Engage Cymru
Change Makers
Evaluation Report
July 2022

Effecting positive social change by tackling inequality in the arts

Table of Contents
1 Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 2
1.1 The project .................................................................................................................... 2
1.2 Evaluation Approach and Process ................................................................................. 4
2 Project Summary .............................................................................................................. 5
3 How the project met its Aims .......................................................................................... 8
  3.1 For racially minoritised young people from low socio-economic backgrounds to gain access and progress in the arts in Wales. ................................................................. 8
  3.2 To demonstrate new, innovative and creative models of engaging racially minoritised young people, with a particular focus on tackling inequality. ......................................................... 16
  3.3 To deepen and extend knowledge and understanding around diversity, equality and inclusion, supporting the wider gallery / visual arts sector to become more inclusive . 21
4 Learning Points and Recommendations ......................................................................... 28
1 Introduction

1.1 The project
This report is about Engage Cymru’s Change Makers. Change Makers is a collaboration with Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team (EYST)\(^1\), Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Ffotogallery, Riverfront and Wales Millenium Centre. The overarching aim of Change Makers has been to diversify the workforce through meaningful engagement between racially minoritised young people and artists, with partner venues, providing opportunities for young people to access and progress in the creative industries in Wales. Change Makers has the following aims:

1. For racially minoritised young people from low socio-economic backgrounds to gain access and progress in the arts in Wales.

2. To demonstrate new, innovative and creative models of engaging racially minoritised young people, with a particular focus on tackling inequality

3. To deepen and extend knowledge and understanding around diversity, equality and inclusion, supporting the wider gallery / visual arts sector to become more inclusive

These aims have been addressed through the following objectives:
- Through co-designing approaches
- Through supporting racially minoritised young people to gain creative skills
- Through supporting racially minoritised young people to gain a qualification
- Through introducing racially minoritised young people to a range of careers in the visual arts and identifying progression routes
- Through strategic training and professional development as follows:
  - One day diversity training in partnership with EYST and Rising Arts Agency enabling understanding of the diverse cultures and communities in Wales, impacts on services in an equal opportunities context and strategies for diversifying engagement and representation in the arts.
  - Arts Award Advisor training for project artists and partners.
  - Group meetings, networking and peer support opportunities focussed on tackling inequalities.
- By working with partners including the EYST
- By articulating learning, through ongoing evaluation and documenting the new models of engagement
- Through sharing learning and new models with the wider sector
- Through supporting the sector to build longer term partnerships with diversity organisations
- Through supporting galleries to understand the barriers which prevent racially minoritised communities engaging with, and being represented within their buildings and programmes

\(^1\) See: https://eyst.org.uk/
o By ensuring that the sector we support has the skills and resources to be genuinely inclusive and build resilience and capacity, as we navigate our journey out of lockdown.

o By supporting freelance artists to adapt and build capability through professional development and project delivery work have been especially impacted by the pandemic.

o By Tackling some of the pre-existing concerns around diversity and youth arts engagement with the visual arts that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic

This report is based on an analysis of evidence generated through an evaluation process that is outlined below. The evidence has been analysed to identify themes and learning, as well as examples of how the work has fulfilled its aims and objectives. The report is structured around the aims of the programme.
1.2 Evaluation Approach and Process
The evaluation process has been devised through the development of an evaluation framework, to map out the aims and objectives of the work, and thereby identify the questions that need to be explored, in order to surface learning and generate evidence relating to the aims and objectives. The evaluation process has involved:

- Identifying questions to be used by the film maker, ensuring that the resultant video content includes commentary and feedback relating to the difference the programme has made, not just what has happened during the programme.
- Utilising the potential of the Arts Awards to encourage reflection amongst the young people engaging.
- Devising and facilitating group sense making sessions for all involved to reflect on their experiences of the programme and the difference it has made.
- Devising questions for partners and teams involved in delivery of the programme to explore how the work has influenced practice and what sort of legacy the work will have in those venues.
- Surfacing questions and themes to inform the dialogue at the The Change Makers Training event.
- Reflection amongst all involved and the wider sector at the training event.
- Reflection on and analysis of the evidence thereby generated to inform this report.

The evaluation process was also used as a mechanism for nurturing the co-creative process, by asking the following questions of young people taking part at the beginning of the programme, so that they could inform the project priorities:

- Why do you want to be involved in this project?
- Do you think this project is important? If yes, why? If no, why not?
- What do you hope to gain?
- Is there anything more you would like to say?
2 Project Summary
The artists and project coordinator ensured that the activities that young people took part in were co-designed by them, drawing on their personal interests. For this reason, no activities were planned in advance of the artists meeting the young people. Guided learning activities and workshops took place, which were selected in response to young peoples’ interests. These activities included workshops, talks, tours, venue staff sharing their own career pathways, reflective sessions and pulling together information and evidence for their Arts Award logbooks.

The following outputs have been realised through this programme:
• 20 young people were engaged, 10 in Newport and 10 in Cardiff
• Both cohorts of young people worked towards Bronze Level Arts Award. Bronze Arts Award is a Level 1 qualification on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) and is open to young people aged 11 to 25.
• 20 young people have consequently been entered for Bronze Arts Award, which has included:
  o 40 guided learning hours
  o 20 independent learning hours
  o 60 hours total qualification time (TQT)
  o Collecting evidence in an individual portfolio of their experiences of:
    - Developing their interests, knowledge and skills through actively participating in any art form;
    - At least one arts event/experience as an audience member and their review of that event/experience;
    - Researching the career and work of an artist that inspires them;
    - Passing on an arts skill.

• Moderation of the Arts Awards portfolios is taking place on 26th July.

Because the programme was based on the young people’s interests and priorities, the activities were specific to each context. This is illustrated in the difference between the activities in which young people engaged, in Cardiff and Newport, as listed below:

Cardiff
1. Street art/mural tours around Cardiff with artists Yusuf Hussein Ismail and Shawqi Hassan (Unify Creative)
2. Persian calligraphy workshops with artist and designer Sahir Saki, Cardiff-based UNESCO and Arts Council Wales (ACW) award-winning Iranian artist
   https://www.saharsaki.com/
3. Textile workshops in artist studio with Ophelia Dos Santos - Welsh textile designer and climate justice activist specialising in hand embroidery.
4. Spin bright painting at Ffotogallery https://www.opheliaadossantos.com/about
5. Creative reflection sessions
6. Sense making session with Dr Roz Stewart Hall
7. Gallery tour and talk: Edgar Martin exhibition at Ffotogallery ‘What Photography & Incarceration have in Common with an Empty Vase’
8. Supporting Project Coordinator with pom-pom making workshops at Chapter as part of Ffotogallery Wellbeing Event
9. Venue and mural introduction plus collage workshop with Sahar Saki at Spit and Sawdust – a community space in Cardiff housing a skate park, café, art space and studios https://www.spitandsawdust.co.uk/
10. Two young people contributing to Change Makers training event
11. Introduction to and workshop at Radio Platform, Wales Millennium Centre – a new training programme and youth-led radio station supporting young people to produce and present their own live radio shows and podcasts.
12. Creative workshop creating ‘guardian sculptures’ with Green Squirrel – a social enterprise offering practical, creative, and inclusive opportunities for individuals and communities to take action on the climate and ecological emergency.
13. Print making workshops
14. Two young people volunteering at Ffotogallery (ongoing)
15. Peer skill sharing presentations supported by artists and Ffotogallery

Newport
1. Sharing event at Unit 9, Newport – young people involved in showcasing their work and contributing to panel discussions.
2. You and Your Voice poetry and writing workshops
3. Two young people and artist contributing to Change Makers training event
4. Studio time with Cobra Studios learning producing and technical skills
5. Sense making session with evaluator
6. Researching creatives for Arts Award, film makers, rappers, musicians
7. Sharing new skills with peers for Part D of Arts Award
8. Attending events across Newport for Arts Award, including films and events at Riverfront and The Place, Newport
9. Music and speech workshops with Mamadou O Diallo
10. Workshop session with Jamie Winchester on music career pathways
11. Creative reflection sessions
12. Supporting the Riverfront Windrush events (paid opportunities)
13. Attending Windrush Caribbean Film Festival events at Riverfront
14. Film making workshops with Onismo Muhlanga project artist and Ffilm Cymru
15. Contributing to the Riverfront Big Splash events
16. Young people presenting at the first Newport Solidarity Network meeting, a new network set up by Bectu, Cult Cymru (representing unions in Wales) and Urban Circle aimed at finding supportive opportunities for young people to develop their interests and learn film and performance industry skills

The programme was originally also intended to take place in Swansea, however, recruitment has been slow with the Swansea Change Makers project. It was therefore not possible to offer Arts Award accreditation within the timescale. However, through the ambitions of this programme Engage Cymru have made a key link with the EYST Swansea Youth Officer which has opened up opportunities for the partner venue to develop joint opportunities in the future.
3 How the project met its Aims

3.1 For racially minoritised young people from low socio-economic backgrounds to gain access and progress in the arts in Wales.

Young people’s ambitions for the programme
The need for this aim to be addressed has been clearly evidenced during the initial stages of the programme. For example, the films made at the beginning of this programme clearly evidenced young people’s recognition of the need for this work:

“As BAME people... not really a place for us in the artistic community.” (Film 1: 0.19 – 0.28)

Professionals and artists interviewed in the films also articulated the need for this work, for example:

“Art space is quite exclusive... more inclusive... less roadblocks and red tape, barriers, entry into the art scene. Programmes like this are going to enable that.” (Yusuf, Unify Creative Collective, Film 18: 0.17 – 0.36.)

The films also provide evidence of the interest there is amongst racially minoritised young people to establish such a ‘place’ or connection with the wider arts sector:

“I want to be involved in my community and be involved in art outside my sketchbook.” (Film 1: 0.56 – 0.59)

These initial films are also useful as evidence of the myriad of reasons that young people had for wanting to be engaged in the programme and why they thought it was important. For some people the focus was about the opportunity to develop their skills and understanding of both the arts and / or themselves, for example:

“Great for me to develop my art skills and find a new sense of identity... what art is to me and other people... art is in everything we do... art is everything... art is a big part of seeing that” (Film 5: 0.16 – 0.56)

“Gain better knowledge of art.” (Film 14: 0.28 – 0.31)

“Widen my perspective.” (Film 15: 00.10-00.15)

“Help me find myself.” (Film 15: 0.28)

“Gain new friends and socialise with people who can relate to me about art.” (Film 15: 00.50)

“Evolve my skills.” (Film 15: 0.15)

“Gain more connections in the art world.” (Film 6: 2.10-2.13)
“Gain a different perspective in life... different skills.” (Film 6: 2.20-2.31)

“I want to be more confident...to show my art style and express my feelings through art.” (Film 11: 0.04-0.15)

As well as gaining confidence and connections, young people expressed a hope that the work would bring them a place of belonging and a place to come together:

“Confidence and place of belonging and connection.” (Film 7: 0.40-048)

“Place where you can meet people... where you can fit in together... they understand where you’re coming from.” (Film 7: 0.18-0.26)

“Come from similar backgrounds... ethnicity... commonality.” (Film 7: 0.28-0.37)

In addition, for many young people the opportunity to bring about change in the cultural sector was important:

“Important to be involved... start to change community... if all people come together, it can be an important change.” (Film 4: 0.01-0.15)

The programme also inspired and engaged young people because of the potential for the arts to have wider influence on people’s perceptions, for example:

“I think Change Makers is important because of representation and feeling like I’m being seen. Even the mural...she’s wearing a head covering... you only see negative images of hijabs.” (Film 2: 0.25 – 0.41)

“Brings awareness to things people overlook e.g. BLM or people from ethnic minorities.” (Film 3: 0.01 – 0.23)

“Good way to help change Cardiff for the better.” (Movie 9: 00.15-19)

“Everyone should be seen for their great qualities not where they’re from... through art we can change that.” (Film 9: 00.45 – 00.56)

The development of these films has been an important strategy in ensuring that all involved had opportunity to articulate what was important to them at the outset of the programme, so that their priorities and interests could inform the programme content. The films also act as evidence of this process, and therefore as evidence of the embedded approach of co-creation that has flowed throughout the programme. In addition, the films have been a valuable way of representing the process to the wider members of Engage Cymru and of raising the profile of the programme:
“Having a promo film has been invaluable in terms of raising profile of the project and the issues the project serves to address. The film has also been useful for sharing in a visual way, the intention of the project with Engage board members and wider membership.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

In addition to the programme being important to young people, as an opportunity to gain skills, confidence, connections, and opportunities to influence perceptions, the context in which the work took place, post pandemic, was also significant. For many young people the timing of this programme was important, as an opportunity to reconnect and develop confidence following pandemic lockdowns:

“I’ve lost a lot of my social skills and confidence… main things I’m looking for.” (Film 4: 0.53 – 1.02)

This was also important for partners in the sector, for example:

“For organisations such as ours, the journey back to the norm of pre pandemic times is ongoing and being able to offer projects and opportunities such as this has absolutely supported us in doing so.” (Cath Cains, Ffotogallery, Sense Making Session notes, May 2022)

The difference made to access and progression

When reflecting on the difference the programme had made for them, during sense making processes such as journey mapping and interviews, young people at Newport talked about the range of creative experiences they had gained, for example:

“I’ve gained progression, experience, more knowledge… different expressions.” (Music maker 3 Newport)

“For me it was more so about my artist explorations, there were 2 about photographers… learning more about them led me to learn more about myself.” (Music maker 4 Newport)

“Something that was new to me was going to theatre shows… it was very immersive.” (Music maker 4 Newport)

This has been echoed in feedback at Cardiff, with people also talking about the range of skills they have acquired:

“I feel the project has really helped me get more ideas and find different art styles and develop skills.” (Change maker 1 Cardiff)

“I enjoyed this project because it was nice to meet some artists… it was such a diverse group it was nice to see everyone’s perceptions on art, the different styles and ideas.” (Change maker 2 Cardiff)
“I just really enjoyed this course because it’s been great to meet new people and to see different artists… to see different types of art.” (Change maker 3 Cardiff)

“New skills, new knowledge, social skills.” (Change maker 1 Cardiff)

In Cardiff young people also talked about the value of doing embroidery, making motivational posters and photo collage and a wide range of other visual arts activities.

Exposure to different artforms has inspired young people to expand their sense of what they might achieve, for example:

“It definitely has inspired me to be more open minded to things as well, I think. It’s made me realise that I don’t just excel in one skill, I can excel in more things than I’ve been used to, it’s made me more open minded to try new things… so I feel like I will definitely be a lot more open to trying new things, going to new places and holding different events. This has really helped me put in place what direction I want to take with this and how to get there because before I feel like I was quite unsure.” (Music maker 5 Newport)

Young people also commented on the opportunity to perform as one which inspires them to hone their skills through hard work:

“I’ve been given the opportunity to perform also, which has given me the encouragement to work harder within music.” (Music maker 5 Newport)

The importance of sharing your work in a public context, through the visual arts equivalent experience of exhibiting work, has also been reflected upon in Cardiff:
“The Ffotogallery exhibition... showed me how important layout can be, when it comes to any sort of exhibition... how important it is... that you display things in certain places and how you want the light to be and how that important that is as well as the work.” (Change maker 4 Cardiff)

Young people also had an explicit awareness of the value that has been added to their experience through working towards an Arts Award:

“From this Arts Award I’ve gained more confidence and brought new skills upon myself, I’ve been able to research new things, but also, I’ve realised that I’ve done quite a lot of things in my life that I haven’t actually looked into or researched or written about. I’ve learnt new things within this, and I’ve also learnt that research is key. I’ve been able to research some of my favourite artists.” (Music maker 5 Newport)

Such reflections are indicative of the potential legacy from the integration of Arts Awards into engagement, as young people are now equipped to learn more from their future experiences in a more independent way, by valuing the processes of research and reflection.

As a consequence, young people have been very positive about their experiences of the Arts Awards and keen to pursue higher levels of the award, to be advocates for the awards, and to become Arts Awards advisors themselves:

“It would be lovely if we could do a silver award later on.” (Cardiff Change maker 2, event feedback, July 2022)

“One thing about the Arts Award is that... it’s a lot more straightforward than it seems... people can seek inspiration from us doing it and reach out to us as well, we could be the ones helping instead of being the ones participating.” (Music maker 1 Newport)

It is also clear from young people’s feedback that such experiences have supported them to develop an explicit sense of their own ambitions and “opened eyes to different career paths that are possible” (Cardiff Sense making notes) which relate to those ambitions, for example:

“I’ve learnt about many different careers, but also how collaborative the arts are as a career and how many people are involved in just making one event happen or one piece happen.” (Change maker 4 Cardiff)

“It’s helped me map out my own path and my own idea and MRO... Now that I’ve got a catalogue behind me, I can choose what songs I want to perform and think, okay, is this the crowd that I want to perform this song to, which I feel has given me a big freedom now in performances.” (Music maker 1 Newport)
For further example, young people have also talked about future professional pathways to a broad range of creative careers, from becoming musicians and performers, to interior designers. This is especially relevant in this context because of the extent to which some young people’s families may not recognise the potential for careers in the arts:

“During the Change Makers training event we learnt from Momena Ali, founder of EYST, that the arts are not always recognised as a viable career path, and only accepted as a ‘hobby’. Through meeting partners in venues, the young people have learnt about the variety of roles within the sector and the pathways into arts careers.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

In addition, the programme has supported young people to expand their networks in ways that will enable them to pursue such ambitions:

“I’ve gained new connections, progressions, opportunities, experience, professional status and the opportunity of earning money.” (Music maker 5 Newport)

This is important, especially for the music makers in Newport, because:

“Networking is a big thing in the music industry.” (Music maker 6 Newport)

The group members’ own support for each other has also been an important aspect of the networks that they have developed, for example:

“We are constantly uplifting each other with new ideas, new skills, which is helping one another grow within our creative art and what we do, and we are good at. It’s really nice to be around a strong group of people who are on the same wave length as you in the sense of what you want to achieve in life, because I do feel like I would potentially struggle more if I wasn’t feeling included and if I wasn’t around other creatives that were very similar to me in that sense, so I’m grateful to be around other people who are all about diversity and inclusion and developing and growing as a whole as creatives from different backgrounds.” (Music maker 5 Newport)

It has been common for young people to also express how the programme and the supportive relationships that have developed through it, have supported them to become more confident, which will also be key to them ‘joining other projects,’ and their future creative career pathways, for example:

“I have gained a lot of confidence throughout this project.” (Music maker 2 Newport)

“The skills we’ve developed are confidence.” (Change maker 1 Cardiff)
“It’s given me confidence, not just for speaking for radio but also for also for my own skills.” (Change maker 4 Cardiff)

In turn this has enabled people to think more about their own worth and to value the skills they have and recognise how valuable these skills will be in a professional context:

“We are all learning about our worth, for our own individual careers as well through this period, we are all finding out what we deserve from what we are actually producing.” (Music maker 5 Newport)

For some young people this has also led them to consider the potential role they have as change makers:

“I’ve learnt how to involve activism, which is something I’m very passionate about, into my own arts career and into what I want to do.” (Change maker 4 Cardiff)

It is clear from the evidence presented above, from sense making sessions and interviews, that this aim was met, not least through the following programme objectives:

- To support racially minoritised young people to gain creative skills
- To support racially minoritised young people to gain a qualification (Arts Award)
- To introduce racially minoritised young people to a range of careers in the visual arts and identifying progression routes

In addition, the programme has evidently realised the following objectives for partner organisations and the sector:

- To ensure that the sector has the skills and resources to be genuinely inclusive and build resilience and capacity, as we navigate our journey out of lockdown.
- To support freelance artists to adapt and build capability through professional development and project delivery work have been especially impacted by the pandemic.
- To tackle some of the pre-existing concerns around diversity and youth arts engagement with the visual arts that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to realising this aim, the programme has realised other outcomes. Whilst this programme has not aligned itself with any preventative ambitions, some young people have talked about the difference this programme has made for them in terms of deterring them from engaging in less positive social activities, for example:

“The reason why I really do music is that it keeps me from doing mad stuff, it keeps me from being on the street and because I’m 16 I’m going to be around a lot of different friendship groups and there are going to be people who are doing certain things that I shouldn’t be doing, so music helps me gain a
different pattern, to go down the right route instead of the wrong one.”  
(Music maker 2 Newport)

Similarly, the EYST team in Cardiff has talked about how this programme has supported young people to express themselves and how relevant this is, especially post-pandemic:

“Our EYST Officer for the Cardiff Cohort highlighted how the pandemic had adversely affected so many of the young peoples’ mental health and the project has helped to address this by giving the young people a way of expressing themselves.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

It has also been apparent that the work has made a positive difference to young people’s relationships with their families:

“Young people and their families’ relationships improving.” (Fateha Ahmed, EYST, Cardiff Sense making session, 4th June 2022)

It is apparent that this work has addressed needs that were commonly recognised by young people, arts organisations and partners, and has effectively engaged racially minoritised young people from low socio-economic backgrounds so that they have gained access and progressed in the arts in Wales. Furthermore it has modelled a process for doing so and generated evidence of why this is important:

“The project showed the importance of having projects for upskilling the next generation based on their passions; and exposing their heritage.” (Onismo Muhlanga, interview July 2022)

As will be further evidenced below, this programme has achieved this through developing and demonstrating new innovative and creative models of engaging, through a responsive co-creative approach to programme design.
3.2 To demonstrate new, innovative and creative models of engaging racially minoritised young people, with a particular focus on tackling inequality

For Engage Cymru, the new, innovative and creative model was initiated through the following processes:

- Working with our diversity-led partner EYST to promote and recruit young people
- Promoting the lead artist opportunities widely by engaging with diversity organisations and networks to ensure we reached artists from all backgrounds
- Engage Cymru and all project partners participated in a Theory of Change session to collaboratively agree aims and objectives, which helped a large partnership cohort agree collective aims and objectives. This is the first time Engage Cymru has used this process in a project
- Engage revised its Safeguarding Policy to enable young people (under 18s) from the project to take part in the public facing online Change Makers training event
- Working with an evaluator who introduced ‘sense making’ sessions is a new way of working for Engage Cymru. Engaging the young people in these sessions has been a creative model which we are keen to embed within our practice and advocate for.
- Young people being key in organising end of project celebratory events
- Film maker commissioned to produce a promotional film and evaluation film, by embedding the evaluation questions within the interviews

Partnership has been key to this programme, and identifying and working with the ‘right’ partners has been vital:

“Creating the right partnerships is key; arts venues shouldn’t be applying for funding for projects like this if it’s tokenistic, not meaningful. Arts organisations should be partnering with diversity organisations e.g. Urban Circle; we do not categorise anyone.” (Onismo Muhlanga, interview July 2022)

Recruitment of artists was an important element of this new model and has provided an example that can inform future work:

“This is the first time Engage Cymru has received applications from artists from racially minoritised communities. Using traditional methods of recruitment alone would not have resulted in applications from global majority artists. With the support of diversity organisations, the project coordinator’s Fusion networks, and drawing on the Arts Council Wales ‘Cynefin’ network enabled us to reach and subsequently recruit four global majority artists and project coordinator.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

Recruitment of young people has also been important and has also been dependent upon new partnerships:

“Without the support of EYST, I am not certain we would have recruited 10 young racially minoritised women for the Cardiff cohort. EYST are a respected organisation whom the young peoples’ families know and respect.
They were a key broker and supporter.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

The models of engagement demonstrated in this programme, as evidenced in the previous section of this report, have been based on a co-designed approach that has reflected and responded to the priorities of those young people that the work sought to engage. For further evidence, the following comment was made by the team during the Cardiff sense making session:

“What we have tried to expose the group to isn’t as fixed or regimented as the school curriculum, so the fact that we have been able to meet different personalities within the arts sector… that they normally wouldn’t have contact with and for them to understand that there is an arts scene here that they might not have been aware of. The embroidery artist really resonated with the group because she was not much older than them and was doing something with real purpose.” (Team discussion, Cardiff Sense Making Session, 4th June 2022)

The model has clearly been new and innovative in various ways. For example, it has been based on experiencing and understanding a wide range of art forms, including public art as well as art encountered in more formal spaces, and it has also enabled people to reflect upon and consider how art can bring about change:

“It’s the way that the young people have been exposed to the art experience in so many different ways and how visual arts is not just in a gallery but outside... and that will change what they create... using activism in art...it’s about how they can see themselves within that more than before.” (Team discussion, Cardiff Sense Making Session, 4th June 2022)
One detail of the approach that has been key to the model developed has been about the openness and responsiveness of the work. The flexibility and responsiveness of the programme has made it a relevant context for young people with a range of previous experience. For example, in Newport the young people engaged were already experienced music makers:

“"I’m a singer, I’ve been making music for 6 years and being involved in this project is important for me because it is helping me understand my influences a lot deeper and kind of seeing their formula and how they got to where they want to be, which is helping me formulate my plan of where I want to be.’’” (Music maker 1 Newport)

Whereas in Cardiff, the young people engaged were not experienced in arts engagement or activity prior to the programme.

The flexibility and responsiveness of the programme made it a relevant context for young people who are new to this type of activity, but generally interested in visual arts and craft, as well as for you people in Newport who are experienced music makers. Young people engaged have determined the focus and the content based on where they are situated in terms of their arts experience and what they want to achieve based on their own aspirations and interests. It has achieved this through the programme’s objective, to use co-design approaches.

The Arts Award has been a good fit with this approach as it also is an open model of working, whereby people can complete Arts Awards at different stages of their artistic development and across any artform. Furthermore, it has been an asset in terms of recruitment of young people, given that the arts are not necessarily always recognised as a route towards a career:

“"I am certain that working through the Arts Award framework and offering a qualification alongside experiences, helped with recruitment and commitment from the young people. Having a qualification offers a tangible outcome and will help grow arts leadership skills.’’” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

However, there was very limited capacity in the team for supporting the realisation of Arts Awards and in future it would be better if there was more support and planning built in:

“"All project artists delivering Arts Awards for the first time after just a half day Arts Award Advisor online training. Pre-covid Engage Cymru would organise Arts Award Advisor training in-house, in person with the whole cohort, and build in planning / meeting time immediately after to help gel the group and tease out any issues. In future iterations of a programme such as this, I would want to build in more support and planning.”” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

“I could have done with more support around delivering Arts Award. Any future iteration of this project I would take the learning and create something smoother going forward.” (Onismo Muhlanga, interview July 2022)
However, the Arts Awards process has concurred with the programme’s flexible and responsive approach, which has been important. By responding to the young people’s interests and priorities the team have been able to structure the programme around relevant work that the young people involved can imagine themselves doing. For example, in the Cardiff sense making session the team also summarised some of the details of the approach that were important, and which distinguish it from others as:

- Learning about artists with similar / resonant lived experiences
- Participants being able to see themselves within the visual arts, and reflected within the artists’ identities
- Working with diverse artist role models, including those who are not much older than the people engaged
- Opportunities to collaborative, co-create, create, and curate their own work
- Exposure to a variety of art forms
- Noticing that visual art is everywhere, especially in urban environments
- Establishing the importance of expression through art
- Recognising activism in art
- Exposure to examples of different career paths and ‘opening up’ different career paths as viable options
- Helping participants to identify what they can do and clarify their own skills
- Making it possible for young people to help and support each other
- Ensuring opportunities for all engaged to find something that resonates with them / they could relate to
- Establishing a feeling of belonging and confidence, so that future engagement and career development are credible and realistic

However, an open and responsive approach sometimes causes uncertainty about starting points and can be a challenge for some partners to plan for, if it is an approach that they are unfamiliar with. For example:

“We do feel if the project organisers outlined and clarified certain details of the project from the start, we could have planned and delivered the project even better to engage participants with different artists.” (Shawqi Hasson, Unify Creative Collective, Response to artists’ questions, June 2022.)

Another challenge for all involved was the shifting timelines, which are, to some extent also a consequence of an open and responsive process:

“We also feel that if the project has started at an earlier date, participants could have performed better and allocated more time towards this project, and less mental strain of having committed to both this project and study for their exams.” (Shawqi Hasson, Unify Creative Collective, Response to artists’ questions, June 2022.)

“When the project started it was a busy time (because the project started later than intended). Urban Circle had other prior commitments and I had to reshape them to fit with the project.” (Onismo Muhlanga, interview July 2022)
Given the success of the open and responsive, co-creative approach, it is important that future work adheres to such a process and, rather than predefining the details of a programme in order for partners to be able to prepare better, it may be more effective to work together with all partners to articulate and share the rationale for such an open and responsive co-creative approach, at the outset of the partnerships.

Another thing that impacted on the start date in some areas was the capacity of partners and changes in their roles and focus:

“A major challenge was EYST Officers in the Newport and Swansea region being pulled away from the project early on. This impacted massively on recruitment of young people. Where EYST were involved in Cardiff, recruitment was smooth, and the Officer was able to offer ongoing practical support throughout the project. This was not the case with Swansea and Newport where the officers were pulled away because of a rise in child trafficking cases in their regions.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

Timing was a common feature of the challenges faced. For further example, finding common dates and times to come together was difficult and finding the best way to communicate to agree sates was also tricky:

“Finding opportunities to bring project cohorts together for planning and de-briefing; finding a convenient date(s) was in some cases impossible… Sometimes communication channels have been challenging… Lots of important dates, arrangements and planning matters have been shared on Whats App and it has been difficult at times to keep up with progress. In future projects preferred communication channels should be agreed with everyone at the start of the project.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

As will be further evidenced in the following section of this report, working with networks and partners who have insight into approaches to extending diverse engagement has been key to addressing such issues. Furthermore, such partnerships have been key in informing the work as it has developed. These partnerships have been a site for essential mutual learning, through collaboration and sharing of practice:

“Organisations need opportunities to share practice and be collaborative. For organisations that haven’t worked with diverse communities, they should find out about practices; share case studies; incorporate practices into their own organisations. It’s pure. It’s recognised by who you’re trying to approach. ACW need to think about due diligence; look at who is applying for funding; make sure they have those things in place or a clear intention to do it.” (Onismo Muhlanga, interview July 2022)

It is apparent that such partnerships and the sharing of knowledge and practice, through collaboration, across partnerships is essential to developing work that is about widening engagement.
3.3 To deepen and extend knowledge and understanding around diversity, equality and inclusion, supporting the wider gallery / visual arts sector to become more inclusive

Learning through exchange with the cohorts and partners
It is apparent that the arts organisations involved and Engage Cymru have found partnership working a valuable and insightful way of informing and developing more inclusive approaches.

For Engage Cymru, working with the team at Cardiff EYST has also been valuable for recruitment, support and advocacy:

“The Cardiff EYST BME CYP Officer, Fateha Ahmed has been a highly valuable and supportive partner. Not just helping recruit young people but being a fantastic advocate for the project and offering practical and pastoral support throughout.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

The Cardiff EYST team have also provided useful provocation and input in relation to the equality and inclusion:

“The founder of EYST, Momena Ali, offered a valuable contribution and provocations at the Engage Cymru Change Makers training event.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)
Partnership working has also established relationships with organisations and individuals that will be beneficial to future inclusive work. For example, when asked ‘Has this project supported your organisation to develop / establish longer term partnerships with diversity organisations?’ Cath Cains of Ffotogallery answered:

“The project has created a new partnership between Ffotogallery and EYST which is certain to evolve in the future. It has also helped grow our relationship with Engage Cymru and strengthened our relationships with WMC, Unify and Naz as a freelance creative.” (Cath Cains, Ffotogallery, Sense Making Session notes, May 2022)

For further example, this is also the case for Engage Cymru:

“Engage Cymru attended a number of EYST training and sharing events which has increased our networking opportunities with diversity organisations and racially minoritized individuals.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

Through working with partners and young people to develop this programme, arts organisations have identified important details that will help them to make future work more inclusive. For example, Ffotogallery recognised the need to work with more emerging and local artists:

“At Ffotogallery we had already recognised the need for us to support artists from racially minoritised communities and the importance of including those artists in our gallery exhibition programming. However, many of those artists have been relatively established and this project has made us realise how important it is to also work with emerging artists and groups from our more local communities.” (Cath Cains, Ffotogallery, Response to additional questions, May 2022)

The programme has also supported organisations to develop the skills and resources to be genuinely inclusive, for example:

“In particular partnering with EYST, Engage and Unify and hearing from the young people involved in the project, has enabled us to see exactly where we are lacking in being genuinely inclusive and how we can evolve going forward.” (Cath Cains, Ffotogallery, Response to additional questions, May 2022)

Organisations have also benefitted from wider learning through the programme, for example:

“It’s revealed where I need to progress and where I need support. I’ve recognised my management of projects with Urban Circle need to be more rigorous.” (Onismo Muhlanga, interview July 2022)

In addition, direct work with young people has deepened and extended knowledge and understanding around diversity, equity and inclusion for arts organisations:
“Further understanding of the challenges facing engagement with young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds in the visual arts and strategies to overcome these issues. How to create more opportunities for career pathways for young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds.” (Cath Cains, Ffotogallery, Response to additional questions, May 2022)

Furthermore, exchange with artists and young people has also deepened and extended Engage Cymru’s knowledge and understanding in this area of work:

“We have learnt directly from the artists and the young people the barriers they experience and perceive in gaining opportunities in the creative industries.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

One example of such a barrier has been made apparent in Newport, where for some young people accessing one venue was problematic:

“Our young people are from very varied circumstances; they have levels of care and support is vital. Level of trauma and lack of confidence some of the young people already have; Riverfront was, for some, not accessible.” (Onismo Muhlanga, interview July 2022)

This programme has presented an opportunity to address such barriers through direct work with such venues:

“I’ve had good conversations with Riverfront and we both acknowledge the need for long term sustainable relationships, but we have to move at the young peoples’ pace; some young people are not quite ready to walk into Riverfront, they didn’t feel comfortable. Exploring with Danielle at Riverfront what needs to happen, e.g. moving at young peoples’ pace to create long standing space; getting across that Riverfront is a creative space that is for them. It still needs work and takes time.” (Onismo Muhlanga, interview July 2022)

For further example of how direct exchange with the young people engaged has deepened understanding, one of the most insightful comments during the process of gathering feedback has come from one of the Newport music makers, when he said:

“Watching Shades of Blue was good because even though it follows two black men, or there’s two black men leading it, racism is solely at the forefront of what they do, so yes, they are black men, but they’re also other things as well, and therefore we need to focus on how, when they (arts venues) give us opportunities, it’s ‘speak about your experiences of being black’, as if you’re not human, you’re a separate category or something, you’re kept in that box, which is limited.” (Music maker 2 Newport)

Expectations placed upon young people to always be making work about their identity as young black people can be understood as problematic, as it defines them
in limited and limiting ways. Even without this emphasis being part of a programme, young people may still assume that this expectation exists, because it is so commonplace. This has been recognised by Engage Cymru as significant learning for the future:

“Young people from the Newport cohort in particular have expressed how they do not wish to always be defined by their ethnicity and how there is a pressure to express themselves in projects in ways which shine a light on this. It shows too narrow a definition of who they are.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

Through such learning, the programme will inform organisations, including Engage Cymru, in ways that will enable those organisations to practice in more inclusive ways in future, for example:

“We will be reflecting on this project when planning our future programming, in particular with regards to our Engagement and Learning programme, to offer more opportunities like this. We will absolutely take the learning from our involvement in this project and apply it to our future programming.” (Cath Cains, Ffotogallery, Response to additional questions, May 2022)

“There is a level of care that is vital now when we’re presenting projects specific to target groups; this is coming from young people conversations; in order for us to be inclusive, they worry about labels and categorisations, so these must be removed and there should be no criteria. If we want more African young people, we need to remove African, just ‘young people’ to show a level of solidarity.” (Onismo Muhlanga, interview July 2022)

“I feel more confident and focused on the next steps Engage Cymru needs to take to create a more equitable playing field for artists and young people from racially minoritised communities. It is clear there is a gap in terms of professional development opportunities for young/emerging artists who want to work in engagement/participation.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

Involvement in the programme has encouraged artists and organisations already committed and working to diversify engagement to continue to build on their work in this area to ensure that the arts become increasingly inclusive in the future, for example:

“The project has reinforced in our minds that we have to continue doing work of this nature and nurturing future generations of creatives who seek to enter the arts, especially those from minority communities like ours, is really crucial if the arts are set to become more inclusive.” (Yusuf Hussein Ismail, Unify Creative Collective, Response to artists’ questions, July 2022.)

“The project has influenced our passion to continue working and inspiring future generations of creatives, especially those from minority communities who seek to enter the arts and design sector.” (Shawqi Hasson, Unify Creative Collective, Response to artists’ questions, July 2022.)
The programme has established various relationships and connections that will be built upon in future, for example:

“We have established really good relationships with the group of young people that we have met through the project and introduced some of them to our organisation even though it is very local to most of them. Without it we may never have made those connections. I am very grateful to this project for introducing us to an amazing group of young women, some of whom will possibly even volunteer for us in the future and I hope that we can continue to support as they progress through careers in the visual arts.” (Cath Cains, Ffotogallery, Response to additional questions, May 2022)

“There is no doubt that Engage Cymru will continue to develop opportunities for young people in partnership with EYST. Our work in 2022-2023 and beyond will focus on diversifying the creative workforce. Through this project Engage Cymru has developed links with Race Council Cymru who attended the Change Makers training event. Engage Cymru has also been invited to contribute to a new ‘Solidarity’ network alongside Cult Cymru, Bectu and Urban Circle.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

“Engage Cymru was able to broker conversations between partner venues and Arts & Business Cymru around their upcoming ‘Future Proof’ creative apprenticeship for young people with protected characteristics. There is an appetite from at least 1 of the venues to host apprenticeships, and a number of young people have expressed an interest in applying.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

Also, as a consequence of this programme, Engage Cymru have suggested that these young people could be invited onto a steering group, in paid advisory roles, about future iterations of the Future Proof creative apprenticeship scheme, which Arts and Business Cymru welcome. There has also been interest in the programme from other organisations, for example:

“There has been a growing interest in the project from a number of organisations e.g. Cult Cymru; Ffilm Cymru; Creative Lives and Bectu – all of whom we look forward to working in partnership with in the future.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

The legacy from this work promises to be rich, especially in terms of the potential for future work to spiral from these partnerships. This is important, not least because there need to be ways to develop this work into a longer-term projects or programmes, within which people can continue to build on the trust that has been established through a slow and careful approach:

“Trust is key when it comes to working with young people. We need to think about their vulnerability and offer them safe spaces. Projects like this need to be long term. It takes time to build trust and it can’t always happen in a short project. It can take 3 or 4 months before young people start
communicating with us and express themselves; come out of their shell.”
(Onismo Muhlanga, interview July 2022)

Long term sustained opportunities for engagement are important, because short term projects can effectively nurture a desire to engage in creative activities and then remove those activities in a potentially damaging way:

“When you have short term projects it can be damaging. It can be traumatising for young people. We need longevity. We’re working with people with delicate issues. When trust is established, this is when young people express themselves and they flourish. Our young people have been in a safe space where they feel safe and feel comfortable and can express themselves.” (Onismo Muhlanga, interview July 2022)

One way in which the programme has extended upon the young people’s engagement in a positive way has been through their involvement in the change makers sharing and training event.

**Change Makers sharing and training event**

On Monday, 27 June 2022, Engage Cymru presented an on-line sharing event entitled ‘Black, Asian and Racially Minoritised young people’s representation in the Creative industries.2’

Kamina Walton, founder of Rising Arts Agency and Engage Diversity Rep, facilitated the event, at which there were contributions from Andrew Ogun, Agent for Change ACW; young participants, Rabab Ghazoul, gentle/radical; Charley Sealy, Equalities Policy Advisor, Welsh Government, Culture Division and Momina Ali, founder Ethnic Minorities Support Team.

The sharing event was planned to ‘deepen and extend knowledge and understanding around diversity, equality and inclusion, by supporting the wider gallery / visual arts sector to become more inclusive’ As such it realised these objectives:

- To share learning and new models with the wider sector
- To support the sector to build longer term partnerships with diversity organisations
- To support galleries to understand the barriers which prevent racially minoritised communities engaging with, and being represented within their buildings and programmes

The event was a ‘call to action’, which focussed on how we can shift the creative sector towards genuine inclusion of young people.

The event included presentations, a panel discussion and break-out sessions and was a chance to reflect on and think about the following questions:

- How can we shift the creative sector towards genuine inclusion?

---

2 See https://engage.org/happenings/engage-cymru-change-makers/?fbclid=IwAR3qDuN1B1OHaBC2sfOWBy2XPg6ewjBMVfuJqO3a2_dCwEwZCcni3kr9L5U
• How are we able to open up pathways for young people at the start of their careers?
• How can we work with young people to ensure diverse representation across our workforce?
• How can we create long term plans, measures and support to ensure inclusive creative initiatives on a long-term basis?

The event engaged 32 people from across the sector, including artists, researchers, and other professionals. The feedback in the session was very positive and whilst there were only two responses to the survey about the event, these were also very positive. For example, when asked on a scale if their knowledge of the topic had increased, the response was 100% yes. Similarly, when asked if participating in the training was a positive experience, the response was 100% yes. Also, when asked ‘Would you be interested in more training on the same topic?’ the response was 100% yes. When asked ‘How do you expect this training will support you/your work?’ people said, ‘Links and contacts, networking opportunities’ and ‘Developing Arts Award in my own venue.’

One of the key achievements of this event proved to be about the involvement of the young people in the exchange. Young people were meaningfully engaged in the event, they “thought the event was very interesting” and “enjoyed hearing the viewpoints of others.” (Cardiff Change Maker 1, event feedback, July 2022)

One way in which the change makers involvement was useful was that it made the scale of the programme and the sector interest in the programme more apparent to them:

“The amount of people involved in the project was surprising as I hadn’t realised the scale of the project before this… I liked being involved in such an important event.” (Cardiff Change Maker 1, event feedback, July 2022)

Furthermore, the change makers appreciated the opportunity to further inform work in the sector:

“I hope that what I said at the event has helped the shaping of projects like these going forward.” (Cardiff Change maker 1, event feedback, July 2022)

“It made me feel I guess, as they want to know our opinions.” (Cardiff Change maker 2, event feedback, July 2022)

However, although there were a number of global majority contributors and delegates in the room, one of the change makers had concerns about a perceived limited representation of racially minoritised people:

“Perhaps have more people of BAME backgrounds present. For the most part, everyone involved was white and I felt there should have been a wider range of speakers.” (Cardiff Change maker 1, event feedback, July 2022)
The event has also been recognised as a very important element of the programme for Engage Cymru:

“The Change Makers training event has been a crucial part of this project. The panel discussion with its provocations and direct call to action will help inform future Engage Cymru programmes aimed at tackling inequality.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

“The provocations raised in the Change Makers training event will certainly be explored further with Engage members and the wider sector and help build capacity and knowledge in the sector we support.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

Learning, through exchange with young people and partners during the programme, and sector exchange at the sharing and training event, has deepened and extended knowledge and understanding around diversity, equality and inclusion and thereby supported the wider gallery / visual arts sector to become more inclusive.

4 Learning Points and Recommendations
This section summarises learning points and consequent recommendations from the project. The learning includes unexpected outcomes, issues, the successes of the work and the relevance of the approach.

1. The responsive co-creative approach that has evolved a programme that has been relevant to different young people with different ambitions, interests, and levels of previous experience, across artforms.
2. Sharing the rationale for co-creation with all partners more explicitly will be useful in future.
3. The use of the Arts Awards has been a valuable strand of the work, which has helped with recruitment and nurtured young people’s explicit understanding of how to be independent, reflective learners. However, more time for staff and artists to become familiar with Arts Awards and to be able to support young people to produce their Arts Awards portfolio should be built into future programmes.
4. A combination of the co-creative approach and the use of the Arts Awards has led young people to seriously consider their career paths and to begin to think about themselves as professionals:
   “In this project we’ve actually been able to professionalise ourselves and our status.” (Music maker 5 Newport)
5. Positive outcomes relating to young people’s wider life experiences, that are often reflected in the aims of more ‘preventative’ or ‘transformative’ models of work, can be realised through programmes like this, without any unhelpful emphasis on such outcomes as imply that people are in need of change.
6. Expectations placed upon young people to always be making work about their racialised identity is problematic and it is important to consider whether this is inevitable within a targeted programme. It might be useful to consider whether a
more beneficial long-term strategy might be to target the barriers there are within arts organisations to more diverse practice and engagement.

7. It may be beneficial to shift the focus to be about developing anti-racist practice and programmes, in organisations and venues, and widening engagement through strategic work that changes organisational infrastructures, rather than targeting racially marginalised people.

8. A significant lead in time is useful for ensuring co-design of programmes with partners (such as took place through the Theory of Change meeting) within which details can also be agreed such as the best communication channels to use, roles and responsibilities and how best to agree dates for coming together.

9. Projects and programmes like this one need to be long term, to build trust slowly and to ensure continuity for young people once they have developed trust in the organisation and process, so they are not left ‘high and dry’.

10. Creating the ‘right’ partnerships is key to success.

11. System change within the sector will be usefully informed by the content of the training event:

   “The provocations in the Change Makers training event will form the basis of ongoing sector conversations about system changes.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

12. Sense Making sessions and the wider co-created evaluation approach have proved valuable and were a welcome addition to the programme:

   “Sense making sessions are something which the partners particularly welcomed and young people contributed fully to. One venue partner suggested sense making training for the sector to ensure inclusive co-produced approach to evaluation for participatory engagement.” (Angela Rogers, Engage Cymru Coordinator, Response to questions, July 2022)

13. Young people have been keen to articulate the need for this sort of programme to continue and be extended upon, for example:

   “There should be more events for showcasing, so people would get a better understanding of what we do.” (Music maker 2 Newport)

   “A place where people can go... when people complain that the kids are causing trouble it’s because they don’t have a facility to go to.” (Music maker 3 Newport)

It is important to acknowledge that through ongoing reflection Engage Cymru has already identified and is acting upon the need to develop programmes in many of the ways outlined above. For example, Engage Cymru is already exploring how to build the capacity and pathways through professional development opportunities for racially minoritized artists/young artists in ways that will be informed by this work. Furthermore, Engage Cymru is now clearer about where the gaps are and have started building a network of individuals and organisations who Engage Cymru needs to be working with to make progress.
Cardiff Change Makers at Ffotogallery with Arts Awards Portfolios

Supported by
The National Lottery®
through the Arts Council of Wales

Cefnogwyd gan
Y Loteri Genedlaethol
towy Gyngor Celfyddyau Cymru

Engage Cymru
Bringing people and art together

Arts & Business
Cymru

Newport City Council
CYNGOR Dinas Casnewydd