“our futures”

Eyemouth High School Transition project

Funded and supported by
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Introduction

The concept of an arts based project supporting a positive transition from the old school building, to the new was first discussed by Think Make Grow and school staff in autumn 2007. Following a series of meetings and successful funding applications with Berwickshire Local Integration Team and Leader Scotland the project commenced in January 2009.

The bulk of the workshops took place between March and May and the final event took place in June on the same day as the new school building’s official opening ceremony.

It had been hoped that some of the work would have been informed by local research undertaken by Arts Eyemouth, a local charity. Unfortunately they were unable to complete their research during the life of the project.

Please note, consent has been given for use of photographs in this document by TMG Ltd only.
The People Involved

Through the course of the project more than 800 people were directly involved in some way. This includes attendees at the promotional and final events. Twelve Micro businesses benefitted from the project when individual artists were contracted for aspects of the project. These were:

Wendy Ward / Caim Services: Management; IT facilitation; Poetry facilitation: 1:1 work.
Gary Miller: Management; Song Writing; Recording
Dave Ward / Waymarks Consultancy: IT facilitation; Songwriting
Sarah Chappell / Pictorial Photograpy: Photography
Mhairi Seymour: Photography
Geraldine & Nansady Keita / Undaja: West African Drumming
Jo Simpson: Fashion Design
Louise Batham: Fashion Design; Visual Art
Sylvia Home: Visual Art; Exhibition set up
*Chloe Petrie: Assistant artist to photography, visual arts and song writing plus promotional events
Andy Foster: Music technology staff training (for school) and Recording; Film Editing
Trish McLaughlin / Tapestra: Jewellery Making

Participants in the project were drawn from:
Eyemouth High School
Eyemouth Primary School
Adult Literacy Group – Eyemouth Community Centre
NEET group – Eyemouth Community Centre

*It is with great sadness that we note the tragic death of artist Chloe Petrie on 4th August 2009 in a car accident. Her contribution to this project was highly valued by both her colleagues and the young people she worked with.
Promoting The Project

In January 2009 artists Gary Miller, Chloe Petrie and Wendy Ward delivered a series of assemblies to the whole of Eyemouth High School to introduce the opportunity to young people to lead the project in terms of content and outcomes.

Each assembly consisted of an original song from Gary. A time of gathering ideas regarding hopes for the future, and the opportunities the new school may bring. A short explanation of the sort of things participants might choose to do with support from an artist. Each assembly ended with the performance of another original song by Gary Miller incorporating the ideas gathered earlier in the assembly. This song was added to each day until by the end it expressed the hopes of the whole school. The Lyrics are shown below.

Following this dates were arranged for young people wishing to participate to come and tell us the art form/forms they would like to work with. This was how the programme that happened was decided upon. The exception to this was African Drumming, which was initiated by school staff and photography which though not initially suggested by young people seemed to fit with the other workshops very well so it was added to broaden horizons. This proved to be the most well attended workshop of the project.
Songwriting

The session took place in the school’s Assembly Hall and was attended by about 15 students. By way of introduction, Gary reminded the group of the project’s theme and aims and gave a talk about songwriting. Using a flip chart to take and display feedback notes, and with suitable and excellent support from Dave and Chloe, he encouraged a lively discussion and brainstorming session involving all the participants, which looked at possible starting points for songwriting and the different elements that might make up a song.

The overall participant group was then split into 3 smaller groups of about 4 to 5 people into different areas of the hall, in order to develop song ideas through discussion and basic musical jamming using instruments the participants had brought with them as well as the two in-house pianos. The three workshop leaders each took charge of a particular group encouraging and supporting as required.

It became evident however, that there was a mixed bag of skill, experience and interest amongst the participants and that certain groups and individuals would need much more support and encouragement than others.

A look at the feedback sheets afterwards indicated that a number of participants did not seem particularly interested in developing their songwriting potential and had come along to the session more out of curiosity than actual enthusiasm for developing any new songwriting skills. It was therefore anticipated that these participants would not return the following week and this indeed subsequently proved to be the case.

After the session ended, it was unanimously agreed in discussion by the three workshop leaders that the assembly Hall was not the most suitable of venues for these workshops to be held in due to the venue layout and the fact that the volume levels created by each group proved too distracting to the others. Dave therefore offered to approach Deputy Headmaster Robin Chapman with a request for the venue to be changed for the subsequent sessions.
The group gathered in the Assembly Hall at 3.30pm. Deputy Headmaster, Mr. Robin Chapman also arrived to mention that steps could now be taken to use the Music Rooms as a workshop space, as had previously been discussed between Dave and him, following Dave's request.

In the meantime, a small group of participants from the photography workshops arrived to take photographs of the songwriting group, while Chloe and Gary made preparations to begin and took stock of this week’s group.

Five participants had turned up from those who had been there last week and we gained three new ones from the photography group, who had initially come along to take photographs of the songwriting group but then decided to take part in the actual songwriting workshops, making for a total of eight participants. Dave soon returned to announce that we could move immediately to the Music Rooms.

We reconvened in the Music Room at 3.50pm. With everyone gathered together we spent 5 minutes revisiting the themes and aims of the project, as Gary performed ‘Let’s Make These Dreams Come True’, the song that had been written during the initial assemblies, with the participants joining in for an impromptu ‘jam session’ on the song.

It was then decided to swiftly move on, as time was pressing and some time had been lost due to the room relocation, to allow the participants as much time as possible to focus on songwriting. The overall group was split into two, with Gary working with a group of 4 boys who had worked together last week and created a song, and Dave and Chloe working with the others.

Gary’s group had set themselves up in one of the rooms as a musical combo, playing piano, guitar, bass and drums. Once they had set their volume levels and were ready to begin, Gary offered them the option of further developing the song they had begun last week or working on a new song from scratch. The group decided unanimously to begin work on a brand new piece. Recalling to their minds the list of possible starting points
for songs that were discussed last week, Gary asked if they had any idea or preference as to how they wished to proceed. They decided to begin with a chord sequence. They developed this using the chords F, Gm, Dm and Bb and managed to produce some nice musical arrangements. Once the musical element had become sufficiently developed, a brainstorming session was held to discuss ideas for the lyrical theme of the song. Two of the participants were particularly strong in this area and a lively discussion ensued with some excellent creative outcomes. Gary facilitated the discussion, prompting where necessary. Using ‘Our Future’ as a thematic starting point, the participants decided they wanted to structure the verses around the concept of a first-person story narration with a character relating how his life emerged into an unsuccessful future, as a factory worker, due to lack of enterprise and commitment.

The last verse would change focus to suggest that they, the performers, did not want to suffer a similar fate and would work hard to avoid such a future. Once they had decided on this, they instantly got to work in developing lyrics, without the need of any support from the facilitator, other than encouragement. They worked on the lyrics as a team with one of the group taking a lead as lyricist.

Each participant contributed to the creative process and there were some productive discussions between all four members of the group. The challenging part for Gary as facilitator, however, was the need to constantly reign in their jamming tendencies, which were regularly in danger of meandering into a non-productive self-indulgence, if not controlled. Also, although they had many creative ideas and there was a willingness to share and discuss these in an open and collaborative way, it required leading on Gary’s part to pull everything together and instil a level of discipline into their creative process, as they sometimes lacked a method of following through their ideas into something productive. Overall, however, their efforts and general enthusiasm were impressive and their teamwork was excellent. It will be important next week to focus on their discipline in further developing, arranging and polishing the two songs they have worked on to date into a finished product ready for performance and recording.

All the facilitators and the participants agreed that the change of workshop venue to the Music Rooms was a great success and a far better environment for aiding the creative process than the Assembly Room used last week.

Gary revisited the themes of the project, and performed ‘let’s make these dreams come true’-(written to inspire students—at initial assemblies) with students jamming along. The group was split into two smaller groups. Four boys worked with Gary, having already created a song together the previous week. The group consisted of a musical combo of
piano, guitar, bass, & drums. The students decided to work on a new song. Gary revisited possible starting points. They agreed on a simple chord sequence, introducing some nice musical arrangements. Brainstorming was used to help with ideas for the lyrical theme of the song, which produced much lively shared, discussion, and excellent creative ideas.

Using 'Our Future' as a thematic starting point, the students structured the verses around the concept of a first-person story narration. Demonstrating excellent teamwork, with Gary's encouragement, and one student taking the lead as lyricist. All participants contributed to the creative process. The challenge for Gary as facilitator was channelling all the creative, lively, enthusiasm, and jamming into focused ideas, and songs, ready for recording and performance next week!

Dave & Chloe worked with one boy from last week, and three girls inspired from the photography group to come & photograph musicians. One student focused on the photography, the other two were keen to get involved with the song-writing, with no prior musical experience.

Dave opened the session returning to the original theme Transitions-comparing the old & new school building.-aiming to get the students thoughts & feelings around the moving process. Both Dave and Chloe aspired to get the students to see the positives about the new school building, and relating this to their future aspirations. Dave then introduced a rhyming game to focus ideas and trigger creativity. We then split into three smaller groups, using the words generated from the rhyming game as a starting point. Dave worked with one student to produce a catchy melodic guitar-based tune. Chloe worked on a verse with one student using vocal improvisation, with an acapella result. Two other students produced a vocal verse. All songs were listened to and appreciated by everyone. Much enthusiasm and creativity was generated!
All facilitators and participants agreed that the change of workshop venue to the Music Rooms was a far better environment for aiding the creative process, than the Assembly Rooms used last week.

Only one student turned up to the fourth session! Dave Ward had previously been working with this student to develop his song. The lyrics had almost been completed in the previous session. After finishing off the last few lyrics, time was spent experimenting with the vocals. Dave singing the lead, Chloe on backing vocals, with the student adding drum & trumpet elements. The final part of the session was spent recording the song with several takes. A very productive, lively, focused & creative session, with a great finished song! But we all agreed that it still needed to be fine-tuned & with better quality recording.

Following the song writing sessions Andy Foster came into school to coach staff and pupils on the use of the recording studio. The next week Gary and Dave went in to make the final recordings. Unfortunately the girls were absent due to ill health on this day and so missed out on recording their creations.

A CD was produced and played at the opening event.
Film Editing

The film editing took place with a group of adult learners at Eyemouth Community Centre. They were part of a group developing literacy, numeracy and work skills for the future. They had started a film project with a facilitator who has since gone off on long term sick and the funding had now ended. Through this project we were able to provide a new facilitator to enable them to complete the project by teaching them to use and supporting them to edit the filming already done.

Andy Foster worked with the group of five to complete a short film about the village of Eyemouth. This film was shown at the opening event along with a photographic record of the project and their research.
Jewellery Making

This aspect of the project came out of some 1:1 work done with “NEET” young women at Eyemouth Community centre. They decided that jewellery making was a skill they didn’t mind having a go at.

Trish McLaughlin attended the community centre 3 times to deliver these workshops, unfortunately the participants did not so when it came to the exhibition there was a small display of the work they could have done had they attended.
The Final Event

The final event took place on 12th June and was a wonderful celebration of opportunity and collaborative working.

A range of activities took place as well as a formal ceremony and lunch in the exhibition hall for guests.

This was extremely well attended and all the participants were able to be there to celebrate and share the results of their work with everyone.

The African Drumming Group performed 3 times. Twice in the afternoon and once during the evening concert event.

Visual Art Work                Poetry Display                Fashion Design Board

Photography Displays
Songwriting display with lyrics

Creative IT display and showreel

The Exhibition

The Banner
Outcomes

The range of outcomes from the project are huge. A few have been listed below as examples:

- Participants gained in self esteem. This was demonstrated by improved attendance in some pupils and by joining in on equal terms by a learning disabled pupil in the photography workshops.

- Participants further develop skills. Following the project the band Atmostheatre are now officially formed and performing in local live music venues. It is hoped they will be able to perform at a future Think Make Grow event later in the summer. The adult learner group supported by Andy Foster secured funding to do a follow on film project taking their new skills further. This follow on project was completed in February 2010.

- Positive publicity. The workshops and final event generated positive publicity for the school, Leader, LIT and Think Make Grow demonstrating to the wider community an openness and commitment to local community wellbeing.

- Around 200 local people had the chance to try activities and learn skills they would not otherwise had the chance to do.

- Participants were given skills that they could use to benefit their own lives and that of others in the school. E.g. knowledge of how to use the sound recording studio in the school.

- Local micro businesses were strengthened and supported through being contracted into the project.
The Future

Following the "our futures" project we have been exploring the possibility of a more formal and closer relationship with Eyemouth High School so we can work collaboratively on the inclusion of creativity to the wider curriculum. For example using arts to support learning in subjects such as science and maths. This is still under discussion.

A follow on film project has taken place with the adult learners group at Eyemouth Community Centre.

A follow on project took place with Eyemouth Primary School pupils supporting the concepts of respect, relationships and responsibility between generations in October 09.

Some of the older participants from the songwriting workshops have formed their own band, “Atmostheatre” and are writing their own material and performing in local live music venues.

Having provided some interim youth provision during 2009 in Eyemouth ongoing youth provision is now in place.
Photography

Session 1

Photographers Sarah Chappell, Mhairi Seymour, & Artist Chloe Petrie facilitated this session. Mhairi opened the session getting an idea of the students basic photography experience. Photos were taken both inside & around the school grounds. Sarah & Mhairi advised on technical points, angles, light, & shade considerations while Chloe suggested exploring movement & artistic themes further. Much enthusiasm & creative ideas were generated in this session.

Session 2

A lovely sunny day, thus everyone agreed on taking more photos outside. The facilitators spread themselves around to help different students with their ideas. One student was both interested & nervous of exploring the theme of 'vertigo', already covering it in his art class at school. Chloe encouraged him to take the role of Creative Director & assert his vision! Some interesting images were produced whilst Sarah & Mhairi helped other students to develop their ideas. Sarah finished the session with a light show where students were able to make pictures just from light. This was very much enjoyed!

Session 3

With the help of the facilitators the students photos were down-loaded, whilst they experimented & 'played' with the many artistic possibilities within the paint.net software. Two photos from each student were then submitted at the end of the session for a photographic competition. Most of the students came to all the sessions, & expressed that they both learnt & enjoyed all the sessions.

In all 17 young people participated in these workshops.

By Chloe Petrie
Fashion Design

In all there were 5 workshops delivered to this group. It started off with 8 and was completed by 3 young women who designed their own “ideal” Eyemouth High School uniform. Time did not allow them to actually produce the outfit but they were able to make a fun interactive board where people could “try on” the uniform and have their picture taken, and see and feel samples of suggested materials.

Interactive fashion board
Visual Art

Session 1

Artists Louise Batham, Sylvia Home and Chloe Petrie facilitated the first painting and drawing session, with a small group of approximately six students. Louise introduced the session using the idea of garden seeds blossoming into beautiful flowers as a metaphor for all our dreams starting as a thought in seed form and having the potential to grow into something wonderful! Sylvia then read Nelson Mandela’s famous quote about living our glorious dreams & Chloe explored other uplifting quotes. All this set a fertile ground for an inspiring start! Words, flowers, and ideas were then explored through paints and coloured pencils. Creative ideas developed.

Session 2

Oh dear! No students turned up. One student mentioned the previous week that he wouldn’t be able to attend this session due to an operation, another two girls said they were unsure due to other commitments….

By the end of the last week’s session a group idea was evolving of a flower/flowers starting off as seeds & growing out of the dark soil into the bright midday sun. This linked in with the transition from old building to new & how the students felt about it. And as a metaphor for their future blossoming aspirations. Possibilities were discussed as to making the stems out of inspiring quotes & making many petals from multi-media images.

With no students here the three Artists discussed where to go from here & decided we would have to do some preparation with it being the final session the following week. We painted a back-ground, & made flower/leaf & stem templates for possible use. Students work already made was cut out & photocopied for possible multiple use inside petals.

Session 3

Louise facilitated a previous session which Sylvia and Chloe were unable to attend. Louise had begun the process of some lovely varied petals produced by students.

Additional sessions

Over additional lunch-time sessions Sylvia & Chloe encouraged many students to get involved conveying their future hopes & aspirations through mixed media.

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paints/pens/pastels & words. This proved to be a lively, productive, & enthusiastic session with some lovely budding creative ideas, and overcame the difficulties experienced with the after school sessions.

Having changed the timing of these sessions more than 25 young people contributed to this art work.
Using IT

This aspect of the project was spread over three sessions. Participants made power point shows around the theme of old to new and opportunities.

Through the workshops they practiced photography skills and picture editing. Putting together digital animations, creative writing and use of the special effects found within the power point software.

The result was a series of humorous, creative and entertaining slide shows. Three participants completed slide shows for the exhibition.
African Drumming

These workshops were arranged following conversations with the music teacher while the songwriters were using her room. She was keen for S2 classes to have the opportunity to broaden their musical horizons through more diverse world music. TMG were able to provide workshops for the whole of S2 during one day. Out of these sessions interested pupils were able to join a performance group who played at the opening celebration and concert on 12th June.

Nansady, lead drummer and facilitator