

“Scrape off the grey and show  
there are still rainbows”

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National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance  
Anne Peaker lecture  
March 26<sup>th</sup> 2024



# Inspiring Futures : a practice and research collaboration

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## Funding:

- NCJAA and Arts Projects: Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Research: Economic & Social Research Council

## Inspiring Futures Research Team:

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CLEAN  
BREAK



JK  
KOESTLER ARTS



# Research questions

- 1) What are the **effects of arts programmes** in the criminal justice sector?
- 2) How can these effects be measured in a way that is participatory and inclusive and which is accessible, meaningful and empowering to participants and builds research capacity amongst arts organisations?
- 3) How can these effects be collated to establish a collective evidence base for impact which can be further developed and sustained by arts organisations in the future?
- 4) How can the evidence of arts impact be disseminated to policy makers and the wider public in order to facilitate a transformation of approaches and attitudes towards people in the criminal justice system?

# Research Design

- Participatory principle: design, collection, analysis and presentation of findings
- Participant study
- Wider study
- Methods:
  - Observations (50 – 1 – 5 days)
  - 182 Participant Surveys T1 and T2 – 121 (T3 - 27 )
  - 71 Comparison Group Surveys (men’s prisons) T 1 and T2
  - 52 Diaries
  - Interviews
    - 59 participants
    - 25 leaders and facilitators of the arts projects
    - 20 staff and managers in criminal justice settings
  - Audience surveys (60)
  - Data analysis: statistical analysis; thematic analysis.



# Findings

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# Participants

## Creative Capital

Creative Capital	Participant group (total)	Men’s prisons participant group	Men’s prisons comparison group
<b>Wilcoxon Signed Rank Tests (WSR)</b>	Mean T1 = 3.92 Mean T2 = 4.18	Mean T1 =3.84 Mean T2=4.15	Mean T1 = 3.62 Mean T2 = 3.76
<b>Means comparison</b>			
<b>Test scores</b>	Z=-3.41 p<.001 r= .32	Z=-3.4 p<.001 r= .23	Z=-1.45 p>.5

*Participant scores ranked on scale of 1 – 5 where 1= strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree*



# Creative Capital



***I'm creative, I'm creative anyway. And in here, you don't really get a lot of opportunity to be creative.***

(Irene Taylor Trust, Lullaby Project participant)

***I didn't realise how much I enjoyed being creative.***

(Geese Theatre participant)

***Once you get that one bit of push to do something, you've been taught something, you can start making up your own beats, or your own tunes up. And, you might end up going on to think, right I want to do a music producing course, and I want to go on and do this or do that. It just gives you loads of avenues.***

(Irene Taylor Trust, Music in Prisons participant)

# Looking inwards



Personhood		Participant group (total)	Men's prisons participant group	Men's prisons comparison group
<b>Well-Being</b>	Mean comparison	Mean T1 = 3.82 Mean T2 = 3.98	Mean T1=3.90 Mean T2=4.02	Mean T1 = 3.80 Mean T2 = 3.84
	WSR Test scores	Z=-2.3 p<.05 r= .21	Z=-1.8 p>.05	Z=-1.92 p>.05
<b>Self-Concept</b>	Mean comparison	Mean T1 = 3.53 Mean T2 = 3.69	Mean T1 = 3.56 Mean T2 = 3.66	Mean T1 = 3.59 Mean T2 = 3.57
	WSR Test scores	Z=-2.13 p<.05 r= .19	Z=-1.7 p>.05	Z=-.91 p>.05
<b>Personal Development</b>	Mean comparison	Mean T1 = 4.14 Mean T2 = 4.37	Mean T1 = 4.18 Mean T2 =4.38	Mean T1 = 4.40 Mean T2 = 4.22
	WSR Test scores	Z=-3.16 p<.005 r= .29	Z=-3.06 p<.005 r=.20	Z=-1.33 p>.05





# Looking inwards

*I'm proud that I have seen the course through even though it has brought up a lot of difficult things from the past .. How feeling about self? I feel good. Very positive and happy I tried something very different to what I'm used to. How are you feeling about tomorrow? Thinking about what I can get involved in next. **Sum up day in one word? Proud.***

(Geese Theatre participant diary)

*[the facilitator] said, if you mess up, just carry on. And I've **taken that little thing he said, and I kind of apply it and it works: mess up, just carry on....** It's, yeah, we all mess up sometimes, and we've got to carry on. Don't worry about it as much, and... it'll sort itself out.*

(Good Vibrations participant)

*I said **I just want to be a better version of me before all this even happened. And I can see that now, I can see that end bit** and I can see now where I want my future to be, but having things like this it helps develop you more as a person as well, definitely.*

(Clean Break participant)

# Social Capital

Social Capital		Participant group (total)	Men's prisons participant group	Men's prisons comparison group
<b>Communication with others</b>	Mean comparison	Mean T1 = 4.02 Mean T2 = 4.17	Mean T1 = 4.06 Mean T2 = 4.21	Mean T1 = 4.16 Mean T2 = 4.13
	WSR Test scores	Z=-2.10 p<.05 r= .20	Z=-2.28 p<.05 r=.15	Z=-0.18 p>.05
<b>Relationships</b>	Mean comparison	Mean T1 = 3.94 Mean T2 = 4.14	Mean T1 = 4.06 Mean T2 = 4.19	Mean T1 = 4.13 Mean T2 = 4.00
	WSR Test scores	Z=-3.16 p<.005 r= 0.29	Z=-2.84 p<.05 r=0.19	Z=-0.10 p>.05
<b>Working with others</b>	Mean comparison	Mean T1 = 3.93 Mean T2 = 4.14	Mean T1 = 3.96 Mean T2 = 4.20	Mean T1 = 4.03 Mean T2 = 3.99
	WSR Test scores	Z=-3.25 p<.005 r= .30	Z=-3.67 p<.001 r=.25	Z=-.59 p>.05

# Social Capital

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## Bonding Social Capital

*once you get to do that group work with them you know **you realise that we've all got problems, we all have to deal with us problems, you know, and together it does help to talk about it and to support each other and the confidentiality***

(Open Clasp participant)

## Bridging Social Capital

*But also, **it's not just a music course**, cos when I go uni they're not gonna be teaching me about participating in groups, and empathy and sympathy and all these other little life training skills....Whereas that course **...it was like a rehabilitating, kind of, reinstate you to society kind of thing, without saying it.***

(Only Connect participant)





# Variations

- Artistic starting points and motivations
- Participant expectations of the programme
- Personal and relational issues
- Organisational factors
- Settings: men's and women's prisons, community and prison



# Impact over time

The longer-term reach of the arts into the lives of the participants varied by the extent to which they had opportunities to build on their experiences from the course and the acknowledgement and support of others.

*...it's had a massive impact on me, doing that course, and especially like when.., I'll get feedback*

*(Good Vibrations participant)*

*So, will I reoffend again? [pause] Probably not, no. But I can't just say that's entirely because of them, but it's helped. They contributed. Positive thinking.*

*(Geese Theatre participant)*

*I wanted to be sustainable, you know, and jumping from sofa to sofa...and then I started mixing up with the wrong people again...Only way I could actually go*

*(Irene Taylor Trust Lullaby Project participant)*



**Inspiring  
Futures**



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## Community

*I feel I kinda owe Only Connect, cos if it wasn't for them, who knows, I could have reoffended by now, I could have been back on drugs by now, I could have, do you know what I mean, but it's like, **the hope of being a part, the hope of being able to be with them and all that, it kinda kept me from all that stuff**, do you know what I mean, ...**Outside the building, it's just a survival**, do you know what I mean? It's, like a, it's a survival trying to not break the law, reoffend, it's a survival not to get caught up in any kind of thing that, that's not meant to be caught up in. And, you know what I mean, it's just, it's trying to, maintain really, as well, like, you know. **Yeah, and it's so hard without that.***

(Only Connect participant)



A FINDING RHYTHMS &  
ONLY CONNECT COLLABORATION

# RHYTHMS & FLOW WORKSHOP

A workshop focused on urban music  
production and recording

Thursdays, 12pm - 5pm  
Located at Only Connect UK  
32 Cubitt St  
London WC1X 0LR  
Next Cohort Begins:  
24th of September

For a referral or more information:  
referrals@onlyconnectuk.org



# Facilitators

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- Personal fulfilment
- Professional, creative and personal development
- Relationships with course participants
- Challenges
  - emotional
  - organisational
  - contractual



# Facilitators



*I love that part because the banter is great, because we get some great dialogue going back and forth about new things that are happening and I can share with them new concepts that I've found. **So I find there's a bit of learning on both sides from that, so I'm learning from them and they're learning from me, and I think that's a wonderful thing.***

(Only Connect facilitator)

*It's really important to me in my career that I feel like I'm doing something of use ... and if I can do little bits on the way then that feels like I'm doing something on my life's journey that's of use.*

(Geese Theatre facilitator)

*I think actors who lock themselves off from connecting to the real world miss out, you know....an actor is just a person telling somebody else's story. **So you better go meet the other people, because otherwise how are you going to do a real portrayal of it.***

(Helix Arts facilitator)

# Criminal Justice Settings

## Prisons

- **Staff development and well-being**

*It's definitely given me confidence that I felt I needed within this environment...and it's reminded me that even if you're not familiar with something, go for it, and it usually turns out really good.*

(Prison staff member, Clean Break course)

- **Staff-prisoner relationships**

*I think showing that I'm not just a member of staff or we're not just staff who are here to do a job, actually we care about what we do ...*

(Prison staff, Irene Taylor Trust Music in Prisons Project)

- **Prison culture:** *inspiring hope ; occasionally a 'buzz' about the place*

## Community

- **A base**
- **Opportunities for public interaction/ showcasing**



# Audiences – Inspiring Futures Exhibition

40 survey responses:

- 24 visit to the exhibition unplanned
- 25 had no personal, secondary (i.e. friends and family) or professional experience of the criminal justice system.
- 38 people agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, *‘it seems the arts in criminal justice settings are worth putting time and money into’*.



*Loved ‘Avant-Guard’, really interesting format made me put myself in the shoes of someone in prison.*

*Some of the personal revelations [were the most interesting]. The fact that people can be released onto the streets and must find their own accommodation with limited support.*

*It was eye-opening. Hard to hear and watch at times but happy there are programs like this.*

# Criminal Justice and Arts Sectors

- Criminal Justice Sector
  - Demonstrable contribution to rehabilitative and therapeutic aims
  - But risk of 'decorative justice' (Cheliotis, 2014)
- Arts sector:
  - Widening access and participation to people who are socially and structurally marginalized as result of involved in criminal justice system.
  - Fragility and resilience of the arts in criminal justice



# Closing Reflections

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# Inspiring Futures Research Study

- Cross-arts insights
- Highlights social interaction
- Holistic and temporal perspective on impact
- Communication platform for participants
- Data collection app



## Research Limitations and Next Steps

- Longer-term follow up
- Roles of gender, age, race and ethnicity
- Arts projects beyond music and drama
- Further comparisons
- Community settings
- Audience impact





# ***Contributions, Continuities and Commitments***

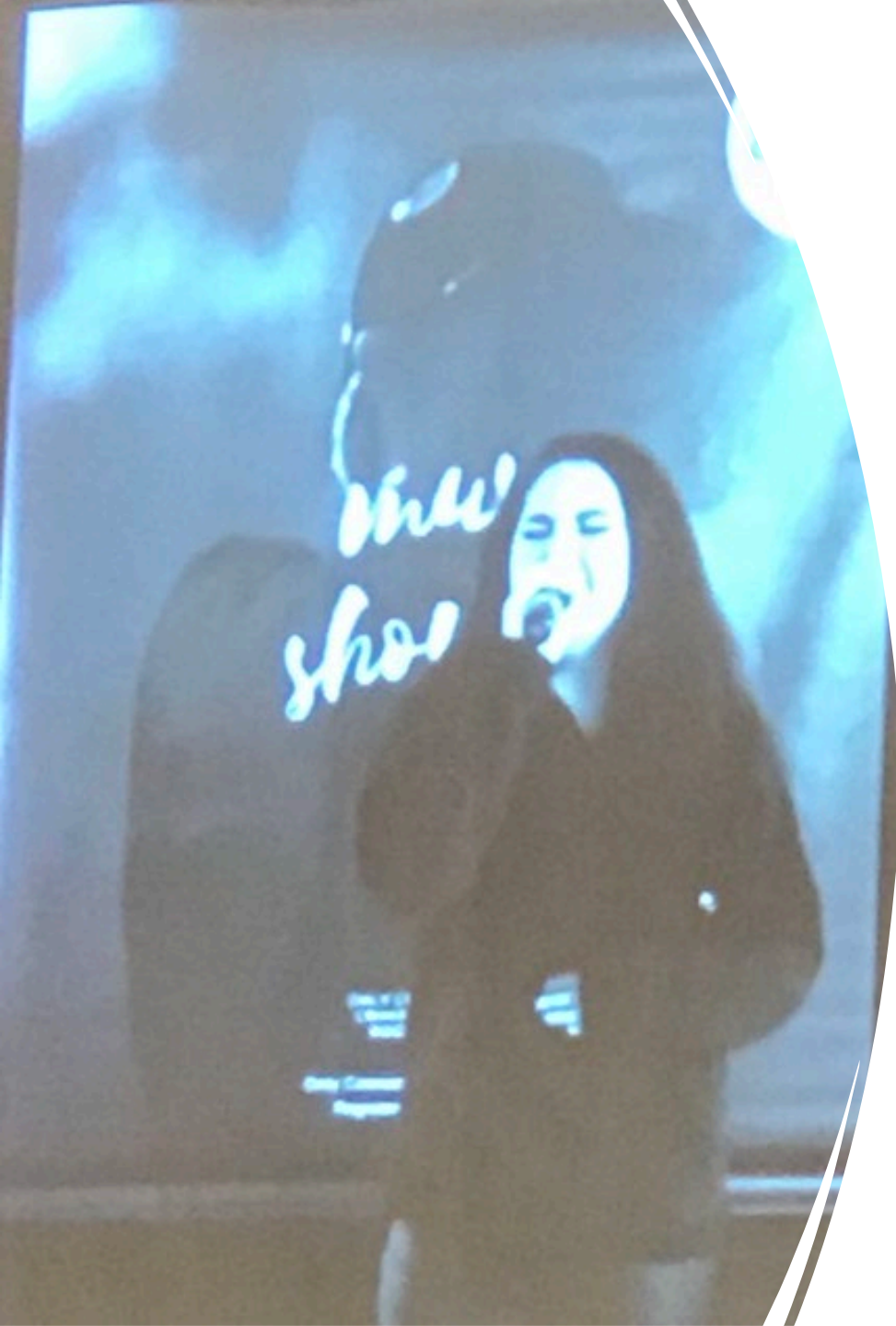
## **Contributions**

*So as long as people are taking positive things away from it, whether they're short term or long term, it's worth doing, isn't it? It can only be a good thing.*

(Good Vibrations, participant)

## **Continuities**

- Ongoing and follow-up activities are important for maintaining the positive outcomes of the projects for participants and to avoid projects 'promising too much' or 'offering too little' (Cheliotis, 2014)
- Much of the work of the arts organisations depended on relationships with individual probation services or prisons. The development relationships were often constrained by wider structural, financial and regulatory procedures.



## Commitments

- The gap between the possible and the actual role of the arts for participants in the criminal justice system is defined not just by those within the criminal justice and arts sectors but by the recognition of the society of which they are a part.
- If the potential impact of arts programmes for men and women in the criminal justice system is to be achieved and sustained on a wider scale, then a **collective strategic commitment to and long-term vision for the arts in the criminal justice system** is needed.

# Further information

- **Inspiring Futures Research report:**  
[https://www.if.crim.cam.ac.uk/files/inspiring\\_futures\\_research\\_report.pdf](https://www.if.crim.cam.ac.uk/files/inspiring_futures_research_report.pdf)
- **Data Collection App** – Inspiring Futures research report pp.101-2.
- **Inspiring Futures films:**
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rdah5ZxAJ68>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qk-3aaswxKA>
  - Creative: Ed Owles, Postcode Films ;UKRI Higher Education Innovation Funding.

The background features a vibrant, multi-colored wavy pattern. The colors transition from a bright yellow on the left, through orange, red, pink, purple, and finally to a bright blue on the right. The waves are soft and fluid, creating a sense of movement and energy.

Thank you