

The power of collaboration

An evaluation of Take Note's model for partnerships

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1. Executive summary

'I find that we often go around in circles about partnerships ... But this project really underlined for me the value of collaboration when it works well. I feel inspired to redefine our approach to working in collaboration ... This project has helped me think about what makes us unique and what we can do to embed collaboration in the way we think about ourselves, to be more deliberate about it.'

Previous NPC research¹ has described how working in collaboration helps organisations tackle social issues and supports communities to develop and thrive: when organisations work together towards a shared goal, it increases their reach and influence, while reducing competition and duplication, meaning positive social impact is more likely. More recently, through NPC's Rethink Rebuild project,² NPC has looked at how the Covid-19 crisis has galvanised collaborations by highlighting new possibilities and how a greater sense of urgency has led to more spontaneous collaborations with new partners.

However, partnership also requires time and resources that can put pressure on capacity. It tends to work best when it is motivated by genuine enthusiasm, when the challenges are understood, and there is clearly defined commitment about how to plan and deliver the work together.³

Take Note aims to spark and support extraordinary artistic collaborations to deliver ambitious, inclusive community arts projects. They do this through a package of funding and strategic support for groups of partners, to help these partners plan, deliver, and evaluate effective partnerships.

To date, Take Note has supported three partnership projects, one in Suffolk, and two in Gloucester in partnership with Gloucester-based organisation GUST, investing a total of £78,000. This report summarises NPC's evaluation of these projects and how Take Note supported them. Our aims are to highlight the impact of the Take Note approach on the organisations supported, reflect on which elements of the model have worked well and could be replicated, and consider where there might

¹ [NPC, Collaborating for Impact, 2013](#)

² <https://labs.thinknpc.org/category/rethink-rebuild/rethink-collaboration/>

³ See for example, Local Government Association 2020 (https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/5.87%20The%20Drivers%20of%20Collaboration%20Report_05%20%28002%29.pdf) and National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement 2021 (https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/what_works_guide_artists_and_researcher_collaborations_final_aug_2021.pdf)

be scope for improvement. Our wider aim is to evaluate and highlight the positive impact that collaboration can have on organisations and on communities.

We found that Take Note's model supported partners to align their aspirations and plan their work effectively, and gave them space to reflect strategically on the change they wanted to achieve together. Through Take Note's facilitated process, organisations established good working relationships with new allies from different sectors whilst also expanding their expertise and networks. Take Note also supported partners to develop their skills for effective partnership working, by introducing a range of tools and resources designed to strengthen and support best collaborative practice.

Overall, the main challenges to the Take Note model were: partners having to coordinate the work of many organisations; limits to the funding available; and keeping partners consistently engaged with the support being offered by Take Note. Despite these challenges, all the organisations who took part believed that Take Note's facilitation and collaborative approach helped them to improve their partnership skills, and ultimately increased the impact of their projects.

More widely, this evaluation finds that collaboration can contribute substantially to impact on partner organisations and to social impact in communities. The partners reported how working together helped them to amplify their artistic ambition and engage a more diverse group of people in their work. Partnerships also led to new social connections and a more joined up offer to the community from the organisations involved. Meanwhile, it reduced duplication of efforts and increased the ability of organisations to fill gaps and meet communities' needs. Partners agreed that partnerships are well worth pursuing, and with the right support and tools—such as those offered by Take Note—challenges can generally be overcome to be able to maximise the impact of projects delivered in collaboration.

2. Introduction

NPC (New Philanthropy Capital) was appointed to evaluate the Take Note programme and help Take Note capture useful learning to refine and adapt their approach with the intention to ultimately promote and embed its collaborative approach more widely. More specifically, this evaluation aimed to explore:

Why collaboration:

- To help understand the benefits and value of partnership working and the impact it can deliver for partner organisations and for communities.

Why Take Note:

- To help understand the extent to which Take Note's model of facilitation, tools and resources was effective in supporting organisations to improve and enhance their collaborative work together and impact.
- To reflect on and assess the different elements and stages of the Take Note model.

NPC were involved in all stages. We provided evaluation support to Take Note and its partners and took part as an observer in partnership meetings. We also helped Take Note design surveys to capture grantees' feedback on the application process and on the programme as a whole. We conducted group interviews with partner organisations across the three projects to capture their thoughts on the impact of the partnership, and the effectiveness of Take Note's model.

3. Meet the partners

3.1. About Take Note

Take Note is an ambitious initiative that aims to support and empower arts and non-arts organisations to collaborate on creative projects that involve communities and deliver social impact. Take Note has developed an innovative model in which funding for partnership projects is provided alongside strategic support to help maximise the impact and success of the collaboration. It works with organisations from the initial planning and preparation stages through to jointly delivering artistic activity and post-project reflection and evaluation.

3.2. About NPC

NPC (New Philanthropy Capital) supports charities and funders to maximise their social impact. We offer support and advice on a wide range of themes, including programme evaluation and strategy development. NPC has also supported several arts focused programmes, and published research looking at ways in which arts programmes can be used to promote social change.

3.3 About GUST

GUST was Take Note's strategic partner in Gloucester for that place-based fund. GUST is an incubator for new projects in the arts and in heritage and for emerging talent in Gloucester, and supported Take Note in networking and embedding in the city.

3.4. About the projects

Kirkley Creates (Lowestoft)

This was a partnership between Suffolk Artlink, Community Action Suffolk and First Light Festival, plus the Kirkley Pantry as an additional later partner. The project's vision was to connect the local community with the [First Light Festival](#) by engaging local people in creative activities that would be displayed at the festival. The project received £38,000 from Take Note. It was intended to be part of First Light 2020, but because of Covid-19 it was delayed for a year and its scope changed considerably.

Through a collaboration with the Kirkley Pantry, lead artists Carrie Phoenix and Kasia Posen, alongside expert forager Jon Tyler, developed a programme which focused on exploring Kirkley through its green spaces and its architecture—from sharing seeds and plants, to making inks and creating new planters. At the festival, dance company Casson & Friends gave a dance performance which incorporated the planters and canvas shapes created in response to conversations with project participants. In addition, a specially devised map named ‘Explore Kirkley’, which included participants’ artwork, was created to encourage more people to follow Jon Tyler’s foraging walks as an ongoing legacy for the project.

Creative Communities, New Perspectives (Gloucester)

This cross-sector partnership received £20,000 for a project to boost mental health and well-being in people particularly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, through mindful photography and drama. Six Gloucester-based organisations were involved: Gloucester Cathedral, Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS), Inclusion Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire Carers Hub and Look Again Photography.

The project aimed to bring together carers, NHS patients, adults facing disabling barriers, adults living with or in recovery from mental ill health and people seeking or granted asylum. Participants explored the relationship between photography and mindfulness through workshops and drama sessions. The project culminated in an exhibition at Gloucester Cathedral, open to the public throughout August 2021 and reaching over 30,000 visitors. A film of two short drama performances inspired by the group’s photographs was presented alongside the photographs.

Connect, Collaborate, Create (Gloucester)

This partnership group received £20,000 to bring together youth dance charity Your Next Move with other partners from across sectors: The Music Works, Barton Street Neighbourhood Policing Team, Prospects Youth Support Team, The Venture Playground, and Friendship Café. The project aimed to use art to shine a light on food poverty and the impact of the Covid-19 crisis.

The project delivered a multi-artform hip hop activity in four Gloucester communities in partnership with community organisations whose work crosses over into food provision. Workshops aimed to engage and inspire young people and provide a fun, creative and supportive space for families to come together after a challenging year of lockdowns and social restrictions. Alongside the activity programme, the project aimed to raise awareness of food poverty and the positive work of community organisations supporting local families.

The project reached more than 200 young people aged 5-16 through workshops in hip hop, beatboxing, MCing, DJing and graffiti. A film of the project was made and publicly screened with

local communities to celebrate the talent and creativity of local young people as well as spotlight the challenges of food poverty.

Project reach summary:

- **3** Take Note Connect partnership projects in areas of low arts provision—Gloucester and Lowestoft—funded to £78,000 (between £20,000-£38,000 per project) and supported by Take Note’s unique programme of wraparound strategic support.
- **16** cross-sector partners from the arts and other social change organisations, including the NHS, the police, a refugee support agency, a disability support agency and more.
- **397** participants engaged.
- Over **30,000** audience members (in person and digital) saw the final performances / exhibitions.
- **16** partnership applications from a total of over **70** arts and social-change organisations nationally.

4. The benefits of collaboration

4.1 The benefits of collaboration

‘Working in partnership with others was very important and produced a cohesive joined up approach. Collaboration means the load is shared, the networks are strengthened, and more people get involved delivering greater impact.’

All partners we spoke to were very positive about the benefits of collaboration in delivering the projects and in enhancing social impact, and their experiences highlight the range of potential benefits of collaborative working.

Different perspectives, expertise and learning

Each project brought together organisations from different sectors or parts of the community, including some who had never worked together before. Partners brought different perspectives and ideas, which everyone agreed was a key feature of the partnership approach and strengthened both project aims and the work itself.

‘This project has shown how valuable it is to work together and to see things from different perspectives—Kareena and Kirkley Centre and Maggie’s focus on the day-to-day needs of Kirkley people, Suffolk Artlink’s artist-led approach for this project, First Light Festival’s community celebration.’

Different partners also brought different types of expertise. As well as strengthening the projects, this gave partners opportunities to learn from one another and develop new skills. By sharing their experiences, partners were also able to deepen their understanding of the needs of the communities.

‘Working collaboratively on this has enabled all of the partners to further our working relationships and allowed our separate organisations to become further embedded within specific communities.’

This sharing of knowledge and experience helped make the process rewarding for those involved and amplified the legacy of the project by developing the skills of the people involved in its delivery.

Amplified artistic ambition

Working together encouraged partners to be more ambitious, both artistically and in terms of social impact.

'The artists we chose were both very experienced, but collaboration was new to them. The collaborative space we provided helped raise their ambition. There was something very exciting about choosing artists that had a lot to prove in collaborative practice. We were supporting them to aim really high personally and collaboratively.'

'I think this project has made us step up our artistic ambitions in the local area. It feels like we want to do it in a bigger way. We all learnt so much from this project, now we want to amplify it and share it with other partners. Historically, this has been a disjointed place with lots of groups working in silos. This project has demonstrated the value of collaboration to achieve real impact.'

Often this ambition manifested in helping people to develop connections between different elements of projects.

'Working collaboratively fuelled enthusiasm for our work and strengthened the project by bringing new ideas. For example, through the drama sessions we extended the creative and therapeutic themes brought to life in the mindful photography course.'

Enhanced motivation

Many partners described how working in partnership helped them to feel positive about the project, both through motivating and encouraging each other and through the sense of achieving more than would have been possible alone and overcoming challenges together. For some, this benefit was seen in the community itself as well as those involved in delivering the project.

'This partnership benefited all the organisations involved a great deal; we would not have arrived at the outcome of engaging with all these people without it. None of that would have happened, [we] would have not had the means or impetus to deliver activities in the way we did and the perseverance to keep going during the pandemic.'

Wider and more diverse community reach

'[The project] brought together a diverse group of people who shared and showcased their skills and experiences, including carers, disabled people, people working in the hospital, refugees and asylum seekers. We reached a far more diverse group of participants than any could have managed working on their own.'

Each partner brought their own connections, networks and experience of engaging with different community groups, which enhanced the reach and diversity of the participants taking part. Partnership working also increased opportunities for marketing, for example through sharing press releases and social media communications across all partners:

‘Through partners, we saw new possibilities in understanding how to offer opportunity to more people, particularly in hard-to-reach groups’.

The involvement of several partners also meant that those community members reached through the project were connected to a wider range of other services to access in future.

‘One of the major successes of this project is the signposting of partners’ organisational offers to participants, many of whom are now already taking part in other opportunities offered by the partners.’

Efficiency, consistency and additional resource

By delivering a combined offer, organisations could reduce the risk of duplication (for example approaching the same people with different projects). It also meant that the work was more coordinated and cohesive, and increased the ability of organisations to identify and fill gaps in provision. Joint working also means that efforts are shared:

‘Working closely with new partners helped us to ensure that we were not duplicating work, and we were thinking smartly at how we did things.’

The involvement of more partners also increased the resources available to the project, either actual or in kind.

Building new relationships

Across the three projects, several new relationships have been established both for participants and for the organisations involved, many of which will continue into the future along with possible new projects. In some cases, partners are already delivering new projects with each other as a direct result of the connections made through these projects.

‘Relationships have now been built which will be a great basis for future collaboration.’

‘This project has introduced participants to other opportunities through links with local offers and a greater connectedness with the local area through the project’s place-based focus.’

Take Note's partnership with Gloucester-based strategic organisation GUST enabled a wider reach in the city, a deeper understanding of the city's needs, and a greater potential for legacy through embedding Take Note's approach in GUST's future support of partnership projects.

Social impact in communities

Ultimately, the partnerships were all aimed at maximising the positive impact achieved for people and communities themselves. While it is difficult to claim a direct causal link between collaboration itself and social impact, partners did highlight some of the ways they believed it had made a difference. These reflect some of the benefits described above like increased ambition, reach and resilience in the face of a challenging and changing context like the pandemic.

'This project has achieved new social connections through shared creative activities and the diversity of participants.'

'This project has furthered all partners' understanding of the needs of young people in some of Gloucester's deprived areas.'

'I was very impressed with the number of people we managed to reach and the different ways we managed to connect with people. I thought people would be quite scared to take part. It was an exceptional time, so given the constraints we achieved a lot.'

'You have to work with the assets in the community to make things happen. This project really opened my eyes to all that is happening in this area to help children, it has improved my knowledge and understanding of other agencies.'

There was also positive feedback from those working on the frontline and participants themselves about the benefits of the projects.

'The course has made me realise that we exist as a community, that people are interested in each other and the way they see the world and they can learn from each other that way.' -

'The young people learned ... to maximise the impact the artwork has at conveying the message intended, as well as considering how their own artwork will complement their friends and peers work, in a collaborative nature.'

4.3 Challenges to collaboration

Lead organisations told us that it was challenging to coordinate the work of many partners, both in terms of time and resources needed, especially considering that all the projects were delivered throughout the pandemic which had a disruptive impact on organisations and communities.

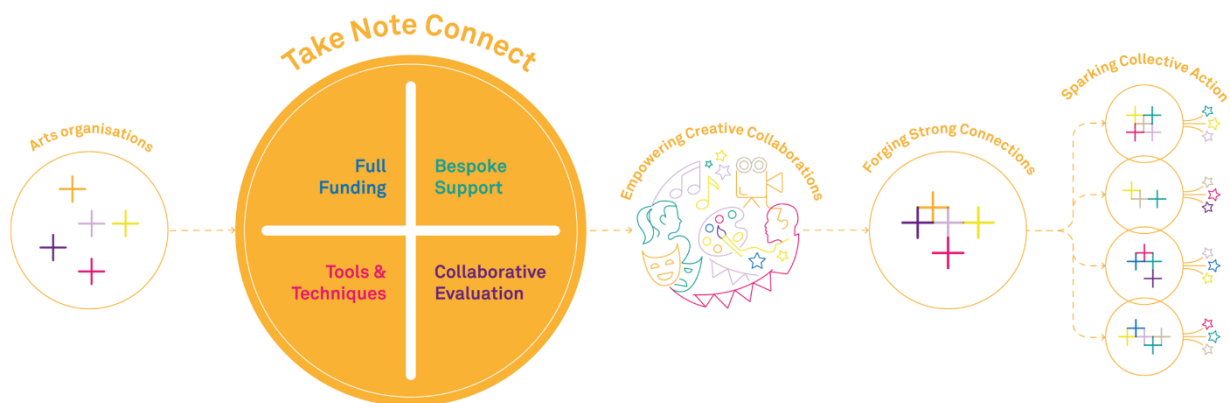
'We had very diverse partners, including community organisations operating in specific neighbourhoods. We had an opportunity to learn from partners in different ways, but it was also challenging to coordinate the work of 5-6 partners who were also trying to respond and adapt to the pandemic.'

Some of the other challenges mentioned were the relative capacity of different partners to attend meetings and contribute when needed; the tight timescale for delivering the work; keeping momentum going throughout the project; staff changes; challenges sharing information because of GDPR; and having to work online using Zoom / Microsoft Teams.

'We found it hard to keep momentum going, I was sending out lots of emails. There was also a drop in communications with new people coming in. Some people in our partner organisations left and new people came in and were not up to date with the project, so they were not aware of the timeline and the communication was very disjointed.'

5. The Take Note model at a glance

Take Note’s model offers a package of funding and support to cross-sector groups of partners working to deliver ambitious and inclusive arts projects. The model is predicated on the understanding that funding alone is not enough to promote healthy partnerships and does not offset the additional pressure and challenges that come from working with others. Rather, for groups of organisations to work better together—especially when they come from a range of sectors and backgrounds—additional support and tools are required to effectively plan, deliver and evaluate their collaboration.



The Take Note programme provides support at every stage of the partnership journey:

- **Full funding and a collaborative application process:** A two-part application process designed to encourage potential partners to come together, explore potential partnership ideas (through ‘speed-dating’ sessions and workshops) and collaborate on creating the funding application.
- **Support and facilitation through ‘Huddles’:** Once the partnerships were formed and funding awarded, Take Note facilitated three strategic partnership sessions (‘Huddles’) at key points in the project (‘Kick-Off’, ‘Check-In’, ‘Wrap-Up’).

- **Tools and techniques:** Partners were given tools, resources and techniques designed to support and enhance their partnerships.
- **Collaborative evaluation:** Partners were supported on project evaluation and collecting impact data. This included help to: build a collaborative Impact Map (theory of change); prioritise the outcomes they wanted to measure; choose the right level of evidence; and choose which methods to evaluate their projects' impact.

6. The Take Note model: Impact on projects

‘The approach from Take Note of developing the partnership over time and supporting that development throughout the project was a very different and positive experience—to have mutual buy-in, total understanding of the project’s aims and outcomes, and to all be equally invested in it brought huge benefits and was a great learning experience.’

6.1. Impact evaluation: Summary

Overall, this evaluation has found that by providing funding and strategic partnership support, Take Note can encourage partners to effectively plan their work together, reflect on the change they wanted to achieve, and plot out responsibilities and contributions from each partner. The process helped partners align their aspirations, anticipate challenges and work together towards finding shared solutions. It also encouraged partners to discuss how to distribute resources, skills and capacity across organisations. Partners across the three funded projects told us that they found this support helpful and instrumental to success.

‘The support from Take Note made us focus and be clear about who we were targeting with the project [...] The initial planning session gave us the resources to be able to adapt throughout the project and was very much guided by the tools created by Take Note. It meant that whatever journey we took, the delivery was alright. There was a clear methodology to start with and that showed all the way throughout the project despite the changes.’

All the project partners interviewed noted that their projects might have not happened without the funding and support provided by Take Note; or if they had happened, would have been on a much smaller scale, with fewer partners involved and with less benefit for the community.

‘The partnership would not have happened without funding and support from Take Note, we may have had a sort of relationship with other organisations in a light touch way, they may have brought some elements of their contribution to the final project output. But we would not have understood the good they do and the potential to work with them.’

6.2. Successes: What works well in the model

Full funding and a collaborative application process

While collaboration will often occur between organisations who are familiar with each other or with each other's ways of working, NPC has argued that some of the best work happens between organisations with different areas of specialism.⁴ To encourage collaborations between unlikely allies, Take Note designed a two-stage process that sought to encourage organisations to actively collaborate in shaping the project together from the start and contribute equitably to the funding application. The first stage was written / filmed / visual, requiring contribution from each partner. The second stage took the form of a group workshop to start developing a collaborative Impact Map (theory of change) together. Positive feedback on the application process was that it felt rigorous, professional, and helpful in creating new opportunities for organisations to work together. The approach of encouraging new partnerships rather than solely building on existing ones was seen as a great way to enhance partnership infrastructure in a place. The process also connected established and less established organisations, across the arts and other social-change sectors. Projects felt this encouraged them to be more innovative and increased their potential to reach more people across different communities.

'The application process offered us the opportunity to engage with new partners, to partner with organisations we never worked closely with before, which was very positive. We also found all the guidelines Take Note gave us throughout the process helpful ... [Take Note] established a supportive relationship with us right from the start, and the various stages in the process helped us to firm up plans for how we wanted to work with partners.'

Bespoke support and facilitation

A core part of Take Note's support was facilitated and bespoke sessions for partners to meet at key points, referred to as 'Huddles'. These gave partnerships the opportunity to discuss:

- The change they wanted to achieve and the role each partner could play.
- What was working well and any challenges they were experiencing.
- How the group would evaluate the impact of their projects on communities.
- The legacy of each project, and how they could continue developing the partnership.

⁴ <https://labs.thinknpc.org/unlikely-allies-collaborating-beyond-the-comfort-zone/>

'Huddles' were positively received by all participants as useful opportunities for partners to come together and reflect.

'The idea of the Huddle seemed very original. That element of it being integral to the project. It made us stop and evaluate as we were going along with the added element of getting very thoughtful and useful prompts from Take Note. Everything was geared towards helping us to think about collaboration. The Huddles helped us to make sure our collaboration was on track and felt very supportive.'

A key benefit of this approach was ensuring that everyone was aligned from the start. To achieve this, Take Note focused the first Huddle on developing a shared Impact Map (or theory of change), which articulated what the partnership project aimed to achieve and how. This was also an opportunity to tease out any differences in focus or understanding that could have caused problems later.

'To have mutual buy-in, total understanding of the project's aims and outcomes, and to all be equally invested in it brought huge benefits and was a great learning experience.'

'All the resources TN shared were very good—I thought the theory of change session was excellent, a very illuminating session.'

The 'Huddles' also encouraged partners to discuss how to distribute resources, skills and capacity across each organisation.

'The meetings in the lead up to the delivery sessions proved very useful for organisations to share ideas and experiences that helped shape the co-delivery and strategic aims of the partnership programme.'

Project partners from all groups seemed to appreciate Take Note's facilitation, which was seen as instrumental in creating a reflective environment where partners could openly talk about their partnership and learn from each other. Partners in all three projects said that the Huddles helped them to reflect on shared values such as the importance of establishing open communication and shared goals, to embrace a diversity of perspectives and contributions, and to share responsibility for following through on actions.

By facilitating these meetings, Take Note created a safe space where all participants felt they could learn from each other and were encouraged to share their views and expertise. The process gave a chance for partners to reflect on what their collaboration could achieve and what change might look like for beneficiaries and communities, which in turn increased the organisations' enthusiasm for the project.

'The Huddles gave us a chance to step away from the project delivery and look at the partnership. Without Take Note's support, we would have facilitated those conversations ourselves, but it would have been less effective. Having someone as external support to facilitate these conversations was helpful [...] The Huddles offered moments where we had permission to come together, breathe and think things out. I think it did enhance the partnership, it enabled us to connect and appreciate each other's input more [...] it helped us to achieve our outcomes better.'

Some of the partners mentioned how the structure of the Take Note framework and the bespoke support on offer created a space in which they felt encouraged to develop an open and honest communication with each other, to voice any concerns or challenges, and to participate as equals.

'Connections between partners felt very different, we were in a framework created to hold us as three organisations, and I have never experienced that to such an extent before. Something was different about this partnership. Take Note's staff were actively involved, in a very caring and light touch way.'

Tools and techniques

In addition to facilitating the 'Huddles', Take Note also designed and shared a collaborative toolkit, including a range of partnership resources such as:

- A partnership agreement template, to help define roles and responsibilities of each partner.
- A 'partnership cycle' diagram to help partners to think about the different stages of the partnership and explore opportunities and challenges associated with each stage.
- A partnership 'health check', which participants completed ahead of each 'Huddle' to help assess how well the partnership was working across different elements.

All partners thought that Take Note's resources were helpful and enhanced their partnership. Partners noted that having access to these resources helped them to develop a clearer structure for their work together, and a strategy for how they could move forward as a group.

'All of the resources that Take Note shared with us were really helpful. The support we received from Take Note made us feel as if we were a part of this together. Take Note gave us the strategy and tools we could use to move forward in our partnership. They gave us a structure to work together and helped us to clarify what all of us needed to do.'

'I will take this learning away with me and try to implement some of the tools given in the project in future collaborations.'

'I had never gone through a ToC process before, it was great to have new tools to measure outcomes, great for me professionally and a good tool for the Cathedral and other staff.'

Collaborative evaluation

Take Note offered a collaborative theory of change model to help partners reflect on the change they wanted to make and what they wanted their beneficiaries to experience. They also offered collaborative and creative evaluation prompts to help partners better assess the impact of their projects on the people and communities they engaged with.

'Working together with Take Note to develop our theory of change helped us massively. The project was not easy as we aimed to engage participants that needed a lot of support and care. Having developed a theory of change, we had a clearer sense of the outcomes we were hoping to see in participants and so we were able to develop a shared methodology for how we could measure whether these outcomes had been achieved.'

7. Learning points

While the overall feedback on Take Note's support was very positive, partners also identified some challenges and possible improvements.

Application process

Some partners thought that the application process was too long, demanding and time consuming, particularly for those organisations coordinating the effort. Some felt that the level of information and time commitment required to apply was disproportionate to the funding on offer. Take Note has already substantially adapted its funding approach in response to feedback from the Gloucester funding round.

Size of collaborations

Although the process created valuable opportunities for many organisations to build new relationships with the potential to continue beyond the project, partners also reported that working in partnership was difficult to coordinate and time consuming, especially when many organisations were involved.

Take Note could consider limiting projects to three to four organisations to minimise the burden on the lead organisations, and only accept applications from smaller scale projects to make projects more sustainable and manageable.

Funding

One project said that the relatively small amount of funding the partnership received meant they had to scale back the project outputs and leave a smaller scale legacy than they had originally intended. With more case studies, past project examples and track record, Take Note would be able to more effectively share previous examples of partnership projects funded at different levels, to give a clearer indication to potential applicants what is possible in terms of scale, ambition and reach.

Support and facilitation

All partnerships said it was helpful to have an external facilitator who could 'hold the space' for them to explore how the partnership could work best. However, this model is fairly intensive and

costly; Take Note is therefore developing an alternative iteration of the model that is self-facilitated and which requires organisations to engage with the 'Collaboration Toolkit' using it as a framework for their project planning, delivery and evaluation. Take Note is also exploring how others in the community can take on this facilitation role, what this role might look like and how it might be funded.

Although all partners found the 'Huddles' useful, a few said that attending additional meetings put a strain on the project. This was especially true of smaller organisations who were receiving less funding and therefore struggled with capacity. It meant that some partners were not able to be fully integrated into the project.

'Having to attend so many sessions meant that some partners could not attend, including partners that had a valuable contribution to make, so we missed their input into the process.'

In response, Take Note could consider how to simplify the 'Huddle' process to maximise engagement from partners and ensure everyone has enough opportunity to contribute and / or develop a structure for the 'Huddles' where not every partner is required for every discussion.

Collaborative evaluation

All projects appreciated receiving support from Take Note to develop their evaluation approach. Indeed, some partners would have welcomed more on this topic, so Take Note could consider designing additional resources to help partners develop and implement a measurement framework. Better project evaluation will mean that Take Note could more confidently describe the impact of the projects, and thereby have a stronger legacy.

'The CPD (Continuing Professional Development) element of the theory of change and evaluation Huddles and organisational benefit could be built as a couple of half day workshops in person followed by a couple of online shorter calls. This would give capacity to expand learning for more than one person attending from organisation.'

8. Potential legacy

Legacy of collaboration

Partners reported that they learned more about what works in collaboration and felt this experience would help them work more effectively with others in future. Many also said that they intended to retain and further develop the relationships developed directly through this project. One partner talked about how they were now considering ways in which they could replicate this partnership model to amplify the impact of their work in their local area.

'As an organisation, this has been an interesting experience—we are now trying to figure out how we can replicate this way of working with bigger partnership projects and with bigger partners that have a lot of bureaucracy.'

Legacy of Take Note's model

A key reflection about the role played by Take Note was whether more could be done to ensure that the model is replicable without funding and / or external facilitation by Take Note. One partner suggested that Take Note should think more about how they could help the funded organisations to embed this partnership model across their organisations, to maximise the positive knock-on effect:

'I would not change anything in terms of the project delivery model. But it requires more thinking at the organisational and developmental level to understand how to embed the model more broadly in an organisation and what works afterwards. There is something more about the broader impact of this model and how to change the way in which organisations are operating. Could there be a mentoring programme offered to help organisations to learn how to embed this approach beyond the project?'

Some partners thought that the place-based funding model implemented in Gloucester, where Take Note funded two unrelated projects and did so in collaboration with a strategic partner in the city, GUST, was an important way to amplify the impact for the local community and enable relationship building between key stakeholders. Take Note could consider how to expand and develop a place-based funding model which could potentially involve engaging other funders, and stakeholders that are active in specific areas.

'There needs to be support and recognition for the Take Note model within the sector at a higher level. Particularly in the context of placemaking. Towns and cities could benefit massively from this, it gets people to think about healthy collaboration. The point of a project like this one is not just the final output but also the relationships formed to create that output—that is its legacy.'

Take Note is developing new iterations of the model to meet these legacy and replicability challenges. A new 'Collaboration Toolkit' of partnership resources has been developed, incorporating the experience and feedback of the Gloucester and Lowestoft partners, with a view to organisations being able to use these tools without external facilitation, as well as within future versions of the Take Note model. Take Note has also identified a need for a brokering and producing role in partnerships that is currently not being met and is developing the concept for a network of place-based 'Collaborative Change Makers', trained in the Take Note model, to fill this gap.

Appendix 1: The Take Note partnership model's theory of change



CHALLENGES	PROJECT			OUTCOMES	VISION
<p>What challenge(s) faced by your community are you trying to tackle?</p> <p>(Ask yourself why you're doing the project? Why now? What need is there for it?)</p> <p>E.g. There is not enough creative provision for young people in the community.</p>	<p>ACTIVITIES</p> <p>What are you doing during the project?</p> <p>(These are the actions/concrete steps taken to produce the outputs and achieve your outcomes.)</p> <p>E.g. Running 10 dance workshops for young people.</p>	<p>CHANGE MECHANISMS</p> <p>What do you want people to be thinking, feeling or doing while experiencing the project?</p> <p>(These are ways people will engage that make your outcomes more likely.)</p> <p>E.g. feeling safe, trusting staff, having fun, feeling listened to, starting to think about things differently</p>	<p>OUTPUTS</p> <p>What will you have created / what events will have happened by the end of the project?</p> <p>(These are tangible products/ services that result from project activities. They're usually concrete and countable.)</p> <p>E.g. 3 local site-specific performances.</p>	<p>What changes do you want to make through the project?</p> <p>(Who do you want to make change with? The communities you're working with? Your partners?)</p> <p>These should be concrete, measurable changes.)</p> <p>E.g. Young people feel more confident.</p> <p>E.g. Each partner has developed their expertise from another partner.</p>	<p>What ultimate change do you want your project to contribute to in society / your community?</p> <p>(Imagine your society/community once the project has happened. How do you want it to be better?)</p> <p>E.g. A community of young people that is more connected in which every young person can access creative opportunities.</p>