

# Stoneyburn Case Study

**Art  
Works**  
Paul Hamlyn Foundation  
Special Initiative

Developing  
Practice in  
Participatory  
Settings



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## About the Project

Stoneyburn is a West Lothian village situated off the M8 near Livingston. Surrounded mostly by farms and fields, the area accommodates a low population, but is nevertheless rife with history. This community heritage project saw Generation Arts collaborate with an illustrator and a storyteller to bring its residents' experiences and memories to the fore through various media and an exhibition.

A great deal of information was gathered concerning both the village and its neighbour Bents. Generation Arts decided that compiling local tales in a book – to be titled *Stoneyburn Stories* – and producing an engaging illustrated map would bring their findings to life. A broad cross section of the community was involved in these projects, with school children drawing and writing about places of interest, for example, and the Community Bowling Club exhibiting work on their grounds.

## Using the Toolkit

To begin, the project leaders used the toolkit when planning staff time and financial resources. A heritage group was assembled comprising locals, many of whom already knew each other. It was agreed at the planning stage that the production of an illustrated book was the group's main goal.

The toolkit's Observation and Reflection Template was used to prompt reflection at the end of each meeting, ensuring that all participants felt their presence and contribution were being valued. The tool generated discussion from even the quieter members of the group, allowing all voices to be heard.

It was when approaching the later, evaluative stages of the toolkit that the project became truly enriched, and the group's thinking became more creative. This was the point at which an exhibition was decided on.

## An Evolving Project

At one session, a recently unearthed piece of archive footage documenting the everyday life of a Stoneyburn miner was suggested for inclusion in the exhibition. Its authenticity was admired by the group who felt previous studies of the area were inaccurate and undervalued their lives as a result. After further discussion, a shared goal was agreed upon: to depict the area as honestly and true to life as possible.

From this point on, the project evolved in accordance with its participants' values, experiences and outlooks. Participation was opened to schools in order to reflect an increasingly broad cross section of the community's interests

To ensure the school pupils connected with the project, the group turned to the compass drawn up during the third stage of the toolkit, a resource which all felt comfortable with by this point.

## Conclusions

Margaret Pow, Project Manager said ***“[The compass] made the whole project process more enjoyable, there was no ambiguity on who was doing what and when, and it went very smooth as if we had covered all bases. Everyone did what they committed themselves to do.”***

According to Margaret, the compass allowed for a democratic way of working. ***“It did unlock, encourage and allow all the stakeholders to be open, and for us all to share the same amount of participation,” she finishes. “No one person led the project.”***