

## Transported evaluation report, A Small Library, Open Book

Spring 2016



Image – Electric Egg

Updated Autumn 2016

## SUMMARY

### What happened and the difference it made

The Open Book strand commissioned The Eloquent Fold (artists Carole Miles and Phiona Richards) to host book/print making workshops at Boston, Long Sutton and Spalding libraries for one morning or afternoon over the course of four weeks per library.

Participants were encouraged to book their place in advance of the workshop. The workshops enabled participants to use printmaking, drawing, photography, calligraphy, stitching, personal memorabilia, collage, and paper engineering to make their 'Big Ideas' books. Each person designed and created one book to keep as well as one book to fill and leave with the Small Library of Big Ideas.

*Big Ideas books created by participants of workshops*



*Images - Electric Egg*



The investment was £22.5k from Transported, with a further £3.5k from the Local Authority Library Service, in-kind. The project was free to staff and participants. Some participants walked to the workshops, whilst others came from further afield and arrived by car or used public transport. The average cost of travel for participants was just under £3. In addition, participants committed their time and sometimes gave a small donation to Transported too. The artists chose to contribute more than their contract at around £1.5k of in-kind work.

### Intentions

The overarching purpose of the Arts Councils Investment in Transported is to create new audiences for the arts, from places of least engagement. This phase of the Open Book programme aimed to focus on creating sustainability for the arts within libraries and for the people living in and around Boston Borough and South Holland, Lincolnshire.

It is also an important feature of Transported to 'make the everyday exceptional' and Transported also used this and other 'quality intentions'<sup>1</sup> to deliver something that celebrated the people, place and heritage in everyday spaces, in this instance, local static libraries.

Ron Frayne, Area Manager Libraries East, was a champion of the project. Transported worked alongside Ron to find new and unique ways to diversify their service. Ron moved job positions mid-way through the project and Nicola Rogers came into the post.

Between 4-9 participants were present at each workshop including children, young people and adults. There were 40 unique participants over the three weeks of delivery when evaluation postcards were completed. Fifteen of these participants were return attenders some of whom were living in disadvantaged or challenging contexts; including one woman living with ME, a man who was unemployed, a family who were moving between homes and another man who was homeless.

There were two outcomes for the audience, and seven for participants.

Library users who read or borrowed the books made by participants, are the **audience** for this work (as distinct from participants).

- 1** Participants of the project created books either about themselves, an area of interest to them, or to promote a local group. This led to a tangible outcome; an increase in **new, locally focused material culture**. This material culture (the books), was placed on display at each library for 3 months after the project ended, and was available to borrow. In some instances, library staff provided interpretation, explaining what the display contained and information about the project.
- 2** Whilst there was no evidence of the impact of this new material culture to the audience members (library users), there was evidence to demonstrate that some books were issued and that the displays were viewed. In the future, more active promotion of the book displays, combined with more focused participation or engagement activity (connecting the local community with the books created by participants), could **increase demand for the library service** to existing and new library users. In addition,

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<sup>1</sup> Transported has a 'Story of Change' which is the chain of events expected to make a difference to people in the area. Part of this is an intent to delivery quality in the arts and the participation. Within this quality intent are two elements; 'delivery intent'; building on local need for example, and 'creative intent'; such as making this project engrossing and locally resonant.

consideration about how this engagement could be quantified would provide greater insight about the impact of this type of community display.

Participants who attended the workshops across the three libraries are the **participants** of this work. Before and after self-assessment with participants as well as observations by Transported staff, saw notable positive changes across three expected outcomes<sup>2</sup>:

- 3** Despite (or perhaps because of) some individuals initially experiencing the workshop activity as 'complicated', participants reported an increase in **artistic skills** (+38%). This noteworthy outcome was achieved for a number of reasons; the starting point of the participants; the duration of the workshops being spread over a period of four sessions, allowing participants to develop their skills over time; and the high quality, person centred pedagogical approach of artists, Phiona and Carole.
- 4** An increase in their **sense of belonging and communal pride** (+26%) was also substantial. This outcome is directly linked to participants being able to create **new, locally focused material culture** (the books) about themselves, something of interest to them, or a local group. This was a deliberate delivery intention of Transported and the artists. The artists also took photos of every page of every book made, creating an online archive of the project.
- 5** An increase in their own '**everyday wellbeing**' a sense of being happy in the moment (+27%). Participants were often observed being 'engrossed' in the activity, indicating a sense of 'flow'.

One unexpected outcome occurred for participants; **reduced feelings of isolation**. Both Transported staff and the artists observed participants talking about and feeling less isolated as a result of spending time with people. Behaviours and conversations within the workshops, noted during observations by Transported staff, also point towards this outcome. **Reduced feelings of isolation** contributed towards participants experiencing two expected outcomes; a **sense of belonging and communal pride** and **everyday wellbeing**.

One outcome that might have been expected was not evidenced. Whilst there a small number of families who attended the workshops, we did not see evidence of an improvement in their **family time** which we do see elsewhere in Transported. The delivery intention of A Small Library of Big Ideas was directed towards adults and it was held in the daytime. As such it was not advertised as a family event. However we saw a big jump in attendance in the sister project

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<sup>2</sup> These results are before adjustment to account for context and contribution by others

on mobile libraries over the school holiday period which would be likely to occur here too, and this outcome could be developed in a new forecast.

Of the families who did attend, they did report experiencing an **increase in artistic skill**, increased **everyday wellbeing** and an increased **sense of belonging and communal pride**.

The library service and library staff are '**participant partners**' of A Small Library of Big Ideas. For these participants, two outcomes occurred:

- 6** The project enabled the **Library Service to diversify** further. As a result of participants of the Boston Library workshop experiencing an increase in artistic skill; three of them established a new Sketchbook group, supported by Boston Library staff and Transported. The group meets twice a month, and over 10 participants attend each session. Supporting the sustainability of the project was a deliberate delivery intention by Transported and the artists. We have also created a forecast model showing the potential for additional impact here, had a more in-depth level of strategic work taken place to maximise the potential for library diversification.
- 7** **Diversification of libraries** would not be possible without local **people in leadership roles knowing the value of the arts**, demonstrated through the commitment of library leaders, Ron Frayne and Nicola Rogers. This was evident in their investment of staff time, library space, and library resources. In addition, the library service and Transported commissioned a new project Taking pArt, for people with mental health issues, in part as a result of the success of A Small Library of Big Ideas and with funding from the Mental Health Promotion Fund.

**Transported staff** (Event Team Assistants) and **Artists** experienced both expected and unexpected outcomes:

- 8** Both artists reported an increase in their **everyday wellbeing** as a result of the relationships they developed with project participants which was not anticipated. In line with the intentions of Transported, they also reported a development of their **artistic practice** as a direct result of working together to deliver this project.





Artists The Eloquent Fold / Image – Electric Egg

- 9 The role of the Events Team Assistant is an important intermediary between the artists and the community, as such they became cultural **community advocates** too. The Event Team Assistant allocated to the project, Joan Rushton, reported similar outcomes to those of participants; notably an **increase in artistic skill** (she created her own book), and increase in her **sense of belonging and communal pride** and an increase in her **everyday wellbeing**.



## Transported's impact

There are two adjustments we make to the results; we adjust downwards for what may be due to other factors, and adjust upwards for longer term effects.

We account for what would have happened anyway, the risk that the project replaced other activity and any element of partnership or overlapping provision that could have had the same effect<sup>3</sup>. This reduces by a little under half the results for the participants (for example some were already arts attenders). As far as the library is concerned, together with other Transported projects this is a rare activity as it was delivered by professional artists and so it is genuinely new.

We then value the outcomes detailed in the infographic below using two main methodologies,

- National research into Subjective Wellbeing Valuation – this equates the increase in a person's wellbeing from an activity, with the increase in income they would need to generate the same wellbeing improvement. We use values that have been robustly researched to quantify both the wellbeing participants would get from being involved in the I, and the wellbeing they would feel from better communal relationships.
- 'Willingness to pay' type evidence, including proxy values<sup>4</sup> - what people might pay locally for a craft course, what the library service might spend on an exhibition or similar workshop and what might be spent on training leaders to value and be able to commission services of this kind.
- We estimate further value to library services and the local economy using research into current library practice and marketing by word-of-mouth.

In total the value of the investment was £27.5K<sup>5</sup>. The value of the return, as experienced by participants in the main but with some benefit in the library and others, is just over £27K. This is a return of 1 to 1, around break-even.

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<sup>3</sup> Deadweight, displacement and attribution

<sup>4</sup> Used where there is no obvious 'market' value











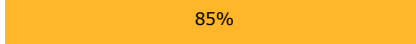












<sup>5</sup> The budget, the overheads, the participating partners expected in-kind contribution and the artists voluntary in-kind contribution

The overwhelming bulk of the value comes from the outcomes experienced by participants, which is even better for those who set up their own craft group because their outcomes are likely to last longer. Whilst they increased their wellbeing and sense of belonging in equal measure, the national research shows the value of belonging to be about twice that of everyday wellbeing.



# Where does the value lie?

Calculation: No. stakeholders x Adjusted change x Value per outcome = Total value

2 New, locally focused material culture		1	Value of display now; promotion could increase demand	Cost of new display (diff S/H to below)	1,000	1,000
1 Increase demand for the library service		1,423	Demand could be increased in future forecast model	Potential future value in forecast model	1,359	-
3 Artistic skills and awareness		30		18%	45	441
4 Sense of belonging and communal pride		30		12%	2,885	14,078
5 Everyday wellbeing		30		13%	1,359	6,888
7 Additional value to those who set up group		10	As above but with longer life	As above but with longer life		2,661
6 Library diversifies		1		85%	1,000	850
2 Develop quality arts practice with communities		2		16%		-
3 ETA's artistic skills and awareness		1		8%	45	7
4 ETA's sense of belonging, communal pride		1		5%	2,885	463
5 ETA & artists' everyday wellbeing		3		5%	1,359	654
7 Local leaders and community advocates know the value of the arts		1		20%	227	36
		1		13%	550	70

## Notes

Outcomes colour coded by stakeholder:

Audiences  
Participants  
Transported staff and artists  
Local economy

Levels of participation include two leaders (one experienced the outcome) and one ETA and 40 participants with 10 in the new group having additional value. There is one library service affected and the potential for large numbers to increase their demand for library services which is not yet realised.

Adjusted change shows the % change experienced by the stakeholder taking account of what else might have had an effect. For example, the use of professional artists makes this a genuinely new experience for libraries.

The proxy values are for an imagined 100% change. They come from both what we know people would be prepared to pay and national research into Subjective Well-being Valuation.

The total value for each outcome is a combination of the number of people, the amount of change and the value of the change. In this project we separate the outcomes for the new group that was set up (though their outcomes are the same as other participants) because the impact will last longer with extra value in the next year.

## What if and what next?

Although the results were extremely good (the best of all the SROIs) the overall value was limited by lower participation numbers than the other library project. In the future though, the fact that these participants had a good enough experience that they set up their own club may make the value much higher in the longer term. There is also scope for more knock-on impact on new audiences, who could be engaged as a result of delivering activities linked to books left on display in the libraries after the project.

A significant opportunity is to focus strategically on working in partnership with libraries to help them achieve their need to diversify their service. This has already made progress with the ongoing commission Taking pART for people with mental health issues to take place in libraries.

In management terms, bringing overheads down (which are high, as this is an action-research programme) to sector standards would make a significant difference.

The following scenarios would allow the project to increase return on investment:

- Reducing overheads – overheads are high at £11.5k. Reducing overheads to 20% (a percentage often used in the arts and cultural sector), would double the return, to 1 to 2.1. With the return on investment identified in a US study of arts in libraries as over 1 to 4<sup>i</sup>, we think this is a cautious estimate.
- With current library attendance trending down, developing new audiences could be very valuable. Over 70,000 people use the libraries over three months. If only a small percentage of those experience some of the wellbeing that participants do centred on the library, this could readily increase the value by half (£12K) and the return to 1 to 1.4. Coupled with more standard overheads of 20% this could achieve a return of 3.

There is a knock-on organisational impact on both the library workforce and leadership and Transported is in a great position to create further value in T2. A recent DCMS report highlighted a very significant role for libraries to 'underpin communities' and recommended enhancing leadership as well as new economies of scale from a national strategy. The report describes the importance of the non-judgemental, flexible space, particularly to those who are vulnerable and on literacy and digital access<sup>ii</sup> (whilst attendance across England is over a third of the population, it rises to nearly half in the poorest areas). Protecting libraries for these users is important, and supporting the workforce to do so is effective and strategic.

## Recommendations

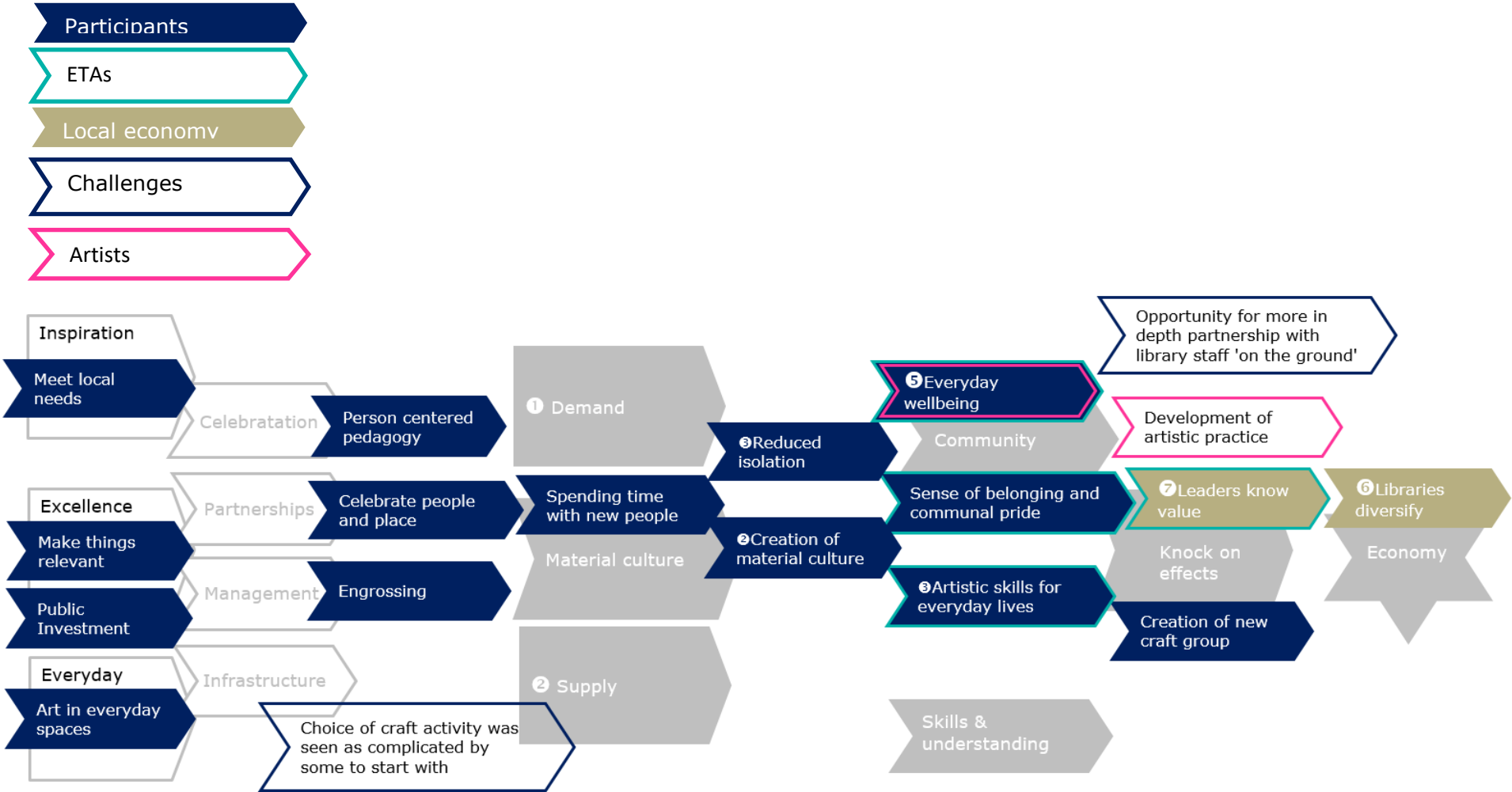
Working with participants who had a lot to gain because their lives were challenging or they were isolated, created significant benefit in this project and the

taking pART library project for people with mental health issues will take this forward and be tested with a further SROI.

The person-centred approach and engrossing and challenging activity culminating in a thing of beauty, both celebrated the people involved and created a sense of pride and achievement. This was especially strengthened by making one book that they could take away and another to be shared in their community. Both this and reduced isolation made for happier participants. Wellbeing in turn can lead to other better life chances. Where participants went on to set up their own new craft group the outcomes can last much longer, and supporting them to maintain this could create significant benefit.

Being explicit about the organisational benefits to libraries of this kind of diversification is likely to be very beneficial, both to the library service and in terms of community use, and understanding that more deeply is an important next step.

# Chain of events



# FULL REPORT

## People and scope

This Social Return On Investment analysis is one of three for Transported<sup>6</sup>. It explores a public sector book making project in partnership with the Lincolnshire County Council Library Service.

This analysis is of the impact of this project alone. The stakeholders fall into four groups, audience, participants and participating partners, staff and artists from Transported and 'the economy', including the social and cultural as well as financial economy. In fact the artists were not technically 'material'<sup>7</sup> to this analysis, but because their work is very relevant to the value created for others, and because their own value could be more significant in future delivery they are included in our interactive model.

## Consultation and evidence collection<sup>iii</sup>

Ron Frayne (Area Manager, Libraries East) worked in partnership with Transported to develop the project commission and to interview and appoint artists, The Eloquent Fold.

Participants were surveyed before and after 3 out of the 4 workshops they attended. Participants were also observed for key behaviours by Transported staff. Library Managers and staff, artists and the ETA were interviewed. The project point-of-contact was also interviewed. Both artists, the ETA, the project-point of contact, and participants of the workshops were part of an in-depth focus group too.



Workshop participant

Image – Electric Egg

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<sup>6</sup> A 'Creative People and Places' programme funded by the Arts Council England to encourage arts attendance in areas where it has been low.

<sup>7</sup> A technical term from accounting practice to explore whether in social value terms, an outcome or stakeholder group are both 'relevant' and 'significant' in the analysis.

## Plans for a Story of Change

### How and what?

Content of the workshops was designed by the artists the Eloquent Fold. Carole Miles and Phiona Richards normally work individually as freelance artists but worked together collaboratively in the Transported engagement phase and in the Open Book strand during 2013 / 2014. The artists formalized their collaborative practice as The Eloquent Fold in order to design and develop innovative arts initiatives together. The artists are drawn together by a love of text, books, maps, fabric, history, journeys, exploration, photography, making and doing. In their work they use recycling and up-cycling as a way of connecting with participants of all ages and abilities.

A Small Library of Big Ideas workshops were designed to enable participants to use printmaking, drawing, photography, calligraphy, stitching, personal memorabilia, collage, and paper engineering to make their Big Ideas books. Workshops took place in three libraries; Boston, Spalding, and Long Sutton during August, October and November 2015. Workshops lasted for 3 hours.

This books were placed on display at each library for 3 months after the project ended, and were available to borrow. In some instances, library staff provided interpretation, explaining what the display contained and information about the project.

A Transported 'ETA<sup>8</sup>' was allocated to the project for the duration, receiving training from MB Associates in preparation. The ETA supported participants to complete surveys and also observed participants' behaviours over the 4 month period.

Arts in unusual spaces meets the Arts Council's intention to bring the arts to new places and Transported's own feature of 'making the everyday exceptional'. Artists and staff felt that the local focus and use of under-used space were also important. For the Library Service, a deliberate intention was to diversify the library offer:

***"Taking part in projects such as these, is an important part of proving that there is so much more to libraries, particularly mobile libraries than just a few books!"***

A celebration of people, place and heritage was also key and was evident in Transported's original commission and the response of the Eloquent Fold; there

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<sup>8</sup> Events Team Assistant



was a clear artistic intention to ensure that the project would make things relevant; this was regarded as a 'considerable feature' of the project by interviewees, as was 'making the everyday exceptional'.

Bookmaking was an activity new to most unique participants:

***"People were intrigued as to how they were going to produce the book. When the artists demonstrated it, people were focused on how it was done 'wow! It was really clever'. The artists were really encouraging and encouraged people to do it step-by-step."*** Transported staff feedback.

Some participants reported some hesitation when first introduced to the activity, ***"the hardest part was the ideas"***, but were supported by the artists to understand the process and engage in it.

The choice of activity was deliberate by the artists, as were considerations about sustainability:

***"We had to ask ourselves how we made it sustainable. Quality is connected to sustainability. Supporting people to sustain what they do."***

Artist

The Eloquent Fold have considerable experience supporting people to access creativity. One of the artists describes the importance of making sure people in the space 'feel comfortable'.

***"Process and product are equally important. I consider the level of my delivery, the emotional response from participants and whether people leave feeling better than they started"***. Artist

The notable outcomes experienced by participants are reflective of the pedagogical approach of the artists, one which places them alongside participants in a safe creative space regarded by some as a 'lifeline':

***"I don't want you to go away; I've only just found you"***. Participant



Book making / Image – Eclectic Egg

## Why?

The difference that the project made is shown below. Our expectations were based on a Story of Change workshop with Transported staff, artists and participating partners before the project started. The other key investor, the Arts Council, hopes to increase demand for the arts and high quality supply, as well as learning what works.

We expected the outcomes for participants to be deeper than those for audiences, with skills, wellbeing and deeper sense of belonging to the local area, increasing as a result of participating and creating new material culture.

The Transported team clearly wants to understand the specific benefits to the library service, specifically how partnership and collaboration with the service can support them to diversify their offer.

## Why? The Results

The 'chain of events' above shows how the project worked, as well as highlighting the risks where it worked less well.

### Outcomes

#### Stakeholder: New community audience in libraries

- 1 Increased demand for arts and libraries
- 2 New, locally focused material culture

#### Stakeholder: Participants and participant partners

- 3 Artistic skills and awareness
- 4 Sense of belonging and communal pride
- 5 Everyday wellbeing
- 6 Library diversifies
- 7 Local people in leadership roles know the value of quality arts (results fall to leaders, but value falls to the economy)

#### Stakeholder: Transported staff and artists

As for participants, plus

- 2 Develop quality arts practice with communities
- 7 Community advocates (ETAs) know the value of quality arts (results fall to ETAs, but value falls to the economy)

#### Stakeholder: The local economy

- 7 Local people in leadership roles know the value of quality arts (results fall to individuals, but value falls to the economy)

## Results: ACE research questions

There are three research questions from the Arts Council with two answered by results and the third, about what works, addressed later in the report.

### Stakeholder: New community audiences in libraries

ACE Question ❶ Are people from places of least engagement experiencing and inspired by the arts?

We consider this question to be about demand. The full Transported evaluation report explores in detail the demographic of attendees, describing that Transported is very effectively attracting an audience who are not used to experiencing the arts. It goes on to assess how inspired they are, with a positivity 'score' of just short of three-quarters<sup>9</sup>.

The participants for A Small Library were a group particularly able to benefit as their average wellbeing score was 6.7 before the programme, below the regional average of 7.5. This was probably because it attracted participants who were quite disadvantaged; one man was unemployed, another homeless, one woman was living with ME and a family came who were between homes.

In this partnership project the intention was to increase people's cultural appetite specifically through:

#### ❶ Increased demand for arts and libraries

Evidence was limited because exposure to new community audiences (beyond the immediate participants) came beyond the life of the evaluation, but with a large audience of over 70,000 visitors in three months, even cautious estimates could make a difference to a substantial number. In order to include this in the analysis for future consideration, library staff agreed to an estimate of 1% of visitors that would see the display, 1% of whom might be engaged to the point of wanting more. We estimate their result as 10% of that of participants.

The other part of the equation is for Transported to meet demand with effective supply:

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<sup>9</sup> Audiences are extremely positive and highly inspired by Transported events, with 93% ready to recommend, and 78% inspired to do more. As a composite measure of three indicators, 72% of audiences both intended to do more *and* would recommend what they'd seen, or come again.

ACE Question ② To what extent was the aspiration for excellence of art and excellence of the process of engaging communities achieved?



Artist / Image – Electric Egg

## ② New, locally focused material culture

The work that participants created was a element in the chain of events that led to strong benefits for them and the scope for a wider audience and impact.

The artists describe the key quality processes, for example making sure the work is locally resonant so that participants could further develop their sense of identity in relation to the place where they lived. This includes the need to make the artwork relevant, responding to local need. In addition to this, the careful consideration given by artists and Transported to sustaining the delivery beyond the project funding.

***"At each session there was one person who was in a traumatic stage in their lives and they sat and did something for three hours. They all reported positive outcomes for being involved."*** Transported staff

***"Relationships were formed and people were hoping to keep in touch after the sessions were finished."*** - Observation of participants

***"It is supporting them to have their own experience, within that group. Whilst encouraging the group to have a shared experience."*** – Artist

It was a delivery intention by Transported, the library service and the artists to make the project locally resonant and this was achieved by the person centred approach of the artists. As such, participants, experienced a very high quality process, some of whom were supported to establish their own craft group in

Boston Library. By keeping the idea of sustainability as a core delivery intention, participants developed their own craft group, regarded by the artists as the 'development of participant's agency'.

Feedback from the Transported staff also demonstrates the quality of engagement, key to achieving this high quality delivery:

***"They are enthusiastic about what they do. They explain processes and show people what they can achieve. Little things that were thrown into the space as extras - they responded and listened. They told stories and this made it a very relaxed atmosphere. They got to know the participants; it wasn't like teachers and class, it was like a big group of friends and they happened to be artists."*** - Transported staff

We conclude that the engagement process had features of excellence that people discussed unprompted in the feedback and which were fundamental to success.

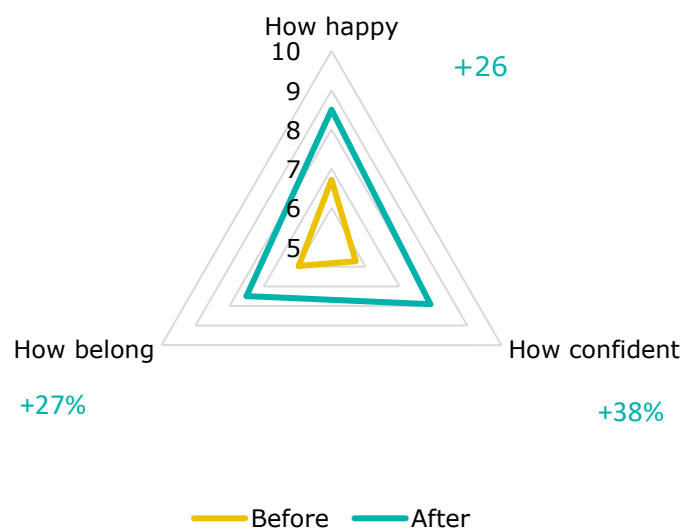
## Results: Cultural and social impact

Transported's interest in wider social impact allows us to dig deeper.

### Stakeholder: Participants and participant partners

Participants benefited from three outcomes as shown below.

*Participants outcomes before and after the project*



### ③ Artistic skills for everyday life (how confident)



As the artists taught a variety of skills as part of the workshops, a direct impact on artistic skills was expected. It was key to the project that participants could implement their new learning in their everyday lives.

On average there was a 38% increase in participants score against the question How confident do you feel about doing the activity on offer?

*"I learnt a new and interesting skill". – Participant*

*"I had a great time - really creative". – Participant.*

Notably, two members of the group attending the workshops at Boston Library expressed an interest in setting up their own craft group. Boston library are providing the library space for free. Up to 19 people attended the first session, 12 attended the second. The group is still running, with some participants from this project attending.

As a result of the development of their artistic skills and through the support of the wider project team, progression routes have been created for participants. Crucially, they have been inspired by the artists and supported by Transported to do this.

#### ④ Sense of belonging and communal pride (how belong)

A celebration of people, place and heritage was key for this project and was evident in Transported's original commission and the response of The Eloquent Fold. Their creative intention to [meet local need](#) and [make the everyday exceptional](#) was regarded by the artists as 'a considerable feature of the project'.



The impact of this delivery intention is evident in some of the responses from participants and staff about the importance of a project being delivered in the local area:

*"Because the activity took place in the library, participants know it is a nice atmosphere and people are made to feel welcome. The familiarity of it is attractive and 'safe'".* - Transported staff

*"Most of the ideas were locally resonant. Most of the people attending were fairly local. Not all participants made their book locally resonant, but was a topic that as close to someone's heart."* – Transported staff

On average there was a 26% increase in participants score against the question 'How much do you feel you belong to where you live?' The workshops included 'hundreds of local stories connecting the participants to the area'. For some participants, particularly those who faced isolation, experiencing this outcome was incredibly pertinent.

The outcome, *sense of belonging and communal pride*, is directly linked to participants being able to create *new, locally focused material culture* (the books), capturing stories of people (themselves) and place. This was a deliberate delivery intention of Transported and the artists.

*"It represents the community very well and it unique to it. The lady who hasn't left the house in 15 years - her book was very moving."* – Transported staff

New audiences could have been engaged in forthcoming projects as a result of delivering more in-depth participatory activities linked to the book displays in the libraries. Such activities could be delivered as a consultation process (before a project begins to promote the activity), or as a celebratory experience (after the project has ended). This recommendation could be considered in a new forecast.

## 5 Everyday wellbeing (how happy)

We distinguish everyday wellbeing as a personal outcome. It was expected that the activity would promote wellbeing, by delivering an activity that participant could become engrossed in allowing people to experience 'flow'<sup>10</sup>.

On average there was a 27% increase in participants score against the question how happy do you feel? An important element of this was the combined approach of the artists, supported by the Events Team Assistant and Arts

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<sup>10</sup> 'Flow' is a concept identified by positive psychologists which is about being absorbed and engrossed by an activity, or 'being in the zone'. It is known to lead to wellbeing.

Engagement Worker, in creating a safe, relaxing and welcoming environment where 'participants, [were] visibly enjoying themselves and having fun'.

Participants themselves described the experience as a 'thoroughly enjoyable' and something to 'savour'.

***"Through the socialising it encourages wellbeing, this when you can listen and be listened to".*** - Transported staff

***"People smiled and laughed, the talked together".*** - Transported staff observation

***"Looking around everyone was concentrating and really engrossed and trying to produce these cards, and really oblivious to what else was going on."*** – Transported staff observation.

Participants **experiencing a reduction in isolation** was noted, unprompted, within feedback from participants, observations made by Transported staff and in interviews with artists. This outcome was also identified as part of a focus group where key stakeholders were present. **Reduced feelings of isolation** contributed towards participants experiencing two expected outcomes; a **sense of belonging and communal pride** and 'everyday wellbeing'.

The impact of this outcome on participants 'moved' all of those who were part of the delivery team.

***"There were two ladies discussing how this has helped their depression and how little else there was in their locality".*** - Transported staff observation

***"One lady has ME and got quite emotional at one point but the others rallied round her. This was her first outing to a group, on her own, for 15 years! Quite an achievement!"*** - Transported staff observation

***"P at Spalding who was unemployed said that it was nice to do something different".*** - Transported staff observation



Workshop participant / Image – Electric Egg

Support from library staff 'on the ground' was felt, by artists, to be 'remote'. The artists saw the potential for greater involvement from staff; an opportunity to develop their own creativity, develop relationships with new people, and find out how the community might use the library space for in the future.

However, the library service has faced significant pressure to reduce budgets and staff-time over the last 2-3 years and therefore involving frontline staff in projects such as this can be a real challenge. A Small Library of Big ideas yields such value due to the fact that it provides additional resource (people and activity), to a service facing considerable cuts.

There isn't evidence to suggest that library staff experienced similar outcomes to the participants within this project, however this could be part of a new forecast.

### ⑥ Libraries diversifying and ⑦ local people in leadership roles knowing the value of the arts.

By working in partnership with Transported to commission The Eloquent Fold to delivery this project, the Library Service is clearly considering ways to diversify. Whilst the artists did not go as far as to say that their work improved a public space they did feel that by 'working in the libraries they 'injected life fun and energy'.

This outcome could not have been possible without [local people in leadership roles knowing the value of the arts](#), notably the support of Ron Frayne who was

regarded as a 'big ambassador' for the project. The support provided by Boston library in establishing the new craft club, combined with the commission of Taking pArt also demonstrates the commitment of the libraries to diversify.

## Stakeholder: Transported and artists

### ⑦ Community advocates (ETAs) know the value of the arts

Over time it has become clear that this leadership is not only about those with strategic responsibility in the local authority, but is clearly related to the Transported ETAs who have the ability, in their words, to **"build the community from the middle."** Where there is particular attention to evaluation in the SROI analyses this seems to be more pronounced, but this is an outcome across the programme as informed, educated and trusted 'word of mouth' promotes the authentic benefit of the arts in a way that is locally accessible; Joan was seen as a broker between the local area and the activity. Significantly she also took part in the workshops too, alongside participants and artists and reflected that 'she is sorry the project has ended'.

### ② Develop quality arts practice

Some of Transported's work has enabled artists to develop their practice as result of making a project 'locally resonant' and 'celebrating people and place'. Within A Small Library of Big Ideas, Carole and Phiona felt that their artistic practice had developed as a result of the opportunity to work together, supported by Transported. Both artists reported that the project had given them the opportunity to 'consolidate [their] joint practice'.



Image – Electric Egg

However, both Carole and Phiona felt that there was a missed opportunity, as neither artist was able to make, develop or explore their own creative practice as 'participants' or 'members of the community' within Transported.

***"It is very difficult to move from working with communities to making work in response to those communities. Such commissions would give***



*the artist a chance to grow their individual practice whilst utilising the very valuable skills they have connecting with communities and individuals". Artists*

The potential exists to develop such opportunities for artists, in the next phase of Transported.

## Impact

### What was due to Transported

We adjust the results downwards to take account of the context (what would or could have happened anyway) and other contributions (what did happen in the time that might also account for the change).

In terms of context, we account for what would have happened anyway<sup>11</sup> and the risk that the project replaced other activity<sup>12</sup>. Generally almost three quarters of participants (72%) tell us that Transported projects are 'new to them' resulting in an adjustment downwards of around a quarter (28%). When asked specifically what they would be doing if not coming to Transported, a small percentage (15%) would have been involved in other arts, library or leisure activity. In terms of other contributions<sup>13</sup>, we attribute around a fifth (18%) of the impact to other similar activities that people told us they had taken part in, like gallery visits or other Transported attendance. This reduces by a little under half the impact on participants that can be claimed by this project.

As far as the library is concerned, together with other Transported projects this is genuinely rare activity for the mobile library service.

### Long-term impact

We adjust the results upwards to take account of longer term impact which is clearly evidence by the sub-group who set up their own craft club. To be cautious, we don't claim an ongoing impact for the library as there are many other factors in play that may supercede Transported's effect. But as there is also ongoing support offered from library staff, there could be ongoing value here too.

We do account for a longer impact on the ETA. Although this is just one person and a small value, it illustrates a very valuable role for Transported, that of trusted word of mouth in the community.

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<sup>11</sup> Deadweight

<sup>12</sup> Displacement

<sup>13</sup> Attribution



## Return on Investment

### Value of the investment

The investment was £22.5k from Transported, with a further £3.5k from the Local Authority Library Service in-kind.

There was negligible cost to taking part. The project was free to staff and participants. The average cost of travel for participants was just over £2. In addition, participants committed their time.

### Value of the outcomes

We valued the outcomes using two main methodologies,

- National research into Subjective Wellbeing Valuation – this equates the increase in a person’s wellbeing from an activity, with the increase in income they would need to generate the same wellbeing improvement. We use values that have been robustly researched to quantify both the wellbeing participants would get from being involved in the I, and the wellbeing they would feel from better communal relationships.
- ‘Willingness to pay’ type evidence, including proxy values<sup>14</sup> - what people might pay locally for a craft course, what the library service might spend on an exhibition or similar workshop and what might be spent on training leaders to value and be able to commission services of this kind.
- We estimate further value to library services and the local economy using research into current library practice and marketing by word-of-mouth.

### Ratio

In total the value of the investment was £27.5K<sup>15</sup>. The value of the return, as experienced by participants in the main but with some benefit in the library and others, is just over £27K. This is a return of 1 to 1, around break-even.

The overwhelming bulk of the value comes from the outcomes experienced by participants, which is even better for those who set up their own craft group because their outcomes are likely to last longer. Whilst they increased their wellbeing and sense of belonging in equal measure, the national research shows the value of belonging to be about twice that of everyday wellbeing.

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<sup>14</sup> Used where there is no obvious ‘market’ value

<sup>15</sup> The budget, the overheads, the participating partners expected in-kind contribution and the artists voluntary in-kind contribution

## Outcomes and proxy values

*These are monetised values but we avoid the £ sign which undermines the message that these social and cultural, not financial values.*

	Outcome	Proxy value	Value of one full outcome	Value per person/ service	Value per outcome
	Community audience Participants Transported & artists Local economy				
2	New, locally focused material culture	Cost of new display (diff S/H to below)	1,000	1,000	1,000
1	Increased demand for arts & libraries	Potential future value in forecast model	1,359	-	-
3	Artistic skills & awareness	Cost of local craft course	45	15	441
4	Sense of belonging & communal pride	SWB Valuation by Fujiwara for HACT	2,885	469	14,078
5	Everyday wellbeing	SWB valuation by Fujiwara for DCMS	1,359	230	6,888
<input type="checkbox"/>	Additional value to those who set up group	As above but with longer life		266	2,661
6	Library diversifies	Cost of a new display	1,000	850	850
2	Artists develop quality arts practice with communities	Cost of a day training/ CPD		48	96
3	ETA's artistic skills & awareness	Cost of local craft course	45	7	7
4	ETA's sense of belonging & communal pride	SWB valuation by Fujiwara for HACT	2,885	463	463
5	ETA & artists' everyday wellbeing	SWB valuation by Fujiwara for DCMS	1,359	218	654
7	Local leaders and community advocates know the value of the arts	Value of WOM promotion/champion	454	73	73
		Cost of senior leadership course	550	70	70
					27,282

# Impact model

Story of change			Results			Transported's impact					SROI in year 1			Long term SROI			Outcome total	Stakeholder total					
People who matter	Participation	Outcome	Evidence	No. experiencing outcome	Outcome result	Less what would have happened anyway	Less where Transported has displaced the issue		Less contributions from others		Adjusted result	Value of investment	Proxy value		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Outcome total	Stakeholder total				
							Deadweight	Displacement	Attribution				Year 1	Year 2						Year 3			
<b>1 New community audience in library</b>																							
Library audience in 3 months (potential new audience)	71,163	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New, locally focused material culture</li> <li>Increased demand for arts &amp; libraries</li> </ul>	Books available to borrow from library, created by ASL participants	All books issued from each library		No evidence for results beyond inherent value, but more active promotion could increase demand for library service through diversification.					None. Came across book display in library.	Cost of new display (diff S/H to below)	1,000					1,000	1,000				
			Est. 1% see display, 1% of those experience 10% of participants' change	712	2.7%	As participants	28%	As participants	15%	As participants	18%	1%		Potential future value to participants and library service. Included for in forecast.									
<b>2 Community participants in library</b>																							
All participants																							
Participants in library	30	Artistic skills & awareness	Self score, interviews participants & artists, whole staff survey	30	38%						18%	£2.17 is the average spend on travel by Transported audience / participants	44	Cost of local craft course	45	241	120	482	24,919				
Participants in new club	10	Sense of belonging & communal pride	Self score, interviews participants & artists, whole staff survey	30	26%	Participants already familiar with activity	28%	Other similar activity participants might have been doing	15%	Other similar activity undertaken in the time	18%				SWB valuation by Fujiwara for HACT	2,885	10,559	-		15,838			
Library workforce	3	Everyday wellbeing	Self score, interviews participants & artists, whole staff survey	30	27%						13%				SWB valuation by Fujiwara for DCMS	1,359	5,166	-		7,749			
Library service	1	Families have better leisure time	Families were not actively encouraged to attend, but outcomes could be considered in future models												Potential future value for families			861					
Library leader	1	Library diversifies	Opinions from interviews and observation	1	1	Another similar project may have occurred	15%	No other similar project rejected	0%	No other similar project occurred in the time	0%	85%	Additional library investment	3,631	Cost of new display (diff S/H to above)	1,000		0	850				
		Local people in leadership know the value of quality arts	Ongoing commitment to invest, self-assessment	1	15%							13%				Value falls to the wider economy							
<b>3 Transported staff &amp; artists</b>																							
Delivery artists	2	Artists develop quality arts practice with communities	Artist reported change to practice (working together)	2	20%		10%		10%		0%	16%	Extra time from artists	1,500	Cost of a day training/CPD	300		0	96				
Events Team Assistants	1	ETA's artistic skills & awareness	Feedback from interview and focus group	1	38%	Other project/employment may have arisen	0%	Other project/employment rejected	80%	Other project/employment taken up	0%	8%			Project budget & overheads	22,386	Cost of local craft course	45		2	7		
		ETA's sense of belonging & communal pride	Feedback from interview and focus group	1	26%												5%	SWB valuation by Fujiwara for HACT	2,885		146	97	463
		ETA & artists' everyday wellbeing	Feedback from interview and focus group	3	27%												5%	SWB valuation by Fujiwara for DCMS	1,359		207	138	654
		Community advocates (ETAs) know the value of quality arts	ETA feedback; building community from the middle	1	100%								20%	Value falls to the wider economy					0	-			
<b>4 Local economy</b>																							
Library leader	1	Local people in leadership know the value of quality arts												Cost of a senior leader leadership course	550	70	-	70					
Events Team Assistants	1	Local savings through healthier communities												Value of WOM promotion/champion	454	91	23	15	73				
		Local investment in the arts	Longer term, local savings thru' participant outcomes and local investment as leaders know value and businesses give something back			To be tested in T2																	
<b>Total</b>												27,561		3,159		252		27,282		27,282			
<b>Present values</b>												27,561		3,052		235		27,158		27,158			
<b>Ratio</b>																		1 to		1.0			

## What worked and what next?

### What if?

We look at the affect of different scenarios in management, delivery and results to explore how greater value could be created.

Straightforward potential in this project comes from:

- Reducing overheads – overheads are very high at £11.5k as this is an action-research programme. Reducing overheads to 20% (a percentage often used in the arts and cultural sector), would see a 1 to 2.1 return on investment and could be achieved once Transported has moved beyond its action research phase to a more normal delivery model.
- Much more complex additional value could come from increasing participation to capacity. However we don't have the resources within this analysis to explore whether this could be done without negative impact on participant experience, and forecasting additional value could mislead.
- We also recommend that value could be easily added by creating a new audience for the work. Evidence was limited because exposure to new community audiences (beyond the immediate participants) came beyond the life of the evaluation, but with a large audience of over 70,000 visitors in three months, even cautious estimates could make a difference to a substantial number. In order to include this in the analysis for future consideration, library staff agreed to an estimate of 1% of visitors that would see the display, 1% of whom might be engaged to the point of wanting more, amounting to around 700 people. If only a small percentage of those experience some of the wellbeing that participants do centred on the library, this could readily increase the value by half (£12K) and the return to 1 to 1.4.

## ACE Question ③ What works? – Which approaches were successful and what were the lessons learnt?

### Working with people who will benefit

For a Small Library of Big Ideas, participants starting point was quite low, demonstrating the opportunity to really add value. As before the Small Library participants had a strong increase in wellbeing likely to be linked to their pride in their work, but also to a reduction in the isolation that many of them felt.

### Engagement and tangible outcomes

Within Transported, participatory projects in particular have developed people's artistic skills with many knock on effects. Bookmaking was a very good choice for this project because it engrossing and was made accessible (with the support of artists) to new participants. The quality of engagement and delivery was very high, due to the flexibility, adaptable and socially engaged pedagogy of the artists from The Eloquent Fold. Their approach to working alongside the staff from Transported also resulted in a welcoming atmosphere for participants.

People had to overcome what at first seemed quite a complicated<sup>16</sup> activity and the pieces they produced were quite beautiful. Two books were made; one left in the library and one taken home enabling participants to share their sense of pride outside of the library environment. Both factors may have enhanced their sense of achievement.

### Wellbeing

Interest in wellbeing is a big opportunity for the arts to demonstrate value and well worth Transported's focus. Being engrossed in a participatory activity, or captivated as an audience is a personal experience which prompts reflection. This can enable people to 'get in the zone' or experience 'flow'<sup>17</sup>, which tends to create a stronger impact than merely enjoyable experiences<sup>18</sup>. On top of which there is increasing evidence that wellbeing leads to better other life chances. So Transported can not only help people feel better, but could also impact on their self-esteem and interest in new skills, including a positive cycle of creativity and confidence<sup>iv</sup>. Nationally, there is strong evidence that wellbeing is highly

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<sup>16</sup> Personally, at the initial start of the session I did feel it was a little daunting for some of the participants, as they were asked to do a layout plan of the concept of their ideas as to what they were going to put in their handmade book ie who, what, when, where. This may seem easy, but for some you could see that it was a bit like being back in the school classroom!!! Especially for those who struggle with imagination and literacy skills. However this said, they were helped by the artists for inspiration - ETA.

<sup>17</sup> A mental state in which a person is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity described by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi

<sup>18</sup> Seligman

correlated to good relationships; happy people tend to be more sociable<sup>v</sup> and to like people better.

## Relationships and place-making

The relationship of people and place is important for all CPP projects and the vision of a local focus is very strong in Transported and demonstrated within the design and delivery of A Small Library of Big Ideas. In addition, the starting point of participants of this project (many facing feelings of isolation) also impacted upon the degree of difference experienced in their sense of belonging and communal pride.

## Knock on effects

Over 70,000 people use the library over three months. New audiences could be engaged as a result of delivering participatory activities linked to books left on display in the libraries after the project. With current library attendance trending down, this could be very valuable. Such activities could be delivered as a consultation process (before a project begins to promote the activity), or as a celebratory experience (after the project has ended).

Transported should plan for more regular celebration events that bring everyone's attention to the project in order to sustain activity or develop new activity. Specifically connected to A Small Library of Big Ideas, the online archive<sup>19</sup> created by the artists, could be used as an engagement tool for future projects.

## The wider economy

The partnership between Transported and the Library Service was regarded as positive by both organisations. There is a knock-on organisational effect associated with the effectiveness of Transported.

A recent DCMS report highlighted a very significant role for libraries to 'underpin communities'. It describes the importance of the non-judgemental, flexible space, particularly to those who are vulnerable<sup>vi</sup>; whilst attendance across England is over a third of the population, it rises to nearly half in the poorest areas. Protecting libraries for these users is important, especially in relation to literacy and digital access, and the DCMS report recommends enhancing leadership as well as new economies of scale from a national strategy. Transported is in a great position to support the library workforce and leadership, which should be further valued in T2.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 Lincolnshire Libraries were outsourced by Lincolnshire County Council to Greenwich Leisure Ltd. Established in 1993, GLL is the largest UK-based charitable social enterprise delivering leisure, health and community

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.flickr.com/photos/133413175@N06/albums>



services. GLL exists to 'make community services and spaces better for everyone'. There is still a willingness within the Library Service to continue working in partnership with Transported to develop new ways in which library users can experience art and culture.

In order to further diversify the library offer consideration should be given to how library staff can be more involved in delivery at the commissioning stage of the project. It is clear that there is strategic support for the project and potential for library staff to be more fully involved; this could increase the potential for a higher return on investment.

## Recommendations

- Work on reducing overheads
- Engage people with challenging lives who can really benefit
- Develop new audiences especially before and after the programme, in consultation and celebration events.
- Work strategically on the relationship between the arts and libraries for community benefit.

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<sup>i</sup> Labovitz School of Business and Economics 2011, Minnesota Public Libraries' Return On Investment

<sup>ii</sup> DCMS 2014, Independent Library Report for England

<sup>iv</sup> Cited in Lyubormirsky page 25, Richards 1994 and Kashdan, Rose & Fincham 2004

<sup>v</sup> Reis & Gable 2003; Burns 2000, 2006

<sup>vi</sup> DCMS 2014, Independent Library Report for England