



UrbanWise Media Project

Evaluation Report



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1 Introduction

1.1 Urbanwise: The project

The project aim was to create positive change in the lives of young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or those at risk of offending and in the wider community from KW and wider Bristol area, with an interest in working in the creative industries. The project was coordinated by two young people, Davina and Scott. Scott took up the post immediately upon leaving Ashfield YOI. The project was realised through collaboration between 2nd Chance¹ and Knowle West Media Centre.²

This report summarises the outcomes and outputs, from Urbanwise, in section 2. Section 3 presents qualitative evidence relating to the outcomes achieved. In the conclusion key elements that have contributed to the success of the project are identified. The appendix contains all qualitative evidence of the process and its outcomes, gathered through KWMC's evaluation approach and process.

1.2 Evaluation Approach and Process

Current debate in the field of participatory arts practice has highlighted the problems there are with measuring the benefits of cultural engagement and there is consensus that what needed is a new way of appreciating and exemplifying the positive impact of cultural activities. (Holden, J.: 2004; Selwood, S.: 2005). The methodological approach to this evaluation process is one that is informed through such current debate and therefore aims to evidence the value of the work through a qualitative and dialogic approach.

Essentially the approach has ensured input from a diverse range of relevant individuals and stakeholders. The evaluation process utilised is one that has stimulated dialogue about and reflection upon the activities that have been facilitated. The process involved the documentation of dialogue which has been analysed in order that pertinent extracts, representative of the over all set of exchanges, could be used within this report to highlight both successes of the work and the issues that have been indicated. The evaluation activities have been planned using the KWMC project planning form, which is contained in the appendix. This tool enables project coordinators to think through and plan for the most appropriate ways of gathering feedback throughout the project process. All evidence thereby gathered is also contained in the appendix. The Appendix has been mined for relevant evidence relating to the aims of the project. This report contains representative examples of the feedback and evidence collected.

Furthermore, the evaluation process has been at the heart of the ongoing CPD that has taken place in a structured way throughout this project has ensured opportunities for Davina to reflect on the process and project development, as well as getting feedback such as the above from her co-workers. This has enriched both the project process and outcomes and also Davina's own development as a professional through the project.

¹ www.2ndchanceproject.co.uk/view/1/home

² www.kwmc.org.uk/

2 Project Summary

2.1 The project

- 2.1.1 Total number of Taster sessions: 2
- 2.1.2 Total number of Participants in Taster sessions: 29
- 2.1.3 Total number of production week days: 5
- 2.1.4 Total number of participants in production week: 16
- 2.1.5 Total number of steering group meetings: 4
- 2.1.6 Total number of advisory group meetings: 3

2.2 The Outcomes

- 2.2.1 Perceptions about young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending have been challenged.
- 2.2.2 Aspirations of young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending have been raised.
- 2.2.3 Young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending have become skilled in media production and informed as media consumers.
- 2.2.4 Young people have become familiar with and informed about media and creative industries contexts and the vocational opportunities they offer.
- 2.2.5 Young people have become more confident to pursue vocational opportunities.
- 2.2.6 Young people have become more autonomous learners and practitioners.
- 2.2.7 Young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending have formed positive relationships with other young people and the wider community, fostering greater mutual trust, respect and understanding for each other and each other's different experiences.
- 2.2.8 Young people leaving the criminal justice system or at risk of offending have developed a sense of value for their own experiences and understandings and a sense of their potential roles within the wider community.
- 2.2.9 Real opportunities for young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending to make positive life choices have been developed.
- 2.2.10 Real opportunities for young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending to enter work have been developed.

2.3 The Outputs

- 2.3.1 Total number of participants (including audiences): 150
- 2.3.2 Total number of attendances (participants x sessions): 255
- 2.3.3 Total number of people from BME groups (can be an estimate): 40
- 2.3.4 Total number of people considering themselves to be disabled: 0
- 2.3.5 Total number of people introduced to Information Communication Technologies and new media through this project: 90
- 2.3.6 Number of people supported in setting up their own business and the nature of that business: 0
- 2.3.7 Number of people using incubation space: 0
- 2.3.8 Number of people for who a job has been created or safeguarded and the nature of that job: 2
- 2.3.9 Number of people who have gained employment and a corresponding list of those jobs, including salary range, type of jobs, destination of employment: 2
- 2.3.10 Number of people assisted in skills development through agency programmes, details of the type of training delivered and employment status of participants: 90
- 2.3.11 Partners involved: KWMC, 2nd Chance, HMP+YOI Ashfield.

3 Evidence relating to the Aims

3.1 To challenge perceptions about young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending.

Perceptions about young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending have been challenged through Urbanwise in several ways. Firstly, young people involved in the project, from the local Knowle West Community, have had their perceptions challenged through working with young people in or leaving the criminal justice system. For example, for Scott's co-worker this was definitely the case:

"Working with Scott was an amazing experience. I learned a lot from him and I hope he learned something from me in return. Scott is hard working and motivated which is more than I could have asked for. He was an absolute pleasure to be around and we bounced off each other, which worked really well. When times were hard for me, he picked me back up again and vice versa. I would be more than happy to work with him again in the future." (Davina Froom: Interim evaluation interview: 2010)

For further example, young people from KWMC visited Ashfield YOI and following the visit they were interviewed about the impact of the visit on their perceptions. The following comments illustrate the impact the visit had for them:

"How did you feel before you got to Ashfield HMP & YOI?
Scared, Nervous, Sick, Didn't want to go in.

How did you feel when you got there?
It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be.

How did you feel when being in the room with the young people?
I was shocked. The way they acted, I thought they were going to be really bad.

How did you feel when you left?
I felt that they wanted to prove that they can change."
(Leah and Shelby: Post Ashfield Interview: 2010)

Scott's role, in steering group meetings and wider exchanges regarding the project initiation and development, as well as his practical role, were all opportunities that he embraced, to prove and demonstrate his own abilities. Secondly, therefore, through such meetings and exchanges, the work carried out by young people leaving the criminal justice system has established a positive profile for them amongst the wider community. This is evidenced in the appendix, especially in minutes from steering group meetings.

Thirdly, the work produced through Urbanwise, the music and films made, have been heard and watched by a broad local audience, representing the skills and abilities of young people in or leaving the criminal justice system to that audience in ways that raise the profile of those young people positively:

"I've had my perceptions changed of what young people can produce." (Kerrie Avery: Artist Liaison Manager: Audience feedback: 2010)

"When I walked through the doors it was packed with so many different people, it seemed like it was going to be an extraordinary event. They were amazing; when I heard them I couldn't believe what they had put together. It was just so good!"
(Lisa Marie Carter: Urbanwise Article: 2010)

Finally, the press and publicity produced during and for the project has also acted to promote and therefore challenge negative perception of young people leaving the criminal

justice system, or at risk of offending, to an even broader audience. Examples include an interview on Radio Bristol, the press releases contained in the appendix and various flyers and posters, of which the following is one example:



URBANWISE
MEDIA PROJECT

Scott "Sykes" served 3 years in Ashfield. Now, at 19 he's co-running Urban Wise Media Project and producing dance music.

UrbanWise Media Project is offering the chance for you to tell your story through media. Or you might have an issue you want to get out there?

We are offering opportunities to learn skills in media and get your work seen in the community.

You can use different types of media such as: Film, Music, Animation, Photography, Radio, Podcasts, Newspapers and many more.

Age group: 14 -19
For more information contact :
Davina - tel: 0117 903 0444
e mail: davina.froom@kwmc.org.uk
Scott - tel: 0117 9780 381
e mail: scott@2ndchanceproject.co.uk

YOUR LIFE. YOUR INSPIRATION. OUR HELP. KNOWLE WEST MEDIA CENTRE **2nd Chance** Project **media box**

3.2 To raise aspirations of young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending.

Aspirations of young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending have been raised in many ways through Urbanwise. For example, young people involved in media production have realised that they have experiences, skills and literacy in music and media that could enable them to be successful, for example:

“This has changed the way I think about the future because I want to work hard on the things I enjoy like sketching and making beats and stuff like that.” (Eric Aidoo: production week interviews: 2010)

Young people have recognised their own success and they have produced work that they have been proud of, broadening their sense of what is possible and what they can achieve:

“I feel this project has been successful because we managed to finish everything we planned and the turnout was a good stepping stone for us.” (Christopher Sefia: Interviews at exhibition: 2010)

One key element of the work that can be seen to underpin this success is the extent to which high expectations and production values were maintained for the work made. This is evidenced in the films and music made, but also again in the publicity and promotional materials, for example:

The Urbanwise team invite you to a special showcase of films and music.

30 young people, some in custody, some in the community, have produced personal media stories, sharing their experiences and views on issues that matter to them.

Knowle West Media Centre
Bristol BS4 1NL 0117 903 0444 www.kwmc.org.uk

K-West Leinster Avenue,
0444 www.kwmc.org.uk

ESVP to Davina:
e mail - davina.froom@kwmc.org.uk
tel - 0117 9030444

KNOWLE WEST MEDIA CENTRE

2nd Chance

This is my story,
music is what I'm 'bout
Forget what you ever heard,
listen up and find out.
I've lost my patience
but my observations
keep me concentrated,
The brightest star
you can call me David.

I never listen to haters
I'm just doin' what I'm doin'
Enough with the screwin'
I remain the truest of the truest.
Influenced by life besides all kinds
of different music, I proved it
your never ever
gonna see this winner losin'

D.A.

3.3 For young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending to become skilled in media production and informed as media consumers.

Urbanwise engaged young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or those at risk of offending in media production in three ways. Firstly, through taster sessions and production weeks, young people from Ashfield YOI and young people from the local community in Knowle West engaged in photography, graphic design, lyric writing, animation, social networking, filming and music recording, through which young people realised a wealth of skills, for example:

“Learned how to use SLR cameras, upload and play with different equipment. Learnt how to use the computer to edit and learning different techniques. The green screen was great, I never used one before so it helped loads and it was fun.” (David Aidoo: Production week interviews: 2010)

“I’m more confident with the media such as logic pro, which I have never used before.” (Collins Nemi: Production week interviews: 2010)

“The videoing and the photography was the best part because before this week I haven’t used any of that technology so it’s pretty good to get into all of that stuff. I have developed a good skill and now I feel confident using the equipment.” (Eric Aidoo: Production week interviews: 2010)

Secondly, during production week, when the same young people planned the work they would make and identified the equipment, support and knowledge they would need to produce that work, they developed skills in organising time and directing work:

“Whereas before I’ll put stuff aside and say I’ll do that in 10 minutes, you couldn’t do that with this because we had so much to do in short space of time. The green screen was put up on the Wednesday and we only had an hour to get what we needed to do with it. We had to plan because we wouldn’t get another opportunity to do it. Learning how to organise my time will be good for when I go to 6th form or do A levels because I wasn’t very good at organising when I was doing my GCSE’s so I had to revise a lot harder.” (David Elliott: Production week interviews: 2010)

The self-directed nature of the process, whereby young people have taken ownership and responsibility for the work being made, has led young people to realise what they can achieve if they plan and organise their time. It is also important to highlight that many of the young people involved were surprised by their own achievements, in ways that have led to increased confidence and a clearer sense of what they can achieve:

‘...at the start I was little bit nervous about what I could actually achieve in the week. Once I sat down we actually came up with a plan on the Monday we actually came up with something quite conceivable.’ (David Elliot: Production week interviews: 2010)

In this way the structure of the project and the extent to which that structure ensured that young people would direct and own the work they made, was also a key component to raising young peoples’ aspirations.

Finally through preparing work for exhibition young people were involved in editing video and preparing final soundtracks. Throughout these different activities young people were supported to consider the meaning of the work that they were generating and how the work would represent them, which has led to them being more informed as media consumers as well as producers.

3.4 For young people to become familiar with and informed about media and creative industries contexts and the vocational opportunities they offer.

During Urbanwise young people have not just become familiar and informed about media, but have also had opportunities to meet and work alongside media professionals and with media organisations. These opportunities have led young people to realise something of the breadth of possibilities there are for routes into vocational opportunities for media and music production. For example:

“...now I know I can do a bit more with these people who can work on different media projects.” (Eric Aidoo: Production week interviews: 2010)

“It has sort of opened my options into what I want to do.” (Anthony Sefia: Production week interviews: 2010)

The project has also led young people to realise that a wider educational experience is important to their success:

“Yes. It has helped me work out that I need to get a nice balance between music and education. But it has shown me that I really want to be a musician.” (Collins Nemi: Production week interviews: 2010)

3.5 For young people to become more confident to pursue vocational opportunities.

The extent to which young people have become more confident to pursue vocational opportunities is reflected in the ambitions that have been nurtured through Urbanwise, for example:

“I’ve been thinking of doing sort of different roles since I learnt new skills and putting them into practice more than I ever could before.” (David Aidoo: production week interviews: 2010)

“I want to work towards being an artist.” (Saul Rattray: production week interviews: 2010)

Urbanwise has supported young people to become confident through self directed, youth centred approaches and has made vocational opportunities accessible through nurturing familiarity for young people with the vocational opportunities that media production presents.

3.6 For young people to become more autonomous learners and practitioners.

It is clear that the ownership of and responsibility for their own media productions has led young people to become more autonomous as learners and practitioners. For example:

“It’s helped me because now I’ll be able to have knowledge of how to direct my own music video too.” (David Elliott: production week interviews: 2010)

“I can go away and use my skills elsewhere.” (Geovaughn Burey: production week interviews: 2010)

Not only have young people become more autonomous learners and practitioners but, as is evidenced above, they also have ideas about how they can continue learning and develop their practice further.

3.7 For young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending to form positive relationships with other young people and the wider community, fostering greater mutual trust, respect and understanding for each other and each other's different experiences.

As was shown in 3.1, Urbanwise has challenged perceptions of young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending, often through the positive relationships formed and the extent to which the mutual trust and respect thereby nurtured has led to the wider community having a more positive perception of the young people involved. For further example, young people from Knowle West who visited Ashfield also commented:

"I felt sorry for them.
I didn't want to leave.
I wanted to go back in and help them.
I would like to visit again.
I would maybe work there."
(Leah and Shelby: Post Ashfield Interview: 2010)

Mutual trust has developed between different people throughout the project. Key to this development has been the co-ordinators approach to working with young people, as Davina articulated during the interim evaluation interview:

"I've talked to them and approached them on an equal level, which has got the result I needed for working with them. I have respect for them and they have respect for me and they seem confident with me. So this has been significant learning, about mutual respect and trust and its helped loads. Its important for young people to feel equal because as a coordinator I could be seen as a teacher, which could create a barrier to working together, so I have been careful not to come across as 'someone who is going to 'help them'', but someone who they can come to for support or help. It is a subtle but important difference that I have learnt."

What is also clear here is how Urbanwise, because of its embedded and ongoing reflective evaluation process, has supported Davina to recognise the value of a certain approach and build on that approach, refining her practice as a youth worker.

Furthermore, the screening of the films led an audience, that included relevant professionals, to have a greater understanding of the young people's own experiences, nurturing greater mutual understanding, for example:

"I think the young people who have offended have as much to teach society about why they think they are in custody, as society has an obligation to try to address this issue... Seeing the films has made me understand how much potential these young people have." (Kerrie Avery: Artist Liaison Manager: Audience feedback: 2010)

"I already work with some young offenders and those at potential risk, but this project definitely increased my understanding of where some of the young people were coming from, what they were experiencing in their lives and how this impacted on their attitude, behaviour and outlook." (Rozzy Amos: Princes Trust: Audience feedback: 2010)

The fact that the content of both the music and films produced is based on young people's own experiences has meant that the product of Urbanwise, as well as the process, has contributed to the fostering of greater mutual trust, respect and understanding.

3.8 For young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending to have a sense of value for their own experiences and understandings and a sense of their potential roles within the wider community.

As has been shown in previous sections, Urbanwise has increased young people's sense of what they can achieve and thereby raised their aspirations. Young people have made work, informed by their own experiences and understandings, for example,

“Putting real life events into lyrics.” (Saul Rattray: Post production week interviews: 2010)

A broad audience has shown great interest in these products and provided very positive feedback:

“I was surprised as how fantastic and professional everything was. Not only visually but content too.” (Kerrie Avery: Artist Liaison Manager: Audience feedback: 2010)

In this way young people have been supported to identify the relevance and value of their own experiences and how this could be important to developing a role within their community. For example, young people in Ashfield recognised how they could influence other young people at risk of offending, and deter them from criminal activity:

“I rapped about where I am living and I am trying to show people it's not a nice place to be... I can show people what I have been through and tell them it's not a good thing to experience.” (Jesse Williams: Post production interviews: 2010)

This process has also led young people to consider the roles other people have within their community, for example:

“Instead of just looking at police as people who just put us away but looking at them as people who have a positive input into the community.” (Saul Rattray: Post production week interviews: 2010)

Furthermore, engagement in Urbanwise has led young people to have clear rationales for deciding to use their own experiences in positive ways, for example:

“Last year my friend and me was involved in an armed robbery, he got four years and made sure that I didn't get in more trouble than I should have. I wanted to use my time to make sure his time didn't go to waste.” (Saul Rattray: Post production week interviews: 2010)

3.9 To develop real opportunities for young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending to make positive life choices.

As has been shown in previous sections, Urbanwise has raised young people aspirations, given them a sense of the potential value of their role within the wider community and led them to be confident and familiar enough to pursue routes into vocational music and media opportunities. For further example of real opportunities that have developed, a number of young people engaged through Urbanwise have since gone on to do music apprenticeships. Other young people have pursued specific avenues that have built on their Urbanwise work and experience. For example, one young person, Ramane, has left Ashfield and has used his dvd to introduce himself to relevant people and to engage other young people. As a direct consequence of his involvement in Urbanwise, Ramane is now working on a music / media collaboration with the artist Swingerz in London.

3.10 To develop real opportunities for young people leaving the criminal justice system and / or at risk of offending to enter work.

As has been shown throughout the previous sections, Urbanwise has established the necessary components; such as confidence in themselves, familiarity with vocational contexts and practice and a sense of the value for their own experiences; for young people to enter work.

As with the examples given above of Remane and young people beginning apprenticeships, some young people have acted upon the possibilities presented and have taken a further vocational route towards entering work.

In addition, the role that Scott had, within the project itself was a very real opportunity for a young person leaving the criminal justice system to enter the world of work.

4 Conclusions

As has been evidenced above, Urbanwise has shown a broad cross section of people; both from the local community and professionals from beyond that community; that young people in any community can work hard, are talented and can produce professional work.

In conclusion it is useful to highlight some of the key components in the project that have led to this outcome and which can be seen to underpin its success.

As highlighted above, high production values are central to establishing an increased sense of what can be achieved by young people, as is articulated in the following quote:

“The quality of the media is a positive point, lots of the audience were impressed with media produced and stories told, tracks made. Etc. Some people were blown away by the standard of media produced.” (Team debrief notes: 2010)

Much of the work made by young people challenged the assumptions made and perceptions people have of young people, especially of those leaving the criminal justice system. The project did this by representing and celebrating the skills and talents of young people as were evidenced through their own productions.

Urbanwise has therefore demonstrated how young people, when supported to take ownership and responsibility for their own work and its quality, will aim to achieve a high standard of work. Young people have produced high quality professional work, which has nurtured within them a keen sense of their potential to develop their own unique media practice.

The role of young people on the project steering group can be understood to have underpinned the wider group of participants’ perception of the project and their belief that their own opinions and experiences, as young people, would also be valued.

The ongoing process of reflection and evaluation has supported this process and its outcomes in a number of ways. Firstly it has ensured regular opportunities for participants to reflect on their achievements and refine their work and products. Secondly it has ensured opportunities for the team, especially the coordinators, to reflect on the process that they have facilitated and refine their approach, to ensure relevant and meaningful engagement with participants. Given the apparent significance of the quality of the product and its impact on young people’s sense of their own potential, their confidence and their aspirations, the evaluation process could be built on further to continually ensure the highest possible quality of products, through, for example, peer reviews of products prior to screening to ensure that everyone involved will be proud of all of the results.

5 References

Holden, J: 'Capturing Cultural Value.'
Demos: London: 2004

Selwood, S (Ed.): Commentaries on John Holden's Capturing Cultural Value: How culture has become a tool of government policy. Cultural Trends 53
Routledge: London: 2005

