

Templar Arts and Leisure Centre Case Study

**Art
Works**
Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Special Initiative

Developing
Practice in
Participatory
Settings



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

About the Project

The Templar Art and Leisure Centre (TALC) was opened in 2002 with a view to offering residents of Tarbert a space in which to form and house community groups. It's governed by a board of trustees, all of whom are publicly elected, while day to day activity is overseen by a management committee put forward by the centre's users. The Trust's aim is to promote and enable access to visual arts, creative technologies, music and dance across the community.

This project involved holding workshops in two different environments around Tarbert Academy. One saw the school's Primary 5 pupils create a conductive painting – through which electricity can be passed and actions triggered – with recorded analogue sound. The other had pupils of similar age work alongside their parents to produce a conductive print using manipulated digital sound. The audio-visual pieces were then installed in the school.

Using the Toolkit

In the project's infancy, the artist at TALC and the primary school head teacher discussed their main questions and strategies. The former approached the project with the intention of introducing the creative process to children at an early age, while the latter was concerned with portraying and strengthening community resilience. The toolkit and its compass helped marry and make sense of these two relatively divergent aims.

Feedback

After the first two sessions, the children were asked to comment on the workshop and suggest what activities might interest them in the future. Parents too were asked to provide feedback from their perspective, an idea generated by the toolkit, and one which all found extremely useful.

TALC's artists usually plan and reflect on their projects very carefully, and feel the list of questions presented in the toolkit was not new to them. However, it was found that the school – a body used to working with official toolkits – better understood their agenda when it was presented using a written, structured method. In a sense, the two groups used the toolkit as a translation matrix. While the artists maintain that the toolkit didn't offer them any new information, it did help them understand and celebrate aspects of their practice that usually go unarticulated.

Collaboration

Above all, using the toolkit made the artists feel they were collaborating with the school, when previously they've felt like outsiders within its space. Head teacher Louise Paterson noted the spirit of collaboration: ***“It really was a joint project between the school, the children and the parents. All talked about it and it felt like all did it together.”***

TALC's artists claim that for freelancers delivering workshops, it can be difficult to request input from partners who don't plan on being involved in this process. The agreement to work with the toolkit was part of the initial deal struck between TALC and the school, and steered the course of the activity. Similarly, the opportunity to discuss the school's long term goals and objectives arose from using the toolkit, and led the artists to understand the context into which their work was being presented.

Conclusion

Though TALC felt they would like to change aspects of the toolkit, the organisation intends to re-use it in the future, adapting both the form and content for their own purposes. It is expected that the tool will help clarify expectations between collaboration partners and identify questions to be considered throughout future projects.