

Labels

An evaluation for
The Thames Valley
Partnership

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Thames Valley Partnership (henceforward referred to as the Partnership) is an independent non-profit making organisation that supports the development of policy and practice that make communities feel safer. It does this mainly through building productive partnerships between agencies. For some time, the Partnership has been supporting the work of organisations that use Art to engage young people.

Some see huge potential in using the arts as an instrument to help deliver the government's strategies on social inclusion and neighbourhood renewal. Others are dubious, either because they see the possible outcomes as too soft and difficult to measure or because they value the notion of Art for Art's sake and resist the notion that artistic value should be measured in terms of educational or social impact. Labels was an experimental project designed to test ways of using the creative arts to improve community safety through partnership building. More specifically, it provided an opportunity for the Partnership's own Youth Arts Development Worker to be actively involved in leading the process so that the Partnership could learn first hand about the potential for such work and then disseminate that learning. The intention was to bring together young people aged 13-16 from the High Wycombe area who were *'more disaffected or at risk'* to form a group and work with a professional artist. The original aims and objectives of the project were as follows:

Aims:

- To examine the relationship between Community Safety and the Arts by testing the links between involving young people in a quality arts project and the impact it has on issues such as self esteem, confidence, team skills, social and communication skills, potential re-integration of pupils at risk of exclusion etc.
- To model an example of evaluated partnership-working on an arts project with young people at risk and to disseminate good practice/lessons learnt from this.

Objectives:

- To provide a positive, creative, learning experience for the young people involved
- To give the young people involved practical skills in digital photography, digital video, image manipulation, animation etc.
- To enhance self-esteem and develop decision-making, problem-solving and team-working skills
- To provide participants with the opportunity to explore and express their feelings about self-image, labels imposed and assumed, and the pressures of living with these labels, through creative media.

The project was funded by:-

- Regional Arts Lottery Programme (RALP)
- Thames Valley Partnership Young Citizens Programme
- Wycombe District Council Arts Development
- Bucks County Council Youth and Community Service
- Sir William Ramsay School Community Arts Fund
- Bartle Family Charitable Trust

This report was commissioned by the Thames Valley Partnership and has been prepared by Jeremy Spafford, an independent consultant based in Oxford.

1.2 Methodology

The evaluator attended one session in each phase of the project and spoke with 7 professionals and 5 participants (Appendix A). Interviews took place after Phase One and again after Phase Two. The following questions were explored in semi-structured interviews with professionals using prompts (Appendix B):

- What is Labels aiming to achieve and to what extent has it been successful?
- What has worked well and what could have worked better with regard to the following areas:
 - Partnership working
 - Co-ordination of the project by Thames Valley Partnership
 - Involvement of young people at risk
 - Investigation of the theme of identity and self-image
 - Artistic development
- What lessons, if any, have been learnt about the relationship between community safety and the arts?
- What lessons were learnt from this phase?

None of the Phase One participants were interviewed. Participants in Phase Two were asked:

- What they thought of the project overall
- What they enjoyed most
- What could have been better
- What skills they had learnt
- What they had found out about their estate.

In addition, the evaluator examined data collected by the project co-ordinator.

In order to facilitate greater openness, all interviewees were assured that quotations would not be attributed in the text of the report.

All assertions and recommendations made within this report derive from one or more interviewees unless stated otherwise.

2. Purpose

The aims and objectives of the project are presented above in section 1.1. Interviewees saw the project as action research. The following seven main issues emerged from conversations with interviewees:

- **How to engage disaffected young people**
Can the creative arts be used to engage 'at risk' groups, integrate people from different backgrounds and help address social exclusion?
- **What media are effective**
Is digital video work a suitable medium?
- **What resources are required**
What is necessary and what is desirable?
- **How to facilitate learning and personal development**
Can this approach develop the technical skills, artistic awareness, self-esteem, confidence and team working skills of those taking part?
- **How to use Art to improve community safety**
Does the work need to have a community safety theme in process, product or both? Is the theme of identity and self-image helpful?
- **How to develop partnerships**
Can productive partnerships be created between agencies from the arts, community safety and education sectors?
- **What should happen next**
How should the work be taken forward?

Interviewees saw the content of the project as crucial. Unlike many community safety youth projects, Labels was not seen as primarily diversionary.

3. Structure of the Course

The Partnership began by drawing together a steering group consisting of representatives of Sir William Ramsay School, the youth service, a Pupil Referral Unit (The Grange), the district council arts officer and an independent artist. The project was designed to be based in the school and targeted at young people at risk of exclusion. In addition, young people from Castlefield (on the other side of High Wycombe) would be escorted and supported by a youth worker and pupils would be referred by The Grange.

Taster sessions were organised in July 2002 in the school and at Castlefield Community Centre. Young people were given a brief opportunity to handle filmmaking equipment, experiment with stop-motion animation techniques and learn about the concept of 'blue screen'.

Before the full course began, The Grange pulled out of the project because of staff shortages and a requirement to increase curricular activities from 7 to 21 hours per week. This was a significant setback as it removed the principal access to young people 'at risk'. The steering group decided to continue on the understanding that the youth service would be able to bring young people from Castlefield (mainly Asian young men) to the project.

The course ran for 10 weeks between September and November 2002. Attendance and involvement of young people from Castlefield proved very difficult to achieve. This was made more difficult following the departure of the project's main contact in the youth service. For reasons explored below, many of the objectives for the project were not realised. In particular, the project failed to form a cohesive group of young people from different parts of High Wycombe.

The steering group decided to run a second course in Castlefield targeting young Asian men from the area. This lasted for 11 weeks between January and March 2003. The course based at Sir William Ramsay School came to be known as Phase One and that based at Castlefield Community Centre as Phase Two.

Phase One was a multimedia/digital video project involving a mixed group of 13-16 year olds working with a professional artist to produce a short video piece based around ideas of self-identity and perceptions of others. The course was carefully planned and began with icebreakers and a lively debate about labelling and identity. However, for reasons discussed below, the course became fragmented as the group failed to gel and attendance became inconsistent. One session had only one participant. The artist was unable to follow her work plan and the output was a sketchbook of individual pieces of work linked by the artist rather than a group effort.

Phase Two was a digital video project specifically aimed at Asian young men (aged 13-16) living in the Castlefield area of High Wycombe. Participants worked with a video artist and youth worker to plan, shoot and edit a short documentary style video based on perceptions of their local community. The course was well planned and followed four stages:

- Stage 1 – explaining the project – getting used to the equipment – understanding the components of film making (idea, teamwork, resources)
- Stage 2 – creating a script
- Stage 3 – filming and interviewing
- Stage 4 – editing – downloading, inputting and editing music

A review was built in after four weeks and a strong group of five young people was maintained. The output was very much a group effort. Phase Two culminated in a celebratory showing of the film to friends, family and some local residents. Participants were presented with certificates and trophies and the local press covered the event.

One interviewee noted that, although as a pilot, the project worked well, it would have been easier to retain motivation and focus if the course had been offered intensively over a 3 or 5 day period in the holidays.

Phase One was delivered by Kasia Howard with the support of Sue Darke from the school. Phase Two was delivered by Hatim Qureshi with the support of Amjad Tauseeqe from the youth service. Both phases were co-ordinated by Rosy Prue from the Partnership.

4. Participants

4.1 Attendance

In Phase One, a total of 18 people aged between 13 and 15 attended at least one session. Seven were female and eleven were male. Ten were from the school and eight were from Castlefield via the youth service. However, only five people attended often enough to complete the course. All of these were from the school (2 male and 3 female).

Only three participants had been to a taster session, all of whom dropped out fairly early. Some young people from Castlefield attended regularly but only from when they joined (in week 6) and once they had consistent involvement from a youth worker they knew. A high number of school participants dropped out after week 5.

In Phase Two, 8 young people (all male) attended at some point, five of whom completed the course. One participant attended John Hampden Grammar School, the remainder were from Cressex School. One of the Phase Two participants attended one session of Phase One.

4.2 Target group in Phase One

Interviewees concurred that, in Phase One, the project failed to target young people at risk successfully. The project became very focussed on the school and lost external agencies and referrals.

Some of the students from Ramsay School were described as '*vulnerable*' and indeed it was the more vulnerable young people that stayed the course to the end. This suggests that the content and presentation of the course was particularly well adapted to the needs of less confident or motivated students.

Due to the withdrawal of The Grange, no students attended from one of the original target groups (pupils excluded from school). Publicity to the Youth Offending Team and social services yielded no referrals. This may have been partly due to the fact that the publicity was not followed through with active marketing, as the co-ordinator was unwell during the early stages of the course.

Some Asian boys were ferried over from Castlefield. This arrangement did not work well:

- The youth worker who had helped design the project left so there was no suitable adult available to organise transport. This led to the uncomfortable situation of a white female project co-ordinator collecting a young Asian man from Castlefield to transport him to the course. Once another youth worker became involved, this problem was resolved but it was too late for the participants to properly engage.

- The course was run during Ramadan. Participants arrived at the school just as they needed to break fast.
- Homework clubs in school and transport arrangements from Castlefield meant that participants arrived at different times. This made it difficult for the artist to generate a cohesive group and was very distracting.
- The teacher allocated to provide support was not always able to attend the sessions.
- To complicate matters further, most of the school participants were white and older and all of the Castlefield participants were Asian and younger. The very separate identities of these sub groups was never broken down and, on occasions, tensions between the groups had to be managed but was never addressed.
- This situation was further exacerbated by the fact that the venue was the *'home turf'* of some participants but not others.
- Overall, inconsistent attendance undermined attempts to integrate the group and take individual participants through a structured learning process.

'The Castlefield lot always arrived late so we ended up summarising discussions and running separate groups.'

One young man from Castlefield was reported to have attended relatively consistently which was impressive given that he was in an *'alien environment.'*

4.3 Target group in Phase Two

In Phase Two, the steering group decided to focus very specifically on Asian boys in Castlefield. This was partly, according to one interviewee, to *'honour the young people who missed out in Phase One'* but also to build on newly discovered contacts on the estate via the youth service. Indeed, the relative success of Phase Two was due, at least in part, to greater involvement from the youth service. In addition, Castlefield was chosen because it had already been identified as a target area in the local community safety strategy.

It is not clear why Asian boys, in particular, were targeted. Interviewees had differing explanations for the decision. Some thought it was a management decision based on requirements imposed by the youth service funding which had been drawn from the Community Cohesion Fund. Others thought it was a pragmatic decision based on whom the youth worker could most easily access. One noted that to open the course to girls would have created cultural difficulties that were beyond the scope of the project to address.

In any event, all interviewees thought the targeting had been successful in attracting young people from a socially excluded group. Although some of the participants were reported to have had difficulty at school, none were regarded as being personally at risk of offending. One interviewee noted that *'at risk'* is very different from *'in crisis'*. Young people *'at risk'* are the target group of the youth service whereas young people *'in crisis'* are the target group of agencies such as social services and the Youth Offending Team. If the project wanted to work with young people *'in crisis'*, it would

need to work within prisons and pupil referral units. As it is, it worked successfully with young people in the community who were at risk of being marginalised and becoming disaffected. One interviewee described the target group as 'hard to reach' rather than 'at risk'. They went on to note that people from ethnic minorities are under represented in the media world so it is a useful exercise, in itself, to be introducing Asian young people to these skills.

It is worth noting that the participants themselves observed that they would have preferred the group to be more mixed. They thought it was unfair that girls and boys from different cultural backgrounds had been excluded. Several Asian girls are reported to have enquired about the course.

5. Content

Interviewees were clear that this project was not simply diversionary. However the extent to which the output had to make an overt contribution to community safety was unclear and is debated further in section 7. Overall, interviewees felt that in Phase One the project tried to focus very specifically on the theme of identity and self image but failed whereas in Phase Two the project moved away from this theme to allow a broader focus and succeeded.

5.1 Phase One

The shifting nature of the group and complicated group dynamics meant that the artist's work plan had to be regularly adapted.

One interviewee observed that *'the theme was not as well developed as I would have liked...It ended up too broad.'*

Another noted that the participants were relatively confident so *'we took it away from themselves and asked broader questions about community.'*

The final video was largely edited by the artist due to the absence of a consistent group and lack of time. Some interviewees noted that, although the video demonstrates that participants developed their technical skills and explored issues around identity, it lacks a coherent message that is easily accessible to the viewer.

5.2 Phase Two

The project was presented as an opportunity to make a film about Castlefield. The theme was less about self-image and more about the external environment. Significantly, the stable nature of the group and consistent attendance of the youth worker meant that the artist could help the group develop as a team, acquire the confidence to challenge each other and find ways of making group decisions.

The work plan was broadly followed. Participants spent the first few weeks learning a structured approach to film making and experimenting with the equipment. The second stage involved interviewing – using the camera. The final stage involved reducing three hours of footage to just 10 minutes and adding sound.

Intriguingly, one interviewee observed that although a very broad theme was adopted, the participants ended up talking about themselves. Indeed one of the early preparatory tasks set for the participants was for them to write about themselves and then perform to camera.

'The things they've captured in film are about how we perceive who we are.'

Most felt that the focus of the film had been more external, however, and the participants themselves observed that they wished they could have included more about *'what we think'* and *'more about people and less about buildings'*. However, there is no doubt that the process gave the young people a good opportunity to think about their environment. Indeed during filming, they began to express more affection for their estate and the negative comments of some interviewees were carefully balanced in the editing process with comments about how the estate is improving. Perhaps the most telling example of the reflection that took place is evidenced by the debate between participants, caught on film, about whether it was acceptable for them to refer to themselves as *'Pakis'*.

Several interviewees noted that the final product could be a useful springboard for further debate about safety on the estate. Members of the community interviewed for the film were preoccupied with the behaviour of the police, CCTV cameras and the trouble caused by young people. The young people themselves were preoccupied with the *'scary woods'* (see section 7).

6. Artistic development

Video and computer based art is accessible, popular and, like music technology, can attract people who would not normally regard themselves as artistic. It is a helpful medium as we are surrounded by it and, as one interviewee commented, *'it allows young people to communicate in the way that adults communicate with them...they can practice packaging messages'*

6.1 Phase One

Artistic development was constrained by changing dynamics and lack of focus. It was also hampered by the equipment: computers at the school were not networked so the software could not be shared. One interviewee suggested that the various difficulties led to an increasingly *'woolly'* approach disguised as flexibility: *'the project lost oomph.'* Another suggested that some school students left the course early because they found the drama work *'unoriginal'*. They suggested that it would have been better to introduce the technology earlier.

However the course introduced participants to a wide variety of artistic methods and demonstrated how different media can be combined to create sophisticated images. Participants had the opportunity to draw, paint, use stills photography, digital video filming, animation, computer graphics and blue screen work using Adobe Premier software. Given that there was no overall group output, the artist used the sessions to provide participants with a series of tasters that resulted in a sketchbook rather than a coherent whole.

'With a solid group we could have had a more solid output.'

6.2 Phase Two

There were fewer opportunities to try out different artistic media in Phase Two, as there was a tight focus on producing a film.

'Video is a great medium but is it art?'

It can be argued that a documentary presents findings as a polished product for the viewer to observe but does not invite them in to wonder and explore questions for themselves: the viewer is kept firmly on the outside of the screen. Video as art may also present a polished product but will also invite the viewer into the material to decide for themselves what is being explored. Participants were able to learn the craft of filmmaking and documentary making. This included deciding on the storyline, handling the equipment, conducting interviews with members of the public, editing, selecting and adding music, adding graphics and using Adobe Premier software.

In the opinion of the evaluator, they were also engaged in artistic expression. Most creative decisions took place in the editing process. Interviewees commented that this generated good discussion and debate – particularly with regard to the choice of music. One suggested that the decision to change the title of the film from What lies beneath Castlefield? to Truth Hurts was one of the most creative of the project. The final product presented unresolved questions through thoughtful juxtaposition and the 'scary woods' sequence allowed the viewer to imagine for themselves how evidence and fantasy impact in unpredictable ways on how safe we feel.

Only one PC was available which meant they had to take turns. Editing is a slow process and the artist estimates that the young people undertook about 60% of the editing themselves. Some of the young people enjoyed the long breaks to play football when they were not editing – others thought there had been too much '*messing around*' and regretted that they had not had a chance to do more work.

Interviewees, including the young people, were impressed by the artist's ability to teach technical skills whilst leaving editorial decisions to the team.

'It was a really good example of learning hard skills.'

'They are more confident than ever – they would know how to do it again and they'll want to.'

However, several noted that film and IT skills will be lost if the young people do not have an opportunity to reinforce their learning soon.

7. Community Safety

To what extent has this project demonstrated that Art can contribute to community safety? All interviewees agreed that the project was not simply a diversion. It was expected that the **process** would contribute to community safety by engaging young people at risk in exploring identity, labelling and self image. There was no explicit expectation that the **product** would make a similar contribution. Phase One followed the original brief and enabled a few young people to think about labelling to some extent but none of the interviewees suggested that the contribution to community safety was marked. Phase Two departed from the original brief and sought to create a documentary about the Castlefield estate but in so doing, enabled the participants to reflect on their environment and how they fitted within it. Furthermore, their video had a great deal to say about community safety.

Digital art and video making is reported to be increasingly popular as an instrument to engage under achieving young people. Some interviewees expressed concern that issue based artwork can become manipulative if young people are not properly informed about the purpose of a project.

'If there is an agenda it is important to be honest.'

The new youth work agenda (Transforming Youth Work) requires youth workers to ensure that young people are learning and know what it is that they are learning. The process must be explicit and transparent. Art should not be presented as a purely recreational activity if the actual intention is for learning or to reduce offending.

'The primary outcome may be a video but the secondary outcome is the discussions that led to the production of the video.'

There is undoubtedly a place for Art for Art's sake as the process of finding a means of expression has the potential to enhance the human spirit. But it is also true that Art can develop the individual, build groups and improve communication. It can therefore help to minimise the risk factors and strengthen the protective factors regarding anti social behaviour and offending. It can also help to bring communities together and highlight difficulties that need to be addressed. Young people often feel that they are not asked for their opinion. Art is an excellent mechanism for giving young people the space to reflect.

'If you're trying to enrich, make safe, open possibilities – Art is good.'

'Art is a bridge from negative to positive.'

'Art enables them to do something – they don't want to listen – they want to do.'

'Art is an excellent tool to entrust to marginalised people to help build confidence and stand on their feet and act.'

Interviewees were adamant that by building confidence and changing attitudes, Phase Two of this project had contributed to community safety. This was compounded by the peer pressure from other young people who now want to get involved because they see the process as positive. The project helped to break down barriers. One worker noted that a commercial documentary of Castlefield would have offered less: the project worked because it concentrated on process, artistic expression and the development of the participants. The fact that the product could be used to explore community safety issues further was regarded as a wonderful bonus.

This project not only tried to find synergy between art and community safety, but also (in Phase Two) between both these and youth work. The celebration at the end of Phase Two demonstrated excellent youth work. Young people had been engaged in informal education and were being valued for their commitment and achievement. The Partnership facilitated a youth arts training day in High Wycombe in March to develop this theme further.

One interviewee noted that the same work could be packaged differently to accommodate a variety of agendas.

'You can call it youth work with community safety outcomes or community safety work with youth work outcomes. It is the same piece of work and Art is just another instrument to help you achieve your outcome.'

Several interviewees acknowledged that it is hard to prove that an artistic intervention has effected change.

'We will never be able to prove that crime has reduced or that the community feels safer as result of an art project.'

8. Partnership working and co-ordination

The Partnership sought to bring together agencies from education, the youth service, the arts and community safety to design a project that could contribute to the agendas of each. Given that it is itself a community safety organisation, it is interesting to note that the Partnership struggled to engage other agencies from that sector. One interviewee suggested that the current policy environment means that statutory community safety agencies are only concerned with crime reduction and would not see this project as relevant to their work. It could be argued that the Partnership was able to carry the broader community safety perspective in the project alone.

8.1 The steering group

All interviewees valued the role of the steering group. It was well chaired, reflective and decisive.

'It did what it was supposed to do: it steered.'

'A very supportive group for the workers – setting clear boundaries and giving a steer. The partners were really clued in and proactive.'

'It was a good mutually empathetic group with a shared vision and a willingness to respond flexibly to lessons learnt.'

However, the group shrank as time went by. The district council arts officer helped design the project but was not available to steer implementation. Neither the original artist nor the school were able to remain involved after Phase One so some opportunities for shared learning were lost.

Perhaps the greatest setback was the withdrawal of The Grange quite late in the planning phase. Senior management were not engaged and were reported to be fearful that young people would find it too difficult and may feel exposed. They were also reported to be preoccupied with moving from a 7 hour to a 21 hour curriculum. Interviewees commented that the project could have helped The Grange with growing its curriculum and was designed to be accessible to and valuing of vulnerable young people. This was a lost opportunity.

The steering group then decided to continue on the basis that the youth service would 'deliver' young people at risk to the project. Again, management was not sufficiently engaged and an enthusiastic youth worker was unable to provide the necessary support (mainly because he was leaving his post).

'We fell into the trap of going with enthusiasm.'

The project suffered from staff turnover. The main contact in the youth service left as Phase One was beginning – hindering the involvement of young people from Castlefield. The main contact at the school left as Phase One was ending – hindering follow up and continuity.

It could be argued that many of the difficulties experienced in Phase One originated from the fact that the supporting partnership was not secure. Individual staff from the school, the youth service, the Partnership and the artist herself worked hard to deliver the project well but crucial elements such as referrals, transportation, equipment and support staff were not in place.

In Phase Two, all of these elements were there. The youth service manager was fully involved in the steering group and the youth worker was fully available to and engaged with the project.

'It ran itself. All we had to do was learn from it.'

8.2 The practitioners

Each phase had its own team. In Phase One, the artist, the Arts College Co-ordinator from the school and the Partnership co-ordinator worked well and closely together negotiating their way around the difficulties described elsewhere in this report. The project suffered from a lack of consistent input from the youth service. Towards the end of Phase One, the co-ordinator discovered a further resource in Hatim Qureshi who provided much needed equipment and went on to be the artist for Phase Two. Once the Youth Service Area Manager became more engaged with the steering group, contact was made with Amjad Tauseeque, a youth worker based in Castlefield, who was able to support young people to attend Phase One in the latter stages and then act as the link to young people in Phase Two. A new team of Hatim, Amjad and Rosy was then established. All interviewees, including participants, recognised how well this team worked together particularly with regard to the careful and reflective planning process that was adopted.

By the end of the project, there were only two partner agencies still involved: Thames Valley Partnership and Bucks County Council Youth and Community Service. Interviewees described the relationship in glowing terms.

'We couldn't do this without the Partnership. They open up possibilities.'

'Communication was easy. Relationships were solid. It was good to be so involved.'

'There was no big problem – we took individual responsibility and everyone did their bit – we were always in contact via phone and email and did a weekly evaluation.'

'I'm proud to have been part of it. I'd like to do something more.'

However one interviewee noted that the group and partnership seemed small and closed. They suggested that more could have been done in Phase Two to link with community-based groups such as the Castlefield Community Association. This might have produced a wider range of people to interview and greater possibilities for taking the work forward. The celebratory event at the end of Phase Two could have involved Cressex School for example.

'There should have been more ground level partnership working.'

8.3 Co-ordination of the project by Thames Valley Partnership

All interviewees were very complimentary about the Partnership.

'(The Partnership) is brilliant...I have every respect for them...I knew it would be managed well.'

'I have a lot of confidence in (the Partnership)'

Throughout the project the Partnership is reported to have taken the lead and shown an enthusiastic determination to overcome hurdles. Sue Raikes was complimented for her clarity, straightforwardness and ability to check out what was happening and what needed to be done next. Rosy Prue was ill for much of Phase One which meant that referrals were not chased in the early stages and difficulties with The Grange and the Youth Service were not tackled as proactively as they might have been. However, given this unavoidable difficulty, interviewees were very impressed.

'It is really nice to work with someone who is so committed'

'Stunning... everything she said she would do, she did.'

'Each session was really well documented. The project was under constant review...very thorough.'

When The Grange withdrew, the Partnership could have made the decision to cancel or postpone the project or been more active in broadening the partnership. In Phase Two, it could have been more involved in the selection of young people rather than simply going with those already known to the youth worker. One of the fundamental challenges presented by partnership working is that agencies can find themselves bearing responsibility without retaining control. The Partnership is very experienced at sharing these burdens and took a risk by opting to keep going even though all the pieces were not in place. The result is that the project could not claim to be an unqualified success in terms of community safety outcomes but has clearly been a very useful piece of action research.

9. Lessons

Interviewees identified seven areas that the project was attempting to explore (see section 2).

9.1 How to engage disaffected young people

The project struggled in its attempt to use the creative arts to engage 'at risk' groups, integrate people from different backgrounds and help address social exclusion. However significant learning took place:

- **Location**
Avoid putting one group into the territory of another and try and take the project to where the young people are both in terms of location and content.
- **Staffing**
Asian boys in Phase Two found it easy to relate to their group leaders partly because they were both Asian men familiar with their estate and partly because they all knew the youth worker already.
- **Group identity**
Time needs to be spent forming a consistent group. Logistical problems made this impossible in Phase One, the fact that all participants were from a similar background made it easy in Phase Two.
- **Flexibility**
Outcomes are drastically affected by the environment and the participants – work plans have to allow for variables.
- **Targeting**
To guarantee access to young people in crisis, the project should have sought to work within criminal justice or special needs services. If the work is to be community based, agencies need to be content to work with whomever they get but build in easy referral routes and support mechanisms for people who are hard to reach. Future work should focus more carefully on how best to do this. If the project excludes certain groups (eg girls), this can be justified if they are not a community safety priority but it may be appropriate for the youth service to consider how it could find a culturally appropriate way of including them in a future project.
- **Process vs content**
Young people involved in the project clearly benefited (see 9.4) and some community safety outcomes were achieved (see 9.5). For the work to be more than diversionary and remain honest, it is essential that young people be given control over content. This means that process will be highly significant and content may or may not help address questions of social exclusion.

9.2 What media are effective

The project demonstrated that young people find both digital art and video work accessible and exciting: both are popular and current forms. It could be argued that video is more accessible and therefore more appropriate. Given the logistical problems

in Phase One, it is not possible to make a reasonable assessment of which form is most effective. It is worth noting that in Phase Two, the greatest learning seems to have taken place when the group was making creative decisions in response to questions such as 'what do we want to say?' 'how do we want to say it?' and 'why?'.

9.3 What resources are required

The following elements must be in place:

- **Professional artist**
Both phases benefited from an artist with the necessary technical, creative and youth work skills. Such specialist input is necessary but expensive so requires a capacity for fundraising (see 9.6).
- **Support**
Both phases benefited from the input of a teacher or youth worker that knew the participants. In Phase One, however, the teacher was less available whereas in Phase Two the youth worker was exclusively focussed on working with the group. The difference was marked.
- **Co-ordination and evaluation**
External co-ordination added a level of professionalism and reflection to the process, which may not always be possible to provide but is certainly very helpful. There was a general sense from interviewees that this was more than just another project because the process was being examined so thoroughly.
- **Equipment**
There were significant problems with access to computers with the appropriate software in both phases. Easy access to good quality equipment that allows young people to learn technical skills without getting bogged down is essential. Introductory courses must enable participants to progress quickly and experience the creative process knowingly. This impacts on the size of the group and, again, links to cost effectiveness. It is very difficult to run technology based art workshops for large groups.
- **Venue**
The school venue in Phase One was used as a corridor by people who were not involved in the project. This hindered the creation of a cohesive group. A comfortable, private space without distractions is required.

9.4 How to facilitate learning and personal development

It was not possible to interview participants in Phase One. The young people from Phase Two were very positive about the process. They particularly enjoyed the camera work and interviewing members of the public. They also highlighted the fact that they enjoyed working in a team. Other interviewees were confident that significant hard technical skills had been learnt and detected an increase in confidence and artistic awareness.

- **Structure**

Given that it is always hard to maintain consistent attendance and motivation, it is important that each session has an achievable and visible goal rather than always working only towards a bigger overall product. A flexible inclusive approach still requires structure and careful planning. Indeed one of the key elements of Phase Two was the understanding that the participants acquired of the need to take a structured approach to film making. Components were broken down early in the course and a clear progression explained and followed.

- **Celebration**

The final event is likely to be a positive memory for the five that stayed the course and was an excellent way of celebrating the learning that had taken place.

- **Reinforcement of learning**

Much of the technical learning may be lost, however, if it is not reinforced. There do not seem to be any plans to follow this up (see 9.7).

9.5 How to use Art to improve community safety

The project started with the premise that to have value as a community safety initiative, it would need to address issues around identity, self-image and labelling. There was an acknowledgement that the organisers could be committed to a particular product but should be prepared *'to go with the process.'* In Phase One, some reflection on these themes took place in difficult circumstances but it would be hard to argue that the project had any particular impact on community safety. In Phase Two, the pressure to investigate personal themes was lifted and broader questions about the environment were addressed. Given such a free rein, it is interesting to note that the young people found themselves investigating themes that are fundamental to community safety: relations with the police, the behaviour of young people, CCTV cameras, fear of the woods, labels such as 'Paki'. When asked by the evaluator what they had learnt about Castlefield, participants answered that there are too many bullies, too much crime and problems with parking outside the shops. It is also worth noting that they developed strong feelings for their estate and despite the negativity of some of those they interviewed, were determined to end their film on a positive note.

The product, therefore, is a useful community safety tool in itself but also the process of debating, reflecting and agreeing is likely to contribute to softer outcomes.

'Community safety is broader than simply reducing crime and disorder: it relates to quality of life, the environment and a sense of well-being.'

One interviewee suggested that it might be possible to link to initiatives elsewhere in the country, such as the Channel 4 Self Portrait competition, in order to try and *'get a bigger meaning.'*

9.6 How to develop partnerships

Partnership building takes time and only works if all parties have something to bring and something to take away. This partnership worked but was very small. The current policy climate suggests that it will be hard to engage criminal justice agencies in this kind of initiative. The youth arts sector is growing rapidly however and there is enormous potential for the youth service and schools to link more closely with arts providers. The challenge for the Thames Valley Partnership will be to find ways of demonstrating to colleagues in the community safety sector that such partnerships are productive.

Partnership working provides an opportunity to add value, share tasks, increase learning and raise funds. The Transforming Youth Work agenda, for example, requires more contact with young people at week-ends and in the evening: Phase Two of this project took place at the week-end and demonstrated that the youth service has the capacity to offer a high quality service out of hours and without a full time youth worker. One interviewee described this outcome as *'really significant'* and added that it would not have been possible without the support of the Partnership.

Partnership working is reliant on personal investment. The fact that the contact at William Ramsay School has moved on will make it hard to sustain. The youth service, on the other hand, is already meeting with the Partnership and Bucks Youth Offending Team to investigate ways of developing the work further.

9.7 What should happen next

Given that William Ramsay School is a specialist Arts College, it seems appropriate that links with the Partnership are maintained and further attempts made at outreach work using digital art and other media. This is likely to be more difficult because the key contact has left the school.

Given the strong links made between the Partnership and the youth service, a range of options for the future are available:

- Further opportunities for video work could be presented to the participants in Phase Two to reinforce their learning.
- A future project could include a plan, if appropriate, to use the video to run workshops investigating community safety themes in local schools, via the Community Association, the Residents Association and/or in partnership with the police, the district council and faith groups.
- A similar project could be offered to a wider open group. This would present the opportunity, not only to work with those individuals, but also to compare the outcomes and output.

- A new project could be designed to build on this experience (the Partnership is meeting with the youth service and Bucks Youth Offending Team to take forward an idea to use video and/or drama to generate a peer education project about alcohol misuse.)

Not all of these suggestions will be affordable or a priority. In any event, this evaluator believes that any future project should build in a process to address referral criteria and pathways on to further development for participants

The Partnership does not have the capacity to remain involved on the ground in Castlefield and William Ramsay School over the long term: that is the job of the youth service and the school. The youth service and school, however, do not have the capacity to fund specialist staff or link as effectively to community safety organisations: that is the strength of the Partnership. All partners will need to consider how best to maintain links and support each other's work.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEWEES

Name	Job title	Role in Labels
Amjad Tauseeque	Youth Worker, Bucks County Council Youth and Community Service	Support for young people in phase two and link to youth service
Andy Hitchcock	Area manager, Bucks County Council Youth and Community Service	Steering group, funding and supervision of youth worker
Hatim Qureshi	Video artist and management consultant	Artist in phase two (and provided some equipment for phase one)
Kasia Howard	Digital Artist	Artist for phase one
Rosy Prue	Youth Arts Development Worker, Thames Valley Partnership	Co-ordinator of the project
Sue Darke	Assistant Head, Arts College Co-ordinator, Sir William Ramsay School	Support for young people in phase one and link to school
Sue Raikes	Chief Executive, Thames Valley Partnership	Steering group, funding and supervision of co-ordinator

In addition, the five participants who completed phase two were interviewed.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROMPTS

Thames Valley Partnership

Labels

An independent evaluation by Jeremy Spafford

Issues to be covered in interviews with professionals

- 1 What is your role and your relationship to the project?
- 2 What is the Labels Project aiming to achieve?
- 3 To what extent has it met this aim?

What has worked well (a) and what could have worked better (b) with regard to the following areas:

- 4 Partnership working (eg the steering group)
- 5 Co-ordination of the project by Thames Valley Partnership
- 5 Involvement of young people at risk
- 7 Investigation of the theme of identity and self image
- 8 Artistic development
- 9 What lessons, if any, have been learnt about the relationship between community safety and the arts?
- 10 What lessons were learnt from this phase?

Interviews will last about 60 minutes and will be semi structured leaving opportunities for the interviewee to raise issues of importance to them, which are not covered by these questions. Interviewees will be identified in the appendix of the report but comments and quotations will not be directly attributed.

(for more information contact Jeremy Spafford on 01865 715220)

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