Ideas4Ordsall Policy Recommendations

Ideas4Ordsall was a University of Salford participatory research initiative which fostered creative engagement in academic research.

As part of the research project, Ideas4Ordsall supported local organisations and individuals to develop ideas for cultural and creative activities in the Ordsall ward (Islington – Chapel St – Ordsall Park).

From January – September 2015, 20 ideas people and 4 key intermediaries participated in this initiative which 'boosted' ideas including a community festival, art collective, bee hives, a craft clubs, a local history play ….the list goes on! A celebration event on Saturday 12th September in the Old Fire Station showcased these ideas and the local people who participated.

The 'Ordsall Creatives' were supported by the University of Salford and local organisations Let's Go, Chapel Street Community Arts, Ordsall Community Arts and artist Amber Sanchez.

Ideas4Ordsall is funded by the AHRC as part of the Connected Communities 'Cultural Intermediation' project. See more at www.ideas4ordsall.org

Findings
The project's key findings can be summarised as follows:

Finding 1: Maximise what is already there: when people are supported to develop their own ideas, they engage more productively with external parties than when they are asked to perform or carry out the demands of others.

Finding 2: Work with local cultural intermediaries: organisations already embedded in communities are best placed to engage with local people as they have existing trust relationships.

Finding 3: Tailored individual support for people's ideas is more time- consuming but also more effective. Local intermediaries are well placed and good value in providing this support.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, we make the following recommendations to decision and policy makers focused on enabling and supporting cultural activities as part of wider strategic objectives.

1. Place citizens at the heart of coproducing local cultural plans

Local cultural plans need to be coproduced with citizens. Culture is a right, not a gift. Local people should be centred in developing plans that support their aspirations and creativity.

"Culture should be something that we all own and make, not something given, offered or delivered by one section of 'us' to another" (John Holden, 2008) Freelance writer, speaker and cultural commentator.

2. Identify key individuals and organisations to motivate engagement and activity

Individuals and organisations can help animate existing and spark new creative activities. They can create linkages (connections) between formal and informal cultural fields and between citizens, communities, the public and private sectors.

3. Give funding for local people to access support to develop their ideas for cultural activities

Cultural democracy in our cities means transparency over and participation in decisions on priorities, resources and activities.

"Cultural goes beyond a focus on access to cultural works to incorporate access to the means of cultural production and distribution" (Gattinger, 2011)

4. Enhance the cultural fabric of neighbourhoods by building on what's already there

Initiatives must recognise existing 'assets' (organisations, networks, skills, resources and capacities) in communities, whilst respecting the value of fresh perspectives and cultures.

"We can't do well serving communities... if we believe that we, the givers, are the only ones that are half-full, and that everybody we're serving is half-empty" (Michelle Obama, in Foot and Hopkins, 2010)

5. Ensure support for cultural activity is embedded in multiple strategic agendas

Arts and culture is a dynamic force that is often seen as a luxury rather than an essential component of any initiative. Supporting cultural engagement will enrich strategies from health to welfare, infrastructure to learning.

"Cultural dialogue and diversity should continue to be tools at the disposal of sovereign states in their bilateral or multilateral relations between one another or with third countries" Ward Report adopted on the 19/01/2016 by the European Parliament.

6. Support people to become producers of cultural content that is meaningful in their own lives

Cultural expressions and practices outside the mainstream matter. There are multiple ways of living creative lives. Greater support needs to be given to making meaning and sharing cultures within increasing multi-cultural communities.

We live in a remarkably diverse society and how we evolve and face the challenges of the future will depend on how we can us the resources that diversity gifts us. Sir Peter Bazalgette. Chair of Arts Council England.

7. Provide pre-employment support via creative activity

Pathways must be forged to enable people to benefit from and contribute to more formal creative economic activity. This requires confidence, capacity-building and social and emotional support prior to accessing the job market. It also requires skills development, such as in business planning and digital technology.

8. Develop value chains between large and smaller cultural organisations and across the country to support cultural participation in formal arts activities

Large cultural organisations, including universities, should support the development of a cultural urban ecology to support capacity-building across the sector and work in partnership to improve access to and participation in the arts.

"A cultural ecology deep rooted in locality...a cultural ecology in which artists and small companies are critical...an arts infrastructure built on a spread of intermediate organisations" (Stark, Gordon and Powell, 2014)

9. Undertake social infrastructure and cultural activity mapping in neighbourhoods so that people know what is going on.

Communities with high levels of segregation and loneliness can benefit from knowledge and information sharing activities to increase local cultural participation and improve well-being.

Cultural mapping is an important process that can build a network utilizing assets found in a community. It allows a community to discover the resources that contribute to the unique environment and qualities of that place. Stephanie Moore and Tom Borrup. Arts Engaged

10. Support physical and conceptual spaces for people to gather, share, learn and imagine

Community spaces are important and need to be open and available. Grassroots organisations provide spaces and/or opportunities for conversations with people experiencing different kinds of problems, or for those who want to contribute to improving their area.

" It is the local youth theatre, arts centre, dance class or back room of a pub which provides the incubator for every actor, writer, dancer or musician who later takes on the world." Dramatist Lee Hall

Making Commitments SMART

As part of the project process, we are asking senior decision and policy makers to make a SMART commitment which buildings on our findings and recommendations.

SMART Commitments
(Specific, Meaningful, Achievable, Realistic, Time-sensitive)

Firstly. what is your commitment (in a few words)?

SPECIFIC

What are the specific steps you need to take to develop this commitment further?

MEANINGFUL

How will your commitment build on the findings and recommendations from Ideas4Ordsall and connect into your existing responsibilities and activities?

ACHIEVABLE

What do you need to do to make your commitment happen?

REALISTIC

How will you develop this commitment within your existing responsibilities and activities?

TIME-SENSITIVE

How will you make time to develop this idea over the next 3 months?

Thank you for your commitment to realising the findings and commitments from Ideas4Ordsall. We will send this document to you as a reminder in 6 weeks time and follow up to find out your progress.

For more information, please go to www.ideas4ordsall.org or contact Jessica Symons, j.symons@salford.ac.uk / M. 07984747796

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