



## **Creativity is everywhere: restoring and strengthening local communities through the power of the arts**

Unlocking Change webinar: Creative, Confident Communities | 3 December 2020, 11.00am

### **Speakers:**

[Caroline Mason, Chief Executive, Esmée Fairbairn](#)

[Tarek Iskander, Artistic Director & CEO, Battersea Arts Centre](#)

[George Hill and Heather Peak Morison](#) - George is Co-Chair of Kingswood and Hazel Leys in Corby, and Heather is an Artist/facilitator. Both are part of [Creative Civic Change](#) in Corby.

**Facilitator:** Alison Holdom, Funding Manager – Lead on Arts & Heritage

**Q&A:** After the speakers, the panel answered questions from attendees

ALISON HOLDOM: Welcome, everybody, to this webinar - Creativity is everywhere: restoring and strengthening local communities through the power of arts. We are delighted to many of you could join us today. I am Alison Holdom, a funding manager at Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and I will be chairing today's session. For accessibility, we have asked all of the speakers to describe themselves and where they are. I am a middle-aged white woman with shoulder-length fair hair. Like many of us, I'm currently in my living room. And I'm in a small commuter town in Surrey.

This is one of a series of webinars entitled unlocking change, which aims to bring our new strategy to life. This particular webinar aims to explain why we believe a collaborative creation process is so important in achieving change. The webinar is about the arts and creative sector, but it will demonstrate the importance of the way of working across all areas of funding. There may never have been a more important time for arts and creativity in the UK, helping to manage the impact of COVID-19 and as a central part of our recovery process. But what are the conditions needed for people to devise and engage creative work on their own terms? And how can the relationships between artists and communities enable us to thrive? We will hear three different perspectives on how a collaborative approach can support creativity to be an engine for change. Our speakers will explain why this work is important to them and what conditions and processes can make it thrive.

A few brief practicalities before we start. Live captioning is available. Please click close captioning on the CC button at the bottom of your screens to view these. Luna has also put some details in the chat. We would like to thank Ai-Media for providing the captions today.

There will be an opportunity for Q&A once we have heard from all of our speakers. Please submit questions via the Q&A button at the bottom of the screen whilst the panellists are speaking. You can vote for other people's questions if you would like to hear that question answered. You do that by clicking the thumbs up icon next to the question. My colleague Luna will review the questions throughout and we will come to her after the presentations to hear what the questions are. Some of you may have wider questions about the strategy itself and we will try to answer some of those during the webinar.

We will also be answering some of them on Twitter this afternoon at 2 PM and we are planning a further webinar in the New Year to discuss the strategy. We will tell you more about that later. We will also be tweeting about the event using the hashtag #CreativityIsEverywhere so please join us in sharing your reflections using that hashtag. A recording and a transcript will be available on our website shortly.

So, practicalities out of the way, we are very excited to be joined by our speakers today, who will give you a wave as I say their name. We have Tarek Iskander, Artistic Director and CEO of Battersea Arts Centre. Heather Peak Morison and George Hill, who are both here today as representatives of Creative Kingswood and Hazel Leys in Corby, which is part of Creative Civic Change. Before we hear from our speakers, we will give you some more details about our new strategy. I will handover to Caroline Mason, creative -- Chief Executive of Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Also, Creative Chief Executive as well! She will give us some background on the new strategy.

## CAROLINE MASON: Esmée's new strategy

CAROLINE MASON: That is the best description of me I have ever had, thank you very much. Hello, everyone. First of all, thank you very much for taking the time - I know everyone is super busy, so thank you. And especially to our panellists. I am a tall, white, middle-aged woman. I have very short, tufty hair which is, sadly, going grey far more quickly than I'd like. I have brown eyes, I'm quite smiley and I'm sitting at my kitchen table at home. I thought I would take this opportunity to give a quick snapshot of what has inspired the change in our strategy, which is quite a new direction for Esmée. It has been an absolutely extraordinary year and next year is likely to be the same, or a variation of the theme. We have climate change, COVID, we've got Brexit coming and the impact of all of these on existing inequalities is huge. When we looked at their new strategy, I think I can describe it in three key ways.

One is we needed to know on purpose, first and foremost. Previously, we funded very broadly in a very responsive way. We funded other people's outcomes and, someone described it, we spread the jam thinly. That was right for the time and we did fund some extraordinary work and help some extraordinary organisations. But these are different times and we were very passive and we didn't have a voice and we didn't have an opinion. We were not proactive. We think that now, we need to be very clear about what we are good at and what we are not so good at. So that we can understand where we can make the most, add the most value to make the biggest impact. We now have our own goals. We are going to be using our voice, our influence, being more proactive. We now have a sense of where it is we are heading.

The second is to know our place. As my daughter, when I was trying to explain to her what I was trying to say, she said, "You mean you want to be part of a jigsaw rather than part of a pyramid?" I said that is exactly right. We are part of a system that is trying to achieve change and so we want to be a contributor to that and we want to know our place in that and what it is that we can contribute most - not just as a grant maker, but as a broker, a facilitator and a commissioner, and always working in partnership with those who know best, which are the people who live the experiences and inequalities that we are trying to tackle.

The third is to acknowledge our privilege. As a foundation, we are hugely privileged and so, how do we use that privilege well? Again, how do we use all of our resources, our people, our networks, our voice, how do we use our endowment to make change happen? How do we use our ability to be flexible, adaptive - because we can be. We have to think, always in this new strategy, what more could we be doing so that we make use of our privilege well.

Some of you will know that arts has really always been central to Esmée's work and it is absolutely central to our new strategy now. We think it is a completely powerful tool to strengthen bonds and communities, to help local people build vibrant, confident places and it is also an incredible tool for people to achieve their potential. COVID has disrupted every aspect of our lives. As we weather this awful storm, the arts and creativity are going to be more important than ever.

Finally, I want to share a brief outline of our new strategy. We are taking a very long-term, 10 year view, in three areas. Our Natural World, which is around climate change and the environment and food systems. Secondly, A Fairer Future. And thirdly, Creative, Confident Communities, which is what this seminar is mainly about. We hope that they all interlink, that there are synergies between them all. Although we have 10 year goals, we have priorities where we think that the need is most urgent. We're hoping to make this quite organic and quite responsive to communities, to young people, and I hope that this seminar gives us a chance to connect with you and speak to you about how we might deliver this and deliver it better. Thank you very much.

ALISON HOLDOM: Thank you, Caroline. As this webinar is specifically about our Creative, Confident Communities aim, I will put a slide up that is specific to that and briefly run through some details about that. If you can put that slide up, thank you. Creative, Confident Communities really aims to enable places where the local economy works better for the people who live there and where there is equality of access to arts and culture and where communities are at the heart of change. And as Caroline explained, we're doing this in a very long-term way. We're looking at impact goals we want to achieve by 2030. In the first five years, we are looking specifically at some priorities that we are aiming to work with. These are bearing in mind the extraordinary situation we are currently in due to COVID-19. Priorities for the first five years are: communities working together for change, community ownership and regeneration, creativity transforming lives, and culture restoring communities. There is more detail on all of those priorities on our website.

## TAREK ISKANDER

ALISON HOLDOM: Today, however, we wanted to give this platform to work that has helped to inspire that new strategy. I would like to do that by introducing the first of our

speakers today. Tarek Iskander is the Artistic Director and CEO of Battersea Arts Centre in London. His previous roles include director of theatre for Arts Council England and he was one of the founders of the Yard Theatre in Hackney. He previously held a wide variety of senior management roles in the National Health Service. Over to you, Tarek.

TAREK ISKANDER: Hi, everyone. Lovely to be here, thank you for the introduction, Alison. My name is Tarek and I am a 5 foot six Middle Eastern man with black hair and brown eyes and I am in my very blue living room, which has become my office for the last few months. It is really important with this kind of thing as Caroline and Alison have just discussed to start with first principles. Why does this stuff really matter? Definitely, I speak as a director and a writer, but also on behalf of BAC, we believe that creativity and the arts is one of the best ways of provoking positive change in the world and that is absolutely critical at this moment in communities that are really struggling with inequalities and injustices and all the things that have been described previously.

The context of this talk is described as our power. It is not just the power, it is our superpower, to make change happen. I think, at BAC, we are really committed to this and are invested in this. We're supported by brilliant funders like Esmée. We have a number of programmes running like the Co-Creating Change Network, which in a national network that brings people and organisations from all over the country together to share learning and expertise. Programmes like the Moving Roots project which is taking co-created art around the country. It has been game-changing for us as an organisation in terms of linking in with our local communities, moving away from participative projects to real co-creative projects locally.

We are learning so much and being inspired by others all the time. And I guess some key things we have learned through these networks and this work is this stuff really takes time. You have to invest over a long period. Change does not happen, trust does not happen, the kind of things we want to see emerge in our communities does not happen overnight. This is the work of years, not months. The other thing you learn and I will give a case study around this it is incredibly infectious. As soon as you start doing it, it starts to spread like wildfire, and we will go through some more brilliant examples after this.

What does it boil down to when we talk about co-creation? We do mean sharing power and giving communities power to be creative in the ways that they see best. Power obviously means different things to different people, but in this context, I think it means decisions around resources. Who gets to decide how money is spent, how space is made available, how people are engaged. I'm going back to the example of infectious.

So just to give a case study, Battersea Arts Centre has been involved in a programme called the Collaborative Touring Network for many years. That was a touring infrastructure where BAC liased with a bunch of other small organisations like Heads Up in Hull and Strike A Light in Gloucester and other organisations in Torbay and so on. The idea was that we would develop shows and tour around different areas of the country. A very simple idea. In that context, BAC was by far the biggest organisation and the one with the most resources and the one that was leading that programme. But the attempt was made to make it as collaborative and as democratic and engaging as possible for all the partners. That is really what gave the programme that strength.

As an example, two people who were starting up a very young organisation at the time - Emma Jane and Sarah were starting an organisation called Strike A Light in Gloucester. They were part of this network. They were involved and had the power to make decisions about how the stories were made. They grasped that sharing power ethos fully so rather than them taking the show from BAC and programming it in Gloucester as was initially envisaged, they went out themselves to the Matson Estate local in Gloucester where they were keen for this work to be presented and discussed with the people, the residents who lived locally - do you want this to happen, how would you change it, how would you programme and make it work? Their ability to engage people equally and co-creating that initiative was something absolutely remarkable in that area.

It was the culture of the Collaborative Touring Network that felt very open to sharing power in giving people a say in how things work. That infected how they operated within Gloucester. The story of Strike A Light is truly remarkable. From a number of years ago, they have completely transformed the cultural scene in Gloucester themselves. Their young organisation is now a national portfolio organisation funded by the Arts Council. And GL4, which is a small group of people that they engaged in the Matson Estate to bring this work and cultural activity has now got an unbelievable programme running on that estate that they are coordinating the programme themselves. They have aspirations to become a national portfolio organisation and have completely transformed their communities.

In some senses, this stuff can feel quite difficult but actually, it is quite easy. It really is about investing in people and recognising what different people bring to the table. Everyone brings expertise, everyone brings creativity but those things are different and it's not about creating a utopia where everyone is engaged equally because that doesn't sound like a utopia in any way. But it is about transformation. If you look at some of the programmes that come through the Moving Roots or Co-Creating Change Network and if you go on our website and Google it, you will see examples from all over the country where people are transforming their communities through their own creativity. People are doing things on their own terms and using the power of the arts and creativity to imagine something different and to change the boundaries of what is possible. That is the best way of transforming communities and it is very simple. It is giving people a say to do it themselves. Thanks. Quicker than expected.

ALISON HOLDOM: Thank you very much, Tarek. It's really helpful to have an overview from an organisation that's leading on such fascinating work and has history of doing it as well. Please remember if you have any questions for any speakers, you can submit them in the Q&A function and we'll come back to them after all the speakers have finished their presentations. You can vote for other people's questions by pressing the thumbs up button. Also to remind you, we're tweeting about this on Twitter with #CreativityIsEverywhere.

## **GEORGE HILL & HEATHER PEAK MORISON**

ALISON HOLDOM: Over now to our next two speakers, George Hill and Heather Peak Morison who are going to speak together. They are both involved in creative Kingswood and Hazel Leys in Corby. This is part of Creative Civic Change Programme that offers a new approach to funding committees to use arts and creativity to make meaningful change happen in their areas. George is chairperson of Kingswood and Hazel Leys Big Local which

is a National Lottery funded project and co-chair of the Creative Civic Change Programme there. He is committed to community-led decision-making and he has been involved in volunteering in this area that he's lived in since 2010. Heather Peak Morison's collaborative practice over the past 20 years transcends the divisions between art, architecture and social practice. She is co-director of Studio Morison with Ivan Morison and has exhibited internationally including commissions at Tate Modern, Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney and presented Wales at the Venice Biennial. Over to you, George and Heather.

GEORGE HILL: I'm George and I am a middle-aged white man who is Scottish. But I'm a citizen of the world as well. I am 5 feet 11 tall and I'm excited to be here.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: Hi everyone, I am Heather Peak Morison and I am 47 years old. I'm a white woman with very short hair because I shaved it off during lockdown. It has grown back a bit and I have got one ear that sticks out a bit and I am wearing an ombre, orange to pink scarf. I'm in my studio and my studio it is on the border between England and Wales quite near Hay on Wye. George, shall we start with perhaps talking about how you got involved with Creative Civic Change before I came along?

GEORGE HILL: Creative Civic Change was formed a couple of years ago. KHL Big Local were offered the opportunity to put an expression of interest for some investment for Kingswood and Hazel Leys which is two areas and two estates that we work in. And I volunteer in. So we submitted an expression of interest and we got to the next stage through working with Made With Many, Corby Community Arts, the Core Theatre and we were successful. We were delighted .

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: George, was it important to you that it was about creativity? Was that something that was of interest to you? As well as the investment.

GEORGE HILL: The investment's really important but the creativity part has been really exciting. It is an opportunity for our community to take part and Creative Civic Change as it says on the tin, We want to make change in our community because in a lot of ways, our community and many communities have been left behind. The reason is because of that lack of investment and KHL Big Local and Creative Civic Change are great additions to this area.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: Did you think that the creative part, would you consider yourself creative?

GEORGE HILL: Yes. I think we are all creative and it's good to be allowed to be creative. So I'm a diaries, I write diaries and journals. I have been writing since 1987 when my daughter was 2. She's now 35. I've got a collection of diaries and journals, I write other stuff. So yes, it has allowed me and my community to express our creativity.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: You didn't choose me to be your artist. I chose you. I just want to tell people what why I chose to work in Corby and I wonder if it makes a difference. I did grow up really near Corby. I grew up in Desborough and I know Corby really well. My grandfather sold eggs on Corby market and my dad had a little business in Corby as well. At the beginning, when there were, there are critical friends like me with lots of different groups and when I saw that Corby was a possibility, I was absolutely delighted and determined there was something, I don't know if this makes a difference, I think it does.

With you and with all the members of the team as well, there is an understanding because of growing up in that area, there is a kind of, you don't generally have to describe everything. You know the geography of it. Yes.

GEORGE HILL: Just to say that Heather, when introductions were made and we had some information about Heather and then we met with the other organisations - Made With Many, Corby Community Arts etc and Heather's connection to the area, this area and the county - it was like a door opening for us. Heather knew the area which was really good. She had a lot of knowledge about the area and that has been a great help.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: So we started working together so shall we just describe a bit how it works. What the method is and what we do. There is a group of us and there is quite a few, I think, they are here watching this. They could say hello in the chat, I think. We meet, that is one thing we do.

GEORGE HILL: We meet fortnightly and on sub-groups, working groups and creative groups so there is a lot going on. Pre-COVID, we were meeting in the community centres, we were doing consultations but COVID has changed a lot of that. We've adopted the Zoom and we're still working, still being creative. We are still learning and sharing which is wonderful.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: And one of the things we do, I think this is really, I found this really interesting. I don't think about us as, we are meeting and may be meeting but what we are really doing and I try to think about the way that we are communicating as a little sculpture. We are a sculpture of people and that sculpture evolves in different ways. We talk, we also have got a really good WhatsApp group as well. When you are having a formal meeting, there are loads of other things to talk about but they don't necessarily sit within the meeting so the WhatsApp group is good for that.

GEORGE HILL: In meetings normally, there's an agenda but what we have is, you could say, off agenda items where we chat and grow together, get to know each other. Through this journey, I've just got to know members of the group more each day and each time we meet and each time we communicate and we are constantly reaching out to our community and trying to engage people in this opportunity.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: One of the things I wanted to mention and it is a good example. The last meeting we had, we are having these meetings over Zoom. We were talking about the difference between having a normal meeting and having a meeting where creativity is at the heart of it. Those examples are kind of like the fact that we talk about loads of things and we kind of, we fuel our meetings with all different things.

GEORGE HILL: The phrase that you use - we grow together and the composting thing, we open up the meetings early so there is an opportunity to chat before we get onto the agenda. I'm the chair of that meeting and it's my turn to chair the meeting and I was conscious of the time factor and time constraints. I said shall we get the meeting started in the chat and Heather said: well, this is the meeting. And it's true. The formal, the informal are very much together so it is just a great process. Because in the informal stuff, we learn so much about each other and about what we need to do and what we are doing et cetera.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: Some of the things we were thinking about when we talk about composting and what we put into our meetings - and I'm sure you can add to this - we talk about other artists and art work and we look at other artwork. And you've gone and done some trips away as well. You went to Yorkshire Sculpture Park and to the Hepworth in Wakefield. You also want to the Wellcome Collection as well.

GEORGE HILL: We also went to Tarek's, to Battersea Arts Centre. These trips or these journeys, these learning opportunities have opened my eyes and, I think, the group's eyes to what is possible for our community. That's who we're battling for. We're battling for our community of Kingswood and Hazel Leys. And the people who live and work in those communities.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: There is also lots of kinds of other things that we bring in. We might talk about books and we sometimes talk about films and talk about radio quite a lot. We talk about Twitter, we talk about TikTok and it all gets mixed into what you know about your community and what's going on. As an artist, one of the things I have really enjoyed and really learned from is this unique position that I'm in where I'm not being commissioned to make work. I don't have this weight on my shoulders that I'm going to have to make a work and actually, you are deciding on those things. I'm just there to do challenges (Laughs)

GEORGE HILL: Challenges are only opportunities in disguise and Heather does that for the group. The critical friend is a great thing. Because we also meet on something that Heather calls a hover above where we have other meetings. Myself, Helen from Made With Many, and Heather, we gather and it is just an opportunity to take a look at the bigger picture. Creative Civic Change over the last couple of years has changed my approach to decision-making. Who has the power within communities? And I fundamentally believe the community has the power collectively. For them to be part of that - of those decisions. We need to be engaging them and that's always a challenge. Get people engaged in the process and the decisions. So, sharing power, safe spaces to chat, be honest, be honest, be open and it's an amazing opportunity.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: I think as well, we hold opportunity. this particular space together that is creative and it also has this element I think this is ideally important thing and you're really talking about that this idea that we can deal with difficult things and we can also discuss when something does not feel right and try and articulate why it does not feel right. Myself, I can remember a number of times introducing ideas and actually, the way that we work, because we are , because we have built a relationship and that is something that ties into what Tarek says, because it takes time. Actually, those ideas , we examined those ideas in an objective way in order to wrestle with them, but they are a precious thing that the artist has given you not to hold onto and you have to keep to it. Do you remember in the beginning, when we could not work out what it was we were doing and I brought some objects in.

GEORGE HILL: Yes.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: I think I brought the coconut cup in and one of the things we did is looked at the thing itself, looked at what it was and tried to use that like you would as an artist and think, what is it? Let's describe it. Rather than make it about anybody or about

anything. I think there is - it is sort of like this mixture of art, but the art is just mixed in to the community and what's happening in the community.

GEORGE HILL: I remember that well. Initially, it silenced everybody. It was like, wow! But it was a great opportunity to have the conversations. That was really early on in the journey that we done that. And we still do it. There was an example last week where you suggested something, one of your challenges, and it went silent. That is a response for you to dig a little bit deeper and a good old Scottish saying is 'get in amongst it'. Yes, it is just a good ... I just want to say this, it has been a fascinating journey for me, a wonderful, wonderful opportunity. All of these organisations, knowing that they are supporting us and this community, and we're trying to support our community, we are supporting each other. Heather, you bring so much to the table, as do the others. I am very much enjoying the journey and learning so much about it. I want to continue with it and I am just excited to be part of it.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: George, do you have a poetry book with you? Our latest project. That might be a good thing to show people. Could you tell us about it?

GEORGE HILL: One of the things we'd done, a neighbour of mine - she literally stays through that window to the left - she sent me a message - Nicola - and said that her father had asked her to write a poem at the start of lockdown. We had a conversation, she shared the poem. So basically what we've done - it is poems of Corby. We decided to open it up to the people of Corby, not just Kingswood and Hazel Leys, and we have produced these 32 pages of joy. They are some, not just some, they are all beautiful words in it. It is a very wide range. To get that done during this time and to continue doing what we are doing is just amazing. This poetry book will be coming your way, if you would like a copy of it.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: That is going through every door, isn't it?

GEORGE HILL: 3000 homes in Kingswood and Hazel Leys will receive a copy of that. It will be given to the community and the idea is post-COVID, to have an event where the poems can be recited onstage or at some sort of podcast. So it is developing. And some of the words from the poems will actually go on street art. I think the phrase is haikus That was another school date I learned that as well. Really pleased and proud to be part of this book.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: One of the things - if anyone might make assumptions about the quality of the work, sometimes people do make assumptions around quality and around work that is in communities. One of the things about the work that we have been doing and that book is a really good example of that is that the quality of the work and also the nuance in relation to how we think about the work as well. It is exquisite! Isn't it, George?

GEORGE HILL: Yes. I love the word 'exquisite'. Heather, you are great with the words! If people read this, read it once, put it away, it is just a joy. That thing about finishing something, starting a task-focused group, you will get it finished. It has taken a while, lots of back and forward, but the contributions are just tremendous. There are lots of other examples - there's 'Art up your street' where, during the lockdown period, Corby Community Arts were delivering art supplies and support to members of the community. We are working on the street art stuff, we're talking to the community... We are still doing - and that is the most important thing. We're doing.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: They are asking us to stop now, George, unfortunately.

GEORGE HILL: Heather, what happened, once Heather and I get chatting, you have to put the reins on us.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: One more thing, I want to say something quickly, I think the thing is that we really understand that we are making stuff but we also know, one of the things about 'Art up your street' is that there is this real understanding that there is stuff is going out, things are being made, but also there is a reflection, huge lot of reflection, on process. We know it's how we do things as well as what we do. It is all creative. You know we talked about U theory in the beginning as a methodology for constantly experimenting and then reflecting and then experimenting again. That is totally it the loop, isn't it? We're going to stop, we should stop. We're going to stop.

GEORGE HILL: Thank you

ALISON HOLDOM: Thank you so much, both of you. It's so good to hear your experience of being involved with this. I love the idea of composting and hovering above - great phrases. Thank you so much.

## Q&A

ALISON HOLDOM: I think it's really interesting to hear from all of the speakers today about the various basic principles that go into this work. Tarek was talking about time and how long it takes and how flexible you need to be. Heather and George have talked a lot about - I think one of the phrases you used was - learning about each other. It is obviously an issue around time and relationships. I loved George's explanation that it has actually explained changed his approach to decision-making - that is such an interesting finding to come out of this type of work. We will go to some other questions, but I wondered if I could ask you both a question from myself first of all. George and Heather, Creative Civic Change is an example of a national co-creation project and you're part of a big network of 15 other organisations. I wondered if you had any reflections on the experience of being part of a network that is doing this kind of work and how that might have impacted on your work.

GEORGE HILL: I will take that. We have been in touch with some other Creative Civic Change programmes throughout the country and I would like to give a shout out to Grace at Local Trust who is the coordinator. She has been absolutely fabulous at supporting and enabling the group to continue. Shout out to Grace. Being part of the 15 organisations, knowing that we can reach out and they can reach out to us, is a sense of strength and it gives you confidence. I read something recently that nothing is really ever new, we are only putting a new slant on it. Unless you're really innovative to get something new. But what we are doing is adapting it for the times.

ALISON HOLDOM: Heather, do you have any comment on the network?

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: I do. We've got to big up Grace. Grace is in the middle of all of this. We've got this centrepiece with Grace. What happens is there is a really kind of connectedness that happens. I have talked to Grace on many occasions about things that are going on and things that I'm thinking about and ideas that I have, in terms of what I am learning with Corby. I am also a critical friend work for Hard Times [Require Furious Dancing] in Birmingham as well. I am now the creative support for all the groups to talk creativity and art, very specifically. But that means that everybody is starting to cross. It is more the networking. Because creativity, when you are in a creative framework, when you're in a creative mindset, it becomes about this thing: collaborative, composting and thinking together. I shy away from this idea of let's meet to network. It is actually about a movement of people and then that comes out in lots of different creative ways. It has been extraordinary to be part of that.

ALISON HOLDOM: That is great, thank you. Tarek, can I ask you a question as well? BAC has had a history of working in this way. You were talking at the beginning about the impact on programmes you run. I wondered if it has informed the way the art centre itself is run as well?

TAREK ISKANDER: It has, that is a really good question. It is something we talk about a lot internally how we can co-create more of our own decision-making, particularly with our local... We define communities in different ways, because communities are different things in different moments. We are working on how to engage our local community more on the decisions around resources, what BAC does and how our budgets are allocated. Another community that we work with is the community of professional artists who programme work and present work at BAC. We're working out how our resources can be redirected or our spaces be made available in a different way. As I say, it's sort of infectious. As soon as you start thinking in that way, you really want to bring more people in. The more creative heads you have in a room contributing to it, the better the outcome is. But that presents challenges and takes time and you need to make sure you are creating a framework where that is possible.

Alison, can I ask you a couple of questions? Some really interesting stuff coming out of the chat. I think what George and Heather are saying - this stuff obviously really takes time and one of the things we have benefited from with our relationships with many partners, including yourselves, is that we've time to invest in stuff. Has that been part of your thinking around the strategy and are you thinking different horizons? The second question, one of the things that was also really lovely during Heather and George's description, is the outcomes that come out of this work can be very different from what you may have anticipated going in. Even hearing George say 'I describe myself as a creative person' when he may not have done a number of years ago could be a massive outcome in itself and have knock-on effects. How can you measure success of these bids when things can go skew whiff because we are being creative.

ALISON HOLDOM: Caroline, do you want to answer the first question and I can take the other one?

CAROLINE MASON: We would like to be able to fund for longer. We will fund up to 5 years and we are also trying to make the funding, wherever possible, unrestricted to give people the flexibility - because the world is going to be very, very volatile, I think, over the

next while for good and ill. We have always been, I think, pretty good at understanding that things almost never turn out quite as expected. I think we have done ... I think we are relatively good as a funder. Correct me if I am wrong, but that is my impression of the work of the team, is that they are very good. We think about learning and improving, rather than proving things. And the way I would describe it as I don't really think our ethos is not about measuring impact, it is about seeing evidence of positive change. And that can come in lots and lots of different formats and we are very open to assessing that change in lots of different ways. You are nodding, Al.

ALISON HOLDOM: Yes, absolutely, someone else asked about this in the chat about outcomes. One of the things we've realised as we have funded more of this work is that the process itself is the outcome. We are more than happy to fund on that basis without tying people down - because the whole point of co-creation is you don't know what you are going end up with when you go on. We are able to fund this sort of work on the basis of what the process might be to get you there or a more abstract type of outcome than we would normally have. I should also say that the structure that we have of the aim being Creative, Confident Communities is very much a cross sector approach so if we are getting an application from an arts organisation which is about the work that is spreading over into other areas and is involving non-arts organisations and community organisations, we are interested in looking at that and we see the co-creation approach is being community-wide and sector-wide approach. The outcomes, again, don't have to be about the art and they can be about the community or the organisations that you're partnering with. Or it can be much broader than that and it can be about the arts. It is absolutely up to how you are deciding the process and what you want to do with it. It is a more broad approach to outcomes generally.

CAROLINE MASON: Can I add one more thing? We don't have a single view of what a community is. So a community can be a place but it can also be a cohort of people and I know that is a question and we are not, we don't have a sort of ideological view of what equals a community.

ALISON HOLDOM: Luna, do you have any questions you want to put to Caroline, or the panellists?

LUNA DIZON: There are a couple of questions around the same theme - how do you engage people and engage with people in the community who don't consider themselves creative or who might be intimidated by the notion of culture and think that it's not for the likes of me. Or might not, there is also a similar question around who may not feel comfortable in groups of people.

ALISON HOLDOM: Can we put that to Heather and George first? What's your experience been of that?

GEORGE HILL: Engagement has to be continual and it has to be done in different ways. It can be done via the old social media, it can be done on the street. There's a project which we're staffing now through Corby Community Arts which is called Talk 2021 where colleagues will go into the community and just meet people walking around so the engagement process is a real challenge. That is a challenge. What we are aware of is we have to keep doing it. We have to keep repeating it. Changing it. Not everybody is suited to

groups and we are prepared to maybe do this around the conversations and it might be that it is more one-to-one music tuition. Groups, individuals - just whatever works for that individual. And hopefully it will benefit the whole community.

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: Just to add to that, George. There is kind of like , there is creativity everywhere. I don't mean that in a everyone is creative kind of way. We have conversations about what's creative about the local chip shop, what's creative about hairdressing, where is the creativity in skateboarding, reading, knitting, cooking, walking. I'm having a really wonderful conversation with another CCC group about the creativity around walking. We started off talking about Richard Long's work who's an artist who made work about walking. I think also there is an element of not making assumptions at any point ever about anybody. To find the interesting thing to connect together, whatever that is and work from there. Use that as your point to grow your creative project from. Not doing the creative project and bringing people into it. Grow it together.

GEORGE HILL: Alison, a quick one. Also, I know sometimes Heather and I are guilty of talking too much. We understand that if people don't want to participate. It is okay. They might not want to it today but tomorrow, it might be that they decide to take part whatever that might be. Something else that has come up and is exciting - and it is sewing and mending. It is okay to do it and it's okay not to do it.

ALISON HOLDOM: That is really helpful and interesting for us, we have not typically put any kind of categories around what we think creativity would be and what is creativity. That is another thing that is open to interpretation. Tarek, would you have anything to add about bringing people that might not see themselves immediately in creative work.

TAREK ISKANDER: Just to agree. Language matters - we use a lot of shorthand when we are working in the sector but if you did a questionnaire and asked do you engage in cultural artistic activities? Most of us - even me - would say no. But do we listen to music, do we dance, do we like doing things that are creative I think all of us would say yes. I would say audiences for me are a really creative part of the process. Just coming and being a part of any live creative activity, the audience bring their imagination, they are the change, often, that is trying to be provoked. It is also understanding that people can engage creatively in different ways. You don't have to describe it that way. You can describe people as being creative and there's an expectation that they'll produce a masterpiece at the end. It just comes so loaded and that is obviously not what we are talking about.

ALISON HOLDOM: Thank you so much. Luna, did you have another question?

LUNA DIZON: I was going to ask this top voted question thinking about Tarek's valid point about the time it takes to build relationships and trust with communities. Will grants support the preparatory work of investing and engaging with communities to reach a position where they are leading and co-creating, which is resource intensive but often with no tangible outputs in the short to mid-term or even being able to confidently promise what actively might ultimately arise from it. I think was answered a little bit.

ALISON HOLDOM: I think yes, there is, we are having discussions about how we can fund people's, effectively, development phase of this kind of work and we are talking about that because we realise that can take a huge amount of time. And a huge amount of the grant

time to do. I think one of the things we've realised is how much time that takes. Working with Creative Civic Change partners has shown that process because they had a very long lead-in time to get to the stage where they produced any kind of plans and that has been very telling for us about how long it takes to do that work. That is something that we will be looking at when we look at any applications in this type of work - is the learning that has come from that, from the Creative Civic Change Programme, definitely.

LUNA DIZON: There is a question coming through the chat - this could go to all the panel. What advice do you have about how to bridge arts organisations and community organisations?

ALISON HOLDOM: Can I give that to Tarek first?

TAREK ISKANDER: It also relates to the question about how do you engage people on their own terms and how do people feel comfortable engaging with that. For me it's really important that we reframe the question because very often we frame this as if you need to do more stuff to make it happen and to make it easier. How do we invest making those contacts and connections and usually the answer is making it simpler and taking things away. If you want to engage communities in creative activities, it is taking away a lot of the barriers that you are actively putting up to enable that. For example, it takes a lot of effort to bring people to you, when you are a cultural organisation. It is much easier to be in the place where the people already are. It is quite difficult to enforce old-fashioned rituals about performance or how art is or how it's consumed. It is much easier to let things be naturally where they are. Similarly, it is important for cultural organisations like ourselves to not walk in with expectations and barriers and similar for every partner just to say we are going to accept and see things as they are. Which makes the entire process much simpler and more straightforward.

ALISON HOLDOM: That's great, thank you. George and Heather, you were talking about the organisations in Corby that you have been involved with and have you got any, because coming from the community group, have you got anything to comment on how you link between arts organisations and the community?

GEORGE HILL: The arts organisations that I've mentioned already are there to produce and to work with the communities so rather see it as an us and them, I try to see it as an us. There has always been a suspicion about organisations, what are they up to and why are they in our community but fundamentally, these organisations are there to work with the community and to help grow that community for the cultural experiences. What Tarek was saying is we are all creative because we listen to music, we sing, dance and talk or whatever we do. I just love the idea of the collective and us doing it together. Working together is much better than trying to do it on your own.

ALISON HOLDOM: Thank you. We are running out of time so can I ask you as a final contribution from our speakers - if you had one tip to give the people that are trying to work to engage people with creativity on their own terms, what would that tip be based on your experiences? Shall we stay with George? And Heather?

GEORGE HILL: I had a real think about this question because for me, it is just like reach out and trying to enjoy the journey. Just understand everyone is facing some kind of struggle or

battle and just be kind. I know that my group members will be a bit disappointed if I didn't say this, I want to remind people: every day may not be good but there is something good in every day.

ALISON HOLDOM: Then Heather, do you have a tip?

HEATHER PEAK MORISON: The thing is, what you are doing is, and I'm thinking about it again because I'm doing this. Because I make things. What you are doing is you are growing something together and when you are growing something, you have to feed it. That is like a real mixture of not just what you know but you want to feed with things and you have to feed it with books and films and trips, and art and all the stuff of life has to go in. Do not have anything that is out of bounds because art covers everything. In creativity, is a way of living your life and you can't have those boundaries. You have got to let people bring stuff to it. And that's why I'm mentioning hairdressers, chip shops and artists in the same, you know, because that's our life.

ALISON HOLDOM: Thanks. And Tarek, do you have a last tip?

TAREK ISKANDER: Yes, I agree with all those. About taking things away, being patient and things take a long time. The only other thing I'd say is you really have to enjoy being surprised in this work and by talking about creativity, you are talking about changing the world and things are going to spiral in ways you can't imagine. That is part of the joy of it.

ALISON HOLDOM: Fantastic, a lovely way to finish. Unfortunately, we are coming to the end of the hour so sadly that is all we have got time for. I want to say that if you want to continue the conversation with any of our panellists, we're putting a slide with their contact details on it. Finally, I'd just like to thank all our speakers today for providing such thought-provoking comments. It's been so interesting to hear your points of view across all of this process. A big thank you to all of you have joined us today and for your questions and comments.

Reminder that there will be a video and transcript of the webinar on our website soon and we will also ask some of the questions that came up in the chat about our strategy and our funding at 2 PM on Twitter. I want to advertise our next check webinar which is on Monday 7 December and this is referring to our other impact goals on Our Natural World and the webinar is entitled: Restoring our natural world, is it time to try something new? It will be at 11 o'clock on Monday 7 December. Details about the webinar are on our website. And also just to repeat, we will host another webinar in January which will be specifically about the strategy and our new funding processes for people who want more information on those. Thank you all very much and thank you to Luna for the questions and thank you to Caroline and thank you all very much for joining us today. Goodbye from all of us.