THE GREENHOUSE SESSIONS 2013 – A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE CULTIVATING ARTS IN COMMUNITIES (SUMMARY PAPER) - 10 Aug 2014

Executive Summary

The Greenhouse Sessions (TGHS) is a community of practice (CoP) that was convened in 2013. The main objective was to provide a platform for practitioners doing work in the field of arts in communities to gather and engage in peer learning around the key question :

"How can art-making and community building come together in a meaningful way?"

The Sessions managed to capture a snapshot of the range and types of community-based arts projects and programmes that have been, and are currently taking place in Singapore.

This paper summarizes the highlights from the year-long dialogue (April 15 2013 to 24 Feb 2014) that these practitioners had about the state of the field.

The key findings that emerged from the discussions were :

1. **Building the Capacity of Arts Practitioners**

- Using the Continuum of Impact model put forward by the organisation Animating Democracy, current arts in communities activities were found to coalesce around "Changing Attitudes", "Increasing Knowledge" and "Building Capacity". **The capacity of arts practitioners to facilitate activities that "Improve Discourse", "Mobilise Action" and "Influence Policies" need to be built up** so that systemic conditions may improve and sustainable changes may be effected.

- Given that the practice often involves multi-stakeholder collaboration, arts practitioners have expressed their need to know how **to better articulate their process to various partners as well as to negotiate and manage expectations** on all sides.

- Given the nascent stage of the field, there is currently no code of conduct for arts practitioners working with communities, and in particular, vulnerable communities. There is a need to encourage and **develop self-reflexivity amongst practitioners so that they may put more consideration into the ethics of practice.**
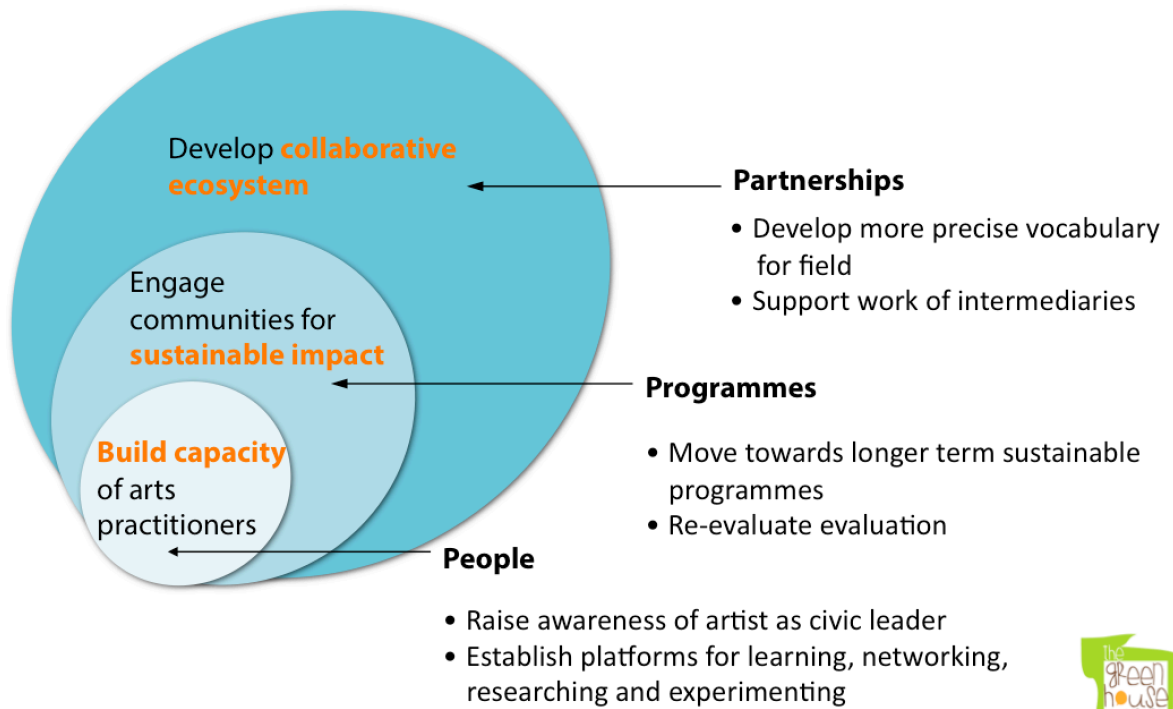
2. Engaging Communities for Sustainable Impact

- Arts practitioners have collectively done work with a diverse range of communities but the **sustainability of the work** in the longer term was a common issue that often emerged as a topic for discussion. Important factors that emerged from the dialogue include the level of community motivation and commitment, as well as the depth and quality of their participation.

- To sustain the work, **community members must be regarded as equal stakeholders** – i.e their needs are addressed, they have a sense of ownership over the process and responsibility for the outcome. There was general consensus that there needs to be constant consultation with community members to :
    - manage their expectations
    - monitor their changing needs
    - tap onto their native wisdom as assets for development

- Change is best sustained only if **community members themselves are agents of change in their own communities**. It is necessary to give them :
    - space and the tools to express their voice, thoughts and opinions
    - skills in organising and administration so that they can mobilise their own resources to do the work

3. Developing a Collaborative Ecosystem

- The **ecosystem of arts in communities is wide-ranging** as the types of communities are diverse, and the arts, as tools of culture means that its influence and relevance permeates all areas of society

- For collaborations among various stakeholders to be meaningful, leading to positive outcomes and benefits for communities, **intermediaries have an important bridging role to play.**

- Evaluation is a significant aspect of the programme cycle which can yield great value if partners learn to collaborate well. **Good evaluation** should have the following characteristics :
    - adaptive enough to capture the needs of the communities as well as the dynamic nature of programmes
    - interests of other stakeholders and not just funders are captured through the evaluation
    - opportunities are provided not just to prove success but also to discover areas for learning and improvement

Recommendations by the CoP as well as authors of this report on how to strengthen the field :

Develop **collaborative ecosystem**

Engage communities for **sustainable impact**

Build capacity of arts practitioners

Partnerships

- Develop more precise vocabulary for field
- Support work of intermediaries

Programmes

- Move towards longer term sustainable programmes
- Re-evaluate evaluation

People

- Raise awareness of artist as civic leader
- Establish platforms for learning, networking, researching and experimenting

BACKGROUND

The Need

The Greenhouse Sessions (TGHS) came about in response to the lack of existing opportunities for practitioners in the field of arts in communities to share and exchange practice, dialogue about issues and actively collaborate within, and across art forms.

A community of practice (CoP) was thus convened to bring together those wanting to investigate how art-making and community building could come together in a meaningful way.

A CoP is an approach to group learning where people who share a common concern for something they do teach each other to do it better through a process of regular engagement. The objectives of TGHS were to enable practitioners to :

- **Connect** with other experienced practitioners working in the field of arts in communities;

- **Exchange** information, stories and personal experiences in a way that builds understanding and insight;

- **Generate** new knowledge and collaboration opportunities through this shared platform to kick-start meaningful action.

The Demographic

While arts practitioners were the primary audience, other stakeholders within the larger ecosystem (eg. those from the social services, education, health, community and cultural sectors etc.) with relevant experience collaborating with other community members to express identity, concerns and aspirations through the arts were also welcome.

The average attendance at each of the Sessions was about 35 participants. Each Session also managed to draw new participants each time, such that in total, more than a hundred participants are currently part of this CoP.

The Format

This consisted of six dialogue sessions convening once every two months, each having a different theme.

Facilitators from ArtsWok focused on creating a learning environment where participants could feel safe sharing their experiences and concerns. This included emerging shared values collectively during the first session, termed the CoP's 'Full Value Commitment', which all participants were to respect and adhere to for all sessions.

The emphasis was on group learning, so while literature and other resources were made available to participants, the collective wisdom of the community of practice was the real treasure.

The structure of each session varied according to the needs of each theme. Facilitators from ArtsWok would present relevant theories and ideas at the beginning of each session to frame the discussion. Thereafter, there was a mix of small and big group discussions as well as case studies and presentations by invited guests.

Sessions were documented and notes and resources (such as presentations and articles) were shared with the participants after each session.

The Content

TGHS #1 : Mapping the Landscape

In this first session, we began to map the diverse people, activities and resources that currently exist in the field. The participants were also invited to surface challenges faced in their practice in communities. Through questioning existing assumptions and imagining possibilities, the CoP was encouraged to start appreciating the potential for collaborative action.

TGHS #2 : Impact of Arts In Communities – Navigating the Terrain

For people who care about arts in communities, the discussion around intention and accountability is important because it goes back to the basic question: How are we making a difference? In this session, we reflected on the ways practitioners in the field of arts in communities understood and articulated the impact of the work they do as well as shared strategies for managing expectations of different stakeholders. A case study on stakeholder management involving a project that dealt with migration and integration issues in Singapore through playback theatre was used to anchor the discussion.

TGHS #3 : Assessing Impact – A Roadmap for Measuring Change

We continued our discussion about accountability and impact assessment - Why, when and how do we evaluate our work? What are some of the assumptions we need to question? We introduced some tools that could be relevant and useful for practitioners working in the field of arts in communities and together addressed some ways to overcome challenges as we attempted to chart a roadmap for measuring change.

TGHS #4 : The Ethics of Practice

Participatory arts practices often involve working with communities, which may lead to ethical challenges: Is the artist's role to make art or to fix problems? Where do our loyalties lie when the interests of the funder does not align with those of the community? Are we conscious of whether a community is co-opted, represented or exploited in the process of art-making? Who is the author of a collaborative artwork? How do we practice power?

The role of ethics is a crucial piece when engaging communities. In this session, we reflected on the values that inform our practice, identified key ethical dilemmas and discovered ways to transform challenges into opportunities for learning.

TGHS #5 : Community Engagement and the Path to Sustainability

What does community engagement look like in the context of community arts? We took a closer look at different models - the benefits as well as the limitations. What does the artist need to be equipped with to ensure engagement is meaningful? More importantly, how does the artist ensure sustainability not only in terms of funding, but also in areas such as vision, leadership and motivation to ensure that the impact of the work continues?

The community of practice listened to presentations from three arts groups – Drama Box, The Finger Players, and The Necessary Stage. They shared their work involving communities and the models of engagement employed. Their sharing encompassed the discussion questions posed to the community of practice, as well as reflections on the sustainability of their programmes.

TGHS #6 : Arts & Social Change – Creating a Culture of Possibilities

Arts practices have the unique capacity to enable the expression of community values, goals and identity. Through such cultural action, we make sense of our existence and environment; we learn from our past, imagine our future and evolve creative solutions to address the increasingly complex challenges of our present.

In this session, we explored the role of arts and artists in bringing about systemic change and how we can create the conditions for creative collaborations between the arts, communities and the social sector. Our guest speaker was Ms Chua Ai Liang, Director of Arts and Community at the National Arts Council.

FINDINGS

The following themes emerged as focal areas of concern for the CoP:

1. Building the Capacity of Arts Practitioners

Most participants appreciated having the TGHS as a platform to exchange ideas with other practitioners and to reflect on their personal practice. They recognise the value of having a safe and neutral space to engage other stakeholders in the field of arts in communities, with facilitated dialogue as a means to communicate across difference.

The Sessions revealed that practitioners had different motivations and intentions for their work in communities. There was often a primary drive that could fall under the following clusters that form an ecology of arts-based community development (Cleveland, 2011):

- nurture and heal
- educate and inform
- build and improve
- inspire and mobilise

The Arts-Based Community Development Ecosystem (William Cleveland)

Most participants chose "educate and inform" as their primary motivation, which is consistent with how most of the practitioners at a subsequent session understood the outcomes of their work, choosing along a Continuum of Impact, as "Changing Attitudes", "Increasing Knowledge" and "Building Capacity" (Animating Democracy, 2012).
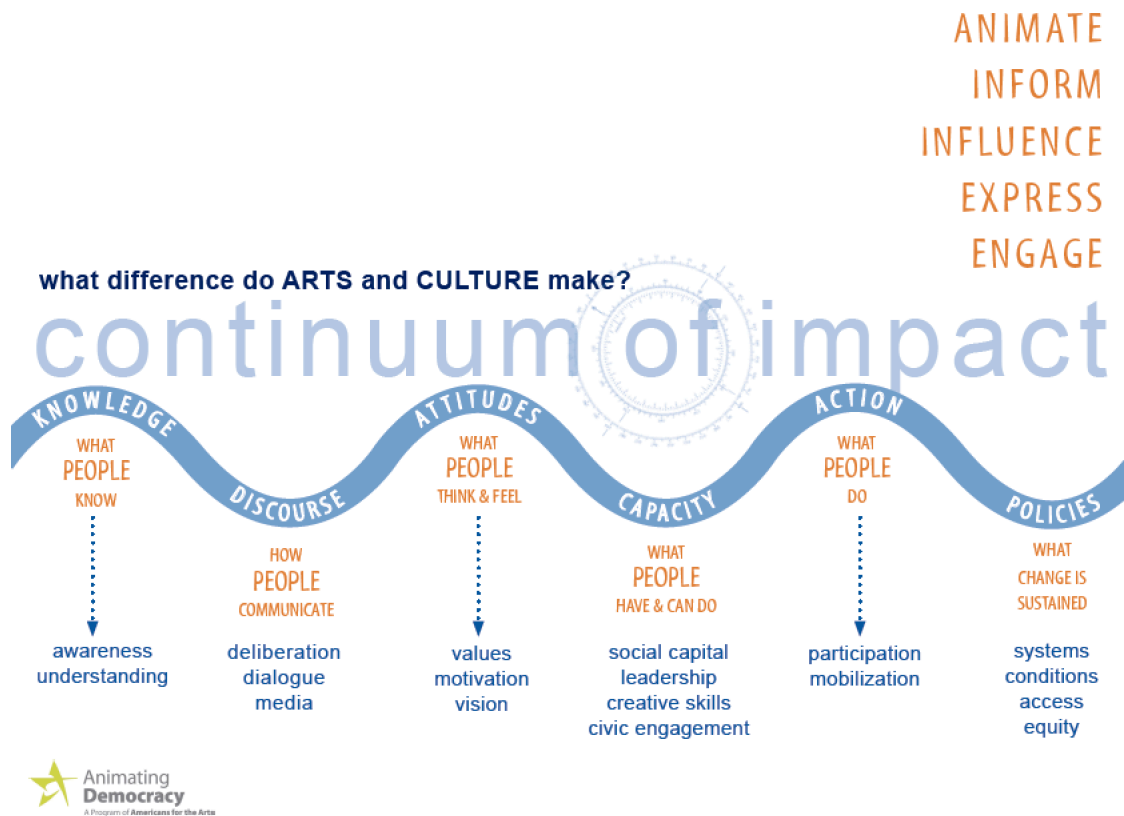
The Continuum of Impact (Animating Democracy)

This points to the general development of arts in communities work in Singapore where the focus has been on creating awareness of issues or enhancing personal development. It is only in recent years that the spotlight has been thrown on the therapeutic arts in communities, and even more recently, working with the arts to engage communities to contribute towards public discourse (eg. on issues of governance, migration and integration, healthcare etc.). Mapped against the Continuum of Impact, the current work of arts in communities on "Improving Discourse", "Mobilising Action" and "Influencing Policies" is minimal and lacking.

By capturing the intentions of practitioners and the understood outcomes of their work, demonstrating where arts in communities work is thriving but also lacking revealed possible tensions with stakeholders. Artists expressed disappointment about constantly having to make accommodations in their intentions or process in order to meet funding criteria and expectations; work ends up being broad with many items on agenda, which then compromises outcomes. This is due to a variety of reasons, which include :

- inability to sufficiently articulate arts-based processes and the resultant outcomes;
- lack of negotiation skills;
- ineffective communication due to different field-specific vocabularies used by stakeholders;
- some stakeholders not seeing arts practitioners as equal collaborators, which compromises their legitimacy and ability to contribute to the shaping of a programme.

Another crucial aspect of the work that needs to be built up is the ethics of practice. Artists working in communities are in a position of influence, helping people interrogate their assumptions. It is essential, therefore for them to be self-reflexive - revisiting their own values, assumptions and ways of being so that their intentions and actions are driven by self-understanding, freedom and integrity.

The CoP supports this reflexive process by providing resources such as frameworks to guide, and input from others to overcome blind spots and biases. This is especially salient as there is currently no code of conduct for arts practitioners working with communities, and in particular, vulnerable communities, given the fairly nascent stage as a field in Singapore.

2. Engaging Communities for Sustainable Impact

The CoP recognised that an important stakeholder in their work is the communities they work with. At the beginning of TGHS, it was important to collectively understand what we meant by "community" which was defined as "groups of people with common interests defined by place, tradition, intention or spirit" (derived by Alternate ROOTS, USA).

Arts practitioners have collectively done work with a diverse range of communities but the sustainability of the work in the longer term was a common issue that often emerged as a topic for discussion. The CoP looked at different models of engagement – programmes "for", "with" or "by" communities and found that there were still a significant number of programmes done "for" communities, where the latter are passive recipients. Increasingly, there has been an expansion into collaborating "with" communities as well, although programmes initiated "by" communities are still rare (Badham, 2013). To get to that stage, the question of sustainability needs to be addressed.

Beyond the oft-cited call for resource availability (eg. funding and space), other factors the CoP thought influenced sustainability include community motivation and commitment, as well as the depth and quality of their participation.

The discussions found that more often than not, projects and programmes are conceived by partners such as the artist, host organisation, funder etc. and directed at a community, with little or no input from them. This is not uncommon, even

when doing programmes "with" communities. The question of whose needs are being served through these programmes surfaced. Do the needs of communities take precedence? The inability to perceive the community as equal stakeholders potentially contributes towards challenges in sustaining the work as participants are insufficiently invested and motivated, and have little sense of ownership and responsibility towards the programme, which may also not be entirely relevant to them. This may then affect programme outcomes, affecting the mobilization of resources (eg. funding) in the future. To alleviate this situation, there was general consensus that there needs to be constant consultation with community members to manage their expectations, monitor their changing needs and tap onto their native wisdom as assets for development.

The CoP recognised that ultimately, change is best sustained only if community members themselves are agents of change in their own communities, becoming allies and advocates, not just for the arts but also for the various social issues that concern them. To tilt the balance in their direction, it is important to give them the space and the tools to express their voice, their thoughts and opinions. It is also important for arts practitioners to conduct sufficient research pertaining to the communities and issues worked with to emerge relevant and impactful programmes, as well as to avoid being condescending when relating with community members; instead remaining open and questioning one's assumptions and biases.   For communities to achieve greater independence, skills in organising and administration should be imparted so that they can mobilise their own resources to do the work.

3. Developing a Collaborative Ecosystem

The ecosystem of arts in communities is wide-ranging as the types of communities are diverse, and the arts, as tools of culture means that its influence and relevance permeates all areas of society – from social issues, to heritage, education, environment, livelihoods, religion, identity, urban planning and so on. As such, the potential for collaborations in this ecosystem is tremendous, and in reality, a necessity and part of the DNA of this field.

The CoP realised that having a collaborative ecosystem is important for a society to thrive, as we need the capacity to understand and respond to an increasingly complex world that changes constantly. How can we involve the arts to create inclusive spaces for diverse voices and to be part of public discourse, bridge differences and contribute towards society?

In order for collaborations to be meaningful, leading to positive outcomes and benefits for communities, bridging the various stakeholders in the ecosystem is important given that we come from different fields of expertise, have different traditions and ways of practice, adopt different vocabularies etc. Practitioners in the CoP often expressed that bridging difference with other stakeholders can be challenging, as it requires particular skill-sets as well as time. They hoped more

intermediaries could enter the ecosystem to facilitate dynamic collaborative processes, contributing to higher quality and innovative work.

During the course of TGHS, the CoP stayed away from having to arrive at definitions and labels such as community arts, socially-engaged art etc. so as to keep an openness to the work as much as possible, as well as to adopt a critical stance. It was also to create an inclusive space, and not be unnecessarily mired in definitions. This was managed successfully except that we did not address ways in which the work can be articulated to other stakeholders in the ecosystem, who often require terms/definitions in the interests of communication. It was suggested that perhaps this absence of bridging vocabulary has in part contributed to the lack of understanding and legitimacy of the field, further hampering effective collaborations.

The CoP recognised that evaluation is a significant aspect of the programme cycle that can yield great value if partners learn to collaborate well. Based on discussions, evaluations currently seem skewed towards meeting specific indicators predetermined by funders. These are normally concerned with output (eg. exhibitions and performances) rather than outcomes. Some participants observed that from experience, not all funders are clear about their objectives or how to do evaluation well. In addition, evaluation processes are often not adaptive enough to capture the dynamic nature of programmes, and needs on the ground. This requires a close working relationship between all stakeholders, and a commitment to remain in constant communication and dialogue; of which not all stakeholders understand, and are willing to do.

There was general consensus among the CoP that there is tension between evaluating to show success and evaluating to discover areas for learning and improvement. In other words, do we evaluate to prove or improve? It is important that the interests of the community and not just funders are captured through the evaluation, and opportunities are provided for arts practitioners to also improve their practice. For example, participants surfaced the need for space and support to experiment with practice, without compromising ethical concerns, and permission to fail and then try better subsequently. This ensures that programmes remain relevant and beneficial when new and untested situations present themselves, and also allows for innovations and development as a field. Encouraging this attitude means there needs to be parity in partnership, as well as established trust between all stakeholders involved, which is then reflected in the evaluation process.

Finally, as arts practitioners collaborating with other stakeholders in the ecosystem, recognising that government is also a stakeholder provides opportunities for our work to make a greater impact, and to influence policy. However, this collaborative model has to be further explored and developed, in order to ultimately bring about impactful change that is relevant and meaningful to communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section outlines recommendations for the arts in communities field, based on findings from TGHS, and as discussed in the previous section of this report. These recommendations are a combination of what the CoP has emerged, as well as further recommendations from the conveners of TGHS and authors of this report.

FINDING : BUILD THE CAPACITY OF ARTS PRACTITIONERS (PEOPLE)

Recommendation #1 : Raise Awareness of Artist as Civic Leader

Community-based arts provides arts practitioners real opportunities to work with communities to effect change and social good. This means of civic engagement is important for a society and democracy like Singapore to thrive, especially in the 21st century and moving forward, demonstrated clearly after our last national elections and the dialogue and discourse that has since taken place. A significant number of Singaporeans want to be engaged in the process of nation-building and are interested in new leadership approaches, where collaboration is key.

The government increasingly recognises that citizen engagement is "the new normal"; in last year's National Day Rally speech, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong mentioned:

> So we must shift the balance, the community and the Government will have to do more to support individuals. The community can and must take more initiative, organizing and mobilizing ourselves, solving problems, getting things done. (Chan and Chang, 2013)

As a continuation of this consciousness, this year's parliamentary address by the President of Singapore, Tony Tan painted a future of Singapore that included more citizen engagement (Chan, 2014). This was reiterated by Deputy Prime Minister, Teo Chee Hean to the public service soon after when he encouraged them "to create space and find new ways for Singaporeans to take part in developing and implementing policies" (Ong, 2014).

As the public sector seeks new ways of engagement, some artists doing community-based arts programmes who are familiar with models of civic engagement will have much to contribute towards Singapore's ongoing development. Civic engagement can be understood as "the commitment to participate in and contribute to the improvement of one's neighbourhood, community, and nation" (Animating Democracy, 2013). Through arts-based processes, and forms such as participatory arts:

> … arts practitioners are directly *engaging* communities in creative process and social action, … *animating* public process and dialogue through art, … *influencing* what gets attention in the public sphere and who participates,

as well as perspective and opinion, … (and) *empowering* people by validating people's stories and perspectives and by bringing people together to discover shared goals and strength (ibid, 2013).

The artist working in community is placed in the position to be a civic leader, one who facilitates and inspires, who applies "the power of the artistic imagination in purposeful ways to contribute to social change" (ibid, 2013), enabling communities to tap into their creativity to imagine solutions to their challenges, and to create possibilities for themselves.

According to Jon Hawkes (2001), the arts are the tools of culture, and is culture in action. Culture is "the inherent values and the means and the results of social expression" and "enfolds every aspect of human intercourse". Artists as civic leaders can therefore be powerful agents of change driving social transformation.

In *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability*, Hawkes advocates that culture is the fourth pillar (the other three being economic, social and environmental) that governments cannot afford to ignore, and is integral to the governance process for sustainable development and flourishing of a society:

> If culture describes how we make sense, and the results of that sense, then art describes that aspect of cultural action in which creativity and imagination are the key drivers, where we discover meaning and community in ways that are intuitive, non-lateral and unpredictable. With the arts, we can imagine the future, unpack the past, confront the present. We can predict change, focus our visions and face our fears.

(Hawkes, 2003)

Artists are central to cultural action, and the authors of this report would like to see more artists who work in communities understand this role and contribute more actively in this area. Their leadership is key and indispensable, and it is hoped that the government and other stakeholders will recognise the value of artists and cultural action in communities, as well as the resultant benefits on a national level. This will hopefully contribute towards the further legitimacy of artists in the field and enable the channeling of necessary resources and support for the work to take place, and be sustained.

Related to this is the CoP's discussion of the role of government in enabling, and developing the field of community-based arts. Perhaps bodies such as the National Arts Council (NAC) should put in place certain structures and infrastructure but should then allow arts practitioners to programme, process and practice, with evaluation being a collaborative process. This is currently in place to a certain degree but more autonomy and trust can be accorded to practitioners. Although it involves some risk, this can be mitigated when effective collaboration models are in place, where there is communication and open dialogue, and the commitment to understand diversity and the intention to contribute to nation-building is present.

In the short-term, the CoP articulated the need for more stakeholders to be part of the ecosystem, and NAC could look into increasing advocacy efforts for the field. As well, there is a need to put in place a regular platform and mechanism where arts practitioners can provide ongoing feedback to policy makers, beyond the once-a-year *Let's Talk* session hosted by NAC. In addition, arts practitioners should be invited to the table and consulted earlier on in the planning process as equal stakeholders, and not when the broad strokes are already in place. Furthermore, the consultative process should extend beyond matters pertaining to the arts, adopting a cultural perspective which may be practically applied to the planning in other domains such as education, social issues, urban planning and so on.

Recommendation #2 : Establish Platforms for Learning, Networking, Research and Experimenting

Through TGHS, it was clear that participants need more opportunities and platforms for structured learning, and the exchanging of significant practice. There is a need to understand other non-arts fields that arts practitioners are collaborating with. Being able to perform needs assessments would help ensure the relevance of projects and programmes, as well as contribute towards the deepening of partnerships with respective stakeholders. The accumulated knowledge and exchange of practice with other practitioners enables a refining of ethical approaches, as well as ideas on how to handle ethical challenges that may arise.

As such, apart from convening communities of practice, the authors of this report recommend a school or institute of learning for community-based arts be set-up to ensure structured, and continual learning. Otherwise, this could be a programme offered within an existing institution. Other platforms such as seminars, conferences, workshops etc. should also be offered, and convened by various practitioners in the field, reflecting its richness and diversity.

Other recommendations include forming an Association to advocate for the field, mobilise resources and stakeholders, emerge a code of conduct for practitioners, ensuring high ethical standards and contributing towards the legitimacy of the field. The idea of having a directory of practitioners, where potential partners and communities can go to engage artists for projects was put forward by the CoP. This match-making function can also be overseen by such an Association.

Another area the CoP recommends more attention be paid is enabling more research to be done in the community-based arts field. By aggregating the work that is being done and capturing the impact of this nascent field as a collective whole helps build a case for more support and legitimacy. With good documentation comes more effective advocacy. Having research that is published also connects the field in Singapore to an international arena, broadening the scope of the dialogue and potential for practice. There is a need to identify interested researchers, and team them up with practitioners working in communities as the latter often lack the resources to conduct, and write their own

research. Platforms such as a dedicated open source website can host the research as well as case studies of community-based arts projects/programmes that could be referred to as a resource, and guide.

Finally, participants of TGHS talked about cultivating a culture of experimentation that allows and accepts failure as part of the process towards discovering better practice. With ethical considerations in mind, practitioners must be supported to grow and develop in their work in communities without having to bear the burden of producing results all the time. This will then encourage them to work with new, and different communities, responding to ever-changing needs and demographics on the ground. It is also only in this context that innovative projects in communities can be piloted and incubated, that then demonstrate the possibilities of practice, and contribute towards new solutions to community challenges. These then add to the bank of local case studies to inform the field, here and overseas.

FINDING : ENGAGE COMMUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE IMPACT (PROGRAMMES)

Recommendation #3 : Move Towards Longer-Term, Sustainable Programmes

The CoP observed that programmes where communities have a significant role in the shaping, implementation and evaluation of the programme contribute towards their sustainability.

Working "with", and programmes initiated "by" communities involves a higher level of commitment to cultivate relationships and build trust. The qualitative improvement in outcomes of such programmes contribute to their longevity and sustained impact as stakeholders (including the community) see the benefits and are motivated to continue.

Therefore there is a need to create opportunities for artists and other stakeholders to learn about strategies for working with, and mobilising communities, with an emphasis on engaging them meaningfully as equal stakeholders.

Some ideas include embedding artists-in-communities, setting up training programmes to mentor arts practitioners, as well as incubating and piloting innovate projects to showcase possibilities of practice. Initiatives that increase community capacity and self-reliance, such as equipping the community with the ability to organise and fundraise etc. should also be considered.

These approaches contribute towards the practice of arts-based community development, understood as "arts-centered activity that contributes to the sustained advancement of human dignity, health and/or productivity within a community" (Cleveland, 2011). This moves community-based arts projects beyond the short-term, and inherent in the approach is understanding the community as equal stakeholders. Sustainability is organically built in the approach, with longer-term impact in mind.

Recommendation #4 : Re-evaluate Evaluation

The CoP seemed mostly ambivalent about evaluating their projects and programmes. They recognise its necessity but feel challenged by how it is often executed in reality as it is mostly directed by stakeholders who fund the work, where evaluation is about accountability and fulfilling funders' interests.

Instead, the CoP expressed that evaluation should be discussed by all stakeholders at the beginning of any community-based arts project or programme, and should allow for various stakeholders' needs and interests to be represented e.g. apart from often instrumental outcomes that funders are interested in such as numbers reached, participant well-being and so on, to also allow for evaluating process, artistic practice, ethical approaches etc. Being able to collaborate on evaluation also ensures the process is meaningful, the data collected is relevant and will be useful on multiple levels, which can contribute towards the sustainability of programmes. This calls for a shift in the understanding of evaluation that extends beyond proving, to improving outcomes; where understanding and meaning making is at the heart of evaluation.

As well, the process of evaluation needs to take into account the dynamic nature of working with communities, and stakeholders need to be open and committed to adapting their measurements and approach to complement realities on the ground. This requires commitment from all stakeholders to the process, and to remain in communication. Doing so ensures the continued relevance and usefulness of evaluation, and it can serve as a check to ensure community members are not harmed instead. In addition, stakeholders should also be open to capturing and acknowledging unexpected outcomes, appreciating that these could be useful data in understanding the programme and participants' journey.

The CoP is also interested in exploring alternative approaches to evaluation that takes into consideration arts-based processes. This sees evaluation and art-making coming together as a creative practice, and the different modalities availed through the arts may emerge responses that have a very different quality of emotion and perspective from an otherwise straight interview or survey. This could involve drawing, photography, writing, performance etc. as a form of evaluation. Utilising this approach would require the support of all stakeholders, in a spirit of experimentation, to work towards improving evaluation techniques, processes and gathering rich data.

Finally, the authors of this report recommend that all stakeholders in the community-based arts ecosystem frequently revisit, and dialogue on the topic of evaluation. As evaluation is about placing value on something, and involves the interests of various stakeholders, the politics of value come into play and questions of what, and whose interests are valued, who does the valuing, how the value of something is applied and to what end become salient. This reflexivity and openness helps to ensure that evaluation in the community-based arts field is ethical, and ultimately serves the communities being engaged, enabling them to thrive and flourish.

FINDING : DEVELOP A COLLABORATIVE ECOSYSTEM (PARTNERSHIPS)

Recommendation #5 : Develop a More Precise Vocabulary for the Field

There are currently different terminologies used in the field of arts in communities. Common ones include "community arts", "socially-engaged arts", "community-based arts", "participatory arts", "community cultural development" and "arts-based community development". Although there is an overlap of meanings in the various terms, there are subtle differences that include the focus of the work, approaches adopted, and history or preconceived notions of what the work means – positive as well as negative.

The diversity of terminology is to be celebrated as it demonstrates the richness of the field, and as it evolves, new terminology will also emerge. However, the findings demonstrate that given the nascent stage of the field here in Singapore, and in the absence of a clear and coherent articulation of the work, some uneasiness amongst certain stakeholders can result, which gets in the way of capturing their awareness and interest. It also contributes to the challenge of advocating for the field when members within have not sufficiently articulated their own vocabulary and interests.

The authors of this report would like to recommend that the term, "community-based arts" be considered as a neutral term to be used unless stakeholders are clear their work aligns with other terminology adopted. A community-based arts project is where "an artist works with a community to facilitate a creative process that enables participants to express their needs, aspirations, inspirations, identity or sense of place" (Arts Victoria, 2014). Further, this will hopefully counter the often negative perception of the currently, more often used term, "community arts" as work that is less professional and of a lower quality. In addition, in instances where performance or exhibiting or presenting work is done with community involvement, it should be described by the tradition present in the art form e.g. a drama performance, an art exhibition, a music recital etc. without the label of it being "community arts". Similarly, a recommendation from the CoP was to avoid calling artists who work with communities, "community artists" but instead to acknowledge their art discipline and describe the community they are working with e.g. a musician working with seniors. This accords greater respect for their status as legitimate practicing artists working in communities.

These steps will hopefully lead to a reframing of community-based arts as involving professional expertise, is of a substantial standard and quality, and sits comfortably within the wider field and tradition of the arts; contributing towards more legitimacy for the work, amongst arts practitioners as well as non-arts fields. It will also hopefully lend towards a consistency of terms used, enabling more stakeholders and the wider public to access the work, and participate and contribute towards its development.

Recommendation #6 : Support the Work of Intermediaries

The role of intermediaries in the community-based arts field emerged regularly over the course of TGHS. The CoP saw the importance of such a role in helping to bridge the various stakeholders which then facilitated more meaningful collaborations and programme outcomes.

The work of intermediaries would contribute to the emergence of mutual vocabularies amongst stakeholders in the field, the building of relationship and trust that enables sustainable and innovative work, helping artists with administrative tasks that frees them to focus on practice, and also contributing towards advocacy of the field and increasing its legitimacy.

Intermediaries may emerge from any part of the ecosystem but they should have a firm understanding of the field of practice, together with project and stakeholder management, facilitation, communication and negotiation skills, experience with programme cycles and community development work, as well as handling ethical challenges.

The authors of this report recommend the training of more intermediaries for the field, as well as training arts practitioners to be able to perform this role, thereby increasing their own competencies and deepening their practice. Being able to perform this role as part of their artistic practice also heightens their ability to be effective civic leaders, facilitating change in communities that create social value.

CONCLUSION

In telling our stories, we identify what is important to us. By listening to the stories of others, we find out what is important to them; and by listening and telling together, we have the possibility of creating a clearer sense of what our community and what our collective priorities are… we can take those stories and help craft our way to the future. (John O Neal, Artist)

Imagine a Singapore where people are tapped into their creativity and draw actively upon their imagination, to understand the new and changing, to approach challenges, create solutions, relate to one another and emerge new possibilities.

Imagine a Singapore with communities where diversity is celebrated, identities and cultures are not threatened but instead enriched, and members are comfortable relating across their differences, contributing towards the co-creation of a vibrant and thriving society.

We all have a stake in this place and all of us, as members of this community, have a part to play in making our own culture, in creating a shared narrative. The arts have a unique power to release our inherent capacity to imagine the world as otherwise. Arts practitioners and others in the ecosystem of community-based arts should aspire to realise their potential as actors in the realm of social change, as facilitators for rehearsing possibilities, as a conduit through which new meanings, and ways of being and relating emerge.

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APPENDIX

Full list of participants for The Greenhouse Sessions 2013-2014.

This document is the result of ideas that have emerged through the conversations and exchanges among the participants. ArtsWok wishes to acknowledge the contribution of knowledge, experience and insight by the generous members of this community of practice.

Facilitators : Ko Siew Huey and Ngiam Su-Lin (ArtsWok)

No.	First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Company
1	Aaron	Ng	Freelance Backstage Theatre & Events Practitioner	NA
2	Adi	Jamaludin		A.D.I Concept
3	Ahmad	Musta'ain Khamis		Singapore Drama Educators' Association
4	Ai Liang	Chua	Director (Arts & Communities)	National Arts Council
5	Akanksha	Raja		
6	Alex	Lew		Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts
7	Alvin	Tan	Drama Educator	Free-lance
8	Alvin	Tan	Artistic Director	The Necessary Stage
9	Andrea	Ang		National Library Board
10	Angela	Tan		National Arts Council
11	Bao Zhen	Lim	Manager	National Arts Council
12	Beng Tian	Tan	Artistic Director	The Finger Players
13	Benjamin	Tan	Assistant Manager	National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre
14	Brendan	Tan	Engagement Executive	TheatreWorks Singapore
15	Caleb	Lee	Lecturer	LASALLE College of the Arts
16	Charmaine	Tan	Manager, Community Care Development Division	Agency for Integrated Care
17	Chit Wah	Hung		
18	Chor Young	Chua		Ageless Theatre
19	Claire	Yang	Education Manager	Singapore Repertory Theatre
20	Dan Feng	Tan	Executive Director	Select Books Pte Ltd
21	Dawn	Tan	Manager	National Arts Council
22	Dexter	Leow	Search Media Evangelist	Purpleclick
23	Dorcas	Ng	The Boss	Kidcucumber Inc.
24	Dorothy	Lim	Arts Coordinator	Singapore Association for Mental Health
25	Edlyn	Ng	Community Outreach Executive	The Necessary Stage

No.	First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Company
26	Edmund	Chow	Postgraduate Student/Researcher	University of Manchester
27	Elaine	Foo	Postgraduate Student/ Researcher	Royal Holloway, University of London
28	Elizabeth	Lim		The Old Parliament House Ltd
29	Elizabeth	Boon	Manager	National Arts Council
30	Elizabeth	De Roza		
31	Elvia	Goh	Executive, Arts & Communities	National Arts Council
32	Emilia	Lew	Executive	National Arts Council
33	Eugene	Tan		Independent Woman Part 1
34	Eugenia	Chuah	Student Researcher	NUS
35	Evan	Hwong	Senior Manager - Place Management	The Old Parliament House Ltd
36	Evelyn	Chve		Family Central
37	Faizal	Masjudi		SPH
38	Faye	Lim	Manager	National Arts Council
39	Fiona	Lockwood	Consultant	Fiona Lockwood Arts & Creativity consultant
40	Geok Kee	Soh		
41	Geraldine	Tang	Senior Student Development Officer	Institute of Technical Education
42	Giada	Tagliamonte	Director	Zadataqii
43	Gua Khee	Chong		Drama Box
44	Han Juan	Wong		Simple Life Studio
45	Harris	Jahim	Program Leader	LASALLE College of the Arts
46	Hazel	Wong	Programme Director	Goodman Ceramic Studio
47	Heng Leun	Kok		
48	Hoe Fang	Fong		Pagesetters Services Pte Ltd
49	Hui Ling	Koh		Drama Box
50	HuiHui	Lin		National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre

No.	First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Company
51	Huiyi	Loy		National Library Board
52	Huiying	Tan		Asset Management company
53	Imran	Manaff	Company Manager	Maya Dance Theatre
54	Isabella	Ow	Partnership Development Executive	Drama Box
55	Jack	Tay	Executive Officer	SDEA
56	James Jordan	Tay	General Manager	Singapore Drama Educators' Association
57	Jane	Goh	Clinical Head	Singapore Association for Mental Health
58	Janice	Seah	Manager (Arts & Communities)	National Arts Council
59	Janice	Koh	Nominated MP	
60	Jasmine	Ng	Filmmaker	Independent
61	Jason	Ng		NVPC
62	Jean	Tsai		Consultant
63	Jean	Tan	Assistant Director	National Arts Council
64	Jean	Hair	Manager, Programmes	The National Art Gallery, Singapore
65	Jeanette	Chan	Art Therapist	thruArts
66	Jeffrey	Tan	Assistant Director	People's Association
67	Jennifer	Koh		Photovoice SG
68	Jenny	Yang	Manager, Arts & Communities	National Arts Council
69	Jerusha	Tan		-
70	Jessica	Wong	Manager (Community Projects)	South East Community Development Council
71	Jieyun	Chen	Associate I (Arts & Culture)	National Library Board
72	Jin Kiat	Choo		
73	Joanne	Ye		People's Association
74	Jong Soon, Julius	Foo		
75	Jovin	Ng	Senior Manager	Esplanade

No.	First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Company
76	Joyce	Teo		The Community Foundation of Singapore
77	Judy	Jia	Researcher	SUTD
78	Justin	Lee		
79	Kai	Eng		Kaifishfish
80	Kamil	Haque	Founder/Acting Coach	HCAC
81	Kamini	Ramachandran	Storyteller & Curator / Artistic Director	MoonShadow Stories / Singapore International Storytelling Festival
82	Kee Hong	Low		
83	Khairun	Nissak Modder-Anwar	Assistant Manager	The Esplanade Co Ltd
84	Lay Hoon	Toh	Director, Community Arts and Culture	People's Association
85	Lay Teng	Yeo		Odyssey Dance Theatre Ltd
86	Lindsey	Bailey	Artist/Educator	Independent
87	Ling Kiong	Quek		
88	Linnea	Ong	Head (Arts4youths)	Odyssey Dance Theatre Ltd
89	Louise	Phua		
90	Lynn	Yang		National Arts Council
91	Max	Cheng	Manager	National Arts Council
92	Melissa	Quek		LASALLE college
93	Melissa	Chiew	Freelance Theatre Artist & Educator	Various
94	Melissa	Reese		
95	Melissa	Tan		Independent
96	Mervyn	Quek	Project Manager	TheatreWorks (S) Ltd
97	Michael	Cheng	Artistic Director	Tapestry Playback Theatre
98	Michelle	Lim		Mud Rock Pte Ltd
99	Min Er	Lee		
100	Nicole	Ho	Asst Gallery Manager	Grey Projects

No.	First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Company
101	Noor Effendy	Ibrahim		The Substation
102	Noorlinah	Mohamed	Freelance Theatre Practitioner	Independent
103	Peck Hoon	Tam		Self-employed
104	Phaik Hoon	Neo	Asst Director, Community Arts and Culture	People's Association
105	Preeti	Gaonkar		Asia-Europe Foundation
106	Ranae	Lee		None
107	Renee	Chua		Freelance
108	Ric	Liu		
109	Rick	Tan	Co-founder	thruArts
110	Roslan	Mohd Daud	Programme Coordinator	INSPIRASI PPIS, Hub for Marriage Enrichment and Preparation
111	Samuel	Bev		National Arts Council
112	Selene	Yap		
113	Serena	Ho		Singapore Drama Educators' Association
114	Shao Xiong	Chia		
115	Sharmini	Viswambharan	Asst Director, Community Arts and Culture	People's Association
116	Shelia	Wee	Storyteller/Storytelling Trainer/Story Consultant	Storywise
117	Shihui	Khee	Executive Director	Bukit Ho Swee Family Service Centre
118	Shuxia	Tai		Kokoro, CARE
119	Sian Eng	Koh		The Esplanade Co Ltd
120	Siew Eng	Ng		
121	Sonia	Kwek		The Thought Collective
122	Swee-Kiang	Heng	Teacher	Temasek JC
123	Terence	Tan		Artsolute
124	Toby	Huynh	Curator	Singapore General Hospital
125	Varshini	P.		HCAC

No.	First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Company
126	Vicky	Gunawan		OneHeartBeat
127	Vincent	Yong	Founder	Danspire International
128	Wai Han	Chan	Business Development Manager	Pagesetters Services Pte Ltd
129	Wan Hui	Sim	Programmer	Singapore Art Museum
130	Wei Chin	Ng		The Very Quiet Studio
131	Wei Hong	Chiang		SE Community Development Council
132	Woon Ying	Chin	Manager (Artistic Administration)	Singapore Chinese Orchestra
133	Xuemei	Han		Drama Box
134	Yen	Phang		Displacements - a Community Arts Event at 13 Wilkie Terrace
135	Yu Xiang	Chiang		
136	Yuka	Ng	Entertainment Producer	The Zine Magazine
137	Zeliq	Lee	Manager (Community Impact Programmes)	Central Singapore CDC
138	Zheng Hao	Choo	Workshop Trainer	Self-employed