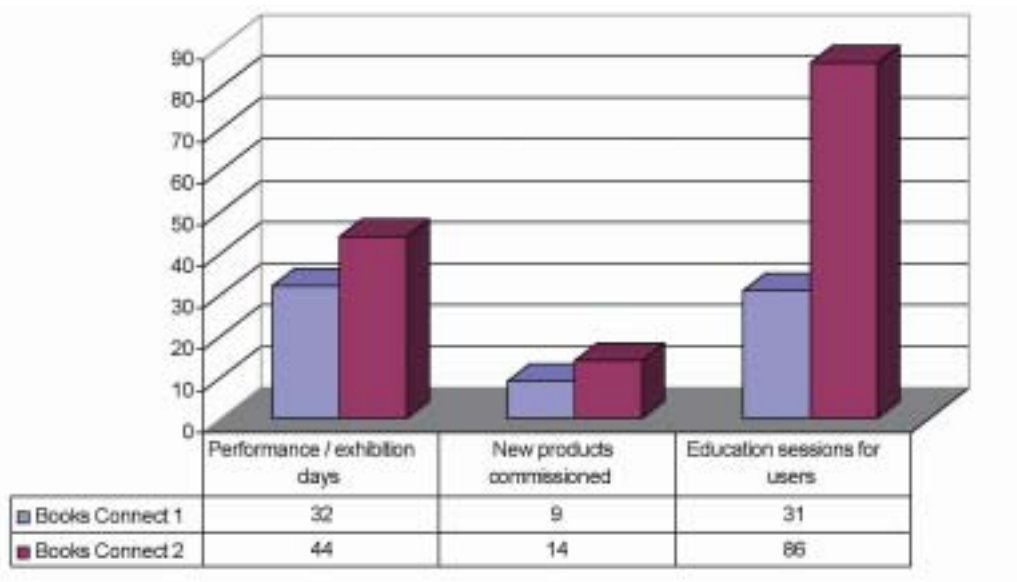


Figure 9: Outcomes for Books Connect 1 and Books Connect 2

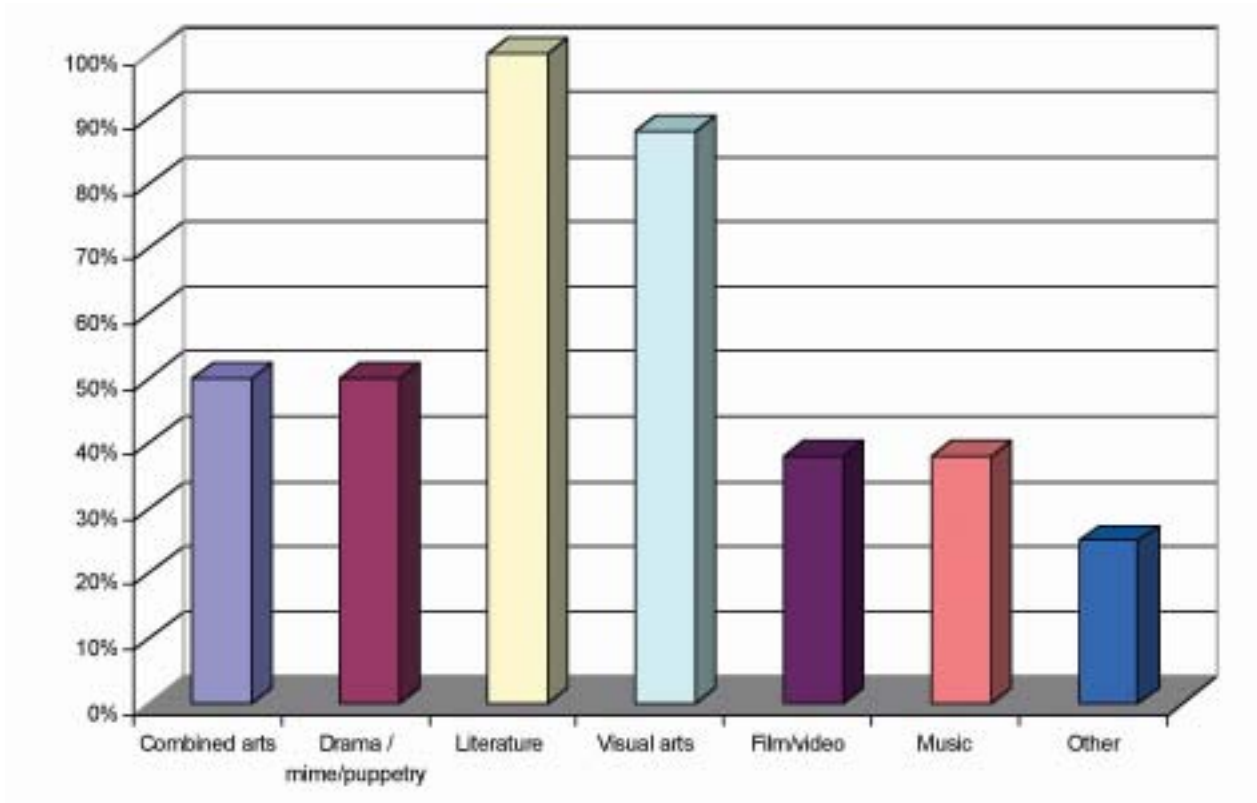
Section 3: The nine projects

The nine projects in Books Connect 2 encompassed a wide variety of activities, from sharing books, reading poetry, and production of dramatic monologues to sculpture, storytelling and textiles.

Communities worked together with artists and staff from museums, libraries and archives to produce a range of creative products including community archives, two websites, a travelling exhibition, a book, and a community library.

A common thread running through the individual projects was the use of books, words and reading to explore ways of drawing communities together. The projects drew upon a range of artforms for creative activities but all involved an element of literature:





Base: 8 projects

Figure 10: Percentage of Books Connect 2 projects involving one or more artforms

The project partners brought individual and often unique strengths to each project. Among many examples are:

- Use of handling wooden toys from Rutland museums to prompt memories of traditional games and songs that resulted in an oral archive and travelling exhibition
- Community artists in Lincolnshire used books and archives to encourage residents on St Giles Estate to share their disparate cultures and heritage and develop a website and a performance event
- A dance performance at Alvaston Library in Derby City was the catalyst for a series of family history and storytelling workshops.

Project profiles

The nine projects in Books Connect 2 are described below. The four projects selected as case studies for the project evaluation (Sherwood Voices; Ways of Telling; Fields and Tunnels; and Crafts in St Matthews) are described in greater detail in Section 4.

SHERWOOD VOICES NOTTINGHAM CITY

Description	<p>Sherwood in Nottingham was the starting point for the production of a series of dramatic monologues intended to capture the spirit of the area. Drawing for inspiration on library, archive and museum collections and the community of Sherwood itself, the monologues explore the identity of Sherwood and what it means to the people who live there.</p> <p>Participants could chose to research, write or perform, facilitated throughout by Andy Barrett, an experienced writer and performer.</p> <p>The project culminated in performances of the monologues at Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery and Sherwood Community Centre.</p>
Partners	<p>Nottingham City Libraries Nottingham City Museums Nottinghamshire Archives BBC Radio Nottingham</p>
Project co-ordinator	<p>Gwen Isherwood Nottingham City Libraries Isabella Street, Nottingham NG1 6AT Tel: 0115 915 8726 Email: gwen.isherwood@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</p>

WAYS OF TELLING NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Description	<p>Ways of Telling focused on how we tell stories, and explored ways of storytelling other than conventional narrative in writing.</p> <p>How do we tell stories? Do we always need words arranged in certain ways on the page, or are there other ways that can be just as effective? Do words always have the same meaning, or are they subtly altered by what we see?</p> <p>The opening event at Creswell Crags explored the basis of storytelling in people's lives, from the past to the present, in the atmospheric environment of the caves. An artist, a storyteller, a poet and archaeologist then spent time with two groups from very different backgrounds - a group of women travellers from Newark and a group of prisoners from Whatton Prison - exploring ideas around the theme of telling stories, and focusing in particular on the special ways of telling used in graphic novels and comics.</p> <p>Participants explored ways of telling their own stories using far from conventional narratives - sequential art, graphic novels, cartoons, graffiti, cave paintings, the rhythm of poetry and music.</p>
Partners	<p>Nottinghamshire County Council Libraries Creswell Crags Whatton Prison Education Service Mount Street Primary School, Newark</p>
Project co-ordinator	<p>Sheelagh Gallagher County Library Glaisdale Parkway, Nottingham NG8 4GP Tel: 0115 985 5290 Email: sheelagh.gallagher@nottscc.gov.uk</p>



CRAFTS IN ST. MATTHEWS LEICESTER CITY

Description	<p>Crafts in St Matthews involved a series of crafts workshops to bring together the diverse community groups on St Matthews Estate in Leicester to create a lasting piece of artwork that would enhance the local area. A varied collection of craft books provided a rich, visual resource to inspire and engage the participants who created their own textile hangings. The individual works were later sewn into one, drawing together participants and their diverse cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>Consultation within the community was the key to finding the focus for this project. The community shaped the project, being involved in both the planning and making of the artwork, facilitated by community artists Linda Harding and Fartun Abdulle.</p> <p>Participants were of all ages and cultures, taking part in workshops at St Matthews Library, at the heart of the estate, and Taylor Road Primary After-School Arts Club and Parent's Group. The enthusiasm of participants for the workshops and for the books has ensured that sessions will continue to be held at the neighbourhood centre next to the library at St Matthews.</p>
Partners	<p>Leicester City Libraries Leicester City Museums St Matthews Area Forum NHS Leicestershire St Matthews Project Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland East Midlands Oral History Archive Leicester City Council Department of Lifelong Learning Guild of Storytellers</p>
Project co-ordinators	<p>Christine Hodgson and Helen Edwards Leicester City Libraries, Reader Development Services Saffron Lane, Leicester LE2 6QS Tel: 0116 299 5483 Email: hodgc001@leicester.gov.uk and edwah002@leicester.gov.uk</p>

BOOKS CONNECT TOO! LINCOLNSHIRE

<p>Description</p>	<p>Books Connect Too! promoted the sharing of cultural experiences and the reinterpretation of social issues by bringing together disparate groups from the St Giles Estate in Lincoln with community artists and craft makers. The group recorded aspects of the community's history in the form of a storyboard, website, scrapbook and performance. These products mark the beginning of a community archive that will be developed beyond the life of Books Connect 2. The project provided the opportunity to pilot this type of approach to community development work in Lincolnshire and helped to demystify books, reading, history and arts development.</p> <p>Local residents used archives and local history books to research the origins of the estate and its community. They explored how the reality of life on the estate has changed over time, with people from different generations describing their experiences, impressions and expectations. The creation of a community archive from the material will promote a greater sense of identity and pride in their environment among residents of the estate and help challenge negative perceptions of it among non-residents.</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>Lincolnshire Libraries St Giles Community Development Group Lincolnshire Arts Development Services Lincolnshire Heritage Services Lincolnshire Echo Radio Lincolnshire</p>
<p>Project co-ordinators</p>	<p>Gill Fraser North Area Office, Louth Library Northgate, Louth, Lincolnshire LN11 0LY Tel: 01507 602218 Email: fraserg@lincolnshire.gov.uk</p>

ROOTS TO COMMUNITY RICHES LEICESTERSHIRE

Description	<p>Roots to Community Riches involved people from the isolated rural village of Fleckney in creating a website to celebrate the village, past and present. A starting point for the project was a themed collection of fiction exploring family life.</p> <p>Oral histories and reminiscences collected from local families were used to trace the recent history of the village. The recorded perceptions and experiences of different ages and generations were illustrated with photographs and by creative writing inspired by museum objects relating to the area.</p> <p>The project gave local people access to the resources and training needed to set up the website which will include the oral histories, a gallery of historic and contemporary photographs of Fleckney, and a virtual library of fiction and non-fiction relating to the history of places or families.</p>
Partners	Leicestershire Libraries and Information Service Leicestershire Rural Partnership Leicestershire Heritage Services East Midlands Oral History Archive Fleckney History Society
Project co-ordinators	Steve Kettle Rothley Crossroads, 929/931 Loughborough Road, Rothley, Leicestershire LE7 7NH Tel: 0116 267 8032 Email: skettle@leics.gov.uk

CELEBRATING ALVASTON DERBY CITY

Description	<p>Alvaston, a socially-mixed and sprawling area of Derby, was the location for a vibrant programme of workshops to celebrate the opening of the new library and learning centre.</p> <p>Activities were aimed at stimulating people to read more widely and gave them the opportunity to experience arts in their own neighbourhood. Participants took part in family history workshops, local history talks, story-telling and Internet taster sessions.</p> <p>Use of the new library and learning centre as the venue for these activities placed it firmly at the heart of the community. Collaboration with local residents over setting up and running creative writing, reading, and family history groups will involve them in the life of the library and help ensure that the community continues to benefit from the outcomes of the project in the longer-term.</p>
Partners	Derby City Libraries Derby Literature Development Foot in Hand Dance Company
Project co-ordinators	Maureen King Derby City Libraries Roman House, Friar Gate, Derby DE1 1XB Tel: 01332 716605 Email: maureen.king@derby.gov.uk

READING IMAGES NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Description	<p>Reading Images sought to widen the audience for, and people's enjoyment of, Northamptonshire's cultural and literary heritage through cross-arts initiatives with partners throughout the county, drawing on existing historic literature and images.</p> <p>Northamptonshire's Sense of Place database and images from the local studies collections were brought to life through engaging diverse groups of participants in a variety of activities - literature, music, dance and poetry. The project gave participants new cultural experiences, and encouraged community involvement in reading, literature and art.</p> <p>A touring exhibition will be used to disseminate the results of the project to a wider audience.</p>
Partners	<p>Northamptonshire Libraries and Information Service Forum for Arts Development Northamptonshire Heritage Group</p>
Project co-ordinators	<p>Caroline Bates Northamptonshire Central Library Abington Street, Northampton NN1 2BA Tel: 01604 462040 Email: cbates@northamptonshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Evelyn Jarvis John Dryden House, The Lakes, Northampton NN5 7DD Tel: 01604 237953 Email: ejarvis@northamptonshire.gov.uk</p>

LAZY RUTLAND DAYS RUTLAND

Description	<p>Lazy Rutland Days was a sequence of events and exhibitions that focused on the cultural history - written and oral - of Rutland. Material relating to Rutland, derived from stories, games and songs, was used to produce a travelling exhibition and collection of oral and written reminiscences.</p> <p>Pre-school and school-age children, young people, and senior citizens were engaged in creating and recording their own narratives and artworks in response to local history reading sessions, demonstrations of local crafts and traditional games, and sessions with a poet exploring games and rhymes.</p> <p>The work contributed a local cultural archive of oral history material in Rutland County Museum, a permanent gallery in the Vale of Catmose College, and a website and booklet based on extracts from the archive.</p>
Partners	<p>Rutland Library Service Arts Officers Museums Service Family Learning Network Catmose Gallery Rutland On Line Rutland Radio East Midlands Oral History Archive</p>
Project co-ordinators	<p>Robert Clayton Oakham Library Catmose Street, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6HW Tel: 01572 722918 Email: rclayton@rutland.gov.uk</p>

FIELDS AND TUNNELS DERBYSHIRE

<p>Description</p>	<p>Fields and Tunnels brought together people from the urban, ex-mining community of the Midway Estate in Swadlincote and the rural, farming community of Church Broughton to celebrate the lives and experiences of those who live and work in South Derbyshire.</p> <p>Children, young people and adults from the two communities and William Allitt School in Swadlincote produced exciting and innovative work inspired by the words of ex-miners, farmers, and their wives, as well as their own lives and experiences.</p> <p>Words, stories, phrases and photographs were stimuli for producing sculptures, poetry, prose, stories, drawings and digital artworks. The artists gave participants - many of whom lacked confidence in their own abilities and with reading - as much freedom as possible to create something of value.</p> <p>The project resulted in an inspirational book containing work produced by young people from Swadlincote and Church Broughton.</p>
<p>Partners</p>	<p>Cultural and Communication Services Derbyshire County Council People Express - community arts Read on Write Away Stepping Forward - Barnardo's Family Centre Derbyshire Rural Community Council South Derbyshire District Council</p>
<p>Project co-ordinators</p>	<p>Ann Wright Alfreton Library Severn Square, Alfreton, Derbyshire DE55 7BQ Tel: 01773 831359 Email: Ann.wright@derbyshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Cathy Miles People Express Sharpes Pottery and Heritage Centre, Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE11 9DG Tel: 01283 552962 Email: people.express@virgin.net</p>

Section 4: Project impacts

The four projects selected as case studies from the nine in Books Connect 2 took place in Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Leicester and Derbyshire. Each involved work with communities that were thought likely to benefit from creative activity based on books, words and stories. Positive outcomes from the projects were wide-ranging and diverse. Artists and group leaders talked about participants:

- Gaining confidence in their own creative abilities
- Becoming more confident about reading
- Developing empathy and a better understanding of others
- Being inspired by books, artworks, words and stories to create, write, and perform themselves
- Using museums, libraries and archives for the first time and being enthusiastic about them
- Experiencing pride at seeing their work displayed or performed in their own community.

The projects also made a positive contribution to the cohesion of local communities. Unlike Books Connect 1, in which many of the projects were events-focused, the four projects described below involved participative workshops with greater opportunities for socialising and creativity. Participants made new friends within their communities, were able to appreciate other people's talents, and acquired new information that affected how they felt about their community or area.

Because the outcome from projects included final products, participants were able to share and celebrate the results with other people. In some cases, the creative freedom offered by the projects also enabled them to provide a tangible legacy of lasting value and importance to their local community.



Case study 1: Crafts in St Matthews Leicester City

This project involved a series of craft workshops, held over a ten-week period, that brought together community groups from across the St Matthews Estate in Leicester to create a beautiful and vibrant piece of community artwork to enhance the Neighbourhood Centre at the heart of the estate.

A sense of pride and achievement

The project culminated in the production of a modular textile hanging to form the centrepiece at a celebratory event at New Walk Museum. The hanging was assembled from the myriad of individual squares produced by the participants. The sewing together of the individual squares symbolised the collaboration of disparate community groups to produce a textile evocative of the different world-cultures represented on the estate.

The impact of the finished piece on participants was reflected in their feelings of pride, confidence and achievement:

"I am proud of my talent and my talent is doing art"
(Art Club participant, Taylor Road Primary).

"I feel that I am famous"

(Art Club participant, Taylor Road Primary).

"I think it's great because people can see your good effort that you've done"

(Art Club participant, Taylor Road Primary).

"I have become more confident, more ready to try different things"

(Adult participant).



Books at the core of the creative process

Although craft workshops and textile wall hangings are not activities traditionally associated with libraries, books were an essential part of the project. A diverse and visually rich collection of craft books helped:

People could look at the books, find something of value to them, and say, "I could do that".

The crafts work stimulated 'reading with a purpose', and the aesthetic quality of the books was important. The librarian researched the books - they were new and of high quality, rich with images. Some of the material was challenging but also relevant to everybody.

Participants used the books, objects on loan from Leicester City Museums, and their own experiences and imaginations to create individual textile squares. They were given complete freedom over their choice of books and use of materials, although they all worked towards the creation of the final textile hanging. The result was a powerful and varied range of work.

The books ranged from simple 'How-to' books to inspirational books of African textile designs that instilled awe and wonder in the participants and made connections with their cultural roots:

"Somali [designs] and whatever inspire me when I see beautiful work especially from book and known tradition"

(Adult participant).

"The books are a real eye-opener... when you see them. I spend ten minutes every Thursday just to look at the books... My favourite book is African textiles - the symbols... They make me remember my country, the background - what I saw as a child... Makes me feel to go back there - because when you're a child you don't care but when [you] read the book, [you] want to see how they make it. When I go back I will go deep"

(Fartun Abdulle, resident and community artist).

"To make books fun and inspire people to read them again and again... to take learning into their own hands"

(Jim Butler, Leicester City Museums).

Illustrated books were very important because of the barriers of language and literacy:

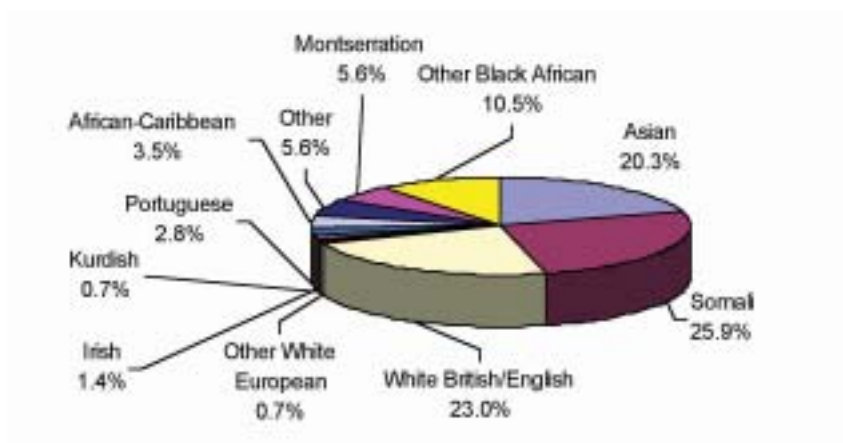
"A few people felt the library wasn't for them because they couldn't speak English, but using the craft books has encouraged them to come back" (Linda Harding, community artist).

A distinct and diverse community

One of the successes of Crafts in St Matthews was the opportunity to work with a distinct and identifiable community.

Some 3,500 people live at St Matthews, a residential estate, mainly of social housing, near the centre of Leicester¹. Four busy commuter routes - St Matthews Way, Humberstone Road, Belgrave Flyover and Dysart Way - effectively cut the estate off from the surrounding areas.

Historically, the use of the estate by the City Council to house refugees and asylum seekers has resulted in a highly mobile and transient population². A street survey in 2002 for the St Matthews Area Plan revealed the following ethnicities represented by the respondents:



It is thought that about 30 different languages are spoken on the estate. St Matthews is also an area of economic and social deprivation. It has the second lowest average household income in the UK (£13,000 compared with a national average of £29,374), and 40.1% of households earn less than £10,000 per year³. Despite considerable investment directed at regenerating the estate, including funding from the Single Regeneration Budget and Sure Start, there is some cynicism among the residents about its effectiveness. Some think that the estate is still neglected, and several high profile arts projects aimed at enhancing the local area have failed to make much impact.

Community cohesion

The value of the Crafts in St Matthews project on the estate has been to foster understanding and friendships between people in disparate communities who might not otherwise have met or even said 'hello'; and to encourage them to adopt a more positive attitude towards the City Council.

Neutral spaces were chosen as venues for the project workshops with the aim of attracting a mix of participants. One group met at St Matthews Library and Resource Centre:

Two groups, an after-school art club and a parents' group, met at Taylor Road Primary School, itself a microcosm of the estate. Drop-in sessions provided a relaxed and informal setting for people to get together and share experiences, traditions, culture, (and gossip!).

At both venues, the project helped participants begin to build or strengthen friendships. As one participant commented:

Other participants appreciated the chance to find common ground with their neighbours:

"Making friends with different people with same interests"

(Adult participant).

"It brings the community together, people show their different talents and I've met a lot of new people"

(Adult participant).

"It's a really good venue because it's at the centre of the community in the parade of shops and people are always dropping in" (Linda Harding, community artist).

"I already knew the people in my group but had never really spoken or spent time with them before. I lived for three years in St Matthews - see people in the street and never say hello but now I am saying hello all the time"

(Fartun Abdulle, resident and community artist).

Although the project was aimed at the whole community, the workshop participants were predominantly women:

Making connections between the women may influence connections between families, especially if their children attend the only primary school.

There was a feeling among participants that the success of the project would help promote a sense of pride in the community among people whose portrayal of St Matthews tends to be largely negative. The project also helped to improve the perception of the City Council on the estate. Marcia Brown, the senior community librarian for St Matthews was a huge asset to the project because of her local knowledge and sensitivity for the community:

These are small but important steps towards community cohesion in a deprived estate - fostering the understanding that people of different cultures can share experiences and concerns:

Individual learning

The impact of the project on the participants is a testament to the careful planning of the project and the freedom offered by the creative process. Participants were engaged and inspired by the books, learnt new skills, socialised, made new friends, and were keen to try out newly discovered crafts. A major indicator of success is that workshops will continue to be held at the Neighbourhood Centre.

"There haven't been any men to any of the sessions - they come in, poke their nose in and run away. Perhaps it's seeing all these ladies enjoying themselves and they don't want to interfere - the dynamic would have been different if men had been there, for example the conversations about families and children..."
(Linda Harding, community artist).

"She can walk down the street and loads of people will say hello"

(Jim Butler, Leicester City Museums).

"[It] brought people from different communities together and showed what they have in common... They talked about crafts learnt as children - I didn't know that crochet was a Somali tradition"

(Linda Harding, community artist).



EVIDENCE OF LEARNING USING THE GENERIC LEARNING OUTCOMES (GLOS)

<p>Knowledge and understanding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixing with others from the estate - "Exchanging ideas, talking to each other, and knowing different ways to do crafts" • Learning crafts from new cultures - "Indian, Indonesian..." • "Learning different use of materials and procedures to apply to different crafts"
<p>Skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Batik • Painting on fabric • Dip dye • Stamps • Embroidery and cross-stitch • Tie dye • Marbling • Parchment craft • Making hot wax designs • Painting • Drawing • Language skills - "Listening to the people talking helps me with my English"
<p>Attitudes and values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes towards themselves have changed - "Like to experiment and experience" • More open to new possibilities - "I have become more confident, more ready to try different things" • Desire to teach others and pass skills on - "I find that I already know things that others don't. I can show others and give other people ideas" • Proud that people will be able to see their artwork in the Neighbourhood Centre - "I would love to go and put up some pictures of my own" • Change in attitude towards opportunities on the estate - "I like the area but some people spoil it, like damaging cars. It's good to do something together and something different from bingo or activities with the children" • "[It's been] an eye-opener for the community - nothing happens like this in a creative way" (Fartun) • Realisation of shared experiences - "We can share lots of things, the crafts are pretty much the same from different countries but with different designs" • New attitudes towards the library - "[I use libraries] but not this one, I didn't know they had such lovely books" • Inspiration from the books - "especially those which show you how to do things"
<p>Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiration from books - "looked at some of the books to get inspiration for designs" • "Somali [designs] and whatever inspire me when I see beautiful work especially from book and known tradition" • Positive experiences - "[I have] experienced different things that I would not have been able to experience before - too expensive to try new crafts - and also the good company in friends that I have met" • "Chance to try out different craft which I have not had chance to buy myself" • Enjoyed the chance to socialise with new people - "Lovely friendly atmosphere. They are good fun and give me the chance to socialise"
<p>Action, behaviour, progression</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching crafts to others, eg family - "I have started to teach my daughter" • "I would like the opportunity to teach others new skills" • Borrowing more books from the library - "Just borrowed a quilting book" • Closer relationships with people in their community - "Can talk to everyone freely. Met new people, helped with my English... helped me to see people differently" • Keen to try and do more - "To get more involved in the local community" • "I want to try painting on plates. I'd love to do pottery and ceramics" • To "do good art so I can be very good and to be an artist"

Partnerships and success factors

The importance of partnerships and community consultation to the success of the project cannot be overstated.

Clarity of focus

The project had clarity of purpose - residents from the estate worked towards a tangible end-product, facilitated by the project co-ordinators and artists. All the partners were focused on ensuring that the benefits for the residents of the estate did not become secondary to achievement of their own objectives:

“Each partner had outcomes that they would have liked to see, but the aim was the artwork produced by the people, using their skills and expertise to achieve that goal” (Jim Butler, Leicester City Museums).

Community consultation

Previous arts-related projects on the estate had failed to engender a sense of pride and ownership among participants. This made in-depth consultation about Crafts in St Matthews essential if the project was to be successful and engage the community. The co-ordinators spoke to over 12 different agencies and centres that operate within the estate to enable them to reach decisions firmly rooted in reality:

- Work with the whole community rather than with isolated groups to avoid exacerbating existing tensions on the estate
- Focus on crafts as a common element shared by all communities and cultures
- Involve participants throughout the process. The two community artists, Linda Harding and Fartun Abdulle (herself from the St Matthews Estate), felt strongly that they should facilitate rather than control the creative process, and so enable participants to take ownership of the finished product.

Critical friend

The project relied on Carol Jasilek, a community health worker, to act as a ‘critical friend’. Her role was to help ensure that the project was relevant to St Matthews, and did not become too ambitious or unrealistic, by:

- Encouraging the project to concentrate on St Matthews estate, rather than inviting communities from elsewhere to participate
- Asking what was in it for the community
- Providing vital information about why other projects at St Matthews had failed.

Nested in the community

Leadership from within the community was vital to the success of the project. Fartun Abdulle, one of the community artists, lives at St Matthews , and Marcia Brown, senior community librarian from St Matthews, had a clear understanding of the needs of people on the estate and was a familiar, non-threatening face in the community. She was described as:

“Having that sensitivity and being able to get peoples’ trust” (Cynthia Brown, EMLLAC).

What next?

The textile hanging has been completed and is on display in the Neighbourhood Centre. Participants who have lived as neighbours but never spoken may say ‘hello’ to each other and take the first steps towards friendship. It is encouraging that the Neighbourhood Centre has agreed to provide a room and tutor for more craft workshops so that residents can continue to benefit from the enjoyment and sense of achievement that Crafts in St Matthews provided. For the museum and library, the project has meant new contacts with local communities and opened up new and imaginative possibilities for working with them in future.



Case study 2: Sherwood Voices Nottingham City



Partners working on Sherwood Voices researched, wrote, produced and performed a series of dramatic monologues that captured the essence of Sherwood and its changing community.

The project acted as a showcase for Sherwood, with performances at Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery, The Place - a community centre in Sherwood, and on BBC Radio Nottingham. This not only brought Sherwood to the attention of others outside the community but also gave the people of Sherwood a sense of being part of something important.

Sherwood is a socially and economically mixed suburb not far from Nottingham city centre. The community has been shaped by the building of a garden estate in the 1920s; the arrival after World War II of people displaced from Eastern Europe; and, in recent years, an increasingly broad mix of residents in terms of age and ethnicity.

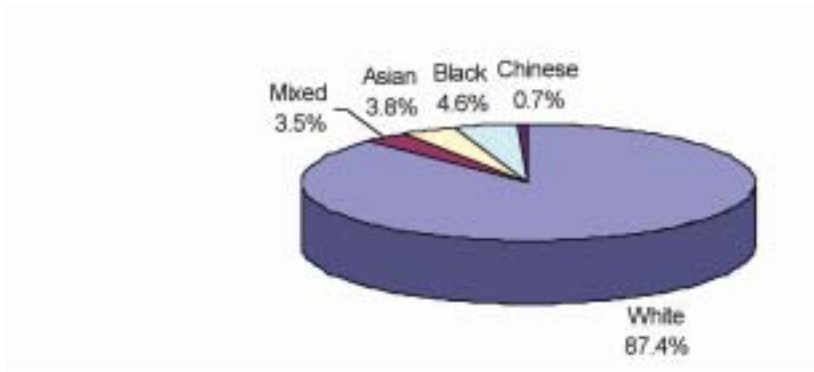


Figure 11: Ethnicity of Sherwood residents (2001 Census)

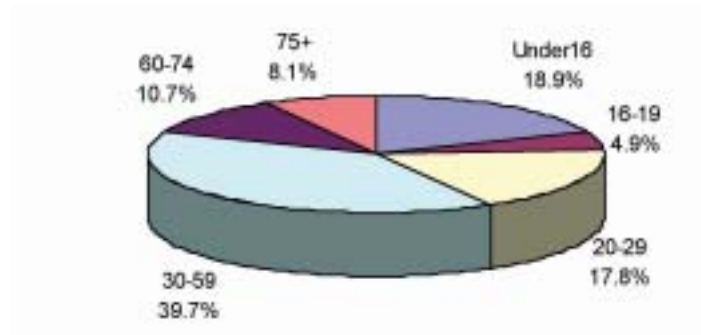


Figure 12: Age of Sherwood residents (2001 Census)

The first meeting for Sherwood Voices was held at Sherwood Library in December 2003 and was open to anyone with an interest in Sherwood or the project. Participants were invited to contribute to the project through research, writing, and performing and were free to decide how they wanted to be involved. Three groups were formed to develop the project, working with the project co-ordinator, writer and performer, Andy Barrett.

An archive group decided on the themes to be covered in the monologues - the prison, entertainment, religion, shops, education, and reminiscences from local residents. Research was carried out at the Local Studies Library, Nottingham Record Office, Brewhouse Yard Museum, and in Sherwood itself to provide the historical and contemporary context. A writers group took this raw material and worked through it to produce the scripts for the performers - a long, rigorous process of writing and rewriting.

The participants came from diverse backgrounds and experiences but shared a common interest in words, writing and Sherwood.

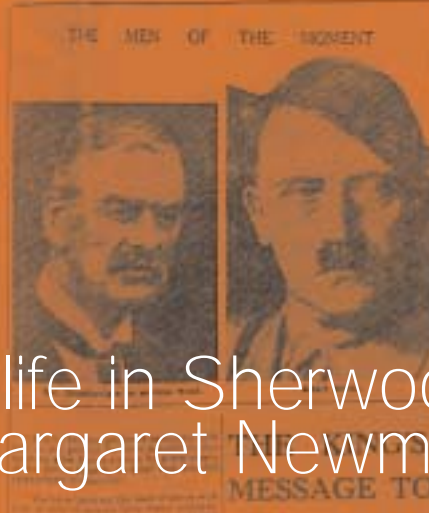
BRITAIN AT WAR WITH GERMANY

Premier's Momentous Statement In The Commons

MR. CHAMBERLAIN'S FINAL WORDS

"I Trust I May Live To See Hitlerism
Destroyed"

FATEFUL DAY IN WORLD'S HISTORY



HITLER'S CHOICE

Refusal Of The British
Demands

"NO INTENTION TO
ANNIHILATE POLAND"

A life in Sherwood - Margaret Newman



Sherwood Voices illustrates the profound impact that creative activity can have on individuals such as Margaret Newman. Her involvement in the project enabled her to see the place where she has lived all her life in a new light, meet new people, and work with a professional writer. She also had the pleasure of seeing her life and childhood experiences woven into monologue and performed in her own community:

"I have lived here for 76 years. I was born on the newly-built estate and moved later to my current house."

Margaret became involved after seeing an advertisement in the library for a project about Sherwood for the people of Sherwood. She was curious and:

"Interested that someone was doing something on Sherwood, which is small and often forgotten, and has not changed that much over the years."



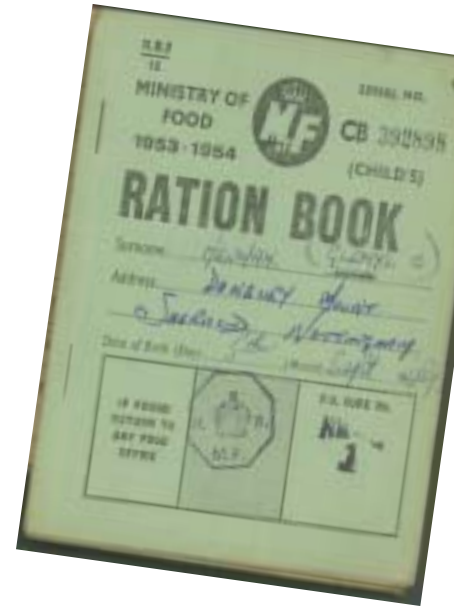
Seeing another side to your community

Margaret was surprised to learn at the early meetings that there was a lot more to Sherwood than she had realised:

"In the beginning, we talked about shared memories, talked about experiences of living in Sherwood, and I was amazed at the knowledge and talent of local people... I found a surprising fount of knowledge and inspiration about Sherwood, things I didn't know even though I have lived here all my life, from local people, and the archives and the library."

Margaret was involved in the earliest stages of the project, contributing her memories of growing up in Sherwood during World War II:

"My bit was about growing up in Sherwood, aged from 11 to 17, in the years of World War II. Looking back, I almost relived the night when bombs shattered the house next door and shrapnel nearly killed me. Five of my friends died. That was 1941, that was the year the war began for me - I grew up very quickly then."



Her words and memories were recorded and Margaret helped to research the wartime period from newspaper clippings and books provided by the library. The information she collected acted as inspiration for the writers and performers. In her monologue she said:

"Look there's a garden at the back and a garden at the front and you can have your greenhouse and now we can start a family. That's exactly what my mum said to my dad - and then I was born. Andy captured that experience and put it in the monologue."

The monologue tells the story of Margaret's parents from her mother's perspective - how they moved into a new estate in Sherwood after the First World War, 'that was built as a home for heroes' full of hope and excitement for the future; how that excitement contrasts with the reality of two decades later when the Second World War threatened the lives of their children:

"[Andy] caught a point about not bothering to go in to the shelter. We said 'they won't drop a bomb on Sherwood' and that night they did and there was a little girl in bed who almost died, and that was me."



Living in a garden city

In this extract from the finished monologue, Margaret's mother tells of the hopes and dreams built around a home in the new garden city estate in Sherwood in the 1920s; and how this dream was shattered one eventful night in 1941:

"What do you think?" he said, 'it's a Garden City'. And he looked made up, he really did, holding on to my hand, telling me the names of all the different trees and pointing out the way the streets had been laid out as if I should stop to clap or something. 'We're lucky to be offered a house here', he said. 'All sorts of VIPs have been to inspect it, and they rate it very highly. It's social architecture for the working classes you see. We're part of an experiment. It's a civilised world we're living in now Maisie, a civilised world...

And last week our child screamed the place down when a piece of shrapnel flew through the window and landed on the eiderdown about a hands width from her face. Me running in sure that she would be cut to ribbons while her lungs burst. But somehow Annie was untouched. Unlike the poor family on Eddingley Avenue where the bomb dropped. Five killed outright. Nobody could believe it. But we all carried on, true British pluck. Maisie was told off for being late to school the next day, and she had the piece of shrapnel with her like a trophy. She spent all day taking it out of her satchel to gasps of astonishment and looks of envy from the boys who couldn't wait for school to be over so that they could go and find some bits of their own."

The impact of the project

Margaret's involvement in the project was valuable to her personally. It gave her the opportunity to think deeply about her life and come to terms with a significant event:

"It was a learning process, the learning process for me was the fact that I had to re-think something that had happened to me. I had to talk about it."

Talking about her experience and reliving the emotions was a therapeutic process:

"In a way the project helped me to come to terms with it. I had to think about it. I've still got that piece of shrapnel that hit me. Could have died then. It brought back the memory very strongly."

Seeing the monologue performed on stage was a powerful and emotional experience for Margaret, thinking that her story was important enough to be used in this way:

"...I felt a bit choked, very emotional. I never thought that my experience, my story, would be used and for other people to hear and remember - never thought it could have been used."

Although Margaret is relating a highly personal experience, the act of sharing it gave it new meaning as part of the collective memory and a wider set of experiences that make up the life of a community. The creative process that Margaret was involved in altered her feelings about herself and her community. Meeting new people and visiting new places provided the opportunity to see her community from a new perspective:

"It was great for someone like me. I'm retired, I'm still very active but I met people that I didn't know. In the beginning we talked about shared memories, talked about experiences of living in Sherwood and I was amazed at the knowledge and talent of local people. We used the archives, the main library in town to research and went right back to the origins of Sherwood. I found a surprising fount of knowledge and inspiration about Sherwood - things I didn't know even though I have lived here all my life - from local people and the archives and the library."

Margaret is an active person, but she was using her energy in new ways - placing her experiences in a wider context and stimulating new thoughts:

"It was a very creative experience and made me think again about things. Not just day to day things like walking and swimming, made me use my brain again - especially going to the archives and finding out about what had happened in Sherwood."

The chance to meet new people from different age groups, who saw Sherwood in different ways to her, was a valuable feature of the project for Margaret:

“The age range was really good - there was a couple of people in their twenties - and then all the age ranges up to my age. That was great. In retirement you often tend to meet people of your own age and it's nice to meet younger people and hear their points of view, particularly those who hadn't lived in Sherwood for long”.

Because the project was also out-of-the-ordinary, it attracted people who Margaret felt she would not have met otherwise. She was comfortable about sharing her memories with the group and felt that people were able to be open and their opinions valued:

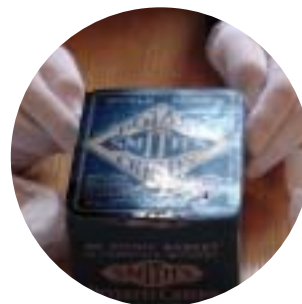
“It was a good group of women and men - people listened to each other and then said their bit. That doesn't happen very often. When I told people who I know about it they said 'that sounds nice, good to do something different.' The way the group worked together was important. The project was about the place where you live, it was personal and brought back a lot of memories so it was quite emotional.”

Margaret was conscious of the impact of the project not only on herself but also on others in her group. It was a big undertaking for all of them:

“Originally the project was going to look at one street in Sherwood, then it grew to public buildings, then with the archive involvement it was more the 'whole' of Sherwood. This meant there were lots of people to contact” (Andy Barrett, project co-ordinator).

Over the course of the project, Margaret also saw other participants becoming increasingly confident about writing and performing, meeting people they did not normally meet, and gaining important experience in research:

“People learnt new skills such as writing and researching and, in my case, being interviewed. They were doing things they'd never done before and never thought about - had to learn about how to do it... It took up a lot of time but there was a real sense of enjoyment.”



It was also a creative process that brought Margaret into contact with artists for the first time. She appreciated the new insight into how artists work:

"I learnt about creativity by working with an artist - had no idea how Andy was going to do all this."

The final performance delighted Margaret, who immediately saw the value of the experience to the whole community:

"I saw it at the Castle and it was a great event, and then there was the performance in Sherwood but that was not enough. There needed to be more performances.... [The] acting was really good and it really was a walk through Sherwood."

She also felt a certain amount of pride for being involved:

"I was very impressed by the actors and the performance at the end. They made it important and they made Sherwood important which was nice for me as I love living here."

For Andy Barrett, artist and writer, the value of the performance was enhanced by the overall character of the finished pieces:

"[They were] quirky, not quite theatre and not quite stories." The pieces had a special feeling all of their own; "full of local references" that "got an excellent response from the Sherwood audience." The monologues have no precedent - they have a unique flavour and they create a real sense of evoking identity and history in a fast and entertaining manner."

Margaret's lasting impression of Sherwood Voices was the stimulation and interest that it provided, as well as meeting new people and helping to keep her mind active thinking about more than everyday things:

"I was sorry when it finished... It was something really good to do especially at my age... We were very serious about what we were doing but we also had good times when we got together. We had a lot of fun and laughter. It reinforced for me that Sherwood is a very nice place to live".



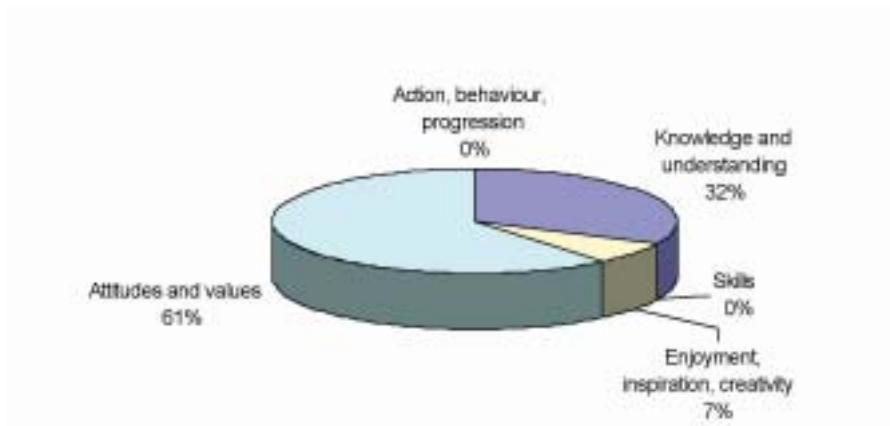
EVIDENCE OF MARGARET'S LEARNING USING THE GENERIC LEARNING OUTCOMES (GLOS)

Knowledge and understanding	Learning more about Sherwood/community
Skills	Using libraries and archives for research and local history Being interviewed
Attitudes and values	Role of artists and what they do Power of actual experience turned into performance Pride in personal experiences and history - become part of the history of a community Reliving a past experience - coming to terms with it/therapeutic
Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity	Keeping the mind active, thinking about more than everyday things Being involved in a creative process
Action, behaviour, progression	Making a range of friends in the community Meeting people from outside everyday experience Contributing to collective memory

By providing people with an insight into different places and facets of one small suburb in Nottingham, the monologues helped promote better understanding and appreciation of, and even involvement in, the community. Margaret's story illustrates the impact of the project on an individual and how people can be helped to look beyond the daily minutiae of their lives and discover the wider world and their place within it.

Conclusion

For the performance of Sherwood Voices in Sherwood Community Centre, an extra question was added to the audience questionnaire to gauge people's reaction to the monologues: 'After watching the monologues, what does Sherwood mean to you now?'



Base: 28 respondents

Fig 17: After watching the monologues, what does Sherwood mean to you now? - coded by Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs)

Of the 31 respondents who completed a questionnaire, 28 answered this question. Their replies, which were coded using the Generic Learning Outcomes and added together, showed that 61% thought their attitude towards Sherwood had changed as a result of the monologues. Comments coded under the Attitudes and Values GLO included:

- "It seems more of a community than it did"
- "A place with a history - a better feel for community in Sherwood"
- "Somewhere special with hidden gems of humour".

An increased knowledge and understanding of the area was mentioned by 32% of respondents:

- "Sausages, curries, pick 'n' mix... the heart of Sherwood seems to be edible wherever it is"
- "An area of Nottingham with [a] touching history".

A much smaller percentage commented on their enjoyment at having the chance to relive some of their memories of Sherwood:

- "After several reminders of how Sherwood was when we first came to live here - eg, Melrose and laundry - with affection and nostalgia"
- "Place of my birth and education, where I met my wife, oh happy days".

No comments were coded using the GLOs for skills or action, behaviour, and progression, possibly because the question was phrased so as to elicit respondents' opinions about Sherwood.

Case study 3: Fields and Tunnels Derbyshire

The popular image of Derbyshire is of the peaks and dales of the Peak District National Park. But the south of the county is characterised by the legacy of coal mining, evident in post-industrial communities such as Swadlincote. Farming was once the focus of villages such as Church Broughton, but today, as the numbers employed in farming decrease, commuters are just as likely to live in the village as people working on the land.

The aim of Fields and Tunnels, a project run by the community arts organisation, People Express, on behalf of Derbyshire Libraries, was to use older people's reminiscences of mining and farming to promote understanding about the roots of two disparate communities. The project provided the context for an ambitious cultural exchange between the two communities: families from Midway housing estate in Swadlincote and families from the village of Church Broughton. The considerable activity that took place in both places was celebrated in a book produced by the participants - although, in the timescale of this project, it proved impossible to arrange a meeting between the two communities.

The concept

The main aim underpinning the Fields and Tunnels project was to record the experiences of people from the two communities of working in the mining and farming industries. Their memories would provide a resource to help young people connect with their heritage and improve their understanding of the roots of their local communities and the role of older generations in their history and development.

Creativity

The project started in a highly visible way with artists working in the streets of Midway and Church Broughton on willow weaving. The weaving was used for symbolic representation of the themes of the project to attract potential participants. A series of workshops was then held in a variety of community venues, at which young people had the chance to try creative writing, photography, drawing, modelling, and performance inspired by words and stories collected by the community artist, Marian Adams.

The creative concept behind the project was to use the thoughts, experiences and concerns of elderly people to help young people connect with their local heritage and compare their own experiences of life with those of earlier generations:

"One miner thought younger people wouldn't be able to do anything with their words" (Marian Adams, artist).

Shared outcomes

The creative work produced by the young people, including stories, poems, photographs and drawings, was collected together in a Fields and Tunnels book. The young people's work was presented alongside the contributions from the farmers and miners that had inspired it. The two communities also produced a Christmas card to celebrate the project.



Young people from Swadlincote

The young people involved in the project were from William Allitt School and the Midway housing estate in Swadlincote. The estate is characterised by vandalism, anti-social behaviour and drug addiction.

The young people's first involvement in Fields and Tunnels was building a willow sculpture at the allotments. The artists started making a mine tunnel across one of the paths, but the children had other ideas:

"It ignited a spark in them... they took control and wanted to do their own thing... they were really excited about it after being shown by the artist" (Marian Adams, artist).

They brought their own ideas to the original design, adding dolphins - inspired by a story one of the children had written - children's names, and straw people. Other workshops took place at the Stepping Forward Family Centre and Swadlincote Library where the young people did more willow weaving, and activities involving creative writing, poems, word maps, photography and drawing.

Engaging in creative activity had a very positive impact upon the young people, who typically lacked confidence in reading, had learning difficulties, or lacked the opportunity and family support to make books and reading a normal part of their lives.



'Because me mum don't read them to me'

Liam, whose family lives on the Midway estate, was involved with the project for several weeks. He took part in willow weaving, was featured on the Christmas card, and attended various workshops at the Library and Family Centre. Although only six years old, Liam has already had negative experiences of education, books, and reading. At school, he said, he always gets told off - his favourite activity is playing in the yard. It is not that he does not like books; rather that he is not given the necessary opportunity or family support. When asked if he liked books, Liam replied without hesitation, "No, because me mum don't read them to me".

Although he said he did not like writing stories, he had "done the dolphin story" which inspired the children to build a dolphin in the willow sculpture on the allotments. Because he was unable to concentrate on anything for long and had difficulty sitting still, engaging him in the project was a positive experience for the artist, Marian Adams. It was also a major achievement for Liam who, with support and encouragement, was able to contribute several photographs he had taken to the project book. One photograph was of a sculpture in building blocks of a tunnel and some miners, which he produced after concentrating really hard during one of the workshops.

'I'd like to make more stuff...'

Tammy, aged 12, and Stacey, aged 13, also benefited from the project, although they were involved at different stages. Stacey took part in most of the workshops and contributed several pieces to the book, while Tammy only participated towards the end - "I'd like to make more stuff... same as the tunnel up there again."

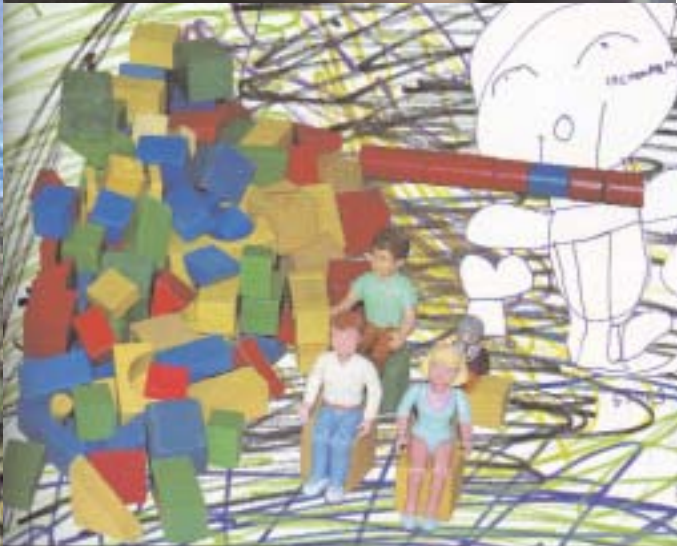


Both enjoyed their involvement - Stacey was proud to be included in the book, "I'll show me mum, all my family and some of my friends." Both girls got better at drawing, and Tammy showed more interest in art at school. They also showed more enthusiasm for reading, and Stacey said she would "like to write a book."

'Each day down the mine'

A class from William Allitt School worked with Marian Adams to produce their own work based on the words and stories of the miners, including poems, stories, pictures and diary entries. They also set some poems to music to help convey the feelings expressed in writing.

Most of the stories focused on the dark and unhealthy conditions endured by miners working underground - the young people were able to empathise with the difficulties and dangers they faced every day.



MINE AND TUNNEL MODEL BY LIAM JAMES (AGED 6)



Young people from Church Broughton

Church Broughton is a rural community with a farming heritage, although now increasingly home to commuters. There is limited access to library services, except via a mobile library which visits at times that people do not always find convenient. The village has a lively community in which reading is very much a part of everyday life. During the Fields and Tunnels project, a Book Café was established where people can swap books and chat informally.

As at Midway, the project at Church Broughton began with the building of a sculpture representing an oxen's horns and the wheels of a cart. Adults and young people were involved, with adults in a lead role, and the sculpture was completed as the artists had intended.

Creative writing and drawing workshops were then organised at which young people took photographs, made drawings, and wrote stories and poems inspired by the words and stories from farmers in the local area. The young people were already proficient readers, and one of them had even had a book published. They were concerned about getting things right:

"The children seemed to be on their best behaviour a lot of the time" (Marian Adams, artist).

'It pays to do things properly in the long run'

Matthew, aged 15, from Church Broughton, took part in the creative writing workshops and produced work for the book. Being dyslexic, he faces some challenges with reading and writing but is confident about his abilities:

"I already had the imagination to write and draw and paint, and can use computers."

He and his friends are confident readers - one friend had just finished reading *War and Peace*. His mother, Kate, was instrumental in establishing the Book Café and also hosted some workshops in her kitchen.

Matthew felt that being involved in Fields and Tunnels helped him learn more about writing techniques, create characters, and write more focused short stories rather than "huge long winded things or short stories that didn't make any sense." The project also challenged Matthew's motivation to write - whereas before the project he was reluctant to write if (like at school) he was being 'told' what to write about, he responded well to ideas suggested by Marian:

"Usually when I'm asked to write something I don't do it as well as I can do. This time I did try hard. At school you're given a title. But Marian gave us a statement and left things really open to do things. It's for me to do one my own. I'm not restricted, not enclosed. I've learnt that I can write if someone gives me stimulus. I thought I could only write from my own ideas."

EVIDENCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEARNING USING THE GENERIC LEARNING OUTCOMES (GLOS)

Knowledge and understanding	Learning about their community - miners and farmers Appreciation for the work of the older generation
Skills	Writing techniques Creating characters
Attitudes and values	Pride in being published Increased confidence in their abilities
Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity	Taking part in workshops - sculpture, writing, drawing, photography Enjoyed having the creative freedom
Action, behaviour, progression	Increased motivation at school Increased motivation to read - and write their own book

Understanding community needs

Harnessing people's creative energy required a good understanding of their needs in relation to books and reading. This can only come from working in partnership with communities and building meaningful relationships with them. The community groups at Midway and Church Broughton, although in the same county, had very different attitudes to books and motivations for reading. Fields and Tunnels illustrated the challenges that libraries face in meeting the needs of communities. Although people in Church Broughton had access to a mobile library, its visiting times were not always convenient for them. Some families in Midway did not use the local library, and their access to the mobile library was also limited.

Books Connect 2 offered participants new ways to engage with books and explore reading and words. In Church Broughton a Book Café was established where residents could meet for informal discussions, swap books and socialise. An initial reluctance of the community to take on responsibility for the BBC Big Read collection (which was offered to them by the library service at the launch of the Book Café), suggested that they were uncomfortable with the formal and institutional character of libraries. At Midway, there was evidence that reading and use of libraries was not part of the everyday lives of the participants.

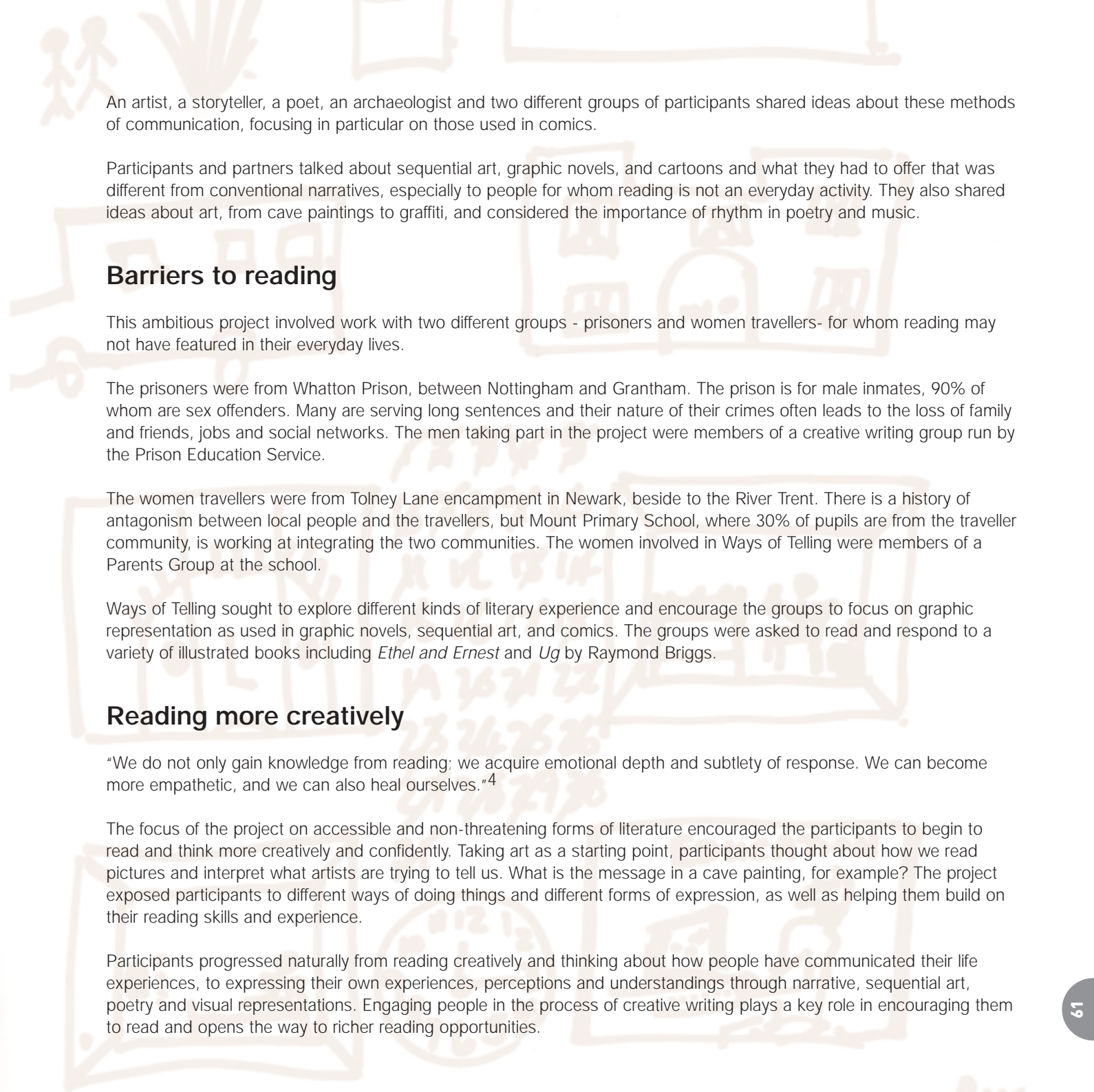
The short timescale for the project timescale called for a pragmatic approach to how much could be achieved. However, the results suggest that, during the project, participants from both communities became more aware of, and comfortable with, books; were engaged by reading and creative writing; and, in the process, increased their understanding of their community roots.

Case study 4: Ways of Telling Nottinghamshire

Literary convention dictates that words must be arranged on a page in particular ways for communication to be effective. Ways of Telling explored other ways in which people without a conventional grounding in literacy can communicate and get their message understood.

The world is not strictly narrative - people throughout history have used every means to tell stories:





An artist, a storyteller, a poet, an archaeologist and two different groups of participants shared ideas about these methods of communication, focusing in particular on those used in comics.

Participants and partners talked about sequential art, graphic novels, and cartoons and what they had to offer that was different from conventional narratives, especially to people for whom reading is not an everyday activity. They also shared ideas about art, from cave paintings to graffiti, and considered the importance of rhythm in poetry and music.

Barriers to reading

This ambitious project involved work with two different groups - prisoners and women travellers- for whom reading may not have featured in their everyday lives.

The prisoners were from Whatton Prison, between Nottingham and Grantham. The prison is for male inmates, 90% of whom are sex offenders. Many are serving long sentences and their nature of their crimes often leads to the loss of family and friends, jobs and social networks. The men taking part in the project were members of a creative writing group run by the Prison Education Service.

The women travellers were from Tolney Lane encampment in Newark, beside to the River Trent. There is a history of antagonism between local people and the travellers, but Mount Primary School, where 30% of pupils are from the traveller community, is working at integrating the two communities. The women involved in Ways of Telling were members of a Parents Group at the school.

Ways of Telling sought to explore different kinds of literary experience and encourage the groups to focus on graphic representation as used in graphic novels, sequential art, and comics. The groups were asked to read and respond to a variety of illustrated books including *Ethel and Ernest* and *Ug* by Raymond Briggs.

Reading more creatively

“We do not only gain knowledge from reading; we acquire emotional depth and subtlety of response. We can become more empathetic, and we can also heal ourselves.”⁴

The focus of the project on accessible and non-threatening forms of literature encouraged the participants to begin to read and think more creatively and confidently. Taking art as a starting point, participants thought about how we read pictures and interpret what artists are trying to tell us. What is the message in a cave painting, for example? The project exposed participants to different ways of doing things and different forms of expression, as well as helping them build on their reading skills and experience.

Participants progressed naturally from reading creatively and thinking about how people have communicated their life experiences, to expressing their own experiences, perceptions and understandings through narrative, sequential art, poetry and visual representations. Engaging people in the process of creative writing plays a key role in encouraging them to read and opens the way to richer reading opportunities.

The prisoners' story

Ways of Telling dovetailed with the aims of the education service at Whatton Prison to equip inmates with life skills and so help to reduce the likelihood of their re-offending on release. The importance attached to personal and social education at Whatton is reflected in a recidivism rate of 18% - much lower than the average for prisons. Topics covered by the education programme at the prison include:

- Sex offender treatment programme
- Extended thinking skills
- Relationships
- Assertiveness training
- Healthy living
- Creative writing
- Art
- Life skills.

The creative writing group involved in Ways of Telling generally consists of six to ten men working towards an Open College network qualification. For Jan Jarvis, a lecturer at Whatton, the project was a very successful way of exposing the men to new ideas and experiences, taking them out of their usual routine, and providing an opportunity that they would not normally get:

"It fitted in with the ethos of the organisation, but provided experiences it is hard to give through the prison education service - for example having access to artists, archaeologists, and a drummer. Such activities are crucial to the education system here. Most of the inmates are sex offenders, paedophiles and rapists, serving often long sentences. When they are released most of the men will be Schedule 1 - they will not be allowed to have contact with people under 18 years of age, attend college, work with young people, or even set up any business where they may come into contact with young people. Their lives are confined and restricted by their crime. The men themselves are very introspective, unable to look outside their own perspective - like being on 'tramlines', they think about what they want and do not look outside from that".

Projects like Ways of Telling are important because they help to broaden their perspectives and direct their minds to other thoughts other than their crime:

"If they are engaging their brains in active writing, active listening [and] developing interest they are less likely to offend [or] to think about grooming victims."

Creative writing also helps to change other negative aspects of character:

"The hidden curriculum is to get them to develop critiques of writing, responding in a positive way, not abusive or negative - showing that you can criticise but do not need to hurt feelings."

The ability to talk about and understand emotions and even to empathise with others is another skill that inmates often lack - a skill that can be developed through literature and art by getting them to realise that writers, poets, and artists all produce work around emotions.

Activities undertaken during the project followed this ethos closely, within the boundaries of the Books Connect objectives. Exploring and discussing different ways of storytelling helped the men develop the confidence to express their thoughts and feelings through different media - not always involving words. They discussed their first experiences of reading comics, and went on to look at images ranging from cave paintings at Creswell Crags and the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel to paintings by Kandinsky and Munch's 'The Scream'. In workshop sessions, the men looked at examples of sequential art and visual narratives and explored the storylines, messages or hidden agendas within them; how line, form, shape and colour can be used to express meanings and emotions; and how messages can be sent or received. Drawing on what they had learnt, the men began to use images and words themselves to interpret their world and tell others about it in their own language.

The depth of this experience helped them to acknowledge their emotions and begin to recognise the creativity associated with self-expression. Through their involvement in the project, they found they were able to express their emotions more readily and to talk more openly about their personal thoughts and feelings - something many of them had not done before:

Enthusiasm generated by the project spread to other activities going on in the prison. On his own initiative, one participant used the experience and skills he had acquired to write and produce an induction booklet in the form of a graphic novel to give to newly arrived inmates.

Even those men such as Steven⁵ who had not thought of themselves as creative were able to gain something from the workshops:

"I've never been any good at art. It wasn't part of my education. I haven't written a poem since I was a teenager and I hadn't painted a picture... I suppose I thought there was no point in doing anything if it wasn't going to be any good."

Despite his preconceptions, Steven responded well to Ways of Telling - he was willing to try new ideas and challenge his own fears to express himself through poetry:

"I used not to attempt stuff in case I ruined it or made mistakes. But it's from our mistakes that we learn how to cope better or what to avoid in future... I learnt not to be afraid to experiment. Nothing is wasted."

"I've decided that any picture, painting even in a book, can touch deep into your soul and tell such a great story in itself"

(Inmate, Whatton).



Jan Jarvis, a lecturer at Whatton, believes that the workshops enabled the men to think more deeply; acknowledge, question, and understand their emotions; and, above all, to empathise with others. The ability to empathise, she says, cannot be underestimated and is particularly significant if it means they do not re-offend:

“My students have thoroughly enjoyed exploring Ways of Telling that they had not even given consideration to before. Evidence for this is the way they can see the wider picture; think about wider issues; explore peoples’ feelings and emotions when they are telling; and look below the surface to find the real message. All this helps them to empathise with their victims which is, generally speaking, something they have not done before.”

EVIDENCE OF PRISONER’S LEARNING USING THE GENERIC LEARNING OUTCOMES (GLOS)

Knowledge and understanding	Being critical in positive ways Different ways of writing and conveying messages
Skills	Developing use of language
Attitudes and values	Different perspectives on art, reading, graphic novels Empathy - understanding feelings, acknowledging emotions Understanding that writers, poets and artists all produce work around emotions
Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity	Working with different facilitators Creating a graphic novel of poems, stories, artwork Induction booklet in the form of a graphic novel
Action, behaviour, progression	Able to talk about their own emotions Learning to use their time more effectively Broadening horizons - looking outside their own experiences

The traveller's story

Many of the families who arrive at the Tolney Lane encampment in Newark are unable to read or write. The location of the camp close to the River Trent is a potential safety hazard for families with children. So the women in the project group decided to warn new arrivals of the danger in a visual form. They began by looking at comics and examples of sequential art and artwork to see how communication barriers due to lack of reading skills can be overcome by expressing emotions and warnings graphically. They then produced a safety poster highlighting the dangers associated with the river, using photographs they took themselves, and colour-coding for the different types of hazard.

The relationship with the women travellers took time to establish; at first they were reticent about participating after a long history of antagonism with local communities and institutions. An important factor in engaging their interest was to work on ideas that the group were interested in. The women's lives centred on their children, and so protecting them from danger was an important motivation for producing the poster.

Poor relations in the past between travellers and staff at libraries in Newark had resulted in barriers to library use by the group. Several visits to libraries as part of the project helped to rebuild their confidence as users. Cotgrave Library, although some distance from Newark, was chosen as the location for storytelling sessions because it provided a safe and welcoming environment, and the library staff are very proactive in working alongside different communities. This re-introduction to libraries enabled the women to make a trip to Newark Library later in the project:

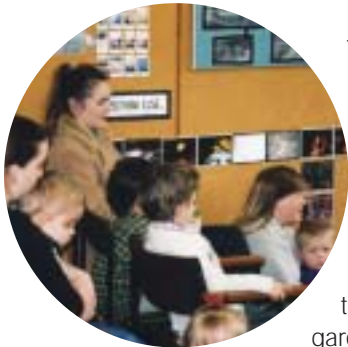
Travellers were introduced to the graphic novel as a means of telling life stories and developing creative reading skills. They were encouraged to think about other people's lives and experiences and compare them with their own:

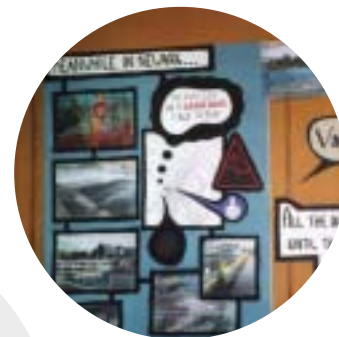
"I thought [*Ethel and Ernest*] was a really good read, although it was just a life story. I enjoyed the way Ethel and Ernest felt about the war and how they had to build the air raid shelter and years later it was still there as if a garden feature with roses that had grown".

The importance of their children to the women travellers was also used as a means of engaging them in the project; for example, copies of *The Snowman* by Raymond Briggs were handed out after a visit to Creswell Craggs. The success of this approach and the interest shown by the women has prompted the setting up of a reading group to enable creative reading skills to be developed in more depth:

"The visits to the libraries had a positive impact on the parents, many of whom expressed greater confidence in using the library in the future" (Karen Barnett, family worker, Mount School).

"We are now looking at setting up a parent reading group - starting by looking at more graphic novels. We feel that the parents who are unable to read or have low literacy skills would gain confidence by discussing this kind of literature" (Karen Barnett, Family worker, Mount School).





Their involvement in Ways of Telling was a first step towards integrating travellers into the non-traveller community. Karen Barnett, the family worker, invited non-traveller parents to help complete the safety poster alongside the traveller group; and they also visited Creswell Crags together, which resulted in important links between the different families:

“I could see the parents confidence grow... The way in which the parents worked together was so successful that we decided to keep the group as a mixed traveller/non-traveller group.”

THE TRAVELLER'S LEARNING USING THE GENERIC LEARNING OUTCOMES (GLOS)

Knowledge and understanding	Using images and colour to convey meaning
Skills	Photography
Attitudes and values	Desire to communicate their knowledge to others Positive attitude towards the library
Enjoyment, inspiration, creativity	Reading with their children Graphic novels
Action, behaviour, progression	Reading group established Integration between traveller and non-traveller families

Section 5:

Factors for success

The main focus of Books Connect 2 was on bringing communities together through creative experiences, drawing on the resources, skills and inspiration of libraries, arts organisations, museums and archives.

The successes of Books Connect 2 projects depended on a combination of key factors summarised below. The most successful of the nine projects were those in which one or more of these factors were in play.

Finding a hook for reading

Finding a hook for engaging people in reading is vital. Although books, words and reading were at the core of each Books Connect project, books themselves were not always the starting point. For people who were not confident readers, or in communities where reading is not an everyday activity, opening the door to words and reading called for different stimuli.

In Fields and Tunnels, for example, making willow sculptures was the 'hook' for catching people's interest and arousing their curiosity. In the case of Crafts in St Matthews, it was an inspirational collection of craft books, African textile patterns, and information on fabric printing techniques that sparked the creative and participative process. The books used were beautifully produced, visually rich, challenging, meaningful, inspiring, and motivating, as well as an aid to the development of practical and reading skills. They also appealed to a wide range of people - they meant something to everyone:

"To really engage people in the community and domain workers, you need a 'hook' that fires up the imagination and has a specific meaning to that community" (Crafts in St Matthews).

Creativity

Book-inspired creativity was at the heart of Books Connect. This took many forms, but all projects engaged participants in creative activities - thinking, reading, writing, poetry, story-telling, craft work - through which they could make individual contributions to a community product such as a textile hanging, a DVD, monologue performance, book, or exhibition.

Artists had a central role in all the projects, acting as facilitators and a source of ideas. They challenged conventional practice and nurtured individual creativity, exposing participants to new ideas and new ways of thinking:

"As we were working with many people whose language was not English, our project had to have a strong visual element so that we could achieve a cohesive end result" (Crafts in St Matthews).

The partners all made their own important contribution to resources for creativity - including archives, books, museum objects, images, local studies, and oral histories. These resources stimulated participants' imaginations and inspired them to try something new, share their thoughts and feelings with other participants, and, in the process, to broaden their understanding of their community or the wider world:

"Introducing something different, maybe unexpected, promotes interest and interaction with staff... has encouraged the idea of developing exhibition space at the Central Library" (Reading Images).

A shared creative product

The creation of an end-product - whether it is a textile wall hanging, a performance, or a local history archive - provides an important visible or tangible reminder of the project. It can also provide the opportunity to celebrate the achievement of participants and acknowledge the value of their contribution to the community:

"Outcomes were very visible - a large textile work produced for the community... It gave a positive profile for the City Council and increased the confidence of participants and organisers" (Crafts in St Matthews).

Clarity of focus

Projects should be based on strong, well-developed ideas that can be clearly articulated and communicated to participants. The best projects reflect the value of initial investment of time in developing ideas, vision and focus, and ensuring that organisational and project objectives are compatible. Clear end objectives are essential, especially if there is to be some flexibility in the methods of achieving them. The icebreaker and workshop events at the start of Books Connect 1 and 2 were an important element in establishing the concept; the project co-ordinators network was important for keeping individual projects on course:

"Partners kept very focused on what were the benefits to the people of St Matthews... each partner had outcomes that they would have liked to see, but the aim was the artwork produced by the people, using their skills and expertise to achieve that goal" (Crafts in St Matthews).

Working with communities

The Books Connect 2 partnerships worked as much as possible with members of their targeted communities over the development and delivery of projects. The role of the partnerships was to facilitate creative activity; consultation with communities helped partners ensure that their plans were realistic and achievable, and that they were aware of the potential pitfalls:

"Break down barriers. Libraries need to find ways of engaging with communities and treat each community as a separate identity. What works in one might not in another"
(Fields and Tunnels).

Learning from other people's experience was also very important. Those projects which used 'critical friends' to test out ideas found them very helpful.

Shared objectives

The objectives of Books Connect 2 - namely creativity, learning and community cohesion - fitted in with the local authorities' own strategic priorities and enabled senior managers to incorporate project outcomes in impact assessments for their services. Commitment to Books Connect at the highest level from the East Midlands Society of Chief Librarians was critical to its implementation.

The clear integration of project-based and strategic objectives meant that the projects had a real purpose - and a justification for funding based on identifiable need rather than opportunism:

Evaluation - the evidence of impact

Evaluation of projects is often concerned mainly with management priorities: "How can I improve delivery?" or "How many people did I involve?" But project managers tend to be less skilled at asking questions about the impact of projects on participants or audiences.

Collecting evidence from the Books Connect 2 projects and categorising it into the Generic Learning Outcomes involved in-depth investigation of their impact on users and collection of evidence from people with a variety of perspectives. This called for much more than simply handing out questionnaires, and it gave us a real insight into the impact of programmes. It was also a challenging process. New skills and learning will need to be developed, but, nonetheless, some of the evidence we gathered was rewarding, powerful and moving.

"When she did come in, Carol [Jasilek, St Matthews health community worker] was quite keen to see what was happening - "Why are you doing this?" - to ensure that we were doing it for the people of St Matthews"
(Crafts in St Matthews).

"Joint working with Family Learning section [was] very successful - shared goals and understanding of capacity and mission of other sections... Family learning sections often share goals and values with library and museum services and are capable of attracting additional funding for events" (Lazy Rutland Days).

"What I have learnt about reading and its place in peoples' lives has been transformational and will affect my future practice"
(Ways of Telling).





