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Artists in Communities:

Exploring changes in access and well-being through Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme

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Executive Summary

Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme is aimed at fostering well-being on individual and community levels through enhanced access to localised arts provisions across Glasgow. **The aims** of this evaluation were to examine the perceived impact of Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme on 1) local communities and artists' access to bespoke creative and cultural activities and 2) aspects of subjective and community well-being. **A qualitative approach** drew on semi-structured interviews and ethnographic interviews and observations. Data was collected across three of the 15 Artists in Communities sites, one per community planning partnership area: the North East, North West, and South Glasgow. Participants included three lead artists, four participating community artists, and five project participants.

Findings indicate the Artists in Communities programme increased access to localised arts engagement for communities and artists alike, using a transformative, place-based approach that encouraged local people to take charge of creative processes, storytelling, or decision-making. Improvements were reported in aspects of participating artists and community members' subjective well-being, including an improved sense of self, as well as to aspects of wider community well-being, such as civic participation. However, in line with the programme design, the identified impacts were unique to each project site and its participants and place. **In conclusion**, Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities meaningfully supported arts access and, in turn, well-being during the programme period, but further research is needed to determine how this impact could be sustained.



Background

Glasgow Life is one of Scotland's largest charities, which aims to inspire every citizen and visitor to become engaged and active in a city internationally renowned for its culture and sport. Glasgow Life supports diverse programmes, services, and experiences across the city of Glasgow, ranging from grassroots community activities to large-scale cultural, artistic, and sporting events. Glasgow Life's provisions are designed to promote inclusion, happiness, and health and stimulate the city's visitor economy in order to enhance Glasgow's physical, mental, and economic well-being. One current provision offered is Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme.

Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme has existed since 2019, initially created to host an artist in residence in each of the 23 wards across the city of Glasgow. The programme is aimed at transforming lives through engagement in local creative and cultural activities and supporting and inspiring artists who work across the city. Artists in Communities has evolved to accommodate artists working beyond ward boundaries with five funded artists or arts organisations in each of Glasgow's three community planning partnership areas: the North East, North West, and South Glasgow, with specific investment also in three Gaelic projects, one in each area of the city.

To date, there has been limited evaluation considering how the Artists in Communities programme achieves its outcomes, with the current understanding of the programme's impact based on quantitative data and artist reports. Consequently, Glasgow Life is missing the stories of the communities they have been working across and an understanding of how the programme supports community engagement in creative activities, inspires local artists, and, in turn, promotes well-being. This evaluation aims to address this gap by focusing on how Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities meets two of its key outcomes: improved community access to arts and, as a result, enhanced well-being.

For the purposes of this evaluation, well-being is broadly defined using key terms identified by Glasgow Life, including positive sense of self, social relationships, community participation, and sense of community connectedness. Through consideration of these terms in relation to the experiences of the participating lead artists, community artists, and local participants, this evaluation aims to illustrate if and how Artists in Communities supports Glasgow Life's wider mission: to help people live "a great Glasgow life".

Rationale

Arts and cultural engagement have been shown to meaningfully support health and well-being at individual and community levels (Fancourt and Finn, 2019). Evidence demonstrates the potential of engagement in arts and culture to improve outcomes ranging from the well-being of individual participants to civic dialogue within communities (Swindells *et al.*, 2013; Kelaher *et al.*, 2014). Place-based or community-based arts approaches, approaches that are centred in a particular community and often characterised by dialogue and co-creation within that community, are especially of use and relevance for advancing not only health and well-being but also health equity (Epstein *et al.*, 2021).

Community-based arts initiatives have been investigated as a way of addressing the structural and social conditions that influence health and underlie health disparities, known as social determinants of health (Lombardo, 2021). Evidence suggests that these arts initiatives can advance protective factors that promote health, such as social cohesion and connectedness, to combat inequities and foster well-being (Engh *et al.*, 2021). Given the growing evidence base behind arts for health promotion, government and charitable bodies are increasingly testing and implementing arts and cultural strategies targeted to social factors influencing health and well-being.

Across the UK, arts and cultural strategies to address health and well-being have taken different forms, such as social prescribing, increased access to cultural spaces like museums, or funding local artists working in communities (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, 2017). Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme takes the latter approach, funding local artists in communities across the city of Glasgow, including areas of high socioeconomic deprivation. In line with a place-based arts approach, each involved artist/arts organisation's project was bespoke and distinct to the people and place of the area they were funded to work within.

Accordingly, Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme presents a unique opportunity to investigate the role of place-based arts and cultural provisions in shaping well-being from a personal to social level; in a city with well-documented health disparities defined and in part determined by locality (SIMD, 2020). The current evaluation centres on one project within each community planning partnership area to consider how Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme affects access to localised creative and cultural activities alongside the impact of this access on well-being.

Evaluation Approach

Aims

1. To examine if and how Artists in Communities affects local communities and artists' access to localised creative and cultural opportunities
2. To evaluate the perceived impact of Artists in Communities on aspects of subjective and community well-being

Evaluation Design

The evaluation used a multi-method qualitative approach and centred on three of the 15 projects funded by Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme. Using purposive sampling, one project was selected per community planning partnership area: the North East, North West, and South Glasgow. Data collection was aimed at gaining insight into the programme's delivery across the three distinct areas of Glasgow and the perceived impacts of the programme on subjective and community well-being. The Ethics Committee of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland granted ethical approval for this evaluation and informed consent was gained from all involved. Feedback is anonymised for all programme participants as well as the community artists wishing to remain anonymous.

Data Collection

Data was collected over a three-month period, from May to July 2023. Twelve participants took part in the evaluation, three lead artists, four participating community artists, and five project participants. The data collection methods used were fit-for-purpose, depending on what was feasible and appropriate for each project's context and participants. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with the lead artists, participating community artists, and any regularly involved community participants for each project. Ethnographic observations and interviews were used to record the experiences of project participants who engaged transiently in the arts activity and written into field notes. All semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded and fully transcribed. Artistic outputs from each project were also considered when applicable to illustrate the process and product of programme engagement.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using thematic analysis, assisted with NVivo Software 12. Two cycles of coding, descriptive and thematic, were used (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2014). Themes are presented within and across the projects to illustrate how each project uniquely affects access and well-being, alongside the commonalities that speak to the consistent impact of Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme.

Introduction to Sites

North East: Rebecca Fraser's *Arty Chats*

Rebecca Fraser is a community artist who grew up, lives, and works in the East End of Glasgow. Rebecca aims to promote cultural advocacy, engagement, and education through creative community groups and projects. With funding from the Artist in Communities programme, Rebecca led *Arty Chats*¹, a weekly 'creative be-friending service' in the Forge Shopping Centre in Parkhead that provided time for visual arts engagement and social interaction. This evaluation focuses on the experiences of participating community members, ranging from regulars to passers-by and grandparents to children.

PARKHEAD
ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

North West: Tricky Hat Production's *Round Our Place*

Tricky Hat Productions is a company that makes theatre with and about people who live on the margins of society. With funding from the Artists in Communities programme, Tricky Hat worked with people who live and work in the North West of Glasgow to create a sound walk, *Round Our Place*². One component of *Round Our Place* considers the Gaelic community, specifically the Gaelic sporting community in the northwest of Glasgow, home to Glasgow Mid Argyll, the last surviving senior shinty club in the city. The Gaelic component of *Round Our Place* is the focus of this evaluation, considering the experiences of a Tricky Hat artist and the Gaelic artist collaborator contracted for the project.

TrickyHat
PRODUCTIONS

South: The Glasgow Barons' *Govan Mural Trail*

The Glasgow Barons support music-making in Govan with local people, schools, and community groups, alongside putting on music performances across local venues. With funding from the Artists in Communities programme, The Glasgow Barons created the *Govan Mural Trail*³ in collaboration with Invisible Cities, which set out to provide 'a magical musical journey' around Govan by exploration of the area and murals created by SWG3 with Yardworks. To create this trail, The Glasgow Barons hired local singer-songwriters to write and record new songs about each mural that are showcased on the trail. The participating singer-songwriter's experiences with the project are the focus of this evaluation.



¹ Rebecca Fraser's *Arty Chats*: <https://parkheadartist.com/about/>

² Tricky Hat's *Round Our Place*: <https://trickyhat.com/portfolios/artists-in-communities-round-our-place-2023/>

³ The Glasgow Barons' *Govan Mural Trail*: <https://www.glasgowbarons.com/govan-mural-trail>

Findings

North East: Rebecca Fraser's *Arty Chats*

ACCESS | *Opening the (shopping centre) door to active arts engagement*

By taking place in the Forge Shopping Centre, an easily accessible local hub falling within 5% of the most deprived data zones in Scotland (SIMD, 2020), *Arty Chats* engaged a wide range of the East End community. People of varying ages and artistic and social backgrounds took part, including those new to Glasgow and from social groups who may not traditionally access arts offerings. Along with the easy-access location, the open, flexible, and casual way *Arty Chats* was delivered further enhanced access by allowing people to participate on their own terms, in their first language, and at their leisure, with some unexpectedly participating before shopping while others scheduled it in weekly. The approachable design of *Arty Chats* was observed and reported to provide a unique access point for individuals and families to engage in a localised arts provision; one local grandma explained:

"I thought this is something that, even as an adult, you might think about, you know. I thought it was good, and watching the wee girl and her interaction with it, that was good as well, you know. You kind of think there should be more things available like that, even just the ad hoc that you go, 'Oh, look there's something we can go and join into'."

(Community Participant 1)

Arty Chats not only engaged a diverse range of community members but also encouraged them to take charge of the creative opportunity provided, whether a toddler drawing on themselves and the community sketchbook or an adult supporting the design of the public art exhibition. For some participants who were supported in some way, the creative freedom provided during the sessions was reported to be a welcome change. Some also noted that *Arty Chats* acted as a stepping stone to further arts or community participation, with Rebecca acting as a sign-poster to other groups, activities, and spaces.



"The concertina book, she loves to just get involved in that, she really loves to draw on her hands, she's drawn her family before. I think because it's in this little play zone, she likes to sometimes take a wee break from the art and go play on the slide and then come back to it; it gives her the autonomy to kind of do her own thing."

(Community Participant 2)

"I ended up going to something in the community down in Parkhead that I had never been into because people were talking here about it. I think they were starting a playgroup, and I took [my granddaughter]...but that was something that I wouldn't have known about if I hadn't been here."

(Community Participant 3)

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING | *Enhancing positive affect*

Participants reported enjoying *Arty Chats* or were observed to through evident laughing and smiling. Words like ‘surprise’, ‘wonder’, and ‘wee treat’ were used to describe the sessions, with the colours, pictures, and energetic interactions acting as an unexpected spectacle for some passers-by and a surprise delight for some engaging. *Arty Chats* also acted as a ‘treat’ in other ways for some adults, providing respite from other responsibilities or adding an element of fun to an otherwise routine trip to the shopping centre. As such, *Arty Chats* promoted positive emotions among the children and adults participating, a key aspect of subjective well-being.



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“And especially if they've [children/ grandchildren] been taken around the shops, and they're bored, and they're fed up, and then they see this, so it's something for them as well as doing the shopping or just having a coffee, do you know? At least the mums and dads can come here with them too, so a wee treat for them in the shopping centre.”

(Community Participant 1)

“Sometimes I'm thinking about, ‘Oh, what are we doing after this or what am I doing tomorrow’, or whatever; I do get some downtime while she is busy... Have a chat or just chill, Rebecca is here; I am putting my feet up...”

(Community Participant 3)

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING | *Promoting social interaction and inclusion*

Arty Chats was reported to provide a meaningful opportunity for social interaction and building social support. Especially for children not yet in nursery, *Arty Chats* was seen to provide a unique time and space for drawing, playing, and socialising with other children. For adults, *Arty Chats* also provided an opportunity for interaction and sharing, including among parents, grandparents, and childminders, on pertinent topics like care or education. The interaction stimulated during *Arty Chats* was reported to help build social relationships and support among participants and with the lead Artist, Rebecca, contributing to community well-being.

“Arty Chats is what it is. It's quite therapeutic. You can just sit here for an hour or two and chat literally about anything that's going on in your life, whilst maybe if you want to create something on that day, and even if you're not, you're not obligated to, it's just there for good company, but again that's why this is cool.”

(Community Participant 4)

“I feel like they've kind of created their own little community now, and whereas before all the mums or grannies would be sitting on their phones, or just sitting by themselves watching their kids play, now that ice has been broken, because of Arty Chats.”

(Rebecca Fraser, Lead Artist)

For some participants, particularly for people new to Glasgow or who may experience social isolation, *Arty Chats* was seen to not only foster social support but also could contribute to social inclusion. Through the creation of public artworks by diverse community members, a range of people's voices were included, valued, and showcased alongside one another, allowing people to be a part of something, and for some, to recognise their unique community contribution.

"By the end of the week, you feel like you have a sketchbook that really represents a community's views on something, so if it's nature, learning, women; in a way that's quite a concrete outcome, a community's points of view."

(Rebecca Fraser, Lead Artist)

"I think it is a reminder visually that artists actually do exist and have a bit of weight to their value, you know, because it just gets washed under all the time... It's an exclamation mark of why creativity is so important in the community."

(Community Participant 4)

North West: Tricky Hat's Round Our Place

ACCESS | Widening access to Gaelic stories and culture

The Gaelic component of Tricky Hat's *Round Our Place* sound walk provided an opportunity for audiences to engage with Gaelic language, stories, and culture through the lens of the sport shinty. By using right-left, Gaelic-English stereo, access was widened by design, allowing both Gaelic and English-speaking audiences to take part. Further, by using the lens of sport and the medium of audio theatre, the sound walk's Gaelic discourse, including relevant topics and issues, was reported to be more accessible, relatable, and inclusive for audiences when compared to other forms. In turn, it was viewed as uniquely valuable for reaching new audiences and supporting the maintenance of Gaelic culture.

"It's also something that I know nothing about, and I think that we need to know more about, know more about our own heritage. We could do that through research and history, but some people, like myself, I think it needs to have an immediacy and something that's happening just now... so it felt like this would open it up to an audience that we maybe wouldn't get involved in listening to the piece, to open it up to a different demographic for us, but also just as an audience in general."

(Kim Beveridge, Lead Artist, Tricky Hat)



The creative approach of Tricky Hat's *Round Our Place* centred on forging and strengthening connections with diverse community members, local artists, and local organisations, including within the Gaelic community. Specifically, the component involving the Gaelic community evolved beyond prior work in the area by connecting with and hiring a Gaelic community artist to be a lead artist and collaborator. Thereby, by leveraging established and new connections, *Round Our Place* provided a new creative opportunity for a Gaelic community artist along with a network for the project to be accessed.

"...plus it's kind of culturally insensitive for me to go, 'Oh well, I'm just gonna go and explore this'. It's like, well, why don't you just employ a Gaelic artist? And support them to do it?... And then giving them the support and the platform that the organisation can give, we're still only a small organisation, but he's coming into an established project, you know, so any support that I can give him and then hopefully, this won't be the end of it."

(Kim Beveridge, Lead Artist, Tricky Hat)

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING | *Encouraging self-reflection and self-awareness*

In the making of *Round Our Place*, the storytelling process and creation of audio theatre were reported to have the potential to support aspects of subjective well-being for some participating community members, such as enhancing self-awareness and self-worth. For the lead Gaelic community artist, project participation allowed for a process of self-reflection and introspection regarding major topics and challenges concerning Gaelic culture, resulting in a deeper level of self-awareness and understanding of their values and beliefs, a contributor to personal well-being.

"It's definitely made me have to put all of those thoughts into words. So before they were just feelings, and a general sort of attitude...But with this project, it really made me put those feelings into words and actually interrogate them and think them through and all that sort of stuff and come up with how I actually feel about it. Because I feel like when you've just got feelings, you're easily influenced based on the time of day or the direction of the wind, but when you actually have to sit down and interview people and think about all this stuff, you end up coming out with an actual opinion on something."

(Lead Gaelic Community Artist)

COMMUNITY WELL-BEING | *Fostering community connections and connectedness*

Through the development and medium of audio theatre, *Round Our Place* brought new people and voices together, allowing for novel connections and collaborations to form. Tricky Hat explained that both the sound walk and launch event cultivated community connections and connectedness, which, in turn, could affect community well-being:

"We're moving around these groups, we're connecting people, we're actually connecting different strands of the community. There are people from one part of the West End that are also in the audio piece, and somebody else is part of it, and they are from total socioeconomic groups that are different, if you go from one end of Partick to the other, but they are in each other's piece, because we connected them, and then they'll be connected at the live event. We will be inviting everybody there for the launch of that."

(Kim Beveridge, Lead Artist, Tricky Hat)

The content of *Round Our Place* highlighted factors within the Gaelic community that promote and hinder community connectedness and well-being. Accordingly, facilitators of community and well-being are promoted, such as shinty, alongside the consideration of negative social and economic forces. Through this dialogue, *Round Our Place* draws attention to significant, wider influences on well-being within the Gaelic community.

*“The beauty of shinty is that it can keep people in rural communities, but it can also keep these connections and pride and f***ing emotions alive in people if they have to leave for somewhere. So if you have to go to Edinburgh or you have to go to Glasgow, if you're subject to the economic conditions that we're all subject to, you might have to do that at some point. But Glasgow Mid Argyll can keep these things alive and can even create an organic Gaelic community of its own... Because it's not just about the people in the crowd, it's about the people on the field and the people in the music and all that, and there's people to look up to and all that, so it's enjoyable and good for them in a very concrete way, but in a much more general way, it's also positive for the communities around them. It gives people focal points and places where everyone can meet up and stuff like that and bump into people you've not seen for a while.”*

(Lead Gaelic Community Artist)

South: The Glasgow Barons' Govan Mural Trail

ACCESS | *‘A place where Govanites do something, rather than have something done to them’*

Participating community artists reported the positive and influential role of The Glasgow Barons in Govan, providing access to a range of local music experiences, resources, and opportunities for community members to make use of and for outsiders to be enticed by to visit the area, an area falling within 5% of the most deprived data zones in Scotland (SIMD, 2020). Specifically, the *Govan Mural Trail* acted as a means of both promoting music-making among local artists and encouraging tourism during the UCI Cycling World Championships.

“Usually, if you're asking or wonder, who is doing that project? The answer is usually The Barons. Because Paul is so great at working around and with people's gifts and talents, and he very much does know the community very, very well. And I think each area of the community is represented very well as well through education, individual artists or artists in residence programmes, bringing classical music to other audiences...”

(Jennifer Andrew, Community Artist)

In furthering access to music-making in the creation of the mural trail, The Glasgow Barons utilised a Govan-centric approach, using local spaces, supporting local artists, collaborating with local professionals, and drawing inspiration from local public art and social issues. While centred in Govan, the project's creative processes were decentralised. In the music-making process, participating community artists were the experts, writing and recording their own music. In contrast to a top-down service provision, artists were given the tools to empower themselves within the creative framework provided. As Artistic Director, Paul MacAlindin, explained, this prompts ‘a place where Govanites do something, rather than have something done to them’. Further, The Barons approach aimed to not only encourage participating artists but also stimulate a cycle of further expression and opportunity among community members.

“It’s not just about a song about a mural; it’s really about saying this is local people and people that we know in the street doing their ‘thing’ and either out of envy or out of admiration or out of any other emotion, being stimulated to do their own thing without me having to guide them or push them, so it’s about seeding a creative environment, and provoking in some cases, a creative environment, provoking people out of apathy, out of hopelessness, out of a sense that they’re not good enough and into a space where they just go ahead and try and do something.”

(Paul MacAlindin, Artistic Director of The Glasgow Barons)

In using the creative framework and toolkit provided through the *Govan Mural Trail* project, involved community artists reported experiencing personal and professional development. Some participating community artists also noted that the experience provided could help to encourage further music opportunities down the line.

“In the last year, maybe two years, I’ve learned more about song-writing than I have in the first seven...I learned a lot in the first seven, but it was all self-taught and listening to what I could. Here, actually somebody is going like, ‘try this’. It was another set of ears and somebody like [the music producer], he has been making music his whole life, so he’s been about, so if there is anyone worth listening to, it is him. So that was another thing, The Barons were able to connect me with somebody that could give me a lot of advice that I’ve taken on board and that I implement in my day-to-day creations.”

(Fivo, Community Artist)

SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING | Supporting self-worth through music-making

Some participating community artists reported experiencing improvements to their self-worth owing to the opportunity, encouragement, and resources provided during the *Govan Mural Trail* project, with some artists being compensated or recorded professionally for the first time. The work of some community artists also spoke to promoting a sense of worthiness among listeners, allowing community members to feel seen, feel as if they belong, and be inspired no matter their background. The first-hand experience and chorus of Kayden’s, community artist and Govan High School pupil, song, ‘Be the One’, spoke to this message:

**No matter who or where
you are, believe in
yourself, and you’ll go far**



“Getting this experience, it is the life experience, having that thing for anyone to look back on and see what I’m actually capable of doing.”

(Kayden, Community Artist)



COMMUNITY WELL-BEING | *Stimulating civic pride and participation*

Through showcasing local murals and singer-songwriters, the *Govan Mural Trail* was reported to boost civic pride among community members and artists, helping people to recognise and appreciate the value within their local area and community, including the value provided by the participating local artists. Specifically for the participating community artists, some noted developing an increased appreciation for Govan through drawing inspiration from their surrounding environment during the music-making process.

“There's a saying, ‘nothing for us without us’, and so on that level alone, the level of civic pride, and the level of emphasising and showcasing local creativity for people who would not normally have ever made a music video... by getting people to write music about this place, and a sense of pride in getting people to see that they've created a music video that's free to view on our YouTube channel that just makes people think, ‘Oh, wow, oh, right, somebody's making music videos about Govan in Govan’.”

(Paul MacAlindin, Artistic Director of The Glasgow Barons)

The project was also reported to promote civic participation by encouraging community members and artists to get more involved in shaping positive change locally. Several of the songs included as part of the trail had a wider social message, such as protesting the lack of community spaces or delving more into Govan's history and culture, potentially resonating with and galvanising listeners to get more involved in their area. The Glasgow Barons reported previously seeing an impact among other Govan-based artists in inspiring them to get creative.

“The song could be something that people would read something in it and think, ‘Oh, that's interesting, I wonder why they're singing about Govan's Olympic swimmers. Who are they? Who are the Olympic swimmers from Govan?’ So yeah, I like the way that it's written because if somebody's got a questioning mind, there's lots of doors to open in the mural, and indeed in the song...I do think that it can definitely connect with people and maybe even get them looking towards more Govan history.”

(Gavin Paterson, Community Artist)



Discussion

Increasing and transforming access to arts and culture

Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme increased access to local creative and cultural opportunities through different means and for different individuals, groups, and communities depending on each project site's local context, objectives, and participants, ranging from increased access for young children to visual arts to adults to music-making. When looking across the projects, the programme often promoted arts access among social groups that traditionally lack access to the arts, including socio-economically deprived and non-English-speaking communities. All three projects evaluated also created bespoke artistic outputs, including community sketchbooks, music videos, or a sound walk for community members and others to access into the future. Each project also enhanced the accessibility of these outputs and their creation through inclusive design decisions, such as the use of right-left, Gaelic-English stereo or non-intimidating, easy-to-use arts materials. As such, each project not only advanced access to localised arts opportunities but also often enhanced the accessibility of these activities through bespoke means.

“June last year is the last time I've really been creative because that's when I graduated college, and yeah, when I hit the real world, I realised that it is a lot harder to surround yourself with artistry unless you fall into the right paths, so this has been good.”

(Community Participant, **Rebecca Fraser's Arty Chats**)

In addition to increasing arts opportunities for local community members, Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme also presented novel creative and cultural opportunities for local artists. While this varied to some extent depending on the design and objectives of each project site, generally, the programme supported local creativity whether through The Glasgow Barons' provision of a novel professional music opportunity and platform, Tricky Hat's development of creative collaborations, or Rebecca Fraser's offering of an open-access space for local artists to get creative. For The Glasgow Barons and Tricky Hat, their work entailed not only supporting but also contracting community artists, fostering a professional creative network mutually beneficial for the organisations and artists.

“I've been working with loads of people, talking to them, interviewing them, meeting people within the community. But there's another layer of collaboration, it isn't higher, it's just different, and it's collaborating and supporting other artists and finding those people. I pride myself on being a really good collaborator, and the older I get, the more I realise it's actually quite a precious thing when you can meet people that you can work with, and I found that with [Lead Gaelic Community Artist], even though I'd never met him before, we had a real shorthand.”

(Kim Beveridge, Lead Artist, **Tricky Hat's Round Our Place**)

Beyond increasing access, some efforts of the projects considered as part of the Artists in Communities programme also transformed access, changing how people interact with and experience art and culture. Each project altered the 'traditional' dynamics of how the arts are

delivered and experienced, with participating community members and artists oftentimes acting as active agents rather than passive recipients, deciding how to tell their story within the creative framework provided, whether through music, visual art, or audio theatre. Accordingly, Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme transformed how community members and artists access and experience arts and culture in their communities.

“That's attempting to change the paradigm between the third sector and the local population, where the third sector basically hangs on to all the cash, converts it into a service, which then becomes a co-dependent relationship between the third sector and the community. And I'm saying, this isn't about being co-dependent, this is about you doing work that I'm paying you for. And that's a shift of, obviously, some individuals will get a boost of self-worth, even by being asked to participate. But what I'm saying is you must also think of the fact that you're an adult with bills to pay. And even though I'm not helping you pay much of them, it's like their first ever invoice about a song that they have written and the first-ever time they've gotten out of the kind of 'bedroom studio mentality' or doing stuff for free, and thinking, actually, somebody's valuing me in some small way.”

(Paul MacAlindin, Artistic Director, **The Glasgow Barons' Govan Mural Trail**)

All three projects also took part in earlier Artists in Communities phases, allowing the current work to build on prior work and relationships. However, for some projects, a concern regarding sustainability emerged about the maintenance of the transformative access and relationships cultivated during the programme. As such, while access increased during the project period, there were questions about how this may continue.

“I'm hoping that these collaborations aren't just what I call like, I've seen it before with socially engaged art, where it feels like the circus is rolling in, and then they're rolling out again, and that annoys me. So I feel like what I hope is that this isn't the end of it, and these continue. And we do more work together with these organisations with Tricky Hat, with [Lead Gaelic Community Artist] because it feels a lot of effort went into building these relationships for them just to be like, okay, right on to the next shiny thing. So that's my hope is that this is the beginning of something.”

(Kim Beveridge, Lead Artist, **Tricky Hat's Round Our Place**)

Enhancing aspects of psychosocial well-being via arts engagement

Across the three Artists in Communities project sites, improvements to aspects of well-being were reported on an individual level to varying extents and hoped for at a wider social level. At an individual level, for some local artists participating in The Glasgow Barons' mural trail or Tricky Hat's *Round Our Place*, their self-worth or self-awareness, beliefs closely linked to subjective well-being, were affected by the artistic process, with some artists viewing themselves and their practice more positively and others finding clarity on cultural topics relevant to their creative practice.

“I do think to myself, right, I'm defos ahead of a lot of people; I must be doing something right if I'm getting paid for it [singing/song-writing], you know what I mean? I don't think I'd be getting paid for writing shite.”

(Fivo, Community Artist, **The Glasgow Barons' Govan Mural Trail**)

For community members participating in Rebecca Fraser's *Arty Chats*, taking part in the arts activity was reported to enhance subjective well-being by promoting positive emotions, being described as beneficial and even therapeutic by some participants. Also, across the three projects, topics that relate to and may affect subjective well-being were considered, such as sport and care. Some participants reported a hope that art-making regarding these topics may encourage further discussion about or participation in activities that may positively affect other community members' subjective well-being.

*"I think sport is incredibly powerful for keeping communities together, keeping communities healthy. If you're really committed to playing a sport, you're not going to drink too much because it's going to negatively affect your weight and your f***ing fitness and all this sort of stuff...There's just so many benefits to playing a sport in terms of exercise, in terms of your happiness."*

(Lead Gaelic Community Artist, **Tricky Hat's Round Our Place**)

Beyond subjective well-being, some participating community members and artists reported improvements in social well-being as a result of participation in Artists in Communities. Each project site helped to build social relationships to different degrees and through different means, whether creating new connections among people of different backgrounds in person or over audio or fostering novel collaborations with artists or organisations. By providing a weekly space for social interaction, *Arty Chats* enabled social support and connectedness to build among participants, with the other two projects indirectly speaking to themes of social cohesion by addressing topics that could bring people together.

"I think it is in the name, very much 50% that chat element of anyone can come down, you may be struggling, you might not even be struggling, you might be buzzing, but you want someone to tell why you're happy or sad. It's just a little support system."

(Community Participant, **Rebecca Fraser's Arty Chats**)

Enriching community well-being through creative placemaking

Creative placemaking involves using arts and culture to transform and enhance spaces, neighborhoods, and communities. All three Artists in Communities projects exercised this transformational approach in different ways and to varying extents, animating the Forge Shopping Centre, seeding creative vibrancy in the streets and spaces of Govan, or adding a unique Gaelic cultural marker to Mansfield Park. By enhancing the appeal and character of a place, projects were hoped to promote positive emotions, provide a source of inspiration, and encourage connections among locals, all impacts that can affect community well-being. The Glasgow Barons also hoped to influence the reputation and economic and cultural vitality of Govan.

"I hear about the resonance of the song not from the individuals who did them but also from the people who really love that song. 'What did you think? That was a great song Paul, that was fantastic, I remember that one', etc. So that's where you know culture is no longer an object to be placed in the middle of Govan. It's now part and parcel of the conversation of normalising creativity in Govan."

(Paul MacAlindin, Artistic Director, **The Glasgow Barons' Govan Mural Trail**)

Owing to the localised or place-based design of the Artists in Communities programme, each project considered topics of particular importance to the local area, celebrating local traditions, stories, and values. Through showcasing local stories, including those of the local shinty club, Glasgow Mid Argyll, Govan-based artists and murals, or community members in the Forge, each project encouraged an attachment to place and a sense of pride in place. Some also reported that in showcasing the diverse voices and identity of a community, people's sense of belonging could be promoted, a construct interconnected with community well-being.

“Although you might think, well this song is not the same size as what Sir Alex [Ferguson] has done, it's the same intention, and it's the same power that can invoke change because the song is really all about allowing people to feel a sense of belonging. And that's the purpose of music. And it's the purpose of art.”

(Jennifer Andrew, Community Artist, **The Glasgow Barons' Govan Mural Trail**)

The local stories considered in the three projects included topics pertinent to well-being in each community or place, such as the lack of community space or the maintenance of Gaelic culture. Through addressing these pertinent topics, some hoped that the projects would stimulate civic participation, especially creative civic participation, among individuals, artists, or communities viewing the project outputs. As such, these Artists in Communities projects were explained to have a potential contribution to the wider well-being of a community or place, in which people could be inspired to positively contribute to aesthetic or social change in their local areas.

“Brightening up Glasgow seems really fun, doing some street art would be really cool. Brightening up the parks, we've got plenty of good parks here, so it'd be good to get the paint out, get a team together, and just have fun doing that... it might encourage other people to add to it in a good way. Instead of just leaving rubbish about, they might leave something pretty about.”

(Community Participant, **Rebecca Fraser's Arty Chats**)



Limitations

The findings could be affected by several limitations, namely owing to the short-term, small-scale nature of the evaluation. In terms of the population, only three of the 15 sites involved in Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme were included, meaning the findings cannot be generalised to the impact of the wider programme but rather provide a detailed picture of the perceived impact across the three sites considered. Participant recruitment was also limited by the time and size constraints of the evaluation, including only a few key artists and participants. Thereby, the perspectives from a wider range of participants and stakeholders are not included, with a bias towards individuals who were regularly and actively involved in each of the projects. Importantly, for the projects led by Tricky Hat and The Glasgow Barons, community members participating in the *Round Our Place* sound walk and the *Govan Mural Trail* were not included, limiting understanding of the resonance and impact of the outputs on the intended audience.

In terms of the evaluation design, solely qualitative methods were used, meaning more objective assessments of access and well-being were not considered. Also, again owing to the time-limited nature of the project, certain considerations regarding impact, such as any changes before or after participation, the impact on communities after the dissemination of artistic outputs, and the maintenance of any improvements, were not studied in this evaluation, with the focus being on the process and perceived impact during the programme period. There were also limitations in the data collection process. Since data collection was undertaken by one evaluator, the observations of activities were consistently assessed but limited in reliability. Also, some interviews with participants were subject to limitations owing to the 'real-world' setting, with there sometimes being distractions and other happenings requiring attention. Nonetheless, data collection within these environments provided a 'real-world' view of implementation and impact, akin to the day-to-day workings of artists in communities.

Conclusion

Place-based arts initiatives are becoming increasingly recognised as a means of promoting individual and community well-being through advancing protective health factors such as a positive sense of self and social cohesion. Findings indicate the projects involved in Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme can support factors positively influencing well-being, such as self-worth and social relationships, alongside supporting local artists and local arts access. However, the perceived impacts and their magnitude differed by site, being bespoke to the local people, place, and project. Further consideration in both practice and evaluation is needed to determine how the impact of the programme may or may not be sustained across the sites. Glasgow Life's Artists in Communities programme provided insight into the potential of localised artists and arts organisations to foster well-being *in their* communities.



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