



**EMERGE Programme**

**Year 3 Final Report**

**May 2019**

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# 1 Introduction and Methodology

## Introduction

- 1.1 In October 2016 Consilium Research and Consultancy (Consilium), in partnership with Rocket Science, was appointed by The Mighty Creatives (TMC) to undertake a summative evaluation of the Emerge programme of verbal arts festivals between 2017 and 2019. This report provides detail on the delivery of the festivals across the localities involved the final year of the programme as well as sharing the experiences of the young people that have taken part.
- 1.2 The research tools and evaluation design have been shaped by the focus on the key questions that the evaluation needs to answer, namely:
- **What impact does Emerge have on the individuals taking part?**
  - **How and why does Emerge make a difference? How can we be sure Emerge has made that difference?'**
  - **Does Emerge meet its desired aims and outcomes?**
- 1.3 The evaluation also has aims to explore the following issues:
- **What are the perceptions and overall experiences of beneficiaries?**
  - **What are the awareness and perceptions of other stakeholders in local communities, including education and cultural sectors?**
  - **In what ways does the Emerge Programme contribute to cultural education locally?**
  - **What is the contribution of and potential for the programme in supporting local place shaping activities?**
  - **To what extent is the project structure and model scalable and or replicable?**
  - **What factors are accelerating or impeding progress?**

## Methodology

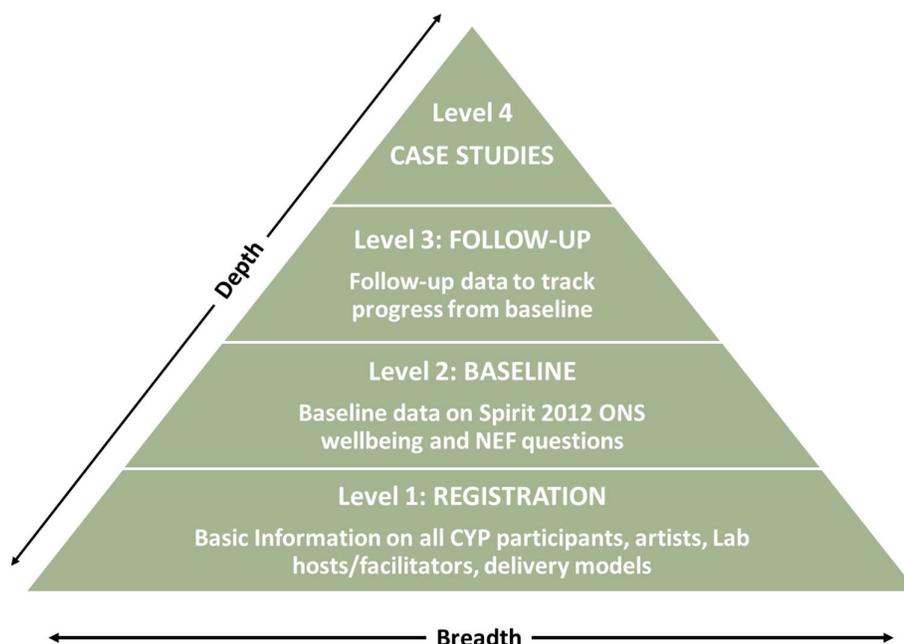
- 1.4 The methodology for the evaluation incorporates a range of qualitative and quantitative research activities to assess the progress of the programme in meeting its core objectives and in delivering envisaged outcomes for participating children and young people.
- 1.5 The initial phase of the evaluation focused on designing an overarching evaluation framework to govern research activities across the three-year duration of the Emerge programme. This has shaped the approach to developing the research tools to illustrate the profile of participating children and young people to be assessed and helped to establish a baseline for the range of measures required by the programme's funder Spirit of 2012<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.spiritof2012.org.uk/>

- 1.6 An overview of the evaluation framework is provided in Figure 1.1 below and demonstrates the tiered approach to capture data on the breadth and depth of the programme's activity.

**Figure 1.1 - Emerge Evaluation Framework**



- 1.7 This Year 3 report is based on the following research activities:

- **Consultation with artists leading the Lab sessions;**
- **Consultation with the Lab hosts across the eight localities<sup>2</sup>; and**
- **Analysis of the Registration and Baseline data submitted by the Labs.**

- 1.8 Baseline data was collected from a total of 224 Lab participants and follow-up data from 120 Lab participants. The smaller number of follow-up survey completions reflects the drop-off of a number of participants during the course of delivering the Lab programme and also the difficulty that some Labs experienced in getting children and young people together to complete the survey forms following the festival.

- 1.9 The evaluation team has been supported by regular communication with the Emerge Project Management Team throughout. In addition, the evaluation team is represented in the quarterly Emerge Programme Steering Groups meetings. The evaluation team has also liaised with Spirit of 2012 as part of the delivery of the research activities, including minor revisions to and streamlining of the data collection tools for this third and final year of the programme.

<sup>2</sup> Includes Ashfield, Boston, Cannock, Dudley, Mansfield, Sandwell, South Holland and Walsall.

## 2 Programme objectives

2.1 With investment from Spirit of 2012, The Mighty Creatives are working in collaboration with Arts Connect<sup>3</sup> and UK Young Artists<sup>4</sup> to deliver a series of arts festivals across the Midlands between 2016 and 2019. The Emerge programme aims to:

- **Involve up to 1,000 young participants in the production of 24 arts festivals on or around 23rd April in 2017, 2018, 2019, marking the anniversary of Shakespeare's birth and death;**
- **Provide up to 24 young artists with a community based collaborative commission;**
- **Explore the art of ideas, challenging modern audiences on modern issues as Shakespeare did himself;**
- **Reach a physical audience of thousands and a larger audience online; and**
- **Deliver arts festivals across 12 Midlands locations.**

2.2 The programme is working to leave a legacy of skilled people and creative spaces in places which really need them, as well as a network of inspired young people, artists and cultural educators and a community empowered by its collaborative creativity. The third year of the programme has focused on eight of the localities that were engaged in the previous year, namely: Ashfield, Boston, Cannock, Dudley, Mansfield, Sandwell, South Holland and Walsall.

2.3 In delivering the Emerge programme The Mighty Creatives and partners aim to contribute to improving participants' personal wellbeing, their perceptions of disability and creating more connected and inclusive communities. In this final year of the programme, Spirit of 2012 are also interested to learn more about the contribution of the programme to supporting local place shaping, which is now widely understood to describe the ways in which local partners collectively use their influence, powers, creativity and abilities to create attractive, prosperous and safe communities, places where people want to live, work and do business.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.artsconnect.co.uk/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ukyoungartists.co.uk/>

### 3 Participant impact

#### Research process

- 3.1 The next section of the report provides detail on the impact of attending the Lab sessions for participating children and young people and is based on several data sources including the participant survey, feedback from Lab hosts and artists and observations made by the evaluation team as part of the research fieldwork. The baseline survey was completed by 225 Lab participants and the follow-up survey by 123 Lab participants.
- 3.2 It is important to note that not every young person attended every Lab session in their respective locality and as such the self-reported impacts derived from the participant surveys are based on differing levels of engagement with the programme including sessions attending prior to the festival and attendance at the festival. More detailed analysis of the survey data is provided in Appendix 2.
- 3.3 Impact evidence has been captured solely for young people that have attended the Lab sessions. However, in the third year of the programme data provided by each locality for the number of young people who have been involved but were not part of a Lab Group indicates that some 6,273 have been engaged across the three phases of the Emerge programme (Table 3.1). As such, whilst the impacts for children and young people that have been involved to the same level and frequency as Lab participants may not be directly comparable, this should be considered when assessing the wider impact of the programme on all participants.

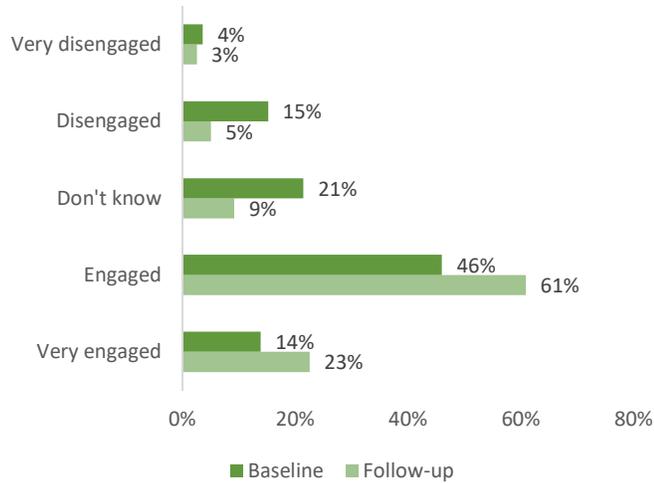
**Table 3.1- Number of young people involved but were not part of a Lab Group**

Locality	Thinking Phase	Doing Phase	Festival Phase	Total
Ashfield	0	300	34	334
Boston	265	782	18	1,065
Cannock	68	130	96	294
Dudley	1,329	10	74	1,413
Mansfield	1,250	370	19	1,639
Sandwell	420	265	36	721
South Holland	100	120	48	268
Walsall	522	0	17	539
Total	<b>3,954</b>	<b>1,977</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>6,273</b>
% of Total	63%	32%	5%	100%

#### Building a sense of community

- 3.4 One of the intended outcomes for the Emerge programme is that through the process of leading the creation and delivery of a place led arts festival participating children and young people would foster a greater sense of connection with and pride for their local community. Analysis of the survey responses indicates that the proportion of participants that report to feel engaged with their local community has increased from 60% to 84% following the delivery of their Emerge festival.

**Figure 3.1 - How engaged does the young person generally feel with their local community?**  
(baseline=224, follow up=120)



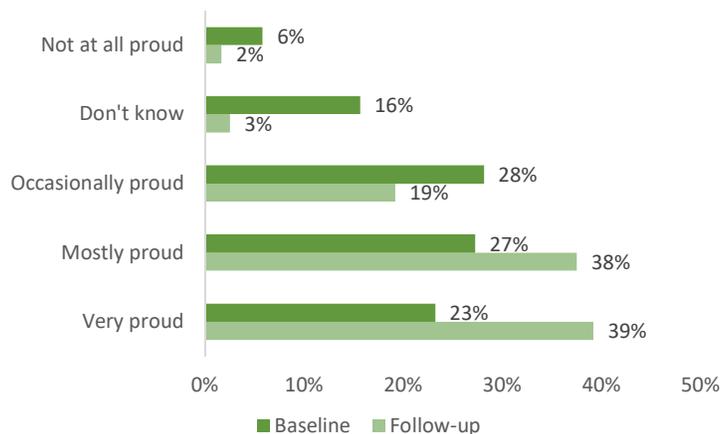
*"Yes! The programme is a great way to express yourself and feel proud of your accomplishments".*

*"I enjoyed being able to make my own dance piece and being able to show other people".*

*"A worthwhile experience that was a lot of fun and definitely beneficial to the community and also myself personally".*

- 3.5 Through taking the lead in co-producing new work that celebrated the life and work of Shakespeare participating children and young people reported to feel pride in their contribution to their community. The proportion of participants reporting to feel mostly or very proud of their contribution to their community increased from 50% at the start of their involvement in the Lab sessions to 77% following the festival (Figure 3.2).

**Figure 3.2 - How proud does the young person feel of their contribution to their community?**  
(baseline=224, follow up=120)



*“Yes! The programme is a great way to express yourself and feel proud of your accomplishments”.*

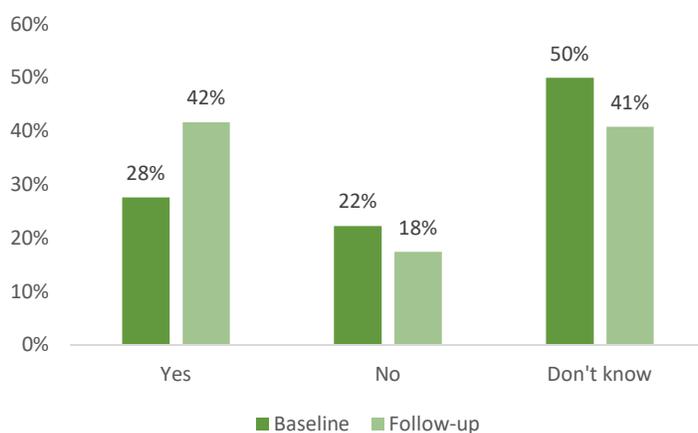
*“I enjoyed being able to make my own dance piece and being able to show other people”.*

*“I have really enjoyed doing this and meeting different people. Running this has made me more proud”.*

*“We’ve done it all ourselves, it’s really good having responsibility”.*

- 3.6 As a consequence of their participation in the programme considerably more participants (an increase of fourteen percentage points) were likely to agree that their views were heard by members of their community (Figure 3.3). A likely contributory factor to this increase is the scale of location of the Year 3 festivals within the heart of their communities and at publicly accessible venues. This has provided the festivals with greater visibility and profile which has allowed a broader base of local people to engage with the performances and artworks produced and commissioned by the Emerge participants.

**Figure 3.3 - Does the young person feel that their views are heard by members of their community?** (baseline=224, follow up=120)



*“Emerge is a great opportunity for creative young children to express their creativity in ways that they normally wouldn't be able to do in school art lessons. For us, emerge has allowed us to elaborate on our plans with the save the whales campaign and our views on climate change around our community”.*

- 3.7 The proportion of young people reporting that they haven't been involved in running a project or activity in their community over the last 12 months has declined substantially in the intervening period between the baseline and follow-up survey (Figure 3.4). Anecdotal feedback from participants has indicated that the process of developing their festival has raised their awareness of and interest in a wider range of local issues, including animal welfare, recycling and ensuring spaces are safe in their community. Importantly, involvement in the Emerge programme has given them ideas and experience of presenting their ideas to others which may provide a platform for many to take part in social action within their community in the future.

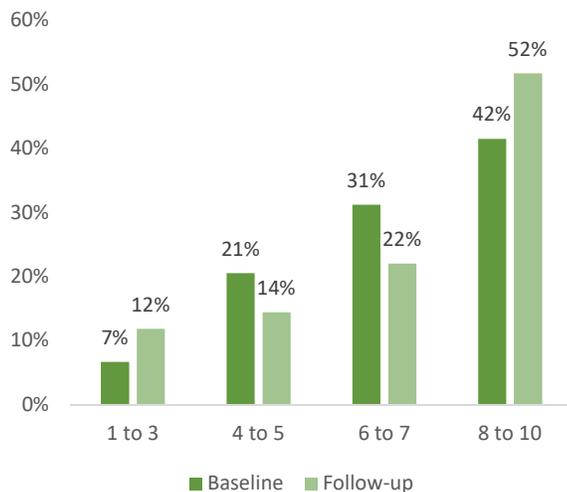
**Figure 3.4 - How often in the last 12 months has the young person been involved in running a project/activity in their community? (baseline=224, follow up=120)**



### Character development

- 3.8 The process of developing the content for their festival and, for many, performing or exhibiting their artwork to a broader audience, has helped to develop their self-confidence. For many participants it has enabled them to overcome their nerves and to stretch themselves beyond what they thought they could achieve. This is broadly reflected in self-reported levels of self-confidence (Figure 3.5) but is perhaps better demonstrated using qualitative feedback from participants and by viewing the videos produced across the festivals.

**Figure 3.5 - How does the young person rate their level of self-confidence? (On a 1-10 scale, where 1 is very low and 10 is very high) (baseline=224, follow up=120)**



*“I really enjoyed being a part of Emerge as I believe it has improved my self-confidence and helped me be more comfortable with taking part in the community”.*

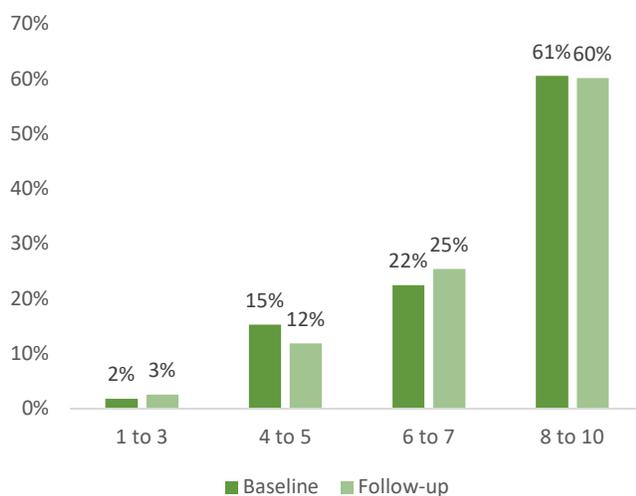
*“Very inspiring, exciting, gets you out of the house, builds confidence, a good experience”.*

*“I find talking in public challenging so I am so proud to have compered the event”.*

*“The project has helped my personal development and I am so happy that I said yes to the opportunity”.*

- 3.9 The survey responses from participants suggest that the programme has had limited impact on improving children and young people’s level of motivation in school or college (Figure 3.6). This measure is perhaps not wholly suited to a model that is intentionally delivered as an extracurricular out of school activity where a more appropriate measure is likely to be their motivation to engage in future arts and cultural activities in their community.

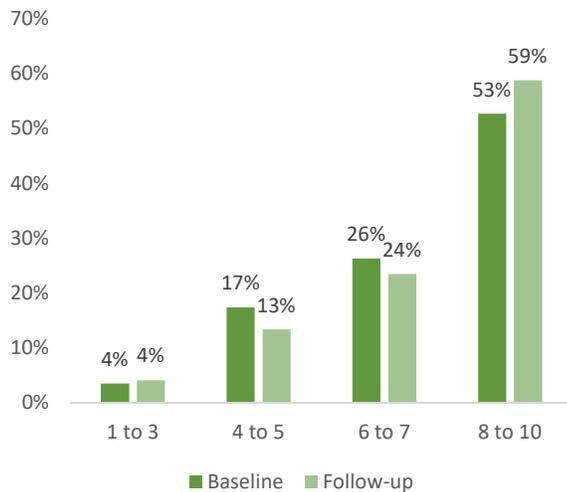
**Figure 3.6 - How does the young person rate their level of motivation in school/college/work? (On a 1-10 scale, where 1 is very low and 10 is very high) (baseline=224, follow up=120)**



### Improvement in wellbeing

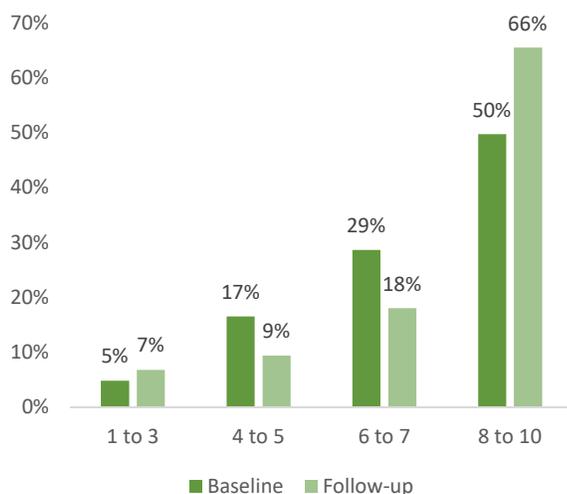
- 3.10 The survey responses also reveal only marginal improvements to self-reported levels of satisfaction with their lives (Figure 3.7). However, caution is required when interpreting this data as there are a broad range of factors that can influence the extent to which a young person feels satisfied with their life, the majority of which are beyond the influence and control of a community arts project. Feedback from Lab hosts also suggests that many young people were unsure of the meaning of this question and/or its relevance to their engagement of the Emerge programme.

**Figure 3.7 - How satisfied is the young person with their life nowadays? (On a 1-10 scale, where 1 is not satisfied at all and 10 is completely satisfied) (baseline=224, follow up=120)**

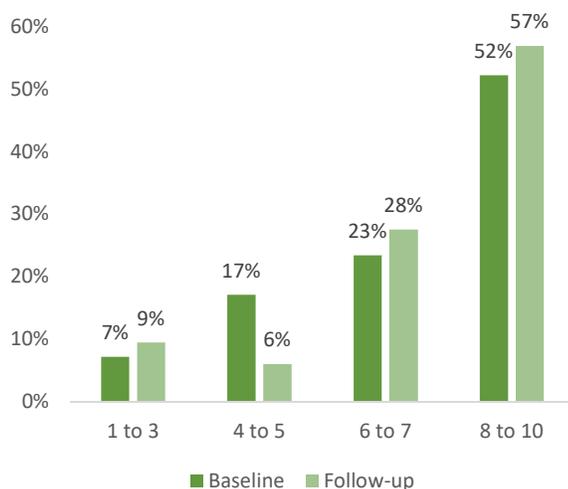


- 3.11 The survey data demonstrates greater change in the extent to which participating young people feel that the things they do in life are worthwhile (Figure 3.7) and their self-reported levels of happiness (Figure 3.9). Across all of the Labs feedback from children and young people has been overwhelmingly positive about their experience and the process of taking a lead in creating a festival within their community has provided them with a focus but also an opportunity to have fun.

**Figure 3.8 - To what extent does the young person feel the things they do in your life are worthwhile? (On a 1-10 scale, where 1 is not at all worthwhile and 10 is completely worthwhile) (baseline=224, follow up=120)**



**Figure 3.9 - How happy did the young person feel yesterday? (On a 1-10 scale, where 1 is not at all happy and 10 is completely happy) (baseline=224, follow up=120)**



*“It has been so amazing and I hope other people get inspired by it like I did”.*

*“I would rate emerge very highly. As I've done this twice I've always loved it and would love to do it next year as well! I've enjoyed the creative process and going out my comfort zone and I've made new friends I never would've otherwise; some might say we're as close as family. I would recommend it to anyone, no matter skill sets. It's encouraged me to get more involved and increased my social abilities”.*

*“We've all learnt from each other. We didn't know each other before but we've become really good friends. I feel more confident in my dancing. I've learnt new moves. I would do it again”.*

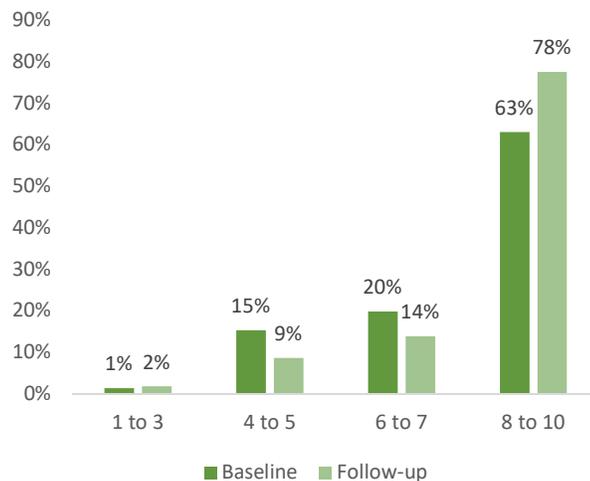
*“I've learnt a lot about how long things take, had to think, ok, I only have this much time, what can I do with it”.*

### Arts engagement

- 3.12 The Emerge programme has engaged a wide range of children and young people, providing them with opportunities to experience a range of different artforms. These experiences haven't been restricted solely to those involved in the Lab sessions but a much broader range of children and young people that have taken part in the 'Thinking' and 'Doing' phase of the programme.
- 3.13 The combination of using the different artform experiences of the artist and Lab hosts has provided a positive dynamic to ensure that participants can focus on a specific artform area that is of most interest to them (e.g. dance, theatre, digital, visual arts). This is evident in the creative diversity that has characterised each of the festivals.

- 3.14 The facility to bring in other artists and creative professionals, either during the process of developing the content for the festivals within the Labs or as performers within the festival, has also extended the range of arts practice that the participants have been involved with. Commissioning professional artists as part of the development of the festival has also provided benefits not only in the quality of the performances and audience experience but also by validating the work and efforts of young people as co-performers.
- 3.15 The considerable enthusiasm evident amongst participants to take part in future Emerge activities provides evidence of the impact of the programme in terms of motivating children and young people to engage in arts activities in their community. Taking part in the Lab sessions has provided many participants with ideas for other youth-led arts activities in their community or encouraged them to seek out existing opportunities. The survey data demonstrated a significant shift in the levels of confidence reported by young people in taking part in arts and cultural activities (Figure 3.10). The challenge for the Labs and the wider community is to facilitate the continued engagement of the Emerge participants in future arts events, in particular in localities where the level of current provision is low.

**Figure 3.10 - How confident is the young person in taking part in arts and cultural activities? (On a 1-10 scale, where 1 is not at all confident and 10 is very confident) (baseline=224, follow up=120)**



*"I enjoyed being able to make my own dance piece and being able to show other people".*

*"I would describe it as a fun club where we spend time with our friends and create artwork or a dance".*

*"I know a lot more about Shakespeare now, I think I enjoy it more because I understand it more".*

*"I've never done anything like this. I'm thinking of maybe doing photography so this has been really helpful".*

## Summary

- In Year 3 of the programme 6,273 young people have been engaged outside of the Lab sessions across the eight localities. This demonstrates the wider reach of the programme into the local community.
- Children and young people participating in the Lab sessions report to feel more engaged with their local community as well as feeling proud of their contribution to their community. They are also more likely to feel that their views are heard in their community.
- The process of developing the content for their festival and, for many, performing or exhibiting their artwork to a broader audience, has helped to develop participants self-confidence.
- Survey responses reveal only marginal improvements to self-reported levels of satisfaction with their lives by participants, however this may be due to young people being unsure of the meaning of this quest or its relevance to their engagement of the Emerge programme.
- Participants report positive changes to the extent to which they feel that the things they do in life are worthwhile as well as their levels of happiness.
- The programme has also improved participant's confidence in taking part in arts and cultural activities.

## 4 Lab and artist consultations

- 4.1 This section of the report presents key themes and learning points from the perspective of those involved in the delivery of the programme in Year 3. Consultations have highlighted several common themes across the programme but a smaller number of issues and learning points that are pertinent to specific Labs or localities. As such every effort has been made to apportion weight to feedback captured during the consultation process.
- 4.2 The evaluation team conducted interviews with 17 Lab hosts<sup>5</sup> / staff and 8 artists in the weeks following the delivery of the festivals. These were mainly conducted on a one-to-one basis to enable consultees to provide frank and honest responses regarding their experiences of the programme.
- 4.3 In addition, a debrief session with all artists hosted at the mac arts centre in Birmingham on the 13th May 2019 provided an opportunity to explore specific themes and highlight key learning points from across the 8 localities. The evaluation team was also able to capture feedback from Lab hosts at a sample of celebration events scheduled following the festivals as well as drawing on the reflections of the Emerge Project Management Team.
- 4.4 Reiterating a point highlighted from the first two years of the programme, there was consensus from all Lab hosts and artists that the Emerge programme has provided a fantastic opportunity for children and young people from across the 8 localities to participate in a fun, creative process in which they have taken on lead roles.

*“Emerge seems pretty unique as a project on this scale, particularly with the double prong of engagement and opportunity....there’s both opportunity for young people and for the artist. So that’s two generations of people who can do things better. It’s really nurturing and development focused”. Artist*

- 4.5 The Emerge programme is ambitious by design and the final year of delivery has seen a considerable scaling up of the Lab activities and resultant festivals, in part due to their ability to build on the learning and momentum achieved through their delivery experience in Year 2 of the programme. This highlights an important learning point from the programme, namely the value in securing funding to embed the Lab sessions as a regular activity for children and young people. Such continuity enables children and young people that have participated in previous years to take on leadership and mentoring roles to support the participation of others. It can also provide benefits in assisting Labs in strengthening their partnership links and building relationships with new organisations and services in keeping with a shift towards a more overt place-shaping role for the programme.

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<sup>5</sup> For some Labs a number of staff were involved in supporting the sessions.

- 4.6 Each locality is unique in terms of its infrastructure, demographic profile and opportunities available for children and young people. The Labs all have differing levels of experience in terms of delivering arts activities as well as varying levels of capacity. Although selected from a wider recruitment drive which stipulated some key requirements, the young artists employed across the programme themselves have distinct skills and capabilities as do the children and young people participating in the Lab sessions.
- 4.7 In other words, there is considerable diversity across the programme in the contexts within which the Lab sessions are delivered. This lack of uniformity has generated some challenges (or perceived challenges) but also conversely has contributed to a richness of creative content and interpretation across the festivals which itself merits celebration.

### **Emerge model**

- 4.8 As outlined in the Year 2 evaluation report the Emerge programme incorporates several fundamental design elements which are non-negotiable. There are other elements of the programme which are more flexible and enable localities and specific Labs to best achieve the objectives of the funder (Spirit of 2012) and ultimately deliver an exciting, fun and creative experience for children and young people. The Project Management Team have continued to provide invaluable support in helping Labs and artists to shape their own delivery approach within the overarching Emerge framework set out by TMC.
- 4.9 Local context and the profile of the young people engaged in the Lab sessions serves to influence how effectively the Emerge framework has worked for each locality and Lab. In the main the fundamentals of the model in terms of the emphasis on being youth-led, the focus on the life and work of Shakespeare, the 'building', 'thinking' and 'doing' phases of delivery have been embraced across the network of Labs. Whilst the creative process have involved verbal arts, the written word of Shakespeare has been used as a platform to inspire more diverse creative output from the young people which has been of benefit to the content of the resultant festivals.

*"I think the focus for the artist was slightly confusing/contradictory - delivery of a community, multi-disciplinary arts, young people led, Shakespeare inspired, high-quality festival with a small budget, two partner organisations and with a target of engaging lots of new young people who don't have access to the arts. Which one is the priority?" Artist*

- 4.10 Consistent with feedback in previous years of the programme most Lab hosts and artists felt the timeframe for delivery of the Lab sessions was realistic and clearly phased (building, thinking and doing). The rationale for the timeframes for the Lab sessions is to provide sufficient time for participating children and young people to develop their artistic skills and importantly confidence in taking a lead role in shaping the design and content of their Emerge festival.

- 4.11 Shortening the timeframe runs the risk of placing undue pressure on the children and young people to create the content for their festival, which may also result in the artist taking over responsibility for content development, thus undermining one of the key design elements for the programme. Such pressure is also likely to impact on participant retention rates, in particular as the Lab sessions may adopt the 'feel' of a classroom activity rather than a fun, out of school creative project. Conversely, elongating the delivery timeframe may bring with it challenges of retaining participants' interest and availability, in particular during examination periods.
- 4.12 One area where the programme has benefited from greater flexibility from TMC and Spirit of 2012 has been in permitting the participation of children and young people that have been involved in development the festival in the previous year. This has encouraged and enabled a number of young people to take on a stronger leadership and mentoring role within the Lab sessions. For some Labs this has provided additional support and delivery capacity whilst also providing returning children and young people with a different experience from their first engagement last year.
- 4.13 Mixed views were forthcoming on the relative merits of holding all the Emerge festivals on the same day. The logic for this aspect of the programme's design is to engender a sense across the localities that they were part of a broader, youth-led arts project. This has certainly been acknowledged by some of the children and young people and indeed has supported aspects of the recruitment.
- 4.14 However, it has also served to generate considerable logistic pressures for staff at TMC and Arts Connect in attending the festivals and supporting local Lab staff and artists. More fundamentally it has also meant that children and young people participating in the programme have not had the opportunity to attend the festivals and view the artistic context created by other participants. Enabling the children and young people in one Lab to attend a neighbouring Emerge festival has the potential to bring a range of benefits, including giving them an opportunity to experience and review the creative content as well as providing them with ideas and inspiration for future arts activities in their own area. It can also help to 'normalise' the process of attending arts activities for children and young people who may not otherwise be inclined to attend opportunities in their own community.
- 4.15 The use of emerging artists is a fundamental design principle of the programme designed to provide them with experience of delivering a community-based commission. This provides clear benefits in terms of upskilling and supporting the next generation of participatory artists whose role is central to efforts to engage and inspire communities to take part in arts activities. However, consistent with feedback from Lab hosts in the second year of the programme one of the themes outlined during consultations was the extent to which programme delivery and impact for participants would be strengthened by involving more experienced artists. One suggestion for strengthening the model is to include a Lab Producer in each locality, who would have local knowledge and experience of running participatory workshops and community festivals, to work alongside and mentor the emerging artists.

- 4.16 The emerging artists have received support and guidance from their Lab host and TMC to varying degrees across the final year of the programme. With hindsight a number of artists and Lab hosts suggested that their professional development, and the subsequent delivery of the programme, would be enhanced through the appointment of experienced creative practitioners to act as mentors / creative producers, providing them with hands-on guidance and support, feedback on their participatory practice and where appropriate additional capacity to support aspects of the festival content development and delivery.

### **Lab delivery**

- 4.17 Where Lab hosts had been involved in the second year of the Emerge programme, they have been able to use the learning from the previous year to improve the delivery of the programme. Greater familiarity with the objectives and parameters of the Emerge programme, along with the practical experience of hosting the Lab sessions and delivering a festival, has enabled and encouraged some Lab staff to take on a stronger support role for their artist in Year 3. This may suggest that the model of delivery could work more effectively if each locality is funded for a minimum period of 3 years to enable capacity, skills and knowledge to be developed on a more sustainable basis.
- 4.18 Consistent with learning from the first two years of the programme, the process of developing a positive working relationship between Lab host and artist at the outset of the programme is central to the successful delivery of the Lab sessions. In this regard the process of 'matching' artists and Labs can play an important role in trying to achieve compatibility in terms of skillsets, artform interests and personalities.
- 4.19 Despite roles and responsibilities being clearly outlined in the artist and lab contracts, feedback from some of the Year 3 artists highlighted a desire for greater prescription and guidance from TMC on the exact roles and responsibilities of the artist and Lab staff. However, in practice the 'building' phase of the programme provides the space for artists and Lab staff to agree their respective roles and responsibilities based on their areas of strength, interest, and experience. For emerging artists this process provides relevant learning for their future freelance work, developing communication and negotiation skills and also highlighting the importance of delegating tasks and the use of a team approach to delivery.
- 4.20 One of the challenges in delivering the Lab sessions raised by Lab hosts and artists has been variability in the number of participants and also the levels of turnover within the groups. Throughout the programme the schools-based Labs have attracted higher numbers of young people than the community-based Labs. Labs such as Cannock Library or The Brunts Academy in Mansfield has exceeded the expected group size of between 20 and 25 participants. On a practical level the capacity required to engage and manage such large groups has to be factored into the local delivery model (in particular as groups may include participants with additional support needs). For some Labs this has required additional staff to attend the sessions.

- 4.21 A further issue with such larger group sizes is their potential to 'dilute' the level of contact that each participant has with the artist. This may have implications in terms of the ability of the artist to inspire and motivate the participants and create an experience that feels clearly different to a standard classroom based arts activity. Whilst the process of developing the creative content for the Labs has engaged and involved other artists, funded through the Lab budgets, this is an important consideration in the design of youth-led arts activities that are facilitated by artists.
- 4.22 For the community-based Labs the pattern has been different with generally lower numbers of participants and a challenge of maintaining momentum and ensuring a positive group dynamic. A number of artists questioned the value in trying to host two Labs in each locality with a suggestion that the model could work better with time and resources invested in a single strong Lab per area. This could enable the Artist and Lab staff to direct more capacity to developing the festival content with a wider network of other groups in the community, providing benefits both in terms of the diversity of the festival content but also supporting local place shaping objectives.
- 4.23 All of the Labs have to varying degrees experienced participant turnover with children and young people either dropping-out or joining the sessions at different stages. Some of the participants have been either unable or unwilling to commit to attending every session. This is not unexpected in particular in communities where arts participation is not a regular feature of young people's lives and where they may also have chaotic home lives. This has necessitated a degree of flexibility from the Lab staff and artists to ensure that the Lab sessions are structured to enable both regular and less-regular attendees to engage fully in the arts activities. This flexibility should be regarded as a strength of the model given that it enables a broader range of children and young people to get involved in the process of developing a festival that would otherwise be the case if they had to commit to every session or run the risk of being excluded from the group.
- 4.24 Several artists have been supported by technicians from either their Lab or their festival venue. This may suggest that the technical capability and capacity of Labs should be considered in the process of selecting future localities. It also highlights the benefits of choosing venues with on-site support to help with the development and delivery of the festival.
- 4.25 Consistent with feedback from the first two years of the programme, Lab hosts and artists provided differing views on the pros and cons of focusing the festival on the life and work of Shakespeare. For some, their lack of familiarity with his works created some initial challenges in recognising the creative scope available to inspire and engage participating children and young people to develop content for the festivals. However, for others the diversity of his works enabled them to guide participants in different creative directions and also feel confident in basing the festival content broadly on the themes and stories that characterise his works.

- 4.26 Moving forward broadening out the theme for the festival is likely to provide benefits by enabling the programme to embrace local interests, including heritage and history, to inspire and engage both young people and the wider community. This would help to further align the programme with local place shaping work whilst also ensuring that the festivals are able to align themselves with local place identifies and ensure 'cultural relevance' within each locality.
- 4.27 For many children and young people their experience of Shakespeare through the Lab sessions differed from the more traditional approach employed within their school's curriculum. The sessions provided them with greater creative freedom and, supported by their artist, many were able to experiment with some of the themes from Shakespeare's work but to add to these a modern flavour to help engage audiences. In this regard many children and young people reported to find the work of Shakespeare still relevant to contemporary life.
- 4.28 This is evident in the creative diversity across the festivals which showcase and celebrate the life and work of Shakespeare but where the ideas and themes have been chosen by participating children and young people. The content for the festivals as such displays an authenticity of voice as a result of being led and co-produced by the participants.

### **Inclusive sessions**

- 4.29 One of the design principles for the Emerge programme was to ensure that disabled and non-disabled children and young people were able to participate together in the programme. A greater proportion of Year 3 participants had a disability or long-term condition when compared with the first year of the programme, which has demonstrated the progress the Labs have made in engaging and supporting the participation of children and young people with a range of support needs. In addition, all Labs in Year 3 have included participants with a disability or long-term condition which is a step forward from previous years.
- 4.30 The process of delivering inclusive sessions to mixed-ability groups has provided the artists with valuable learning, in particular regarding the planning and support required to ensure that sessions are both accessible for and enjoyable for all participants. This has included, for example, ensuring that performances were adapted to ensure that they were able to fully involve participants with physical disabilities or that the content of the sessions was accessible for children and young people with dyslexia.
- 4.31 The nature of the additional support needs required by some children and young people, for example those at Fountaindale School in Mansfield or Liberty Staffordshire<sup>6</sup>, has meant that it hasn't been possible to bring mixed ability participants together on a regular basis. To some extent this has been due to both practical and logistical issues linked to the personal care and support needs of children and young people (e.g. access to a hoist or changing facilities to enable a joint performance). Across the localities many young people, including those with disabilities, live in rural areas and are restricted by local travel provision, which may inhibit them from being involved in activities after school or later in an evening. Adequately

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<sup>6</sup> Liberty Staffordshire works with young people and young adults who live with physical or learning disabilities offering social and emotional development opportunities.

addressing such travel barriers to facilitate a process of ensuring access for all is likely to require additional ring-fenced budgets within each of the localities.

- 4.32 Some artists felt that this hadn't really been a focus on the design and delivery of their Lab sessions, which suggests that further support and guidance may be helpful to strengthen this aspect of the programme's design in the future, including a review of the resources provided to Labs to ensure sessions are accessible for children and young people with a range of support needs.

*"I don't think we achieved a lot of interaction between disabled and non-disabled young people, though we worked with partners and had young people in our sessions with additional needs. I think it would be interesting to know if the young people themselves felt that they had worked in an inclusive setting as we had no visible disabilities, but the young people were honest about the additional support they needed." Artist*

- 4.33 However, several Lab staff did point to positive progress made towards this objective with the Emerge sessions helping to raise awareness of the issues faced by disabled children and young people in society. Staff fed back that some children and young people had found it difficult to interact with participants with additional support needs or a physical or mental disability, but that the process of delivering the Lab sessions had led to several able-bodied participants actively seeking to support the participation of others with additional support needs. This peer-to-peer support was reported across a number of Labs, providing an indication that these inclusive sessions were providing valuable learning.

### **Quality**

- 4.34 A common concern raised by all of the artists was the challenge of ensuring that the Labs achieved good quality, both in terms of the quality of engagement in the sessions and also in the artwork and performances that would form the content for the local festivals. Although the 'Doing' phase of the programme from January to April 2019 provided regular two-hour sessions with participants to develop the content, in practice the productive time within each session was somewhat shorter which in combination with the aforementioned levels of participant turnover, served to create delivery pressures on the artists.
- 4.35 Given the focus of the programme on providing opportunities for children and young people to lead and co-produce the work, all of the artists have been conscious of the need to avoid taking over the sessions, in particular in the final sessions leading up to the festival. The role that artists and Labs have played has been to guide and support the participants in their decision-making around the festival content as well as helping to bring the various elements together into a coherent programme of artworks and activities. The use of professional artists within the content of the festivals has also helped to deliver quality from the perspective of audiences.
- 4.36 It has also been important for the Labs to ensure that audiences are aware of the context for the Emerge festivals, in particular that they have been led and co-produced by children and young people and not by professional arts organisations. This is particularly relevant given

that the Emerge festivals may be the main arts festival within localities where local people have less opportunities to engage in arts activities.

- 4.37 Moving forward the Emerge model may be strengthened by providing a clear quality framework for the artists and Labs to ensure that the process of engagement and artistic content of the festivals is of the highest quality possible.

### **Place shaping**

- 4.38 Place-shaping is widely understood to describe the ways in which local partners collectively use their influence, powers, creativity and abilities to create attractive, prosperous and safe communities, places where people want to live, work and do business<sup>7</sup>. The Department for Culture & Media Support 2016 White Paper on culture highlights the UK Government's desire to establish a more diverse arts and culture industry, seeking to better distribute the benefits to more disadvantaged backgrounds<sup>8</sup>. The White Paper also appeared to signal a desire to achieve a more community inspired approach to arts and cultural activities.

- 4.39 As a consequence interest in the role of arts and cultural activities in 'place-shaping' has grown and can also be closely linked with an interest in the role of arts and culture in the wellbeing agenda and how this impacts place<sup>9,10</sup>. This is an area of interest for Spirit of 2012 and has been an area of focus for the research team in the final year of the Emerge programme.

- 4.40 Across the programme it is evident that the Labs have engaged and involved a wide range of partners in the process of developing the creative content for the festivals and in promoting and delivering the festival itself. Whilst the Emerge programme is focused on delivering positive outcomes for the commissioned artists and participating children and young people, wider partners have recognised the potential for the arts festival to contribute to a range of place-based outcomes, including:

- Place marketing and branding;
- Building and strengthening the visitor economy;
- Revitalising shopping centres;
- Promoting inclusion and tackling social isolation;
- Fostering community cohesion;
- Providing greater opportunities for young people to shape their local community; and

<sup>7</sup> Lyons, M. (2007)- 'Lyons Inquiry into Local Government. Place-shaping: a shared ambition for the future of local government.'

<sup>8</sup> DCMS (2016)- 'The Culture White Paper.' London: MH Government.

<sup>9</sup> LGA and All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (July 2017). Policy Briefing: Local Government Support for Health and Wellbeing through the Arts and Culture. London: LGA

<sup>10</sup> LGA and CLOA (2017). People, culture, place: The role of culture in placemaking. London: LGA.

- Promoting health and wellbeing.

4.41 The Local Government Association emphasises the importance of local councils collaborating with communities to emphasise their cultural character and create a collective place brand<sup>11</sup>. They also highlight the central role that events can play in engaging the local community and growing the visitor economy. It is evident that across a number of localities the Emerge programme has been recognised as a valuable approach to contributing to these objectives, including in the work of the Town Centre Partnership in Cannock (see case study over page) and in evidence from other localities of the festivals inspiring or contributing to efforts to rebrand and promote the town centres.

#### **Revitalising Cannock Town Centre**

In 2018 a new Town Centre Partnership, facilitated by Cannock Chase Council, was launched with the aim of working collectively to help increase footfall in the town centre and making the town an attractive destination for people to eat, drink, shop and visit. The Partnership was established following the granting of planning approval for the creation of a new McArthurGlen Designer Outlet on the outskirts of the town which is scheduled to open in 2020.

Budget pressures within local public services had meant that there was no funds for the traditional Christmas lights in the town centre in 2018, leading to local concerns around continued disinvestment within Cannock and the longer-term viability of its retail offer. The newly formed Town Centre Partnership saw the Emerge festival as an opportunity to showcase the potential for a programme of arts and cultural activities to revitalise the town and attract local people and visitors to the help Cannock compete with neighbouring centres. It was also hoped that the Emerge festival would act as a 'proof of concept' for the role of community arts festivals in supporting local businesses and maintaining occupancy levels within the town centre. The biggest change in Year 2, compared to Year 1, was the venue location. In Year 1, the festival was split across two sites, but in Year 2 it was hosted in the middle of the town centre as an outdoor event.

The scale and ambition of the festival in Cannock's second year of delivering the Emerge programme was expanded considerably from year one. The Town Centre Partnership Officer Angela Haynes has provided additional capacity and support for Kerry Hutchinson from Staffordshire Library Service who has hosted the Lab session at Cannock Library.

The Town Centre Partnership has facilitated various aspects of planning the festival including providing in-kind support with regards to road closures, marketing and communications and event licencing. They have also enabled the festival to use existing facilities in the town including the two bandstands. The festival has also engaged St. Luke's Church Cannock, a Grade II\* listed building located in the heart of the town centre, who provided permission for the use of their churchyard and hall.

The festival included artisan craft markets, fairground rides, key performances from the young people and professional artists and was supported by a wide range of partners including Cannock Chase Radio, the local bus company who provided subsidised travel to the event, Staffordshire Police, local community groups and businesses.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/economic-growth/revitalising-town-centres-toolkit-councils/function/place-branding-and>

Approximately 3,000 people attended the festival and the feedback to the Town Centre Partnership has been wholly positive. Positive marketing and communications at the event has been highlighted as beneficial in putting Cannock on the map and changing people's perceptions at the attractiveness of the town as a place to visit. The festival has enabled a wider partnership, led by the Emerge Labs, to showcase the cultural heritage and identity of Cannock.

The festival has built momentum and confidence within the Town Centre Partnership and community more widely to incorporate arts events as a key part of a new programme animation in the centre of Cannock. The Emerge programme has provided a model which has highlighted the positive contribution that local children and young people can provide in developing and ideas and content for local arts events.

- 4.42 As such the Emerge programme has the potential to act as a catalyst for future place-shaping activity. This may include bringing together partners to submit applications for funding which aims at support local areas to make their high streets and town centres fit for the future such as the Future High Streets Fund<sup>12</sup> or aims to support culture-led economic growth such as the Cultural Development Fund<sup>13</sup>.
- 4.43 Partners engaged in the programme haven't been restricted to those focused on children and young people but have included a range of age-groups, for example a 'knit and natter' group in Ashfield. This highlights the potential for community festivals to bring a range of people together, providing opportunities for inter-generational work and multi-faith collaboration.
- 4.44 Feedback from artists has also highlighted the support received from some local businesses who have recognised the value of the Emerge festival in terms of revitalising the high street. This has the potential to sustain future arts activities within the localities through commercial sponsorship, a route which can be clearly seen in the work of Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) across the UK<sup>14</sup>.

### **Project management support**

- 4.45 Consistent with feedback from artists across the first two years of the programme, the project management support provided by TMC has been both acknowledged and appreciated. Whilst the artists recognised that the capacity of the project management team was often stretched, it provided an invaluable safety value which helped to resolve any delivery issues as well as helping to facilitate a positive working relationship between the Lab staff and artists. Several

<sup>12</sup> For further details see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund-call-for-proposals>

<sup>13</sup> The Cultural Development Fund aims to allow cities and towns to invest in creative, cultural and heritage initiatives that lead to culture-led economic growth and productivity. This fund is from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) with a budget of £20 million available.

<sup>14</sup> For further information see <https://britishbids.info/>

artists in particular referenced the accessibility of the project management team as critical to the success of the programme, providing reassurance throughout that support and guidance could be sought as and when required.

- 4.46 The importance of effective project management support should not be underestimated as an integral component of the successful delivery of the Emerge programme. This function has helped to ensure compliance with the agreed model of delivery for the programme whilst also contributing to efforts to improve the quality and creative ambition of local festivals. Future models of delivery will need to ensure that sufficient project management support capacity is built into the programme, in particular where new localities and Lab partners are engaged.
- 4.47 However, it should also be recognised that a balance needs to be struck between sufficient project management capacity being available to artists and artists becoming over-reliant on others for support. The model of experiential learning requires artists to push themselves and become increasingly self-reliant and any future model of project management support should continue to reflect this.

### **Training and development**

- 4.48 All of the Year 3 artists fed back that the experience of delivering the Emerge programme had provided them with either new skills or strengthened their existing skills (examples include communication skills, problem solving, the ability to work under pressure, negotiation, budgeting and delegation). It has also helped to develop their confidence and levels of personal resilience.
- 4.49 For some it has reinforced their views on the type of freelance opportunities they are looking to pursue. For others it has helped to broaden their horizons on new roles and commissions that they would previously not have considered (either because they felt they lacked the experience to secure related commissions or they were unsure as to whether they wanted to pursue these roles). The programme has helped to raise their profile and strengthen their CV thus supporting their future career development.
- 4.50 Whilst all artists recognised the considerable learning they had gained through delivery of the Lab sessions, the training provided had proven valuable both for the delivery of Emerge and for future commissions. The templates and toolkits provided through the programme, most notably operational planning and risk assessments, were noted as particularly useful.
- 4.51 A minor criticism raised by a few of the artists was that the location and timing of the training sessions in could be problematic. Whilst the dates and timing of these training sessions was included in the artist contracts, several experienced challenges in engaging in these sessions and thus missed out on important professional development opportunities. Whilst the process of physically bringing all of the artists together has provided benefits in terms of facilitating informal peer support, any continuation of the programme across the Midlands may wish to review access arrangements and also the potential to use remote training platforms for some training sessions to make best use of artist's time.

- 4.52 Delivery of the programme has also allowed the artists to work with a wider range of partners and develop their understanding of the practical, logistical and legal considerations when planning a community-based festival. What is evident across the programme is the considerable variation in the administrative systems of local authorities, including for example the process for applying for a temporary event licence.
- 4.53 Whilst for some this has proven more challenging than others, the experience has helped to build their resilience and demonstrated a need to be at times more assertive when engaging with partner organisations.

### **Legacy**

- 4.54 Across all of the eight localities the programme has helped to forge new links between the Labs and wider community partners. It has raised the profile of the Labs and opened up dialogue within each locality around the provision of arts activities for children, young people and local families.
- 4.55 Several Lab partners highlighted that their experience of delivering the Emerge programme had helped them to demonstrate both the need and demand for this type of young people, place-led arts festival. As a consequence Lab staff and wider community partners were actively seeking opportunities and funding to maintain momentum and engage further cohorts of young people as part of future festivals.
- 4.56 On a more personal level the programme has provided an opportunity for many children and young people to make new friends and work alongside participants from across their community. This has provided wider community cohesion benefits as well as motivating children and young people to take a greater interest in issues within their local community.

*“The impact on the local community has been great as they are keen to do more festivals in the town centres and all partners and vendors (local businesses) were really pleased with the event.” Artist*

- 4.57 None of the Year 3 artists reported to have engaged their Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) through the course of delivering the Emerge programme. Responsibility for establishing links between the Emerge programme and LCEPs lay with the Labs given their permanent base within communities. Whilst it is understood that there are current variations in the work of the LCEPs across the Midlands, the absence of any clear lines of engagement between the Labs, artists and their respective LCEP is a missed opportunity, not least because the LCEPs provide a potential source of future commissions and can play a role in helping to sustain the model beyond the cessation of the current programme.

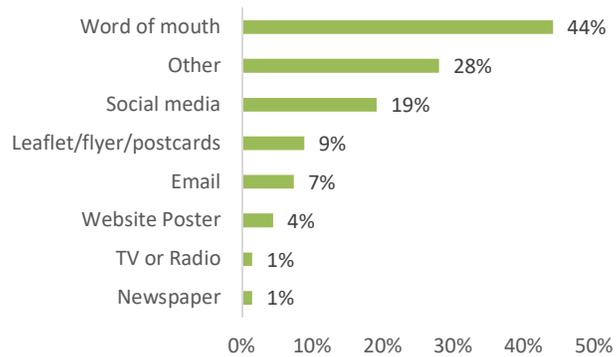
## Summary

- There was consensus from all Lab hosts and artists that the Emerge programme has provided a fantastic opportunity for children and young people to participate in a fun, creative process in which they have taken on lead roles.
- There is considerable diversity across the programme in the contexts within which the Lab sessions are delivered. This lack of uniformity has generated some challenges but also conversely has contributed to a richness of creative content and interpretation across the festivals.
- Permitting the participation of children and young people that have been involved in previous years has encouraged and enabled a number of young people to take on a stronger leadership and mentoring role within the Lab sessions.
- Local context and the profile of the young people engaged in the Lab sessions serves to influence how effectively the Emerge framework has worked for each locality. In the main the fundamentals of the model in terms of the emphasis on being youth-led, the focus on the life and work of Shakespeare, the 'building', 'thinking' and 'doing' phases of delivery have been embraced across the network of Labs.
- For many children and young people their experience of Shakespeare through the Lab sessions differed from the more traditional approach employed within their school's curriculum. The sessions provided them with greater creative freedom and, supported by their artist, many were able to experiment with some of the themes from Shakespeare's work but to add to these a modern flavour to help engage audiences.
- The process of delivering inclusive sessions to mixed-ability groups has provided the artists with valuable learning, in particular regarding the planning and support required to ensure that sessions are both accessible for and enjoyable for all participants.
- Given the focus of the programme on providing opportunities for children and young people to lead and co-produce the work, artists and Lab staff have provided guidance and support to assist participants in their decision-making around the festival content as well as helping to bring the various elements together into a coherent programme of artworks and activities.
- Whilst the Emerge programme is focused on delivering positive outcomes for the commissioned artists and participating children and young people, wider partners have recognised the potential for the arts festival to contribute to a range of place-based outcomes.
- The training and support provided by the project management team has been both acknowledged and appreciated by Lab staff and artists, providing an invaluable safety value which has helped to resolve any delivery issues as well as facilitating positive working relationships.
- The experience of delivering the Emerge programme had provided artists with either new skills or strengthened their existing skills. It has also helped to develop their confidence and levels of personal resilience.
- Across all of the eight localities the programme has helped to forge new links between the Labs and wider community partners. It has raised the profile of the Labs and opened up dialogue within each locality around the provision of arts activities for children, young people and local families.

## 5 Festival feedback

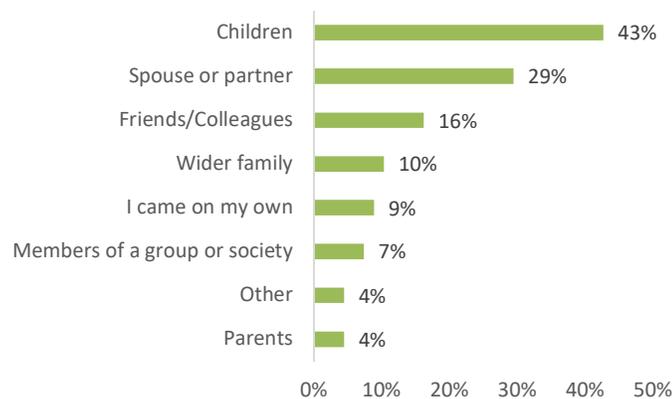
- 5.1 A range of tools were provided to the Labs to enable them to capture feedback from audiences across the network of festivals held on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Tools included audience questionnaires and comment cards. Audience members were also encouraged to share their experiences via social media, the data from which has been collated separately by The Mighty Creatives and does not feature in this report. Evaluation forms were received from 68 audience members across all of the localities. A summary of the data is provided below.
- 5.2 The majority of audience members had heard about the festival by word of mouth. This highlights the importance of the Lab staff cascading information about the festival through a range of local networks and groups and not over relying on other channels such reporting in local press or a website (Figure 5.1).

**Figure 5.1 – How did you hear about the Emerge festival**



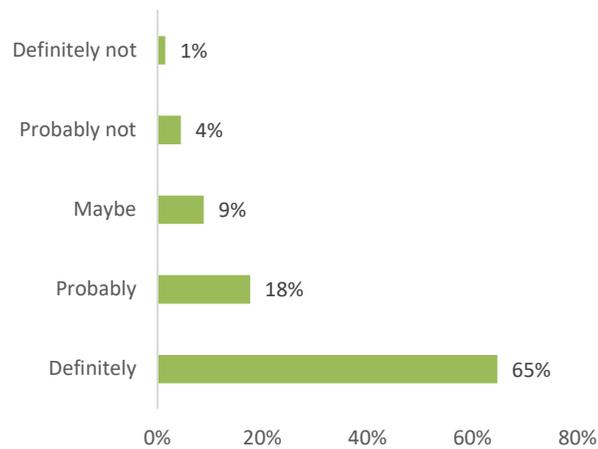
- 5.3 When asked who they attended the festival with the most frequent response was with children (43%) following by their spouse / partner (29%) and then friends/colleagues (16%). Only a small proportion of people indicated that they came to the festival on their own (9%) which provides an indication of the family nature of the festivals (Figure 5.2).

**Figure 5.2 - Who did you come to this event/activity with**



- 5.4 Nine out of ten people (91%) rated the festival they attended as either excellent or very good. The venues for the festivals was rated as excellent or good by 85% of audience members which demonstrates the benefits of selecting the right venue as a backdrop for the arts performances. The performances were rated as either excellent or very good by 88% of audience members, which provides an indication of the quality of the artworks produced or commissioned by the Lab groups.
- 5.5 When asked if the experience had encouraged them to attend or participate in more arts events in future, two-thirds (65%) agreed that it definitely had with around one in five (18%) indicating that it probably had (Figure 5.3).

**Figure 5.3- Impact of the Emerge festival on future participation**



- 5.6 This data suggests that the Emerge programme is helping to build momentum with regards to future participation in arts and cultural activities, which can provide opportunities for organisations involving in planning and commissioning arts activities within the eight localities.
- 5.7 A total of 229 evaluation postcards were completed across the Emerge festivals. A sample of comments and feedback from audience members is provided over page and word clouds for each festival provided in Appendix 2.

**Figure 5.4- Audience festival feedback****Outcomes for young people**

'The event was good for the kids. It kept them engaged and interested'.

It's good they can help boost confidence.

'Gives children a chance to perform, design and run an event. Literature in many formats so attractive to many'.

'Loved to see all the young people getting involved and showcasing their talents'.

'The festival gives the kids a chance to make friends and help each other with confidence'.

'A fantastic atmosphere! Wonderful to see so many young people taking on such leadership roles'.

**Arts participation**

'A really fabulous day of a range of performing arts which is accessible to all'.

'I hope there's another one next year'.

'Great to see some culture brought to local kids. Very interactive and interesting'.

'Such a diverse mix of art on display!'

'Great to see so many young people engaging in the arts and performing to an audience'.

'A bit dubious about bringing children along as assumed it was 'heavy' Shakespeare. Pleasantly surprised ... a fun afternoon had by all'.

**Place shaping**

'A great event for the whole community to be a part of'.

'Excellent for the people of Boston – Well Done!'

'An open event of local standing, something locals look forward to and attractive to visitors as well'.

'There should be more events like this'.

'A great day for all the family, amazing entertainment and crafts for children, thank you'.

'Great to bring more people into the town centre'

'Great way to get the community together and also educate young adults'.

'Never seen town centre so busy'.

Fantastic to see events in the town centre to involve the community and clear that a lot of work has gone into organising'.

'Good turnout, lots of opportunity for promoting our business'.

'Great idea. Lovely to see all races and abilities and ages coming together to have fun. Great community Spirit of 2012'.

## 6 Summary

### Underpinning approaches

- 6.1 The Emerge programme is ambitious by design and the final year of delivery has seen a considerable scaling up of the Lab activities and resultant festivals, in part due to their ability to build on the learning and momentum achieved through their delivery experience in Year 2 of the programme. This highlights an important learning point from the programme, namely the value in securing funding to embed the Lab sessions as a regular activity for children and young people. Such continuity enables children and young people that have participated in previous years to take on leadership and mentoring roles to support the participation of others. It can also provide benefits in assisting Labs in strengthening their partnership links and building relationships with new organisations and services in keeping with a shift towards a more overt place-shaping role for the programme.
- 6.2 Local context and the profile of the young people engaged in the Lab sessions serves to influence how effectively the Emerge framework has worked for each locality and Lab. In the main the fundamentals of the model in terms of the emphasis on being youth-led, the focus on the life and work of Shakespeare and the 'building', 'thinking' and 'doing' phases of delivery have been embraced across the network of Labs. Whilst the creative process have involved verbal arts, the written word of Shakespeare has been used as a platform to inspire more diverse creative output from the young people, which has been of benefit to the content of the resultant festivals.
- 6.3 The community-based Labs have generally found it more difficult than the schools-based Labs to recruit and retain participants. This may suggest that the model moving forward should consider moving away from trying to host two Labs in each locality but instead to concentrate resources into a single strong Lab per area. This could enable the Artist and Lab staff to direct more capacity to developing the festival content with a wider network of other groups in the community, providing benefits both in terms of the diversity of the festival content but also supporting local place shaping objectives.
- 6.4 There is considerable diversity across the programme in the contexts within which the Lab sessions are delivered. This lack of uniformity has generated some challenges but also conversely has contributed to a richness of creative content and interpretation across the festivals.

### Social outcomes

- 6.5 Children and young people participating in the Lab sessions report to feel more engaged with their local community as well as feeling proud of their contribution to their community. They are also more likely to feel that their views are heard in their community. The process of developing the content for their festival and, for many, performing or exhibiting their artwork to a broader audience, has helped to develop participant's self-confidence. Participants report positive changes to the extent to which they feel that the things they do in life are worthwhile as well as their levels of happiness. The programme has also improved participant's confidence in taking part in arts and cultural activities.

- 6.6 For many children and young people their experience of Shakespeare through the Lab sessions differed from the more traditional approach employed within their school's curriculum. The sessions have provided them with greater creative freedom and, supported by their artist, many were able to experiment with some of the themes from Shakespeare's work but to add to these a modern flavour to help engage audiences. The programme has also provided an opportunity for many children and young people to make new friends and work alongside participants from across their community. This has provided wider community cohesion benefits as well as motivating children and young people to take a greater interest in issues within their local community.
- 6.7 Whilst the Emerge programme is focused on delivering positive outcomes for the commissioned artists and participating children and young people, wider partners have recognised the potential for the arts festival to contribute to a range of place-based outcomes. Across all of the eight localities the programme has helped to forge new links between the Labs and wider community partners. It has raised the profile of the Labs and opened up dialogue within each locality around the provision of arts activities for children, young people and local families. In addition to the children and young people that have participated within the Lab sessions the programme has also engaged a much larger cohort of young people. This demonstrates the wider reach of the programme into the local community.

#### **Workforce development**

- 6.8 Whilst feedback from some of the Year 3 artists has highlighted a desire for greater prescription and guidance from TMC on the exact roles and responsibilities of the artist and Lab staff, in practice the 'building' phase of the programme provides the space for artists and Lab staff to agree their respective roles and responsibilities based on their areas of strength, interest, and experience. For emerging artists this process provides relevant learning for their future freelance work, developing communication and negotiation skills and also highlighting the importance of delegating tasks and the use of a team approach to delivery.
- 6.9 The use of emerging artists is a fundamental design principle of the programme and aims to provide them with experience of delivering a community-based commission. This has provided clear benefits in terms of upskilling and supporting a next generation of participatory artists whose role is central to efforts to engage and inspire communities to take part in arts activities. One potential area which may strengthen the model is to include a Lab Producer in each locality, who would have local knowledge and experience of running participatory workshops and community festivals, to work alongside and mentor the emerging artists.
- 6.10 The process of delivering inclusive sessions to mixed-ability groups has provided the artists with valuable learning, in particular regarding the planning and support required to ensure that sessions are both accessible for and enjoyable for all participants. This has included, for example, ensuring that performances were adapted to ensure that they were able to fully involve participants with physical disabilities or that the content of the sessions was accessible for children and young people with dyslexia.

- 6.11 The project management support has been both acknowledged and appreciated by Lab staff and artists, providing an invaluable safety value which has helped to resolve any delivery issues as well as facilitating positive working relationships. The experience of delivering the Emerge programme had provided artists with either new skills or strengthened their existing skills. It has also helped to develop their confidence and levels of personal resilience.
- 6.12 Moving forward the Emerge model may be strengthened by providing a clear quality framework for the artists and Labs to ensure that the process of engagement and artistic content of the festivals is of the highest quality possible.

#### **Key learning points**

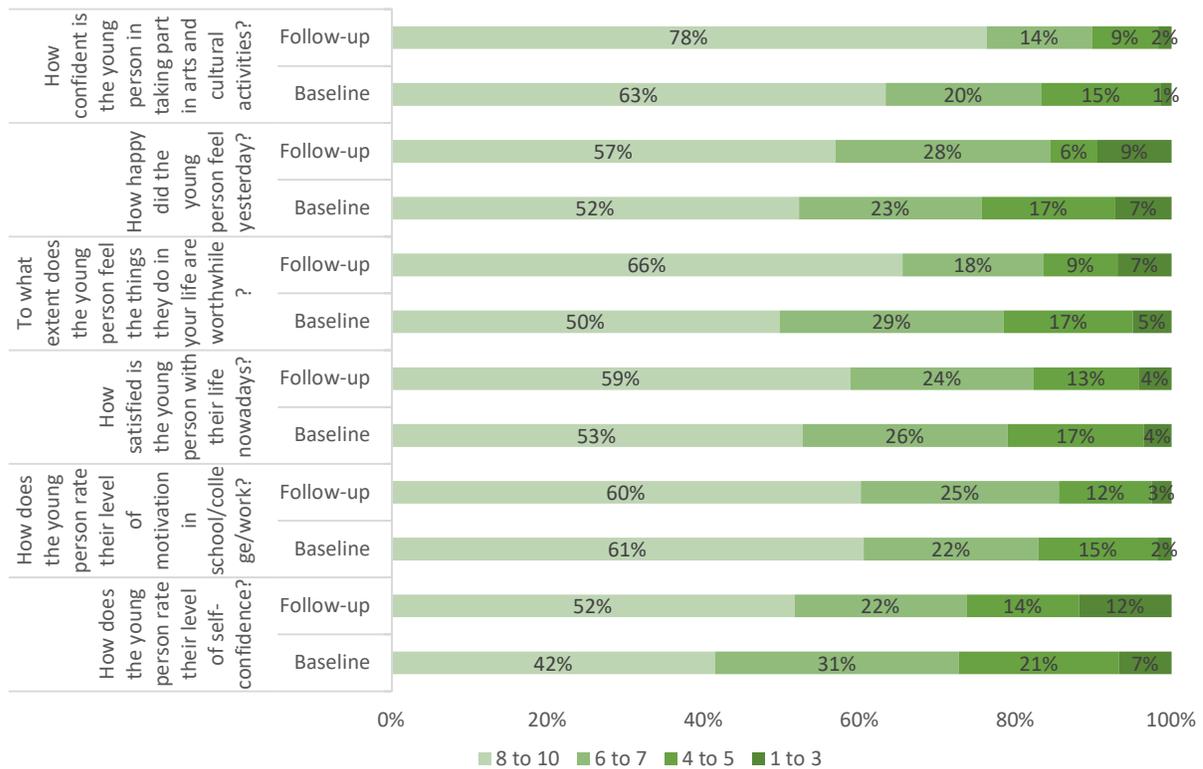
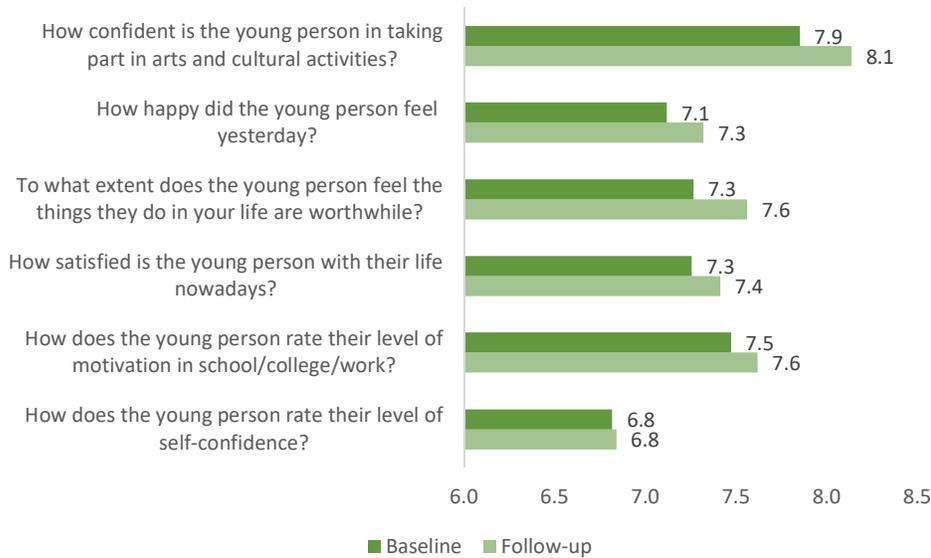
- 6.13 The combination of using the different artform experiences of the artist and Lab hosts has provided a positive dynamic to ensure that participants can focus on a specific artform area that is of most interest to them (e.g. dance, theatre, digital, visual arts). Commissioning professional artists as part of the development of the festival has also provided benefits not only in the quality of the performances and audience experience but also by validating the work and efforts of young people as co-performers.
- 6.14 One area where the programme has benefited from greater flexibility from TMC and Spirit of 2012 has been in permitting the participation of children and young people that have been involved in development the festival in the previous year. This has encouraged and enabled a number of young people to take on a stronger leadership and mentoring role within the Lab sessions. For some Labs this has provided additional support and delivery capacity whilst also providing returning children and young people with a different experience from their first engagement last year.
- 6.15 Hosting the Emerge festivals on the same day has also meant that children and young people participating in the programme have not had the opportunity to attend the festivals and view the artistic context created by other participants. Enabling the children and young people in one Lab to attend a neighbouring Emerge festival has the potential to bring a range of benefits, including giving them an opportunity to experience and review the creative content as well as providing them with ideas and inspiration for future arts activities in their own area. This aspect of the model should be reviewed in any future delivery.

#### **Legacy**

- 6.16 Across all of the eight localities, the programme has helped to forge new links between the Labs and wider community partners. Several Lab partners highlighted that their experience of delivering the Emerge programme had helped them to demonstrate both the need and demand for this type of young people, place-led arts festival. As a consequence Lab staff and wider community partners are actively seeking opportunities and funding to maintain momentum and engage further cohorts of young people as part of future festivals.

- 6.17 Across the programme it is evident that the Labs have engaged and involved a wide range of partners in the process of developing the creative content for the festivals and in promoting and delivering the festival itself. Whilst the Emerge programme is focused on delivering positive outcomes for the commissioned artists and participating children and young people, wider partners have recognised the potential for the arts festival to contribute to a range of place-based outcomes.
- 6.18 The Emerge programme has the potential to act as a catalyst for future place-shaping activity. This may include bringing together partners to submit applications for funding which aims at support local areas to make their high streets and town centres fit for the future such as the Future High Streets Fund or aims to support culture-led economic growth such as the Cultural Development Fund.
- 6.19 Several local businesses have recognised the value of the Emerge festival in terms of revitalising their high street. This has the potential to sustain future arts activities within the localities through commercial sponsorship, a route which can be clearly seen in the work of Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) across the UK.

## Appendix 1- Data Tables





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