

# Evaluation of the Momentum Pilot

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## Executive Summary

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Arts Council of Wales delivered the Momentum Pilot Project in partnership with the Welsh Government's Communities First Programme. Phase one of the Momentum Pilot Project started in February 2014 and ended in August 2014. This pilot funded 14 projects to deliver arts interventions to young people. The aim of the pilot project was to engage marginalised young people living in Communities First areas in inspiring and creative activity. The project focused on delivering 'hard outcomes' for young people – outcomes such as accreditation that demonstrated clear steps towards employability - alongside increasing skills and confidence, and improving emotional wellbeing

The aims of the evaluation of the Momentum project were to collate and analyse the evidence of hard and soft outcomes; assess the effectiveness of the partnerships involved in the Momentum projects, with particular reference to partnerships with Communities First; and make recommendations for changes to the programme where it might lead to more successful outcomes.

### Key findings

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- The 14 Momentum projects have successfully delivered a range of hard and soft outcomes, and illustrated the role the arts can play in providing effective engagement and progression opportunities for vulnerable young people.
- The projects engaged with 325 young people in total, compared to a target number of 213. Almost all projects reached, and in some cases, exceeded their target numbers of participants.
- All 14 projects demonstrated at least one hard outcome for participants. 58% of 11-16 year olds received accreditation and 55% of 16-18 year received accreditation. 40% of participants 16-18 made progress through the categories of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF). 24% of participants 16-18 have moved into further education, 7% moved into employment and 11% moved into a work placement. 20% of participants 11-16 increased their attendance at school.
- A wide range of soft outcomes have been delivered in every Momentum pilot project. These included higher levels of self-confidence (58% of participants), self-esteem (55%) and personal aspirations (53%); and improved team working skills (54%).
- These soft outcomes have made an important impact in terms of providing participants with a foundation to re-engage, develop specific skills that suit their interests and aspirations, and then progress towards more sustained engagement and hard outcomes.
- While recruitment challenges were successfully met some projects considered that the age groups for future programmes could be extended to include 18-24 year olds to increase potential for referrals and provide additional re-engagement opportunities.
- All projects responded to challenges regarding timing and recruitment of young people to deliver their activities. A longer timescale for future projects was considered essential in future for more targeted recruitment based on need and aspirations. This

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could also allow for more intensive work with young people, and potentially more hard outcomes and sustainability.

- Overall, the majority of Momentum projects were positive about the benefits of partnership working with Communities First. Nevertheless, some partnerships with Communities First failed to get off the ground and this was generally linked to a lack of awareness of Momentum, a general lack of interest and investment by Communities First teams or poor initial levels of communication.
- No project noted an unwillingness to work with Communities First in future. The connections with Communities First were considered to be beneficial for future work if partnerships could be developed in a more joined up fashion with greater time and investment.
- Whether partnerships were sustained and effective through the projects' lifetimes usually depended on the strength of existing relationships. Some partnerships depended on the personal enthusiasm of individual partners, such as teachers or individuals working within Communities First and Local Authorities.

## Recommendations

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1. Future arts engagement programmes should be extended to include 18-24 year olds to increase potential for referrals, and provide additional engagement opportunities for vulnerable young people;
2. A longer lead-in time for future projects would allow for more targeted recruitment and taster sessions linked to the needs and aspirations of individuals;
3. Longer project timescales would allow for a greater, more intensive focus on hard outcomes and development of progression routes for young people post-project;
4. Future projects should continue to focus on the development of hard outcomes while recognising the importance of soft outcomes as a base for engagement;
5. The focus on entrepreneurship, industry and location-specific skills is an innovative approach to engagement and progression and should be encouraged in future;
6. Organisations should consider gaining the necessary credentials as assessors in order to deliver qualifications that relate directly to planned arts activities and to build organisational capacity and the skills levels of staff;
7. Future partnerships require further strategic input from Arts Council of Wales and Communities First to identify common goals and promote the value of the arts as an engagement tool;
8. Partnerships with third sector organisations and local authorities should focus on developing networks to support recruitment and offer post-project progression routes.

## 1 Introduction

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### 1.1 Momentum Pilot Project

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Arts Council of Wales delivered the Momentum Pilot Project in partnership with Welsh Government's Communities First Programme. The pilot is the successor programme to Reach the Heights, a group of projects aimed at improving the opportunities available to children and young people in Wales, which ended in 2013. Phase one of the Momentum Pilot Project started in February 2014 and ended in August 2014. This pilot funded 14 projects to deliver arts interventions to young people. Projects were provided with funding of between £28,928 and £40,000.

The aim of the pilot project was to engage marginalised young people living in Communities First areas in inspiring and creative activity. This was designed to increase their skills and confidence, improve their emotional wellbeing and develop their employability. The project focused on delivering 'hard outcomes' for young people – outcomes such as accreditation that demonstrated clear steps towards employability.

### 1.2 Aims of the evaluation

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The aims of the evaluation of the Momentum project were as follows:

1. Collate and analyse the evidence of hard outcomes (such as accreditation) across all 14 pilot projects;
2. Collate and analyse the evidence of soft outcomes (such as increased confidence and aspirations) across all 14 pilot projects;
3. Assess the effectiveness of the partnerships involved in the Momentum projects, with particular reference to partnerships with Communities First; and
4. Make recommendations for changes to the programme where it might lead to more successful outcomes.

### 1.3 Methodology

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Arad undertook a detailed analysis of the impact of the 14 individual Momentum projects based on their final evaluation reports for Arts Council of Wales. To assist with this exercise Arad developed an evaluation framework to ensure that data was:

- collected systematically – helping to inform the design of data collection tools and identifying where qualitative and quantitative methods are required;
- organised according to agreed evaluation themes or subjects; and
- analysed in such a way as to ensure that the objectives of the evaluation have been delivered.

The framework was designed to link to the key objectives of the Momentum programme and cover the main objectives of the evaluation, namely assessing hard and soft outcomes for participants e.g. qualifications gained, progression opportunities taken up such as further

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education or volunteering, increased aspirations and levels of self-confidence and self-esteem. The framework also covered the effectiveness and sustainability of partnerships developed during the Momentum project with a particular focus on links developed with Communities First at an individual project and wider Arts Council of Wales level.

Using the evaluation framework Arad assessed and collated all the data provided by projects to assess the impact that each project has had on participants. The analysis placed a particular focus on presenting qualitative and quantitative data relating to the range of hard outcomes delivered and the effectiveness of individual projects in achieving them. The analysis included an assessment of the impact on the respective organisations taking part in Momentum and examined partnerships with Communities First, recruitment and tracking of participants, and sustainability of project outcomes.

Based on the 14 evaluation reports received Arad chose four projects as case studies of good practice. The case studies aimed to reflect the diversity of projects taking place across Wales and the different approaches used for engagement. Arad visited these four projects and undertook interviews with individual project managers, artists, representatives from partner organisations and, in one case, a Momentum participant who was now volunteering with the organisation in question.

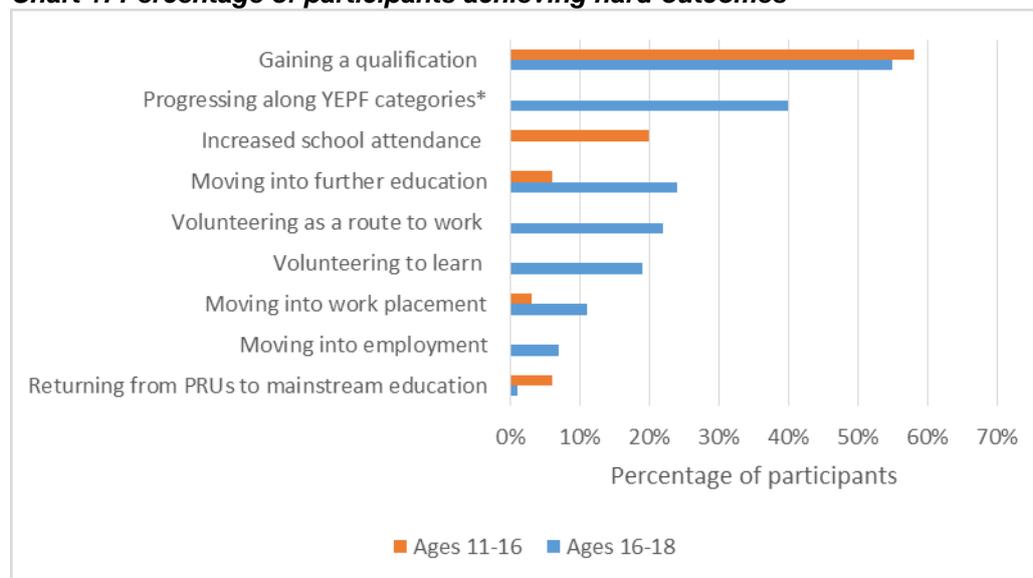
Arad developed a semi-structured interview pro-forma to guide these interviews which included identifying success factors and challenges; effectiveness and relevance of arts-based engagement; building trust with participants and meeting their specific needs, both in terms of skills development and also their aspirations; management; partnerships; and sustainability.

The final reporting stage synthesised the qualitative and quantitative data collected through each of the stages of the methodology, and provided recommendations for the development of similar initiatives in future.

## 2 Hard outcomes

Overall, every Momentum Pilot project was able to demonstrate at least one type of hard outcome for participants. The chart below provides an overview of the key hard outcomes achieved.

**Chart 1: Percentage of participants achieving hard outcomes**



Source: Hard outcomes monitoring data provided by the 14 Momentum pilot projects

\*Youth Engagement and Progression Framework.

### 2.1 Qualifications

The most common hard outcome for young people in all projects was achieving a qualification. 13 projects (out of the 14) offered participants a qualification and the percentage of young people who actually achieved a qualification ranged from 8% to 100% between projects. Overall, 58% of 11-16 year olds received accreditation and 55% of 16-18 year olds received accreditation. Examples of accreditation include AQA Unit Awards, Agored qualifications, Arts Award at Explore or Bronze level, GCSEs and City and Guilds qualifications.

*“We had hoped that all participants would attain basic level instrument / singing / rehearsal / performance OCN accreditation, but they actually went beyond that to achieve a high enough standard of work for some of the more complex units.” Span Arts.*

Cwmbran Centre for Young People reported that their participants achieved six essential skills qualifications in numeracy, communication and ICT, six sports leader qualifications, and four level 1 units in youth work. In engage Cymru, the artwork created by the young people in Oriol Myrddin during the project contributed significantly to their GCSEs as well as their Arts Awards; a teacher explained that the participant “has produced work of a very high standard, which will be reflected in her final grade at the end of year 11”. In the Whitehead Ross project, twenty six City and Guilds qualifications were achieved by participants.

*“The Nurture group was able to work towards both an ASDAN and an ACU qualification in teamwork. The Porth group worked towards an ASDAN qualification in teamwork. The Tonypanydy group worked towards an ACU in teamwork. This is a total of 34 qualifications for 26 participants, which exceeds all our targets.” Valleys Kids.*

Qualifications also functioned in some projects as a way of demonstrating a softer outcome; for instance, gaining a key skills qualification in communication, or team working. The participants in the Swansea City Opera project, for instance, achieved qualifications in improving own learning, working with others and problem solving.

In order to supporting participants to gain qualifications several projects’ staff undertook additional training. Engage Cymru’s team undertook Arts Award Adviser training at Discover, Explore, Bronze and Silver levels. ACE’s partnership with People Around Here allowed them to become verifiers of accreditation and work jointly in future to deliver more Open College Network programmes. Head4Arts reported that staff would be undergoing additional training so they can gain the necessary credentials as assessors for ArtsMark and Arts Explorer accreditations.

These approaches have provided organisations with new tools for using the arts to engage with vulnerable young people and enhanced organisational and individual artist capacity to lead this engagement.

A wider benefit of such qualifications is that such methods of teaching are proving successful where traditional learning has not made an impact. A teacher from Rhydygors Pupil Referral Unit was so impressed with the Arts Award offered through engage Cymru that she wants to introduce it into the school and train as an Arts Award assessor. Theatr Clwyd explained that *“the artists can come from an angle that most teachers don’t. They can break the shell that a lot of pupils wear”*. The Momentum Pilot projects have – in many cases – supported the young people to achieve qualifications and therefore opened up opportunities for further engagement and progression.

Valleys Kids participants from Tonypanydy College demonstrated highly challenging behaviour and were all on a modified curriculum with a support worker. Each one achieved a qualification through the project. Their teacher reported, *‘I am in no doubt that participation in the project allowed them to re-engage with their education, to the extent that all achieved the Level 1 threshold and many of the group achieved the Level 2 threshold. During their time with Valleys Kids, their attendance improved dramatically and this allowed them to fully engage with the interventions offered to them.’*

## 2.2 Progression

A key measurable outcome for participants in some projects has been progression along the categories of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (from Red to Amber to Green, or from Tier 1 to Tier 5).<sup>1</sup> This is a measure of both the young person’s circumstances in relation to education, employment and training, and also

Within the 16-18 age group (for which progression was measured), 40% of participants made progress through the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework categories.

<sup>1</sup> Welsh Government, Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/skillsandtraining/youthengagement/?lang=en>

their risk of dropping out of employment, education or training (including support needs).

Head4Arts' evaluation report explained how progression through the categories directly leads to outcomes for young people. Their participants started at Tier 2 (young people 16-17 known to Careers Wales to be out of education, employment or training but unable to engage due to multiple personal barriers and requiring intensive support). During the project they moved on to Tier 3 (engaged and requiring additional support, advice and guidance to enter further education). By the end of the project all participants had reached Tier 5 (in education, employment or training). Cwmbran Centre for Young People's original target was at least eight participants to move up at least one level. They reported that *"this has been a notable success with all participants engaged"*.

### 2.3 Moving into education, employment or training

21% of young people aged 16-18 participants moved from being NEET back into education, employment or training (EET). The next chapter on soft outcomes explains that, for many of the participants, significant barriers, such as lack of self-confidence, had to be overcome before they were ready to move on to education, employment or training. Therefore, 21% is still a significant figure and the qualifications and progression along the YEPF will move participants closer to education, employment and training, even if this hasn't been achieved during the course of the projects. As the Mess up the Mess evaluation report noted, *'a little more time would have been beneficial in moving the young people into education, employment or training after the project.'*

Head4Arts reported a range of progression for their participants; three went on to further education (one to a car mechanics course and two onto a BTEC level 2 in Childcare), one went on to University in London to study set design, one is pursuing additional training for self-employment with Taste of Enterprise and two gained employment (one gained an administrative post in Caerphilly County Borough Council and one gained paid work at a Dog Grooming parlour).

Valleys Kids reported that six of their participants had moved into further education to do a variety of courses in catering, construction work (Level 1), engineering, mechanics (Level 1). Within the Oriel Myrddin Gallery projects (engage Cymru), *"the experience of working in a forge with a professional blacksmith engaged all of the young people; two of the boys have gone on to apply for college places in construction as a result."*

The hard outcomes that projects measured were not mutually exclusive; moving from NEET to EET was a specific outcome, as was moving into an apprenticeship, a work placement, further education or employment. Projects reported that 24% of young people aged 16-18 moved into

further education, 7% into employment and 11% into a work placement, but it is unclear whether these are included in the total moving from NEET to EET.

### 2.4 Increased attendance

While the timescales of the project made it difficult for some projects to effectively measure increased attendance at school several projects did identify this as a hard outcome. Within the 11-16 age group, a small number were noted as having secured education, employment or training for the future (6%)

Valleys Kids reported that in Porth School 75% of students who were participating in Momentum have improved their attendance, 50% have had higher projected academic outcomes since their last data report and 50% have had fewer behaviour / work related negative referrals since the project started.

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– this measure was not relevant to most of the age group, who were still in the statutory education phase. However, the main focus was on moving pupils from Pupil Referral Units back into mainstream education (6% of participants made this move, all from the Swansea YMCA project) and on increasing school attendance (20%), which seven projects achieved; Theatr Clwyd, engage Cymru, Hafod Youth Action, Mess up the Mess, Swansea City Opera, UCAN Achieve and Valleys Kids.

UCAN reported that teachers commented on the fact that the pupils, several of whom did not have good attendance, were more likely to turn up on the days that the sessions were held. Five out of the seven participants had 100% attendance at the sessions. Theatr Clwyd reported that the attendance rates of nine pupils were increased over the period of the drama production in comparison to the previous 2 weeks. Cwmni'r Fran Wen reported that some participants, who had previous school attendance levels of under 50%, had 100% attendance records during the project, and even came in during their spare time to finish their contributions.

*“One young person who had not attended school for the previous 6 weeks attended the drama project full time”.*  
Theatr Clwyd.

Projects also measured increased attendance at activities. One project within engage Cymru had initial difficulties with attendance, causing the sessions to end early because the participants simply didn't have the focus, stamina or attention span to continue for the allotted time. *“By the end, their attendance...had improved to such a great extent that they began to voluntarily work through their break times, didn't want to leave at the end of each session, and even did some work in their own time.”*

## 2.5 Volunteering

Regular volunteering was measured as a hard outcome as a route to work and to learning within a few projects. Within the 16-25 age group, 21% of participants engaged in regular volunteering as a route to work and 20% engaged in regular volunteering to learn. In those projects which focused on moving participants into volunteering, it was considered as a valuable outcome alongside traditional education, employment or training. Volunteering was considered to provide additional opportunities for ongoing engagement, social interaction, developing employability skills and potentially accessing further progression routes.

Valley Kids reported that one participant volunteered for Rhondda Cynon Taf Skills Centre, one volunteered at Pizza Hut, and one volunteered at his local boxing club where he has already received a number of high profile national awards. Another participant volunteered for Penygraig Community and Family hub with a view to an interest in social work, while a further two participants volunteered for a project with the local Police.

Mess up the Mess' evaluation report explained that *“Communities First also supported the young people's aspirations by presenting them with opportunities to volunteer, gain Jobs Growth Wales work placements*

One Head4Arts participant is now volunteering as a youth mentor in the group and is embarking on her silver ambassador's volunteering award. Another is volunteering for two organisations – a Christian based youth group and LIFT, a community-based lifestyle improvement change programme.

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*and understand how timebanking could work for them within their own communities.”* Theatr Clwyd offered participants the opportunity to volunteer with their ‘Young Creative Taskforce’, to help the company develop its work for young audiences.

### 3 Soft outcomes

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Soft outcomes are captured in every Momentum Pilot project. Soft outcomes include a range of personal outcomes (such as improved self-confidence and self-esteem) as well as project-specific and employability skills. They also form a strong basis for the achievement of hard outcomes, and progression to further, more sustained engagement, particularly when dealing with vulnerable young people.

#### 3.1 Relationship between soft and hard outcomes

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A number of projects noted in their evaluation reports the key role that soft outcomes play in preparing participants to achieve hard outcomes, such as building confidence in their ability to achieve qualifications in school. Valleys Kids explained that *“young people are so vulnerable at the outset of the project that we need to establish soft outcomes primarily, such as increased confidence, an ability to cope, increased happiness.”* This emphasises that longer-term interventions can have increased value for these young people, particularly in helping them progress to hard outcomes once they have overcome barriers.

The Head4Arts reported that *“although the H4A team are totally committed to the importance of achieving hard outcomes, the challenges faced by the participants generally mean that soft outcome development crucially underpins their progress.”*

A few other projects commented in their evaluation reports that soft outcomes also include raising awareness of opportunities for hard outcomes. For instance, Mess up the Mess explained that participants received group and one-to-one support to become more employable and were signposted to other opportunities. Span Arts also noted that participants have *“an awareness of a broader range of opportunities than was available prior to the project”*.

Such soft outcomes – which focus on awareness and ability to take up opportunities – can lead to achieving hard outcomes, such as progression to additional learning or volunteering opportunities which can further sustain reengagement. Theatr Clwyd offered Momentum project participants places on their Senior Youth Summer Course, a six day course working with arts practitioners and culminating in a sharing of work for families and friends. Two of the participants took up this offer and joined the course. Several other projects, such as Cwmni'r Fran Wen reported that participants had taken up volunteering opportunities post-project.

#### 3.2 Delivering a range of soft outcomes

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A large range of soft outcomes were measured in all 14 projects. These ranged from personal attributes such as confidence and self-esteem, to improved physical and mental health and better relationships with peers. Within the 11-16 age group, soft outcomes relating to personal attributes were noted most often.

*“This project has clearly addressed literacy skills, expressed emotions and views, challenged their outlook and confidence and increased their opportunities for positive citizenship and participation in other events.”* Cwmbran Centre for Young People.

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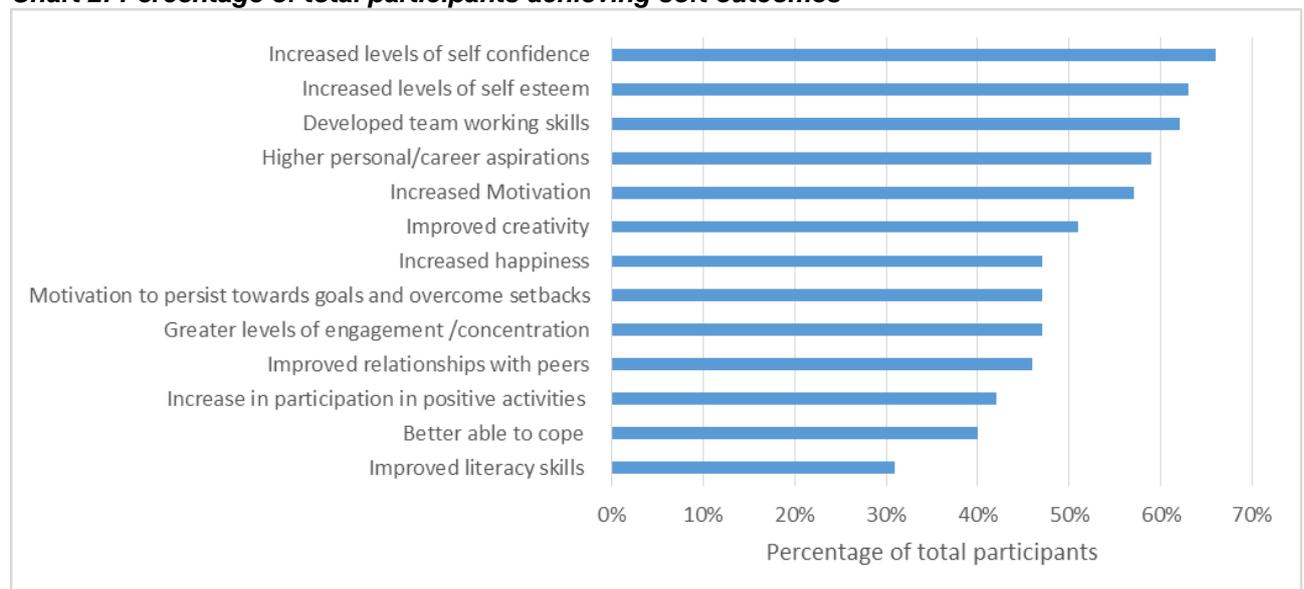
In particular, 74% of participants increased their levels of self-confidence, 67% increased their levels of self-esteem and 68% displayed higher personal aspirations. Team working skills was a common soft outcome (for 69% of participants) as well as improved creativity (66% of participants).

Mess up the Mess reported that eight young people completed their key skill qualifications in working with others and outlined that this was “a huge achievement as earlier on in the programme it was often difficult for them to be in the same room as each other without arguing, attention seeking and being uncooperative.”

Participants ages 16-18 also demonstrated improvements in personal attributes, though to a slightly lesser extent than the 11-16 age group. In particular, 52% of participants increased their motivation, 51% increased their levels of self-confidence and 55% increased their levels of self-esteem. Team working skills was also a common soft outcome (for 49% of participants).

Mess up the Mess reported that participants received support in becoming more employable and that their engagement with learning was improved. Span Arts noted that participants had demonstrated improved levels of engagement and concentration, evidenced by increased focus in class and had developed cultural capital. Swansea YMCA reported soft outcomes such as isolated/lonely people making new friends, participants taking fewer drugs and creative people inspiring and encouraging one another.

**Chart 2: Percentage of total participants achieving soft outcomes**



Source: Soft outcome monitoring data provided by the 14 Momentum pilot projects

### 3.3 Project-specific and employability skills

In addition to the soft skills discussed in 4.2, some projects noted the project-specific skills gained by participants. Participants in the ACE project developed art, film and design skills. Participants in the Cwmbran Centre for Young People project developed skills in design, photography, interviewing, business development, production and promotion. Mess up the Mess participants also developed performance skills and technical and creative skills in filmmaking.

Developing such skills can contribute to the achievement of other soft outcomes. For instance, participants in many projects performed on stage or had their work displayed which reportedly further increased confidence and self-esteem. In many instances projects placed the participants at the centre of the creative process and ensured they took the lead in developing the content and artforms used. This approach had further impact in terms of enhancing soft skills such as communication, team work, decision making and increased self-esteem and confidence amongst many participants.

Several projects focused on developing industry and location-specific skills which can also enhance the employability of participants. Cwmni'r Fran Wen focused on the creative industries as there are clusters of employers based in north west Wales and opportunities for entrepreneurship and self-employment through the development of technical skills such as video editing and graphic design. Head4Arts used film-making and craft activities to support confidence building, presentation and interview skills and linked to the context of two local employment opportunities, namely care services and construction. When linked to hard outcomes such as qualifications these additional specific skills can open up further progression opportunities for participants.

### 3.4 Individual examples of hard and soft outcomes

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Cwmni'r Fran Wen worked with a young person whose dyslexia had left him with a lack of self-confidence and difficulty in making academic progress due to negative schooling experiences. Throughout the project, his work demonstrated a high level of complexity and artistry, he worked very well with clients and had a 100% attendance rate compared to an attendance rate of under 50% when he was in school. He is in the process of applying for a bursary grant to start his own promotional film business. Another participant in the Cwmni'r Fran Wen project started with little experience of graphic design, but quickly immersed himself in learning and bonded well with the group. Since leaving the project, he has started his own graphic design/web design studio.

Mess up the Mess worked with a young person who had moved into supported housing due to a family breakdown and whose youth workers felt she wouldn't see the project through. However, as a result of the project, she completed two qualifications and completed her application to sit her A Levels at a local college – part of her ambition to become a barrister in the future. Another participant in the Mess up the Mess project was often distracted, disruptive and detached and was persistently truanting from school. By the end of the project, she could work in a group, express her feelings and had completed qualifications. Her schools attendance had also increased by over 14% as a result of the project.

ACE worked with a young person who openly talked about his prison background and his problems with drugs and the police. He struggled with written work and was easily distracted. Now, he has gained a place on a training course and work in a full-time retail job; *“this was probably the biggest success story of the project”*.

Swansea YMCA found one of their young people particularly difficult to engage, since he suffered with severe depression and took strong medication which made him tired and his body ache. Through the project he has made new friends, started a band, recorded his own demo, performed live on stage in the YMCA theatre and completed a Film Techniques course. He is now going to college to do a course in Music Technology.

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Another participant in the Swansea YMCA project joined after dropping out of college. During the course she was thrown out of her home and was homeless. With support, she has gained employment and will be starting a level 1 NVQ in Administration/Customer Services. She has also become a regular volunteer at the YMCA.

## 4 Delivery and recruitment

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Overall, the 14 Momentum pilot projects have delivered successful outcomes and reached their target numbers of participants. Some of the projects raised significant challenges regarding the timing and recruitment of young people, but in almost all cases this has not adversely affected the final delivery of the project.

### 4.1 Meeting targets

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Overall, the Momentum pilot projects have exceeded their overall target for the number of young people to be engaged. For the 11-16 age group, there were 196 participants compared to a target of 123 and for the 16-18 age group, there were 121 participants compared to a target of 82. One project also engaged with the 18-25 age group, for which they met their target number of eight.

The 14 projects engaged with 325 young people in total, compared to a target number of 213.

Nine of the projects exceeded their target number of young people, a few by a significant margin (such as the engage Cymru project, which worked with 46 young people compared to an initial target of 17). Only two narrowly failed to reach their targets (ACE and UCAN Achieve, which both missed their overall target by three). With regard to equal opportunities, 8.3% of the total young people were of BME (Black Minority Ethnic) origin, 9.2% were disabled and 12.9% had protected characteristics.

### 4.2 Timescales

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The most common challenge facing the Momentum projects was the initial timing and short timescale of the pilot. This was either due to the timing of the Pilot itself or how the timing of each project matched school and college timetables. For all of these projects, however, the timescale didn't tend to adversely affect the overall delivery of the project; it was seen as a challenge to be overcome and a lesson to be learnt for future projects. This was particularly the case for projects who considered that a lack of lead-in and preparation time for the projects made it difficult to secure a constant group of young people to enable the projects to develop as required.

Most of these projects noted in their evaluation reports that this short timescale made it challenging to recruit young people to their projects. For several projects, their target young people required more engagement through 'taster sessions' before joining the projects in order to see the potential value of participating. For a few others, more time was needed to find and engage the correct young people i.e. those who would benefit most from the project. Swansea City Opera explained that *"had more time been available, a wider window of time for recruitment using tools such as programme tasters, would have benefitted the early establishment of a committed group of young people."*

For those projects who felt that the timescales were suitable, benefits to the young people were evident; *"we really built up great trust, care and empathic relationships with our participants which may not have been possible if working to a very restricted timetable"* (Hafod Youth Action).

A few projects noted that a longer project period would have been more beneficial to the participants. The Mess up the Mess project explained that staff would have been able to spend more time getting the young people into education, employment or training, thus delivering more hard outcomes. Cwmbran Centre for Young People also felt that achieving hard outcomes for the young people was a challenge within the short timescales.

Some projects also noted in their evaluation reports that the scheduling of the projects could sometimes clash with school or college timetables, in particular exam timetables which were completely inflexible. This limited dates on which projects could hold activities and the numbers of young people who were able to attend. UCAN Achieve’s evaluation report noted that this made it difficult to *‘establish continuity with regard to venues and workshop timings’*.

However, some of the projects were able to respond flexibly to these challenges. Theatr Clwyd re-scheduled dates in order to run the required number of workshops. As their project manager noted, *‘we prepare for everything and plan for nothing so we can respond on the day.’* Cwmbran Centre for Young People reported that they used drop in sessions alongside structured sessions to make it easy for the young people to access the space, resources and staff at a time to suit them. Engage Cymru also developed specific strategies to address the individual needs of each young person (e.g. which times of day were best for activities).

### 4.3 Recruitment

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Many of the project evaluation reports identified challenges with recruiting young people. Yet, as discussed in section 2.1, most of the projects still reached their target number of young people and the overall number of young people engaged was significantly higher than the original target. This suggests that the recruitment challenges were overcome in the majority of projects. An example of this is the Head4Arts project, which was initially challenged by a last-minute change in the target age group identified by Communities First but made suitable adjustments.

Some projects faced difficulties recruiting their specific target group. For some, this was because the target age group was hard to reach. Head4Arts noted unspecified local competition for supporting the target groups. For others, finding participants who met all the criteria of the projects was hard; the Mess up the Mess project evaluation explained that *“it was extremely difficult to find NEET young people aged 16-18 with all three qualities needed for the programme – a Communities First postcode being the most challenging.”* Head4Arts explained that the 18+ age group tends to be easier to recruit, as they can be referred by Jobcentre as a fulfilment of their obligations to receive benefits; this was why the last-minute change to a younger age group was an initial challenge.

Head4Arts feel that *“opening [the project] up to a wider age group would certainly help with referrals - Only 3% of our clients are actually in the 16 to 17 age group”*.

Some projects faced difficulties due to the lifestyles and external influences affecting participants’ attendance. This could be because the respective projects found recruiting homeless young people challenging, and some participants dropped out due to general unsettled lifestyles. For instance, Span Arts noted that they lost some participants due to unrelated re-housing and participants being banned from venues where activities were taking place. For other projects, attendance simply dwindled during the project with no

## Evaluation of the Momentum Pilot

additional time for re-recruitment. As discussed in 2.2, this was sometimes because tight scheduling did not allow time to recruit participants who would truly enjoy the activity.

A few projects faced difficulties recruiting through their partners (further details on partnerships are available in the chapter on partnerships). The ACE project noted that the local authority and Careers Wales withdrew access to their NEETs database. Engage Cymru noted that they received very little recruitment support from youth workers. In the Head4Arts project, communication issues with partners in Communities First led to a last-minute change of target group not being shared with the project team.

However, some projects noted that they had been particularly successful in recruiting thanks to their partners. Cwmbran Centre for Young People explained that *“it has been relatively easy to access and engage participants on the variety of courses”* thanks to partnership working. Partnership working is discussed in more detail in chapter five. Other projects noted that once up and running their recruitment rates improved. As the project lead from Swansea YMCA noted, *‘word of mouth will always play a big part of these kinds of projects however, and once activities are established young people will tell friends and referrals from organisations increase.’*

## 5 Partnerships

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### 5.1 Communities First

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Overall, the majority of Momentum projects were positive about the benefits of partnership working with Communities First. This was particularly the case where strong relationships were already established. Valleys Kids considered that *“what is clear is that we already had a track record of work with Communities First in Mid Rhondda...there is a high level of trust amongst staff”*. These established partnerships – either through organisational or individual contacts – appear to be key in ensuring ‘buy in’ from Communities First at an early stage of the project.

Such projects received continued support, guidance and help in finding participants from Communities First. Swansea YMCA reported that Communities First was supportive in recruiting, including hard-to-reach groups such as those not in employment, education or training, and raising awareness of the project. For Cwmbran Centre for Young People the local Communities First officer was *‘vital in engaging those struggling in the school system due to her work programme and partnerships.’*

The ACE project explained that *“the sharing of resources, local knowledge and expertise has been essential”* to the project and that the partnership was based on *‘a sound working principle’*.

Some projects were positive about the initial interest shown by Communities First, but frustrated that Communities First priorities didn’t sit well with the project’s aims. For instance several projects reported being informed that Communities First were prevented from supporting the project because it was outside their remit. Another reported recruitment issues as last minute target ages had to be changed to suit Communities First priorities. Several reported that Communities First couldn’t contribute due to other prior commitments.

Theatr Clwyd noted that Communities First were interested and supportive of the project, but had other commitments to prioritise. Hafod Youth Action also explained that Communities First staff *“were keen to engage but were prevented from doing so because of their own work remits”* and that there was an initial lack of awareness about the projects. Such cases demonstrate that both Momentum projects and Communities First are keen to collaborate, but that further consideration must be given as to how future arts engagement projects fit strategically with Communities First priorities, as well as how to increase awareness of the projects amongst Communities First.

A few projects were less satisfied with the level of support they received from Communities First. This was generally linked to a lack of awareness of Momentum, a general ‘lack of interest and investment’ by Communities First teams or poor communication. Several projects were frustrated with the level of communication received from the Communities First team and that *“there was little interest in the project from the CF team as a whole”*. Mess up the Mess noted that partnerships with Communities First had been so challenging that no partnership working took place during the project beyond the initial first contact.

However, no project noted an unwillingness to work with Communities First in future. In these cases, the connections with Communities First were considered to be beneficial for future work if partnerships could be developed in a more joined up fashion with greater time and investment. As Swansea City Opera noted, *‘feedback from the Communities First*

*partnerships was, that with more run-in and preparation time, the partnership could have had more impact, particularly with regard to involving partner organisations in the recruitment of the young people.'*

## 5.2 Other partnerships

Cwmbran Centre for Young People explained that their *“excellent links with both schools probably made it easier for us to take pupils out of school...[and schools] had wonderful staff within the school who made sure pupils were at the meeting point.”*

Those projects which worked in partnership with schools were generally positive about how the partnerships worked and their impact. For instance, Cwmbran Centre for Young People noted that schools-based Pre-VENT<sup>2</sup> support was effective in engaging young people as the staff were aware of the young people’s background and challenges. In most cases, effective partnerships with schools were put down to existing links and enthusiastic school staff.

In the case of the UCAN Achieve project, good existing links between Communities First and the local school led to effective partnership working. The main challenge for partnership working with schools was timetabling, as discussed in 2.2. These challenges were largely overcome due to a flexible approach and developing close personal contacts with individuals within the schools. Taking pupils out of school has also enhanced engagement. As the teacher of one school involved in engage Cymru’s project reported, *‘The opportunity to work off site with artists and makers has helped to develop pupils’ respect and appreciation of the subject. The classroom is viewed as a studio and gallery space and as a result pupils are respectful and mature in their behaviour and feel valued as creative young people.’*

The project evaluation reports evidence mixed views towards partnership working with the local authority youth service. Some projects found youth workers very supportive and had *‘exceptional’* support. Head4Arts noted that the youth workers demonstrated *‘a lot of knowledge’* about participants’ circumstances. However a few faced difficulties such as lack of access to local authority information and lack of support with recruitment; Mess up the Mess commented in their evaluation report that the youth workers provided access *“to zero eligible beneficiaries”*.

The projects were generally positive about the relationship with third sector and community partners. Evaluation reports note that such partners are valuable in recruiting young people, providing additional support alongside the project (such as drop-in sessions) and in supporting young people on to other progression routes. No project raised any significant challenges to partnership working with the third sector or community partners and some noted they had built on partnerships developed during Reach the Heights. Some project worked with a wide range of different partners; Hafod Youth Action engaged with the African Community Centre; YMCA; Swansea Street project, community artists and the local church to provide premises and additional volunteering.

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<sup>2</sup> Pre-VENT 14-19 is a European funded project within Blaenau Gwent Youth Service. The project operates across five Local Authority areas of South East Wales; Bridgend, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Torfaen. They work with young people aged 14-19 to support with education, training and/or employment issues, needs and opportunities.

## 6 Conclusions and recommendations

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### 6.1 Delivering hard outcomes

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The most common hard outcome for young people in all projects was achieving a qualification. Overall, 58% of 11-16 year olds received accreditation and 55% of 16-18 year olds involved in Momentum projects received accreditation, highlighting the positive impact for young people. Within the 16-18 age group 40% of participants made progress through the categories of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF). The project also had a positive impact on school pupils' attendance and moving back into mainstream education. In addition, 21% of participants engaged in regular volunteering as a route to work and 20% engaged in regular volunteering to learn.

Overall, 24% of Momentum participants aged 16-18 have moved into further education, 7% moved into employment and 11% moved into a work placement. These hard outcomes have all made an important contribution to the sustainability of all the projects' impact. Qualifications provide a strong base for future education and employment applications and in building the young person's confidence in their academic and vocational capacities.

Progressing along the YEPF can help ensure the young person is ready and able to engage with opportunities in future. Moving into education, employment, training or volunteering – even if temporary – further progresses the careers and education of the young people beyond that which has been provided in the projects. Momentum has therefore successfully delivered on its main strategic goals relating to hard outcomes and illustrated the role the arts can play in effective engagement and progression opportunities.

### 6.2 Delivering soft outcomes

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A range of soft outcomes have been delivered in every Momentum pilot project. These soft outcomes have made an important impact in terms of providing participants with a foundation to re-engage and then progress towards more sustained engagement and hard outcomes. Most projects commented on the role soft outcomes have played in preparing participants to achieve hard outcomes and raising their awareness of progression opportunities.

Placing the participants at the centre of the creative process and allowing them to make decisions has further allowed projects to sustain engagement with participants, and develop specific skills that suit their interests and aspirations. Some projects' focus on entrepreneurship, industry and location-specific skills has provided additional opportunities to enhance employability and raise aspirations towards moving back into education and employment.

### 6.3 Meeting targets

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Overall, the 14 Momentum projects have very successfully delivered hard and soft outcomes through the arts for a range of vulnerable young people. The 14 projects engaged with 325 young people in total, compared to a target number of 213. Almost all projects reached, and in some cases, exceeded their target numbers of participants and all projects responded to

challenges regarding timing and recruitment of young people to deliver. While recruitment challenges were successfully met some projects considered that the age groups for future programmes could be extended to include 18-24 year olds to increase potential for referrals and provide further re-engagement opportunities.

## 6.4 Timescales and recruitment

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The short timescales necessitated by the funding did provide challenges for the projects. This was particularly the case for projects who considered that a lack of lead-in and preparation time for the projects made it difficult to secure a constant group of young people to enable the projects to develop as required. A longer timescale for future projects was therefore considered essential for more targeted recruitment based on need and aspirations. Taster sessions were considered an important element of this process to enthuse participants and build the potential for sustained engagement.

This could also allow for more intensive work with young people and potentially more hard outcomes and sustainability. A number of projects considered that they could have delivered further hard outcomes over a longer period, and focused more on potential progression routes for young people post-project. As one project reported, *“a full 6-9 month project would have most definitely aided recruitment at the start and nurture time at the end of the project.”* Another project reported that, *‘what is important to note for future projects is that the longer the engagement was, or more intensive the work, there was a direct correlation with the level of qualification we were able to achieve.’*

## 6.5 Partnerships

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A wide range of partnerships were developed by Momentum projects through the Pilot. Overall, the majority of Momentum projects were positive about the benefits of partnership working with Communities First. This was particularly the case where strong relationships were already established and these projects received continued support and guidance in recruiting participants from Communities First, as well as continued assistance through the project. Some projects were positive about the initial interest shown by Communities First, but further, and more sustained, collaboration was prevented by other Communities First priorities taking precedence.

Some partnerships with Communities First failed to get off the ground and this was generally linked to a lack of awareness of Momentum, a general lack of interest and investment by Communities First teams or poor levels of communication. Further consideration should therefore be given to how future arts engagement projects fit strategically with Communities First priorities. Partnerships with schools, local authorities and other organisations had varying degrees of impact and, again, were largely dependent on building upon previous, established relationships.

Whether partnerships with Communities First or other partners were sustained and effective usually depended on the strength of existing relationships, built up in some cases as a result of Reach the Heights. Some partnerships depended on the personal enthusiasm of individual partners, such as teachers. The future sustainability of partnerships therefore partly relies on establishing and maintaining connections outside the Momentum projects. As Valley Kids evaluation report noted, *‘we know that if we return to the school having*

*successfully delivered on the project the teachers will have more understanding and knowledge and we will be more likely to enable future pupils to participate.'*

Amongst the 14 projects, there are good examples of both strong existing partnerships and the development of partnerships during the life of the project. These partnerships range from linking with local charities and third sector organisations to more strategic approaches. The Cwmbran Centre for Young People plans to develop partnerships into the Service Improvement Plan for the local authority and Communities First identified areas. There is evidence, therefore, that the Momentum pilot projects capitalised on existing strong partnerships and worked to develop new ones to deliver hard and soft outcomes and further develop local networks focusing on engagement for vulnerable young people.

## 6.6 Recommendations

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1. Future arts engagement programmes should be extended to include 18-24 year olds to increase potential for referrals, and provide additional engagement opportunities for vulnerable young people;
2. A longer lead-in timescale for future projects would allow for more targeted recruitment and taster sessions linked to the needs and aspirations of individuals;
3. Longer project timescales would allow for a greater, more intensive focus on hard outcomes and development of progression routes for young people post-project;
4. Future projects should continue to focus on the development of hard outcomes while recognising the importance of soft outcomes as a base for engagement;
5. The focus on entrepreneurship, industry and location-specific skills is an innovative approach to engagement and progression and should be encouraged in future;
6. Organisations should consider gaining the necessary credentials as assessors in order to deliver qualifications that relate directly to planned arts activities and to build organisational capacity and the skills levels of staff;
7. Future partnerships require further strategic input from Arts Council of Wales and Communities First to identify common goals and promote the value of the arts as an engagement tool;
8. Partnerships with third sector organisations and local authorities should focus on developing networks to support recruitment and offer post-project progression routes.

## **Annex 1: Case Studies**

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### **Case Study 1: Action in Caerau and Ely and People Around Here**

#### **Introduction to the project**

The aim of the project was that two groups of young people NEET aged 16-18 (rising to 18-24 years old with Arts Council permission) would work with experienced artists across a range of art forms, developing key skills, teamwork and confidence through group projects. The young people involved were empowered to play a key role in developing the creative outputs whilst participating on the programme. The project was led by Action in Caerau and Ely (ACE), who manage the Communities First cluster in Cardiff West, in partnership with People Around Here, a community artists-led group.

#### **Recruitment**

The scheduling of the programme meant that there was a lack of time to recruit the types of young people who would respond well to creative engagement. ACE led on recruitment with the support of other agencies. Partners reported that some participants had a very small amount of interest initially, however once they settled into the project the young people became connected and excited by the processes they went through. ACE were able to offer familiarity with the environment that the young people moved in and the multiple issues they were facing. This assisted People Around Here in shaping the interaction with participants to produce the best possible positive experience of engagement.

#### **Content**

A combination of multi-media and visual art was used, through the form of two separate accreditations. Young people were trained in film production skills, learning how to work together as a team to research, storyboard and shoot a film. With support from ACE, the young people decided on themes and locations and chose local residents to interview who had succeeded in overcoming obstacles that the young people are facing themselves. They developed a range of skills including camera, lighting, sound, and interview techniques. Some of the participants also created a portfolio of work for the Bronze Art Award. Their artwork and films were exhibited in a prestigious venue in the city centre, Cardiff Story Museum and at the Hub in Ely.

#### **Partnership**

The partnerships worked well from the outset. It was based on the sharing of resources, local knowledge and expertise, and developing and building upon trust. The partnership operated on a flexible, coproduction approach and this cooperation was essential for getting venues and third sector organisation support. For ACE it has been an essential part of the success of the project and paved the way for future collaboration. They noted that they engaged with as many different stakeholders as possible to maximise the community involvement and therefore the longevity and authenticity of the project. The partnership has also allowed People Round Here to become verifiers of accreditation and work with ACE in future to deliver more Open College Network programmes.

## **Hard and soft outcomes**

7 young people who participated in the project have successfully completed accreditations in either Agored Cymru accredited units and/or the Bronze Arts Award. The qualification was an important element of the study and the Bronze Award was for those who also shone artistically. A wide range of soft outcomes were also delivered including motivation to persist towards goals and overcome setbacks, greater self-esteem and self-confidence, and higher aspirations. The 7 participants have now moved into further education and training and full time employment. ACE were able to signpost them to local and appropriate opportunities for employment, training or education and the partnerships were particularly helpful in accessing opportunities available through the Communities First programme.

## **Conclusions**

The project has successfully delivered hard and soft outcomes for participants. Both forms of art provided positive engagement opportunities and the opportunity to develop technical and creative skills recognised by qualifications. Key success factors have included the flexible, coproduction approach with a range of local organisations and allowing participants to take creative control of parts of the project. The final exhibition illustrated to participants and others that they have achieved their goals and demonstrated their talent. The partnership through Communities First has provided further added value to the project and the wider community. Sustainability has also been a key aspect of this, and participants were signposted to further progression opportunities and given additional support in terms of CV writing and developing interview skills.

## **Case Study 2: Cwmni'r Fran Wen**

### **Introduction to the project**

The aim of the project for Cwmni'r Fran Wen was to build on the soft outcomes and overall impact of previous involvement in Reach the Heights and their other community outreach project – Pontio'r Bwlch / Bridging the Gap. This project had been a first step into local communities for Cwmni'r Fran Wen they were now aiming for further, and more sustained, engagement. They decided to target the creative industries as there are clusters of employers based in north west Wales and opportunities for entrepreneurship and self-employment, and to support young people who want to make a living. They also aimed to introduce a strong networking element to the project and make contact with a variety of local organisations and businesses.

### **Recruitment**

The timetable was extremely tight regarding the process of contracting a team and delivering on the project. They worked with an artist that had received training and delivered previous Reach the Heights projects. They also worked with Gwynedd Council's Youth Service department to appoint an experienced youth worker who had worked specifically with young people from deprived areas. It emerged in the design of an appropriate space and a productive environment for the studio that would allow the project to engage with five young people. The focus was therefore on intensive impact within a small group. Candidates were not required to have any qualifications or previous experience but rather enthusiasm and a desire to develop skills in a creative environment.

## Content

They took a flexible but intensive approach involving five young people and a professional working studio within the CFW offices. The aim was to help these young people make careers in the creative industries. The project was therefore developed as a '*real job in a real working environment*', and real clients were dependent on their work. The intervention lasted 35 days so all participants were encouraged to focus on one discipline ranging from graphic design, video editing, web design to music. Individuals were expected to take personal responsibility for the quality of their output and working with others.

## Partnerships

Support was given to the scheme by Communities First (CF) in the initial application process and during the process of recruitment. However, despite all the participants coming from Communities First areas, they could not provide further support as the professional space was in Menai Bridge which is not a CF area. The project leads considered that the professionally equipped location was an integral part of the project's success and more effective than working in a community centre. It was noted that there have been lots of personnel and structural changes in CF which have not helped promote the project and there has been little further contact since the start of the project.

Cwmni'r Fran Wen have, however, developed a range of new creative partnerships as a result of the project including local businesses working in the creative industries and organisations working with vulnerable young people. These have included Theatr Bara Caws; Cofis Bach; Creative Gwynedd; Art in Health, Gwynedd Council and Stiwdio Sŵn.

## Hard and soft outcomes

They worked with TEC Cymru to ensure that all participants achieved accreditation at the end of the scheme through Agored Cymru. All 5 participants gained qualifications including levels 2's in Creative Media, Participating in an Enterprise Activity, Assertiveness and Decision Making, Web Page Creation and Editing, Digital Film Making, Editing and Production, Speaking, Selecting and Exchanging Information using ICT, Computer Music Technology, Gaming and Work Related Education. Each individual gained 6 accreditations. Additional training was provided in the fields of marketing, administration and business planning through the local project, Llwyddo'n Lleol ('Succeeding Locally') which is delivered by Meter a Busnes. 2 participants have gone into FE since the project and another 2 were being supported by Cwmni'r Fran Wen to write business plans and apply for a £1,000 bursary through Llwyddo'n Lleol to buy their own equipment. One of the participants is also working as a volunteer at the studio.

## Conclusions

Cwmni'r Fran Wen's project has taken an innovative approach to the project and linked the arts to local employment opportunities. The development of a more sustained form of engagement focusing on employability and creativity has led to opportunities for entrepreneurship, self-employment and provided a route back into education for participants. New creative partnerships and networks were established with local businesses in the

## Evaluation of the Momentum Pilot

creative industries and other organisations. This can help build a critical mass of community arts projects in the north west and provide further progression opportunities in future. Cwmni'r Fran Wen are aiming to build on the project to develop a local Skills Academy in future.

As a result of the project Cwmni'r Fran Wen were approached by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) regarding the Flexible Support Grant Funding scheme which funds local partnership activity to support their priority customer groups (young people aged between 18-24 years on Employment Support Allowance or Income Support). The scheme aims to realise young people's potential in the education system, stop young people falling into a pattern of re-offending, tackle entrenched worklessness, and improve outcomes for those receiving treatment for drug or alcohol addiction and for ex-offenders. Cwmni'r Fran Wen are in the process of putting in a bid for funding under this scheme with the aim of further building on the outcomes delivered by their Momentum project.

### **Case Study 3: engage Cymru**

#### **Introduction to the project**

Engage Cymru aimed to build on previous successful work with hard to reach or vulnerable young people funded under Arts Council of Wales' Reach the Heights programme and the Galleries & Young People project. Four gallery or local authority partners – Denbighshire County Council Arts Service, Conwy County Borough Council, Oriel Myrddin in Carmarthen and Glynn Vivian Gallery in Swansea – worked with Communities First, six external partners, five project artists and six groups of young people. 46 young people participated in at least some elements of the projects, with 22 completing Arts Award at Explore or Bronze level – exceeding engage Cymru's initial aim to reach 17 young people.

#### **Content**

Art forms explored within the four Momentum projects included printmaking, sculpture, photography, filmmaking, metal-working, paint, stop-motion and GIF animation, drawing, textiles, stitching, assemblage and installation. The project began with the project managers, artists, an evaluator and engage Cymru Coordinator undertaking Arts Award Adviser training at Discover, Explore, Bronze and Silver levels. This gave the project team a good introduction to Arts Award, with the knowledge and skills required to support the young people to achieve this. Completing this Arts Award training has additionally given the project artists and organisations a valuable new tool for working with young people in future.

#### **Recruitment**

Overall they met, and in some areas, exceeded their recruitment targets however it was noted by all projects that they had to take a flexible approach given the tight timescales involved. Several projects were also re-launched with alternative partners when initial recruitment targets were not met and 3 of the 4 projects reported that it was initially difficult to find young people who met the eligibility criteria for the project. The projects based in north Wales benefited from the support of local Communities First groups to recruit participants via external partners engaged with vulnerable young people such as Rhyl Association Playground Art (RAPA).

The projects in south west Wales reported less engagement with Communities First and therefore Oriel Myrddin used an established partnership with two local special schools to recruit participants while Glynn Vivian worked closely with the YMCA and Foyer, a project for young homeless people. It was noted by all partners that a longer timescale for the projects would have allowed for more effective recruitment, accreditation and progression of the participants.

## Partnerships

There was a perception from the individual projects and engage Cymru that Communities First were much more engaged in the two north Wales projects. Representatives from the projects in north Wales reported they built on strong existing relationships, based around previous partnerships with RAPA and the Local Authorities Education services and that this has led to effective partnerships with Communities First. For Oriel Myrddin and Glynn Vivian there was no previous relationship to build on and therefore partnerships with Communities First remained 'low level' after receiving initial letters of support for the project.

## Hard and soft outcomes

16 participants successfully completed the Arts Award at Explore level while 6 participants successfully completed the award at Bronze level. The Arts Award element of the Momentum projects supported the development of the young people's literacy and IT skills through research into artforms and artists. The portfolio of work produced in the project will also support some of the young people to achieve GCSEs in Art. Other hard outcomes included improved attendance at school for several participants and one participant moved from a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) back into mainstream education. Two members of the Glynn Vivian YMCA project were given unconditional places on a Foundation art and design course as a result of the increased motivation and confidence gained and two from Oriel Myrddin have applied for college courses in construction.

A letter from the art and design teacher at Rhydygors school further illustrates these hard outcomes. *'One pupil from the day centre had previously experienced long absences from mainstream education. Taking part in the project was the catalyst for this pupil to rebuild her time management strategy and work ethic. The project had given her a focus. It allowed her to integrate successfully into the group and by supporting one another she established her role amongst her peers. The pupil is now more consistent in her attendance and is predicted a high grade in her Art and Design GCSE.'*

Soft outcomes were reported for the majority of participants involved across the four projects and all partners noted that a foundation of soft skills is essential to move towards hard outcomes. Soft outcomes included increased self-esteem and aspirations, greater levels of engagement and concentration, increased positive attitudes regarding mental health, team working skills and increased resilience.

## Conclusions

For engage Cymru the Momentum projects have built on their Reach the Heights work in terms of moving from soft to hard outcomes and building a sustainable legacy. The projects successfully met their targets in terms of recruiting vulnerable young people and enabling them to gain accredited qualifications. Other key success factors include the close partnerships with Communities First clusters in north Wales which has allowed for a more sustainable approach to provide longer term support and progression opportunities; and the

development of additional skills for artists and managers. Galleries have further developed partnerships with schools and other organisations working with vulnerable young people. Some of the projects are also extending work and Oriel Myrddin will undertake a further project with pupils creating benches for their school and entering their project for the Bronze Arts Award.

## **Case Study 4: Head4Arts**

### **Introduction to the project**

Head4Arts' Momentum project was delivered in three locations, each testing a different model of delivery with the respective Communities First cluster teams as the key partner. The three project locations were Winchestown where the project was linked to an existing initiative for 'at risk' 11-16 year-olds and was devised around arts activities related to film making; Abertillery delivering a visual arts and crafts-based project for the 16-18 age group; and Rhymney where an existing intensive course geared to improve the employment prospects was adapted to be an arts-led programme. Head4Arts worked with a range of artists and Breaking Barriers Community Arts to deliver these projects.

### **Recruitment**

Head4Arts worked closely with Communities First and other local agencies such as Pre-VENT to recruit a wide range of young people. They had worked with Pre-VENT, an ESF funded project within Blaenau Gwent Youth Service with whom they had previously worked via Reach the Heights. Pre-VENT officers were keen to refer their clients on to other relevant opportunities as the programme was coming to an end and several of the participants in Abertillery were referred to the Momentum project via this route.

Head4Arts noted that, since the reorganisation of Communities First Clusters developing partnerships has been more challenging in terms of building trust and promoting arts projects as relevant and complementary to achieving target outcomes. Nonetheless, in one cluster there was an existing strong partnership where Head4Arts had previously been engaged by the Communities First cluster to facilitate the making of digital stories and videos. Overall, while there were some initial problems in recruiting, the projects were successful in recruiting the envisaged target numbers through this multi-agency approach.

### **Project content**

The Winchestown project explored film-making using a range of artists to enable the participants to have some experience of the different creative processes involved. The broad approach sustained participant interest over the whole period and promoted the variety of possible career choices within the creative industries. A final presentation, combining live performance with film was well attended by participants, parents and Communities First staff. In Abertillery the focus was creative design working in an existing 11-16 youth facility and, given the shorter duration of the project, delivered through intensive sessions with one artist.

In Rhymney a variety of arts-based experiences were offered – 3 days a week doing creative work, followed by one day doing more formal training in Rhymney College, over a 4-week period. Film-making and drama were used to support confidence building, presentation and interview skills and craft activities to support team work, ability to follow instructions and then think creatively. These skills were linked to the contexts of the two most frequent

employment opportunities in the area, namely care services and construction. A group of participants from all 3 projects also went on a tour of the Harry Potter studios in Watford to emphasise the opportunities available for developing creative skills into a career path.

### **Partnerships**

Head4Arts developed a successful partnership with Breaking Barriers and other artists based on collaboration and a flexible approach. Partnerships with Communities First proved difficult to develop in some clusters however they have developed good relations with some committed individuals and trust has been key to this. Head4Arts reported that projects are most likely to be successful where they are integrated into the Communities First cluster plans rather than sitting outside of them, and where the arts interventions are recognised as being part of a multi-agency approach to tackle underachievement and disengagement.

### **Hard and soft outcomes**

While the focus of all three projects was developing hard outcomes Head4Arts also noted the requirement for developing a balance between hard and soft outcomes. They reported that the challenges faced by the participants generally mean that soft outcome development crucially underpins their progress towards achieving hard outcomes. The projects were successful in delivering hard outcomes including 6 participants aged 16-18 who gained qualifications, 5 who entered further education, 6 who undertook volunteering as a route to working, along with 2 who have secured a work placement while on the project and a further 2 participants who entered employment.

Amongst soft outcomes recorded were high levels of increased motivation, increased levels of self confidence and self-esteem, higher personal aspirations, greater levels of engagement, team skills, increased happiness and creativity. 8 participants progressed from Amber to Green on the Youth Engagement Framework and this was reported to be an additional useful tool to understand the value of learning.

### **Conclusions**

Overall, the three Head4Arts projects successfully delivered a range of positive outcomes for participants. They also developed new sustainable partnerships with some Communities First clusters and a school where the arts project is being rolled out, becoming part of the ethos of the school. The projects have also linked creative skills to employability, entrepreneurship and progression, and demonstrated that these types of engagement are capable of delivering hard outcomes. For Head4Arts community artists have provided great role models in terms of self-employment and pushing participants to create quality art. The aim for the future is to further develop projects with schools in the areas that link to hard outcomes such as improved attendance.