Network for Creative Enterprise

Final Report

November 2019

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One.

Who we are

The Network for Creative Enterprise (NfCE) was established in October 2017 to help freelancers, artists, creative practitioners, start-up microbusinesses, and small to medium enterprises (SMEs) in the West of England LEP[1] area make a sustainable living from their creative ideas. The programme was awarded £1,000,000 by Arts Council England and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to achieve this ambition.

Between October 2017 and June 2019, we offered free workspace, skills development workshops, bespoke business support, small bursaries, one-to-one mentoring, showcasing opportunities and other resources to creatives looking to grow or start their business.

Our approach has been to understand the West of England's creative sector as a rich ecology of diverse practices and ambitions, which, with the right kind of flexible support at the right time, can thrive in ways that are sustainable, impactful and meaningful to our participants and our stakeholders.

The NfCE programme was a collaboration between four existing cultural hubs and UWE Bristol.

The programme was led by Watershed, a digital creativity centre in Bristol. Watershed hosts the Pervasive Media Studio, home to a community of over 150 artists, creative companies, technologists and academics exploring creative, commercial and cultural opportunities offered by new technologies.

Watershed is an important hub for the Bristol city region, with strong links to national and international cultural organisations. Watershed makes a commitment to work with creatives over long periods of time, supporting them to develop their practice in a way most suited to their needs.

Spike Island is an artspace in Bristol, offering studios to over 70 artists, workspace for 35 creative businesses, community resources for 160 Associates, and is home to UWE Bristol's Fine Art BA (Hons) students. In their museum-sized gallery spaces, Spike Island celebrates the best of international contemporary art, while supporting artists to create innovative work at every stage of their career. The community is a place where artists can develop their careers, knowledge, and networks.

The Guild is a unique coworking space for creative and technology freelancers and small businesses in Bath. Launched in 2012 as a not-for-profit Community Interest Company, its mission is to create and nurture an environment that helps their members work, grow and network together.

KWMC: The Factory is a digital fabrication, design, and prototype micro-manufacturing hub and makerspace in South Bristol. The Factory works with creative practitioners, technologists and community members to offer a site for new modes of manufacturing, using sustainable materials developing new skills, products and enterprises. It aims to create cross-city networks that support open, scalable and inclusive civic participation. The Factory is run by Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC), a charitable arts organisation which supports social action using technology, community arts and education.

UWE Bristol is one of the region's leading universities. Its Research Business and Innovation (RBI) team have extensive experience delivering and managing ERDF finance, funder and contractual relationships. The Creative Economy Unit at UWE's Digital Cultures Research Centre have spent the last ten years developing critical approaches to understanding how creative economies work and generate value beyond the economic.

This report describes what we did, how we did it, and what we found out.

[1] The West of England is defined by the limits of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) which comprises the councils of Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset, Bristol City, and South Gloucestershire.

Two.

NfCE by Numbers

We worked together to deliver a unique programme of tailored support for participants to further their business ideas, develop their working practices, and make their businesses viable and sustainable, increase individual's confidence, grow skillsets, and generate paid work and new jobs.

applied
exercise
innovation
club
cardboard
climate
bio-plastics
director
jewellery
carers
diverse
augmented
aesthetic
dance
consultancy
architect
comics
issues
festival
magazine
fringe
installation
embedding
headgear
education
art
events
games
fashion
internet
engineer
illustration
jeweller
facilitator
film
documentary
live
ethical
change
curator
cutlery
architecture
garden
developer
energy
interactive
immersive
agency
animation
drawing
artform
copyrighter
body
books
built
landscape
illustration
marketing
editor
experiences
creative
laser
embroidery
costume
cutter
advertising
filmaker
exhibition
face
designer
access
cross
led
canvas
development
environment
composer
computer
ceramist
manager
community
food
digital
cut
children
furniture
app
engagement
maker
cinema
kits
fabricator
craft
extended
emotional
bath
collage
fine
inclusivity
graphic
collaborator
development
homeware
artwork
artist
accessories
drawn
ceramics
edible
making
hand
health
clothing
dining
asia
journalist

Our residents came from an astonishing range of practices, from craft to fine art, technology development to publishing, pottery to manufacture, social enterprise, to business coaching.

This group has become an extraordinary ecology of creative entrepreneurs who demonstrate the rich, complex, and often hidden, work of our cultural and creative sector.

For the full details of our targets and outcomes, please see Appendix A.

122
of our residents received **over 12 hours in support**

We offered residencies to
147
creatives, artists and companies who live or work in the West of England

We supported
26
new companies

We thought we'd only reach
80

We helped
85
entrepreneurs
to formalise their work and take their ideas to the next stage of development

Our target was
60

Our residents collectively received

600+

hours of **one-to-one mentoring**

Our target was

16

And launched

40

new products

Their innovations have generated

41.5

new jobs

They also attended

60

workshops,

and received one-to-one Hub Producer support and access to free workspace in the region's most vibrant and connected cultural spaces

Our target was

19

Three.

Understanding our community

NfCE was designed on the principle that sustainable and resilient regional economies need to be understood as networks. To support those networks, we need to understand the complex relationships between organisations, people, places, individuals, institutions and companies at all scales. We believe this is the key to generating sustainable and meaningful impacts of all kinds, from economic through to social, cultural and environmental.

Bristol and Bath have over

5,570

Creative Industry companies

accounting for over

10%

of regional businesses

Our regional creative economy is made up primarily of a range of microbusinesses. Nesta's Creative Nation[2] report suggests Bristol has 4,375 Creative Industry businesses with 16.6K employees, comprising 10.2% of total businesses and 3.8% employment in the city. Bath is reported to have 1,195 businesses with an average of 4.98 employees, accounting for 11.62% of the city's businesses and 3.57% of employment. The Independent Review of the Creative Industries further aggregates this data, showing a £780m GVA for the sector in Bristol with an average sized business of 3.63. Additionally the region has a higher than average rate of freelance employment in the Creative Industries; 43% against a national average of 34%.

> "Taken as a whole, the Creative Industries provide about 15,900 jobs in the Bristol and Bath area. The region's creatives are estimated to be 50% more productive than the UK average, and since 1999, there has been a 106% increase in productivity in Creative Industries across Bristol and Bath." [4]
>
> Peter Bazalgette, *Independent Review of the Creative Industries*

This combination of low average business size and high productivity is recognisably characteristic of the Bristol and Bath creative cluster.

A very high proportion of creative work in our region happens at a freelance and sole trader level, which renders much of their activity invisible to the Office of National Statistics (ONS). ONS classifies work according to Standard Industry and Occupation Codes (SIC and SOC). If a creative enterprise is not registered as a business, or does not report their taxation on their creative work, then they are not counted or measured in any of the official statistics used to estimate the size of the creative industries. This is reflected in the inconsistent estimates of the creative workforce in the region. This means policies are often designed for more visible, larger companies. Furthermore, the nature of the work is precarious, project or commission based and unpredictable with work volume varying dramatically throughout the year. This makes the businesses hard to track.

Connecting the dots

These businesses are vital to the success of a creative region. This substrate of creative workers acts not only as a flexible labour pool for larger creative operations, but it is also a productive, innovative network. These workers frequently act as drivers of ethical, sustainable creative innovation. There is also distinct diversity in business models and approaches to work adopted by these enterprises, driven by a practice of interdependency, collaboration, and sharing of skills, ideas, and work. We've found[5] that in these networks, value of all kinds is exchanged whether that is economic (in the form of paid work, commissions, or funding), social (in terms of training, expertise, support, confidence), or cultural, (in terms of new ideas, inspiration,

[2] Mateos Garcia, J. Klinger, J. and Stathoulopoulos, K. (2018) *Creative Nation: How the creative industries are powering the UK's nations and regions* London: Nesta

[3] Bazalgette, P. (2017) *Independent Review of the Creative Industries* London: DCMS

[4] p. 63, *ibid*

[5] Dovey, J., Moreton, S., Sparke, S., & Sharpe, B. (2016). The practice of cultural ecology: network connectivity in the creative economy. *Cultural Trends*, 25(2), 87-103. https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2016.1170922.

new approaches and ways of seeing the world). Often small and precarious, these creative microbusinesses are the lifeblood of a regional or city based creative economy.

The Creative Hub model

The informal and flexible nature of creative work means that aggregation of small businesses into a network offers them stability and growth through increased connectivity. Creative hubs are key providers of resources for businesses to form these bonds. These are spaces of support that help connect, motivate, broker and provide space for interaction in an increasingly diffuse creative sector.

Ramona Bigwood

The idea of the 'Creative Hub' as a way of organising this work has become prevalent over the last twenty years. Taking over from terms like studios, labs, and offices, the hub – often in the guise of a 'co-working space' – is a term that derives its value as a loosely organized site for resourcing work and making it more productive through connectivity[6].

> "The creative hub is more than the sum of its parts. It offers creative microbusinesses the chance to aggregate with others in order to access crucial resources such as tools, specialist services, or inspiration to help develop projects and businesses. Hubs represent a collective approach to coping with uncertain social, cultural and economic environments and processes of creativity and innovation." [7]
>
> Jonathan Dovey et al *Creative Hubs: Understanding the New Economy*

In previous work for the British Council, we distinguished between the co-located, co-working space and the creative hub. Rather than a shared facility often run as a commercial operation, the creative hub is in fact a far more intentional site, bringing together different disciplines and talents to intensify creative innovation.

Creative Hubs are spaces of cultural, social and economic support and resilience, that gather together the strength of their networks and encourage and communicate their many impacts.

[6] British Council (2015) *Creative Hub Toolkit,* http://creativeconomy.britishcouncil.org/blog/15/06/28/creative-hubkit-made-hubs-emerging-hubs/)

[7] Dovey, J. and Pratt, AC. with Moreton, S., Virani, T., Merkel, J and Lansdowne, J. (2016) *Creative Hubs: Understanding the New Economy* London: British Council, p. 4

The creative economy as a cultural ecology

Our approach was to bring together four very different creative hubs, each of whom bought their own unique focuses, talents, markets, approaches and communities in a new kind of cultural ecology. We adopted a simple working definition of cultural ecology from research undertaken in California by Ann Markusen; 'the complex interdependencies that shape the demand for and production of arts and cultural offerings.'[8]

Thinking 'ecologically' has been part of the Watershed approach for more than ten years, since working with Bill Sharpe of the International Futures Foundation[9]. This approach involves always looking at the whole aggregation of parts that constitute the system. In this instance these parts are the companies, people, institutions, places, mentors, resources, communications infrastructures, producers and stakeholders in our region.

We think this approach is a useful way for cultural organisations and creative businesses to understand themselves, because it highlights how the system produces value: if we ask creative workers what motivates them and what values drive what they do, we get a whole range of answers- inspiration, trust, support, excitement, virtuosity, discovery, reputation as well as money and security. What happens in the production of any creative product or service is that all these values and many others are in play, being shared, swapped, exchanged and built upon. This understanding of the values that build cultural ecologies can transform the way we operate by helping us to understand the rich mix of values that are released in cultural and creative production. This makes it possible for us to value many different outputs of the systems we manage, from the social, to the cultural and the economic.

[8] Markusen, A., Gadwa, A., Barbour, E. and Beyers, W. (2011) *California's arts and cultural ecology*. San Francisco, CA: The James Irvine Foundation, September, p. 8

[9] Leicester, G., Sharpe, B. (2010). *Producing the Future: Understanding Watershed's Role in Ecosystems of Cultural Innovation* Bristol: Watershed

Four.

Who we supported

Network for Creative Enterprise attracted and supported a wide range of people and businesses, from budding entrepreneurs ready to start a business, to sole traders looking to expand their offer, to small companies ready to grow.

Love Letters by Yiota Demetriou

> We are working with people who are worried about registering with HMRC for taxes on one end of the scale, and people who need to set up a board because they have expanded their business so much on the other. We constantly witness that there are typically no linear pathways in this part of the creative industries and we need to be as flexible as possible to allow us to offer the right support at the right time. The strength of the cultural sector is its diversity and therefore flexibility is vital.

Vanessa Bellaar Spruijt, Network Producer

129
described their work as primarily cultural or cultural and commercial

85%
of residents were university educated, with 71% in the 25 – 44 age range

At the point of signing up to the programme, residents reported a range of aspirations for their involvement in NfCE, but nearly all centred around notions of financially and personally sustainable practices, personal and professional growth, and the realisation of creative practices and ideas as businesses. Some saw this as a case of expansion, or scaling up of an existing business as a solution to the challenges of deriving a regular income, but most residents were driven by other aims. Most strongly amongst these was a sense that although economic security was important and ultimately essential, the idea of sustainability included personal development, ethical practice, and connectivity as key factors alongside income.

As well as being structurally varied, our resident community was made up of an astonishing range of creative disciplines, ideas, and approaches to working. 129 described their work as primarily cultural or cultural and commercial; 106 described themselves as artists. The vast majority worked in teams of 6 or fewer, and 70% worked on their own as freelancers and/or sole traders or self-employed. 85% of residents were university educated. 71% were in the 25 – 44 age range, with 41% being between 25 and 34 years of age. 65% identified as women.

The picture is one of a community of a younger, university educated group of creative entrepreneurs, predominantly women, and majority white, working overwhelmingly at small scale. This fits with a national profile, where an overwhelming 87% of the growth of all businesses since 2000 has been 'non-employing businesses' or sole proprietors. In this sense the residents who made up the NfCE community are typical of an aspirational entrepreneurialism across all sectors of the economy. Given that the average business size in Creative Industries in Bristol and Bath is 3.6 FTE jobs, our target beneficiaries were even smaller.

Compass Presents

our residents on average worked

2.7

days a week on their business with us

By and large the residents who engaged with the network can all be classified within the ONS Standard Occupational Codes for creative industry workers[10]. However, these broad definitions cannot tell the specific stories of this group of aspirant creatives looking to make their practices more economically sustainable. Working at such small scale many of the residents in the programme would describe themselves as having a practice rather than a business. These practices combine working intuitively, following creative ideas with a strong sense of entrepreneurial opportunism that seeks markets for new products or processes. This frequently produces innovative hybridising services, for instance, a textile artist working with technology to produce wearables that find markets in the care sector, a traditional craft practitioner combining with IT to find 'spillover' applications in health and wellbeing, or the theatre director retraining in mediation to work in conflict resolution.

Further, a simple classification fails to capture the variety of income-generating strategies present in our community. Many residents had other part-time jobs to support their creative work, others relied on grants from the Arts Council or other funding bodies, commissions, sales, or crowd-sourcing funding and investment. In fact, our residents on average worked 2.7 days a week on their business with us: the rest of time was often spent generating income from other sources.

[10] Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) designated classifications for Creative Industries are - Advertising and marketing; Crafts; Design: product, graphic and fashion design; Film, TV, video, radio and photography; IT, software and computer services; Publishing; Museums, galleries and libraries; Music, performing and visual arts.

Hellion Trace

Five.

What we did

Producing an infrastructure for NfCE

The programme was led by Watershed, who hosted a Network Producer, Project Director and managed finance, funder and contractual relationships for the Arts Council funding. UWE Bristol's research office (RBI) managed the ERDF fund, and managed cashflow for the other partner hubs. The three other cultural hubs managed finances, spaces, and residents attached to their organisation, and acted as co-directors for the project. UWE Bristol's researchers offered research and evaluation expertise, developed through a series of previous projects in the sector, and worked with the team to advise on gathering data and capturing impact. All the partners were represented on a Steering Board, who designed the work programme with the delivery team.

Creative Producers

At the heart of the programme was a curatorial, intentional approach to supporting our creative ecosystem. This involved designing a programme for our residents that was responsive, put their wellbeing and needs high on the agenda, and that offered a range of interventions at different scales that could match the diversity of types of business in our region. In order to do this, we drew on the idea of the 'Creative Producer', a creative professional who acts as a broker forging collaborations and relationships, connects parts of the network together, puts people in touch with resources, identifies advantageous development routes for creative people, and frequently translates between different parts of the ecosystem where professional languages and approaches to work often differ.

NfCE employed one full-time Network Producer and four Hub Producer roles. The Network Producer, based at the Pervasive Media Studio in Watershed, supported the network as a whole, coordinating the day-to-day operation of NfCE, facilitated the partnership and lead on developing the network strategically beyond its existing partners. The Network Producer's role was instrumental in connecting and steering the complementary, but distinct, ways in which the partners supported creative talent, establishing a proactive but reflective process of action learning.

A Hub Producer was appointed in each of the four delivery hubs in the network to manage the networks and relationships of each hub, recruit and support residents, and otherwise expand and develop the work of NfCE across the region. The Hub Producers were highly connected in their respective industries, from contemporary art curation to business and community development.

Compass Presents

This interdisciplinary expertise added strength to the network by ensuring that residents saw their own areas of work reflected in the people supporting them, and whose advice, connections and support was relevant to their profession. They also brokered access to facilities across the hubs: whether that was an artist at Spike Island finding a fabrication service at KWMC: The Factory, or a print designer at the Guild finding business support from the Pervasive Media Studio, the Producers ensured the opportunity for our residents, many of whose practices and ideas crossed between boundaries of industrial sectors or artistic disciplines, as broad an access to the facilities at the creative heart of the region as possible.

Rising

Studio Meineck

The Producer team also collaborated with the Steering Board to design and lead the NfCE programme. They planned community building activities, sought out residents, designed programmes of support, contracted workshops, curated events relevant to the needs of residents, and offered them creative and business advice. As well as acting as 'frontline staff' for the residents, the Hub Producers were also responsible for articulating the core values for the programme. The Hub Producers and the research team collaborated to generate a core set of values that set the tone for the way the network would be managed. This stems from a belief that supporting networks involves active and ethical approaches to care, strategic and responsive methods, and a recognition of value beyond the often limited metrics demanded by funders. In this sense, our values were designed to reflect an approach to work in the creative sector that was led by accessibility, accountability, and care. These values were captured in the NfCE Manifesto (see Appendix B). All the producers also shared skills and experiences with one another, and developed new expertise on the basis of their collaboration.

By being strategic and proactive, collaboratively identifying the needs of the programme and its participants, and making appropriate development plans with them, the Producers became the key nodes of the NfCE network. This collaborative framework provided the NfCE with a strong bedrock from which to operate.

Supporting our residents

NfCE offered residencies to creative individuals and businesses. Potential residents were identified through specific targeted outreach activities, came to us directly, or through recommendations from other creatives and businesses in our networks. If we felt we could offer the support required and the candidate was eligible (see below), these individuals and businesses became part of our world as residents of Network for Creative Enterprise. Each resident was hosted at one of the four delivery hubs which was deemed most relevant to their skills, expertise, and the field in which they worked. Their relationship to other residents and hubs was supported by the Hub Producers, to allow cross-hub working and access to opportunities and networking to unfold.

The basic offer (detailed in the table below) to our residents was access to free, practical working space to develop business ideas, and a community of support appropriate to the residents' needs – whether an artist seeking advice on exhibiting work, a designer exploring markets for their jewellery, a creative technologist seeking a manufacturer for their product, a business needing tax advice in order to expand to a new market, or a company with investment looking to expand its team, we sought to connect our residents with business expertise, mentoring and industry knowledge appropriate to their needs. Small bursaries were also available to residents with specific needs to help develop their practice or business.

Support offered by NfCE

Opportunity:	Criteria for support:
• Access to free working space in the hub • One-to-one development sessions with the Hub Producer • Peer-to-peer support • One-to-one business mentoring sessions • Opportunities to attend diverse workshops and training sessions across the network • Opportunies to attend hub specific workshops and training • Opportunity to attend monthly Tax and Accountancy clinics • Opportunity to attend intensive business development courses for businesses at specific stages of growth • Opportunity to apply for a £800 micro-bursary to support the development of their business idea • Opportunity to apply for a £1,000 - £2,400 Business Development Bursary to support the development of their creative business • Access to hub-specific support/equipment available such as screenprinter, laser cutter, AV equipment, etc.	• The participant has a creative idea they wish to explore and develop further, or the participant has an existing creative business they wish to develop • The support the hub and the network is able to offer is likely to enable the participant to progress their idea towards a business proposition, or to support the development of the existing business (this could include growing their core team or expanding their product range etc.) • The participant is ready and committed to make the most of the available opportunity, including spending a minimum of 16 hours per week developing their business idea • The participant will be generous and open and will fully engage with the hub community • The participant must be over 16, and must not be a full-time student • The participant must be living in the West of England and/or their business must be registered in the West of England

Business Mentoring

Traditional business support, with a heavy focus on investment and rapid growth, is not always the right fit for creative companies who are balancing economic sustainability with ambitions driven by social or cultural value. Network for Creative Enterprise offered an alternative model of business development for the creative sector in which business mentors played a key role in this tailored support. How to consolidate precarious creative aspiration into more focussed business practices and structures, that reflected the reality of portfolio careers became one of the main dynamics of the mentoring process offered to residents.

Over 600 hours of mentorship with three dedicated expert mentors were provided to residents. The mentors were commissioned for the duration of the project, so that meaningful and efficient business relationships could be established. They worked in partnership with the Network and Hub Producers to identify the needs of the residents and support their development.

During the mentoring sessions, mentors were able to provide tailored advice around business planning, investment, markets, value propositions, branding, user testing and much more. Our business mentors were recruited to offer a range of support, from dedicated commercial and product driven advice, to exploring social and alternative business models. They also understood the difficulties around balancing profits and other value markers within the creative sector.

600+

hours of mentorship with three dedicated expert mentors were provided to residents.

> "Working with the NfCE provided a rare opportunity to carve out space with a mentor, to really investigate our vision, our business plan and our core values. This key learning could then be absorbed into the company as a foundation for refining processes, building ambition and managing change."
>
> Resident, Pervasive Media Studio

Hub Producer support

The Hub Producers met regularly with their residents to support the development of their ideas. This involved action planning, reading through funding applications and mapping out business plans. Like the Mentoring programme, the Producer role was key to offering tailored support and helping residents identify and achieve goals. The Hub Producers here were able to facilitate residents both in accessing programme wide benefits such as mentoring, workshops or financial support but were also able to embed them in the specific communities and opportunities of the individual Hubs themselves.

> "The network very much relies on its Producers who strive relentlessly to understand where your creative journey could take you and suggesting real ways of getting there that make it seem achievable and commercial."
>
> Resident, The Guild

Financial Support

Grants of either up to £800 for small ideas development work, or between £1,000 - £2,400 business development, were available to residents to apply for. These funds were used for a range of activities, including legal or accountancy services, employing extra freelancers, redesigning websites, setting up online shops, or buying necessary equipment for the business to become more self-sufficient.

> "The workshops and mentoring have been really powerful catalysts, and the bursary has been so amazingly enabling"
>
> Resident, The Guild

Training workshops

We delivered 35 bespoke and comprehensive network workshops open to all NfCE residents. These ranged from tax myth busting, to advice on building a brand, to Intellectual Property and contracting support, using social media for business growth and more. In addition we offered a programme of Hub specific events, which although open to all residents, were designed to compliment the disciplines most appropriate to the focus of individual hubs. A full list of workshops is available in Appendix C.

Examples of workshops

Telling Your Business Story, facilitated by Jenny Grinsted: participants learned how to tell the story of their business in ways that make people sit up and take notice. Participants came away with a grasp of the principles of storytelling and the different forms of content they can use to tell their story, from social media to website copy to blogs, case studies and more.

Organisations, Structures and Governance, facilitated by Keith Arrowsmith, Counterculture Partnership LLP: this workshop guided participants through the different types of legal structures for organisations, providing practical tips highlighting the advantages (and disadvantages) of each. It drew upon real life examples of constitutions, agreements, and public databases to help participants tackle the rules and regulations for companies, charities, social enterprises, partnerships, and consortium working. The workshop was aimed at owners, managers and those who were thinking about setting up their own business.

Thinking with business, Feral Business, facilitated by Kate Rich: this workshop in, "the dark arts of business, an area in which the artist is regularly and probably wilfully unschooled," took an artist-led and speculative approach to consider how artists might do business differently. This included thinking experimentally with seemingly unglamorous materials such as administration, organisational form, trading and accounting. It focussed both on pragmatic needs for material survival in the present economy and a wilder imagination of how this could be different.

Public Speaking, facilitated by John Dawson: this was an experiential workshop to help participants feel more connected to their audience and the audience connected to them as a speaker. This workshop was aimed at those with little confidence in public speaking as well as more experienced speakers.

How to Apply for Funding, facilitated by Laura Drane: This workshop covered an introduction to types and sources of funding, and tips for the key stages from research to application writing, to evaluation. Participants gained knowledge of sources and types of funding available, understanding of the bid and award process, the use of writing skills and language in raising funds, awareness of broader considerations beyond filling in the form, and confidence in completing bids.

Emma Taylor.

Tailored intensive support

NfCE offered a series of business development programmes, tailored in consultation between the Producers, mentors and facilitators, for creatives or businesses where an intensive engagement was warranted. As the programme progressed we identified demand from those who had been enrolled on the programme for over nine months for a deeper and more complex engagement with their business from Producers and mentors. Those businesses ready to make a significant shift with the development of their business before the end of the programme were supported with intensive mentoring, and a set of clear outcomes and deliverables agreed by the residents.

> "The experience afforded us a space for reflection and planning that is already proving invaluable as we take our business forward."
>
> Resident, Spike Island

Early stage:

Creative Business Jumpstart is a two-day workshop for creative industry graduates, artists, entrepreneurs and anyone else who is ready to start running a business from their practice. The workshop was designed by NfCE mentor Gill Wildman, who owns two creative businesses and has a strong ten-year portfolio of work helping new creative businesses get off the ground. The aim of the course is to be a jumpstart for those ready to start a business. The focus is on the first steps of setting up or boosting what is already in place, ranging from customer base, to legal to marketing and branding.

Established businesses/sole traders:

Mapping Your Business Growth is a two-day programme designed and delivered by Dr Michael Pierre Johnson, Creative Engagement Leadership Fellow at The Innovation School, The Glasgow School of Art. The course aims to help young businesses learn ways to grow through a series of visual mapping activities. The course covers identifying and growing networks, understanding how to develop knowledge, refining outputs and expressions of value, and differentiating and engaging relevant markets and audiences.

Small businesses with teams of two or more people and a clear product:

Artful Innovation is an intensive, tailored business course supporting small creative businesses in the interrogation of their practice and the development of a robust business case for investment. Artful Innovation is designed by consultant Stephen Gatfield in collaboration with Watershed. The programme provides participants with the opportunity to develop new frameworks to pressure-test their thinking. It takes ideas from product/service concept to building a value proposition with real marketplace traction, to being able to fund future development. The course is designed to support those who have formed a company and supports teams rather than sole traders.

Telling Your Business Story workshop

We also developed initiatives specifically for creatives who identified more as artists, or makers with a clear product. We ran an open call for residents to take part in a series of workshops focusing on selling work in a gallery context, including working with curators and arts technicians, visual merchandising, preparing work for sale, working with photographers and telling a product story. This led to a public exhibition at 44AD Artspace in Bath, which was launched with a private view and ran for a week.

Finally, NfCE culminated in an exhibition, at Knowle West Media Centre, including a series of workshops and public events called 'Ways of Working', which showcased the stories, experiences, products and outputs of a number of residents. We ran an open call for residents to take part in a series of creative business development mapping workshops leading to an exhibition showcasing the unique learning journeys of a selection of creative businesses developed with support from the intensive programme of business support.

Market stall product feedback

Peer-to-peer support

NfCE further recognised the value of interpersonal exchanges, interactions between and within communities, and individuals. By being brought together in the network, whether via workshops, intensive courses, through brokerage by producers and business mentors, or simply by sharing space in the hubs, we aimed to help creative workers combat isolation, develop confidence and gain new ideas and insights.

Tessa Yates

Six.

Making a Difference

Our programme was broad in scope. We had 147 active residents across the hubs and over 1,200 people participating in wider activity. The residents were active in forging peer-to-peer relationships across the hubs, often with support from the Hub Producers.

Our work was wide-ranging in scale: 122 enterprises received over 12 hours of mentoring and development support, with 58 development bursaries, over 600 hours of one-to-one mentoring, 60 workshops, producer support and free space. We also far outstripped many of our targets (see Appendix A).

This work had a profound impact on the residents in supported. Our programme of support led to 26 new companies being established, the creation of 41.5 new jobs in the sector, and allowed 40 enterprises the time and space to develop and introduce new products or services to market. Moreover, it led to more complex impacts, relating to business-readiness, investment acquisition, skills development, personal development, and more.

Through a combination of 110 exit interviews conducted by phone or email, surveys, one-to-one interviews, and an intensive series of mapping workshops run by co-author Michael Johnson with 12 companies at the Ways of Working exhibition, we've gathered the following stories of change.

> "I have narrowed my focus down and really honed my ideas."
>
> Resident, KWMC: The Factory

Emma Trussler

> "It's really helped to move me forward in my thinking around my business. I managed to sign another really great photographer [...] as a result of my pitch being much more focused and on point. I now have a really clear direction, it feels as though a fog has lifted!"
>
> Resident, The Guild

Inward Investment

For many residents, the support of NfCE helped them to develop both their creative practice and how it was shaped as an enterprise. This was particularly prevalent through the bursaries that were offered to residents and thus a fundamental value provided by the NfCE.

Many residents matched bursaries with internal investment in time, equipment, staff or other assets they felt could better deliver their offering. This is indicated in their reports of investment in new equipment or software, investing time with partnerships or communities, or various promotional materials, such as pitchbooks, and promotional videos. However they also started to invest time in different ways by attending events, applying for grants, developing a website or getting a studio membership.

Improving Messaging

Validation from a wider market of customers, clients or peers was reported as a frequent marker of progress. These would often tally with moments of selling their products or services to appreciative customers and clients.

> "The extra business support I have had from the mentor has been invaluable. She completely demystified business planning for me with a simple and effective tool. She also really encouraged me to think more about the value I add, where I should be pitching my offer, and how to build a stronger network in the Bath/Bristol area. I've always worked for larger organisations up until now – the mentor helped me realise how much I already know, and how to apply that to my own business rather than other people's!" Resident, The Guild

However this validation through promotion could also be marked by formal exchange or agreements, such as through registering their company, taking on the creative enterprise full-time, or earning public-funding for key projects.

> The tailored business support has helped the transition from myself, being a sole founder of a company, to taking on another person and working together to change from design consultancy to now publishing our first augmented book.
>
> Resident, Pervasive Media Studio

Lucy Saunders

Many of our residents were developing innovative or niche concepts that were not currently in the market. As such, this demanded not only finding a clear narrative, but often building advocacy for their product in order to create understanding and demand in a wider context. As such, they were quickly finding they were needing to develop leadership skills to speak at events, leading cross-disciplinary groups or indeed become an authority on their subject.

> I went to Bologna book fair with a portfolio including my dummy book and some of my artwork. I got a really nice response, which really gave me confidence and made me feel legitimate in what I was doing. I was putting myself out there and found myself enjoying it! I got to learn about publishing and was in awe at the world of children's books.
>
> Resident, The Guild

Developing Skills

When it came to developing their offering, this very often meant learning new skills. The training programmes, workshops and mentor sessions through NfCE exposed residents to a wide range of disciplines and expertise across the Hubs.

As creative enterprises, there were diverse approaches and understandings of how to build and develop their business plans, and these largely developed as goals and actions associated with distinct opportunities or challenges. Most of these young enterprises were quite fluid in terms of the business plan models used. They were commonly driven to rethink their branding profiles, while those that were beginning to develop reframed their strategy in response to the traction their work was getting.

> "Through the network I found a way to review my skills and define my practice. I attended a business modelling workshop and had difficulty defining my clients. So I worked on what benefits I could offer and how to deliver them. Becoming a Community Interest Company was critical, as well as deciding to separate my design business. This all helped define my critical skills requirements."
>
> Resident, KWMC: The Factory

> "The private view and Meet the Makers events [organised by NfCE] led to some strong business advice and possible future investment."
>
> Resident, KWMC: The Factory

> The network has allowed me to slowly build my business giving me support from the beginning and throughout. The network has allowed me to grow as a designer and become confident and more independent allowing me to build my client base and network.
>
> Resident, The Guild

Sleepdogs

Creative Business Jumpstart workshop

Promoting Personal Development

Developing a creative enterprise is always a very personal journey. Some residents revealed they were building on passion projects or previous academic work (such as through Masters programmes), while many shared the difficulty of balancing family and work situations to dedicate the time needed to build, not just their enterprise, but also self-belief. As such, they often cited friends and family as crucial fallback support and a few discussed their efforts managing their own wellbeing. NfCE proved highly sensitive to these personal situations, providing person-centred support, rather than being simply enterprise-oriented.

Developing confidence and self-belief was a key part of these personal journeys. A creative individual is often front and centre of their work. It is often hard for individuals to identify and articulate the value of their work. This takes time and practice but most residents provided highly ethos-driven goals, and were often innovative in their development of highly adaptable entrepreneurial skills.

> "Workshops and mentoring helped me establish a company, learn more about my strengths and start asking myself the right questions. At about six months, I realised I could pursue anything, and there's no such thing as backwards momentum. This was possible thanks to the NfCE members around me, who poured themselves into what they love doing and shared all the highs and the lows. Seeing other members adapt to many of the same challenges (and many more besides!) has given me the confidence to pursue what's right for me, without feeling ashamed when my trajectory deviated from my initial plan."
> Resident, The Guild

Learning to Grow

A common challenge for taking the next steps in their growth was for companies to seek further funding or investment.

Another factor influencing success for creative microbusinesses is balancing the repetitive work on larger orders that may require a wholly different way of working from the original creative effort.

As microenterprises, they cited taking on multiple roles, with limited experience in many of them. This would often raise tensions with their motivation to develop themselves as creative practitioners.

"I was gradually finding I was losing clients and gaining less work, so I took on agency work to earn money. I was no longer a full-time freelancer, other people were getting the projects I wanted and I became socially inactive. However, the agency job has allowed me to push myself to make more. While part-time working has its limits, my history of engagement with the network set me up for a really strong push more recently and I'm in a better place now."

Business Planning Workshop

This gives rise to problems where residents were trying to deliver the day-to-day work of running their business, at the same time as pursuing funding opportunities.

> "To be accepted into a group whilst I am still trying to make something happen with my business has given me the drive to move things forward. I feel legitimised by being a part of the network, and it has allowed me to see that other people are doing the same thing as me. I may have given up without it."
>
> Resident, The Guild

Accessing a creative studio environment and network of activities proved one of the most successful ways for creating opportunities and ideas. A key appreciated factor in this was gaining different perspectives across disciplines, new connections they would have never sought themselves and the quality of critical creative feedback at key stages. Such activities also helped to build awareness of key challenges in development and options for key services. A couple of residents recognised how they might lose ground when working alone, whereas there were concepts driven by their engagement with a targeted network or community of practice.

"The two main benefits of Network for Creative Enterprise are access to tailored business training, for example one-to-one mentoring, and also free studio space in central Bristol. The value of being part of a community of residents is primarily no longer being alone in a studio. That means you can interact with people, understand what people are doing, see people's successes, see people's failures, see how people are making it work. And in a market such as creative technology where everything's constantly changing it's really important to be able to access that pulse on a daily basis - that's certainly how it's helped me." Resident, Pervasive Media Studio

Trigger

Impacts on Our Ecosystem

NfCE was also designed to support the development of each of the partner hubs through mutual collaboration, skills and opportunity sharing, collective lobbying power, and shared resources. A central ambition for the programme was that it would increase connectivity and fluidity between not only residents, but also our hubs, breaking down barriers between organisations and leading to further future collaborations. In each of the hubs there was a desire to increase capacity, both within and between the hubs, to continue to support their communities with responsive and bespoke approaches to the necessities identified by our communities.

Watershed, for example, from the beginning expressed a desire to strengthen its capacity and expertise for business development of businesses and creatives, and to be better able to move products and ideas to the next stage of production. NfCE has allowed Watershed to systematise the range of practices they had developed for supporting new businesses and creatives into the market. This will have a major impact on their future policy and programme development. In turn this process has impacted the Watershed's team of Producers who have seen the variety of processes they have supported in the past validated and redesigned to be made more useful for new creative at particular stages of their development.

> "Apart from our existing community, networks and support infrastructure, we've engaged three really good business mentors during NfCE. One of them is now the business development advisor on the South West Creative Technology Network[11]. This is great, as it embeds some of the learning of NfCE into another programme. All the workshop facilitators who we've engaged with over the length of the project are now part of the network. Some of them already were, but it's interesting to have some voices around value and alternative business structures, like RADMIN, Bex Baxter and Kate Rich's stuff... they weren't really part of our active network before."
> Pervasive Media Studio, Hub Producer.

[11] The South West Creative Technology Network (SWCTN) is a £6.5 million project to expand the use of creative technologies across the south west of England, funded by Research England.

For the Guild, this heightened connectivity and capacity allowed a number of changes to unfold in the organisation. Firstly, the collaboration brought new skills and insights to the Guild, and offered the management team their first experience in attracting funding to support projects that would not require an entirely commercial bottom line to succeed.

> "One of our successes is how well we've worked together as a team. I feel really close to the other Producers that I've been working with, and some of them, in a way, have actually been direct mentors to me. [...] We've all been inclusive to each other, patient, listening to each other, and shared our ideas. It hasn't been about one particular hub or person having a particular focus or need, it has been about bringing the network together and making it happen. [...] We've helped each other overcome the problems around reporting and process of it, which haven't felt as huge as they could have been. We've collectively come through and wanted to do the best for all of our residents."
>
> The Guild, Hub Producer

The project represented a success for The Guild not only in terms of formal outcomes, but by enriching the community. The programme also established much stronger relationships between The Guild and the other participating hubs, the hub management teams and the creative talents within those other hubs. The Guild has begun to offer an NfCE Legacy membership plan to all participating residents. The membership is offered at a 75% discount, and includes unlimited access for 12 months, 50% discount on room hire, buddy opportunities and signposting for further support.

Secondly, the Guild were able to attract new kinds of residents, with different aspirations and from different backgrounds to the existing membership. This in turn enabled existing Guild members' approaches to be impacted via exposure to these new ways of working, and the introduction of more creative businesses to The Guild.

NfCE also led to similar changes for KWMC: The Factory who, being a new initiative wanted to support open innovation, skills and enterprise development by providing facilities and expertise to high-end resources and access to cutting-edge equipment and technologies. NfCE allowed the hub to reach out to KWMC's existing extended community with an ambition to create a robust membership model for residencies and thus encourage a diverse community of users across disciplines, practices and backgrounds to access the space.

> "Maker spaces [around Bristol] have things that they're focused on, so we found we had equipment that they didn't have, but they also had equipment that we didn't have. So, it was a two-way process of pointing people [...] in other directions to get the support that they needed where our expertise wasn't right. [...] There's been a vast improvement in the relationship with the other hubs within the network because there's this constant conversation going on [through the Network] and, certainly, a cross-over of residents who might be at Pervasive Media or Spike or The Guild coming to us because they want to do something physical that they can't do in their own hubs."
> – KWMC: The Factory Hub Producer

The Factory is launching a membership scheme in Spring 2020. Members benefits include access to digital fabrication equipment, wood workshop, prototyping and desk space and an electronics and biomaterials lab, as well as a programme of events, opportunities to meet and collaborate.

Tyrone Probert

Finally, many of Spike's Island's ambitions involved broadening their organisational horizons, and making their overall programme of activity more sustainable by connecting the different communities at work in the building – from artists with studios, to hot-desk residents at the Spike Design creative business hub, the members of the Spike Associate programme, and the gallery programme. By using NfCE as a means of aggregating communities, these communities found find more commonality and more opportunity to work together, generating new work and an increase in profile for the community.

Taken together, the growth and development of these hubs, their new connections and contacts, and increased experience and capacity, NfCE has bolstered the West of England's access to tailored support for one of its most important sectors. It has also demonstrated the truly diverse nature of creative businesses and ambitions in the sector, and adds to the region's body of knowledge about the creative sector.

Impacts across the region

Creativity is always situated and always embodied and embedded in relationships with people and places. In this sense the vibrant DIY and opportunistic culture of this sector also contributes significantly to the wider work of placemaking. The informal creative cultures of the city region are driven by this group and make palpable quality of life impacts in terms of making the city region a lively, connected and experimental place.

> "There's a whole live art scene, which is very close to the contemporary art scene, but very separate. Two or three years ago you could have put on a performance by contemporary artists at Spike Island and none of those live art people would have come to see it. [...] So there are real scenes that there's not much movement between and this network has been a way to aggravate that a little bit. Rattle it. A bit of movement between the molecules and people have been shifting over and making contact with these other places."
>
> Spike Island, Hub Producer

Recognising this, we worked with The Stable (co-working space) and Weston College in Weston-super-Mare to deliver an early-stage business workshop to engage with creatives seeking to set up a business. We developed the 'Creative Business Jumpstart' 2-day workshop mentor Gill Wildman for this type of work. We also made links with 'Terrestrial', a regional project in the process of opening up artist studios in Weston-super-Mare, allowing some of the course participants to collaborate. We collaborated with Bath Spa University's Business department on delivering the 2-day 'Creative Business Jumpstart' to Bath Spa recent graduates.

Our collaboration has been the first time that this group of creative centres has worked together on any kind of project at this scale and the first time that we have each had to share one another's very different approaches to 'enterprise' 'business' and 'success'. This has built new connectivities between different kinds of resources. These connectivities in turn increase the productivity of this group of creatives by giving them access to more and different kinds of development opportunities. This kind of collaboration at regional level is in fact quite rare and, we would argue, is a characteristic of successful regional creative industries development.

Seven.

Design challenges

Despite the success of the NfCE programme, we encountered a number of challenges associated with working in the creative economy. These largely stemmed from the lack of visibility of creative microbusinesses, but also a broader misunderstanding in policy of their idiosyncratic needs, non-linear development processes, and a lack of tailored support for situations where money and growth were often only one element of a creative ambition to become sustainable.

Raucous

Co-ordinating a hub network

Networks and hubs are complex systems, and by their nature, sometimes hard to shape. It takes time to build networks of affiliation and identity between disparate hubs. The role of the Network Producer working with the Hub producers was key to meeting this challenge. In the first six months of the programme, the Network Producer led on building a strong collaborative approach to working across the five partners. The unique expertise and resources each partner brought to the programme enabled a rich and diverse offer to the businesses we supported and made our reach across the creative sector broad.

Developing open relationships, establishing trust and drawing up a set of agreed values was key to the future delivery of the programme and ensured we had a joined-up approach as we began delivering the programme of support. A decision was made early on that we would avoid creating a brand – as represented by, for example, a logo or a central website – for the programme. Instead, the offer was that

> "The Hub Producers came from different creative backgrounds and had varying approaches to the role of the producer. In my role as Network Producer, I qualified as an Action Learning facilitator, and used this as a structure for us to share approaches, reflect on learning and respond to challenges as they arose."
>
> Rachael Burton, Network Producer, NfCE

NfCE was a way to augment, develop, and strengthen existing activities within partner organisations. A principle of cultural ecology is that we should support the existing systems rather than overlay them with another identity. However, this often made the impact of NfCE invisible to residents who more likely to attribute success to the affiliated Hubs rather than the investment superstructure of the Network. This produces challenges of reporting, coherence, profile and 'buy in'. What it made possible, however, was an emphasis on the strengths of individual partners, and their relationship to one another.

Limina Immersive

Designing for the creative sector

NfCE had originally been developed on the basis of a 'pathway' model, where residents could progress through a series of engagements appropriate to their needs, each involving different forms of funding and support. These pathways were designed on the basis of existing business support programmes, for example, developing and testing ideas, moving to start-up through bursaries, and then grow-on and commercialisation through further investment. This quickly proved to be an inappropriately rigid design derived from practices that did not reflect the working lives of our residents.

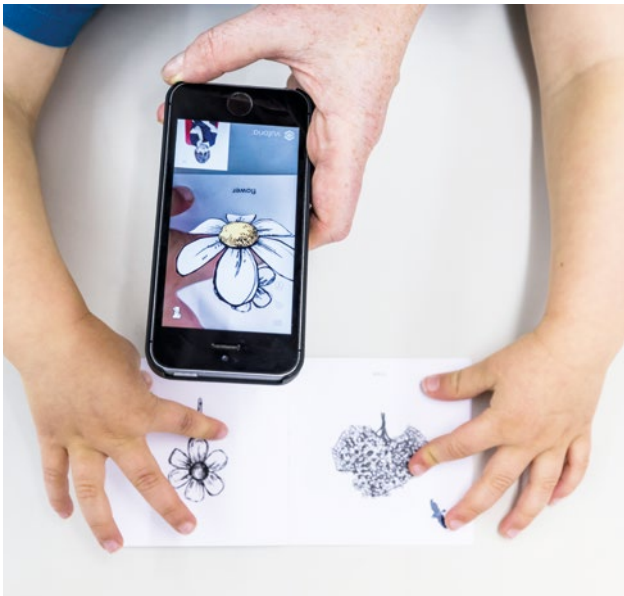
The very basic challenge that emerged in the first few months of the programme was that reconciling 'arts' and 'business' within this part of the creative industries was in and of itself a barrier to engagement. The Creative Producers in each of the hubs became increasingly adept at adapting the original instruments of support (workshops, mentoring, bursaries) into bespoke pathways appropriate to these different creatives at different stages of development. It became clear that in our residents' practices ideas evolve quickly, opportunities arise in unexpected ways, and the kinds of costs accrued shift as our residents evolved their idea and found their place in the market.

> "It took a while to understand how my business might be supported by the NFCE, as I didn't see [my enterprise - an event] as a "product" or something which could have a commercial value."
>
> Resident, Pervasive Media Studio

Faye Hadfield

This meant that sometimes the process of production, particularly around working with residents to address those needs and support their routes through the workshops offered was labour intensive. This is a common reflection in the field of Creative Producing, where the process of brokering relationships, supporting individuals and groups, offering creative input and design, shaping events and programmes, and delivering other aspects of programme delivery are often offset by a large demand on time to support the personal and pastoral needs of a network. This latter support, understood as a role of care, is however vital in supporting the varied stages of creative practice in our network. This support and capacity should always be factored into programmes to ensure this can be delivered.

Similarly, designing linear programmes for ecosystems is impractical. The value of supporting emergent work is that unanticipated outcomes can be nutured and encouraged. However some residents found the workshop content too basic, underlining that even in the narrow strata of the cohort-based approach that NfCE adopted, participants were all at very different stages of development, sometimes being offered advice based on values they themselves did not hold.



Victoria Forrest.

> I wasn't in the right place to fully utilise the workshop. I found the session very frustrating, and feel I would benefit from the session much later in my journey.
>
> Resident, Pervasive Media Studio

> I think there's still some further work needed about alternative ways to grow your business - it seemed that the answer [in this workshop] was only to have a high growth company that would take investment and then exit to a larger one. What are the alternatives?
>
> Resident, Pervasive Media Studio

The model described by the respondent above is clearly a dominant business growth narrative derived from technology and engineering. This model has come to monopolise nearly all business development practice. However, we found that for our residents, by and large the aspiration was not to grow and then sell, but to become sustainable as a small business with a range of creative services on offer to different markets. Many of the residents in the programme would describe themselves as having a practice rather than a business and many struggled with bringing together the notion of being a business while simultaneously being an artist or creative. While this did not preclude increasing employment, where growth was sought, the ambition was frequently not to grow indefinitely, but to reach a stable size and equilibrium.

We approached this issue by developing a series of workshops and opportunities that interrogated this at a deeper level. For example, as a response to the highly successful 'Feral Business' workshop we ran with Kate Rich, we supported 16 residents to attend a two-day summit of thinking, experimenting, networking and learning around how business in the arts could be different, called RADMIN. The summit's programme featured exemplary alternative business practices, creative application writing, infrastructure tours, monetary experiments and a deep collective examination of how business - in the arts and beyond - could be different.

Charlotte Duckworth.

In addition, we offered a Network workshop on 'Art and Money', which allowed space to investigate participants' own psychological, cultural and socio-economic defaults and beliefs systems might lead the artist into consciously or unconsciously living within limited resources or believing they shouldn't 'want' to earn money through their art.

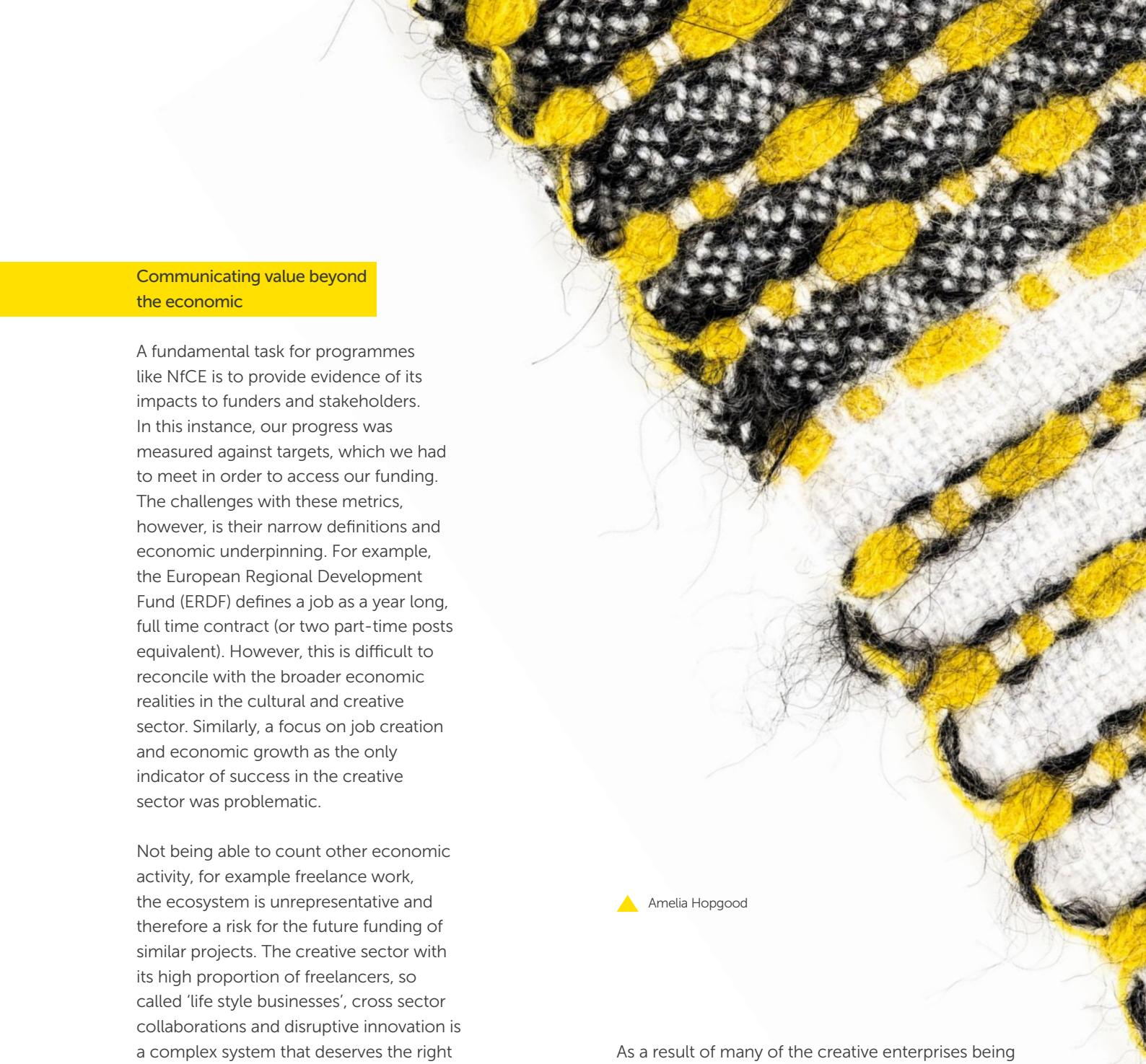
> My personal business journey has been a case of juggling creative mind-set with wanting to establish a business that allows me to engage with a largely conservative industry in an educational and co-productive capacity.
>
> Resident, KWMC: The Factory

Communicating value beyond the economic

A fundamental task for programmes like NfCE is to provide evidence of its impacts to funders and stakeholders. In this instance, our progress was measured against targets, which we had to meet in order to access our funding. The challenges with these metrics, however, is their narrow definitions and economic underpinning. For example, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) defines a job as a year long, full time contract (or two part-time posts equivalent). However, this is difficult to reconcile with the broader economic realities in the cultural and creative sector. Similarly, a focus on job creation and economic growth as the only indicator of success in the creative sector was problematic.

Not being able to count other economic activity, for example freelance work, the ecosystem is unrepresentative and therefore a risk for the future funding of similar projects. The creative sector with its high proportion of freelancers, so called 'life style businesses', cross sector collaborations and disruptive innovation is a complex system that deserves the right support at the right time to flourish.

> Equipping creative businesses with the tools to reflect on, and communicate, their own impacts is often a vital step in articulating the value their work offers to clients, investors, funders, or customers.



Amelia Hopgood

As a result of many of the creative enterprises being fledgling in their development, some of the most effective learning and changes in practice would happen through new experiences, projects and simply delivering their offering to a wider market. Their positions within bustling creative studios also allowed extensive and critical peer feedback for their work, while attending events and establishing the previously cited 'formal interactions' often brought new perspective to the commercial value of their work.

Eight.

Conclusion and Recommendations

> Since joining the network I've felt permission to take risks. Risks that I wouldn't necessarily have taken before. Being part of this community where there's this very clear and evident amount of support. If it's not from the producers it's from the mentors; if it's not from the mentors it's from the other participants. Again that's just been so valuable, so important for how I see myself finishing 2019 and working through 2020. It just makes everything feel, I suppose, easier. It's still scary, but easier.
>
> Resident, Pervasive Media Studio

As this quote from one resident so clearly attests, it is not only in the financial where valuable and meaningful change occurs: it is the intersection of people, ideas, support, and empowering ambition, and it is this, ultimately, that NfCE has sought to do.

We believe that we need better, more meaningful measures of success, beyond economic metrics, and that recognise the soft skills, collaborative, and collectively productive nature of the creative economy. We need a different language we can use, that allows users to more accurately describe the value of supporting people in terms of their aspirations and ethics, not just an idea's financial growth potential.

We also know that one of the challenges we face in this sector is how precarious work generates particular kinds of exclusion, where the cultural capital required for creative people to participate in this semi-formal economy is unevenly distributed. The informal nature of the sector contributes to exclusions based on intersections of gender, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. Only 9% of our residents, for example, identified as being from a BAME background. Recognising this challenge the hubs in the network have built on NfCE to launch a new programme aimed at offering paid internships for BAME and other marginalised groups. The Creative Workforce of the Future programme will begin in late 2019, and support training through the hubs that then links into structured and paid placements with media companies over a 12 month period.

Only
9%
identified as being from a BAME background.

Recognising this challenge the hubs in the network have built on NfCE to launch a new programme aimed at offering paid placements for BAME and other marginalised groups.

As we look to start on these next steps, our key recommendations are:

1 Form collaborations:

Creative hubs are the generative growth spaces for microbusinesses and artists in the creative sector. By pooling their support and development services they can widen the range of talent they work with and increase their impact. Healthy creative hubs are the pulse of a strong regional cultural ecology. Furthermore, mobilising creative hubs as an alternative to conventional acceleration incubators ensures that creative ideas can be promiscuous, connected, in dynamic dialogue with other creative people. In this way the microbusiness is aggregated into a more visible productive unit, where resources can be shared.

2 Develop the role of the Creative Producer:

In an era of very high self-employment and the potential atomisation it brings, the role of a Creative Producer who can draw talent, resource and opportunity together is becoming more and more important. Networks can be 'produced', designed, and engineered for particular purposes. They are crucial to the success of economic clusters and to innovation within them. New patterns of employment and innovation produce the need for skilled people who can do this work of connecting resource, talent and skill for maximum impact. For us, the role of the Network Producer working with the Hub Producers was the key mechanism of success.

3 Offer bespoke and responsive support:

No two creative projects are the same, and in trying to find audiences and markets creative microbusinesses are extraordinarily fluid, constantly hybridising their offer. This means that support instruments and techniques need to be similarly fluid. This support has to be codesigned with the beneficiaries in so far as it needs to respond to their particular needs at their particular stage of development. Much of this work is best undertaken face-to-face.

4 Recognise many impacts come from many values:

Within the system produced by NfCE, there is an understanding that many different outcomes are in circulation: these range from personal development through to creative excitement, technical skill, communications expertise and financial income.
It is only by designing systems that recognise that these outcomes and the values that underpin them are indissoluble from one another that economic and social development is secured for creative microbusinesses in this part of the economy. The combination of structured inputs, one-to-one support, and peer-to-peer learning underpinned by a commitment to personal growth for enterprise development, combined to produce a range of transformative effects on residents.

5 Provide free space:

If your aim is to support creative people to become more productive and more sustainable then the provision of free workspace is absolutely paramount. It connects people together and socialises the process of creativity. It also has value in terms of self-worth, validation and confidence. These spaces are different to paid for co-location working spaces which cater for enterprises who already have an income stream. Instead, spaces that are connected and responsive to the places that they are located are vital, vibrant ones that support the versatility and adaptability of their population.

6 Offer flexible funding:

A little goes a long way. In the strata of activity that NfCE has been working with investments of less than £2,400 and these have had a transformative effect on businesses, enabling them to take substantial next steps on the road to sustainability. This is not an argument to underfund or exploit the precarity of the creative industries, rather that when combined with expertise that understands the particularities of the business, and in conjunction with other kinds of support, the right money spent in the right way at the right time can have a substantial impact.

Nine. Appendices

Appendix A:
ERDF Definitions for outputs, our targets, and our final figures

Output	Criteria for support:	Target	Actual
C1 - Number of enterprises receiving support	12 hours or £1k in value financial or business support to SME.	80	122
C2 - Number of enterprises receiving grants	Subset of C1. SME in receipt of bursary/ payment not repaid	24	36
C4 - Number of enterprises receiving non-financial support	Subset of C1. 12 hour support, group or 1-1. (e.g. product development, innovation, leadership etc.)	80	121
C5 - Number of new enterprises supported	Newly formed business - must be registered for less than 12 months. Based in the West of England LEP area.	40	26
C8 - Employment increase in supported enterprises	New, permanent full-time role. Must be at least 36 hours per week for 1 year from creation	19	41.5
C28 - Number of enterprises supported to introduce new to the market products	New product, process or service, different to existing products: Product can be pre-launch. Process must be introduced to business. Service must be launched.	16	40
P11 - Number of potential entrepreneurs assisted to be enterprise ready	Individuals over 16. Can be employed, unemployed or economically inactive (not students). Receiving group or 1-1 support.	60	85

Appendix B:
Network for Creative Enterprise Manifesto

Our purpose is to support creatives across the West of England to make a sustainable living from their ideas. To achieve our purpose, we will work to the following shared values.

The Network for Creative Enterprise partners will:

- Adopt an inclusive approach to everything we do
- Be generous with our time, skills and expertise to support the team, the network and the resident businesses
- Communicate openly and honestly as a partnership
- Seek out and share existing opportunities with the network and the resident businesses
- Advocate for the network, the creative and enterprising ecology in the West of England and the resident businesses
- Recognise and celebrate the successes of the network and the businesses
- Share learning across the network and the wider cultural sector
- Ask critical questions and interrupt the process
- Take your whole organisation on the journey with us, take time to include other departments, inform them and empower them to be advocates
- Take collective responsibility for achieving the outputs
- Consider the sustainability of the programme beyond 2019.

The Network for Creative Enterprise producing team will:

- Curate a supportive and disruptive environment for the businesses to thrive
- Encourage early-stage prototyping and testing with real audiences
- Seek out potential in people and ideas
- Be brave and ambitious in our thinking and delivery
- Listen to individual business needs and design bespoke opportunities
- Offer critical, honest and kind feedback
- Monitor what prevents people and businesses from growing and seek out opportunities to help remove these barriers
- Enable risk-taking
- Ask about access requirements and offer reasonable adjustments
- Focus on the tangible benefits for the people and the business, rather than being completely driven by outputs
- Collect and share the stories of the people and businesses we work with.

The Network for Creative Enterprise producing team will support each other to:

- Make a commitment to develop confidence, skills and knowledge in working with artists and businesses to deliver business support
- Ask for and offer help
- Be active members of the producing team with a willingness to learn
- Share resources and processes, including successes and failures
- Recognise and respect the capacity and availability of each team member
- Participate in an Action Learning Set
- Develop a general knowledge of all of the businesses being supported through the network.

Appendix C:
Our workshops:

Developing Your Business Model, facilitated by Phil Beale

Building your Brand, facilitated by Julian Sykes, Hofffi

Good Design Briefs, facilitated by James Tooze
Royal College of Art

Bookkeeping for Startups, facilitated by Zoe Whitman

Public Speaking,
facilitated by John Dawson, Speaking Infront

Contracts and how to use them creatively,
facilitated by Nicholas Sharp & Julie McCalden

Crowdfunding, facilitated by Kate Stewart

GDPR: What do you need to know?,
facilitated by UWE Business School

How to write a successful funding application,
facilitated by Laura Drane

Branding, Network Workshop,
facilitated by Caroline McDonald, Oggadoon

The Art of the Application,
facilitated by Dan Tucker, Emma Betteridge and Nema Hart

Confidence in Business, facilitated by Jo Emerson

Thinking with business, Feral Business Workshop,
facilitated by Kate Rich

Organisations, Structures and Governance,
facilitated by Keith Arrowsmith, Counterculture
Partnership LLP

Selling Your Products Online,
facilitated by Aime Cox-Tennant, Studio Cotton

Intellectual Property, facilitated by TLT Solicitors

Selling Products at a live Market, Cheshire Street Market,
facilitated by Gill Wildman, Upstarter

Natural Cycles for Business Productivity,
facilitated by Bex Baxter

Social Media for Growth,
facilitated by Emily Perkins, Oggadoon

National Trust industry talk, facilitated by
Grace Davies & Genevieve Sioka, National Trust

Telling Your Business Story,
facilitated by Jenny Grinsted, Twist Publishing

The Male Room: to develop business skills as creative (18-30 year old) professionals and explore their identities as men, facilitated by Mike Moast and Daniel Edmund

Feral Business, alternative ways of doing business,
facilitated by Kate Rich, Irational

Tax Myth busting,
facilitated by Craig Williams, Zen Accountants

Social Media for Growth,
facilitated by Emily Perkins, Oggadoon

Art and Money, facilitated by Bex Baxter

Sell Without Selling and How to Pitch,
facilitated by Ann Holman, HA Collective Ltd

Negotiation and Value,
facilitated by Shan Preddy, Preddy & Co

Telling Your Business Story extended version,
facilitated by Jenny Grinsted, Twist Publishing Public Speaking, facilitated by The Speaking Company

Public Speaking, facilitated by Speaking in Front

How to Sell in Shops & build belief in the offer,
facilitated by Bryony Morgan & Ann Holman

Tools for Avoiding Burnout as a creative,
facilitated by Graham Johnson

Connecting & Networking, facilitated by Ann Holman

Photography Tips for Artists, Designers & Makers,
facilitated by Jo Hounsome

INTENSIVE BUSINESS COURSES

Creative Business Jumpstart,
facilitated by Gill Wildman, Upstarter

Mapping Your Business Growth,
designed and facilitated by Dr Michael Pierre Johnson

Artful Innovation™ Programme Director, Steve Gatfield

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Page 13, Watershed/BFI Academy

Page 14, 17, 18, Paul Blakemore

Page 16, Drew Cox

Page 19, Studio Meineck

Page 24, 30, Gill Wildman

Page 25, 29, Vanessa Bellaar Spruijt

Page 29, Brian Hartley (Sleepdogs)

Page 31, Elena Blanco

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Network for Creative Enterprise

"We constantly witness that there are typically no linear pathways in this part of the creative industries and we need to be as flexible as possible to allow us to offer the right support at the right time. The strength of the cultural sector is its diversity and therefore flexibility is vital."

Vanessa Bellaar Spruijt, NFCE Network Producer

WATERSHED
UWE Bristol University of the West of England
The Guild
KWMC KNOWLE WEST MEDIA CENTRE
Spike Island

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