

64 Million Artists

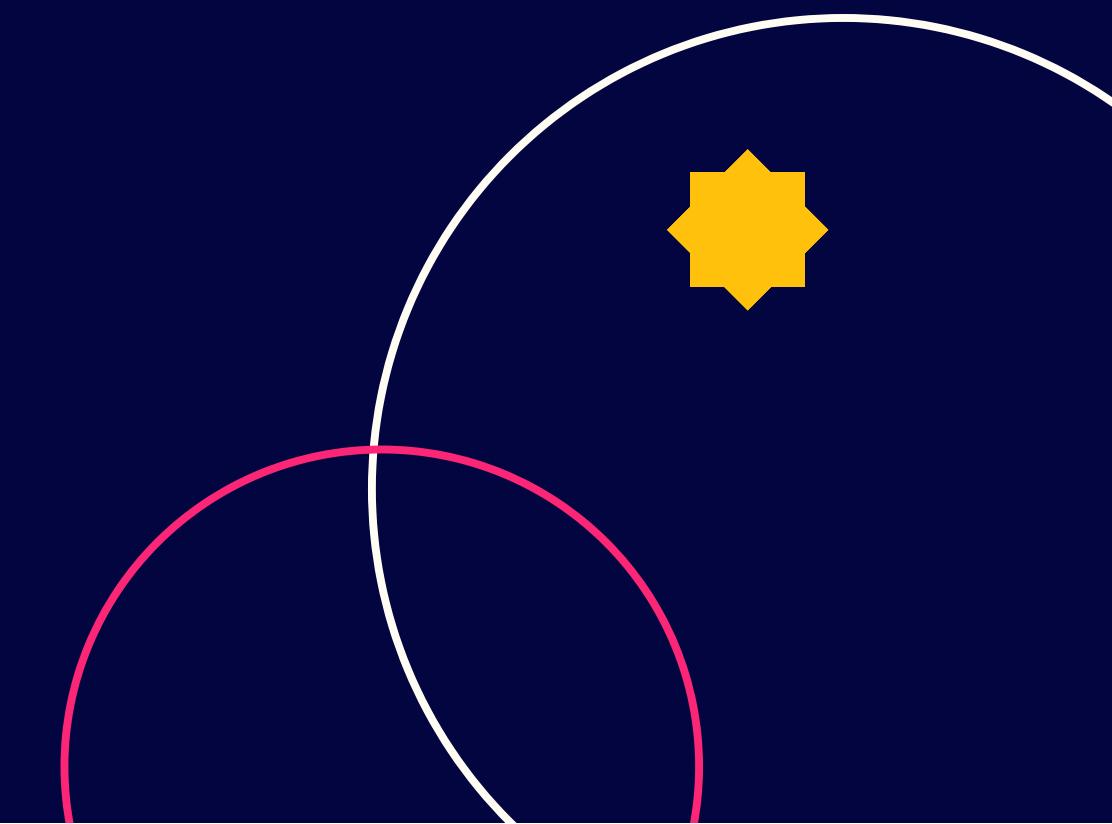
Activity and Impact 2024

By tialt – there is an alternative



section 1

Introduction



Introduction from our CEO

This year was a year of creative courage. We started it feeling grounded in our work and values, which gave us the space to open up new possibilities.

Now, more than ever, the world needs creativity. My favourite dictionary definition of Creativity is to 'transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns and make new ones.' We know the systems around us are failing and that to be able to imagine how it might be different, we need to call on our creativity and courage to try out new ways to be.

We added 'Courage' to our values alongside Care, Belonging and Curiosity because this year in particular it felt important that creativity wasn't just a nice to have. It is vital in the transforming of ourselves and our world into one that fosters connection, generates new ideas, holds more joy and fairness and looks after our planet and our people.

The January Challenge 2024 saw an astonishing 160,000 people taking part across the country from individuals to workplaces, libraries, care homes and schools. We have for the first time supported Creativity Champions year round with workshops, training, peer support and platforming their ideas nationally.

We have continued to grow our academic leadership work with universities from all 4 nations taking part, and reaching well over 250 academics working on climate change, cancer care, pre-term birth, gender inequity and many more of the world's most pressing issues.

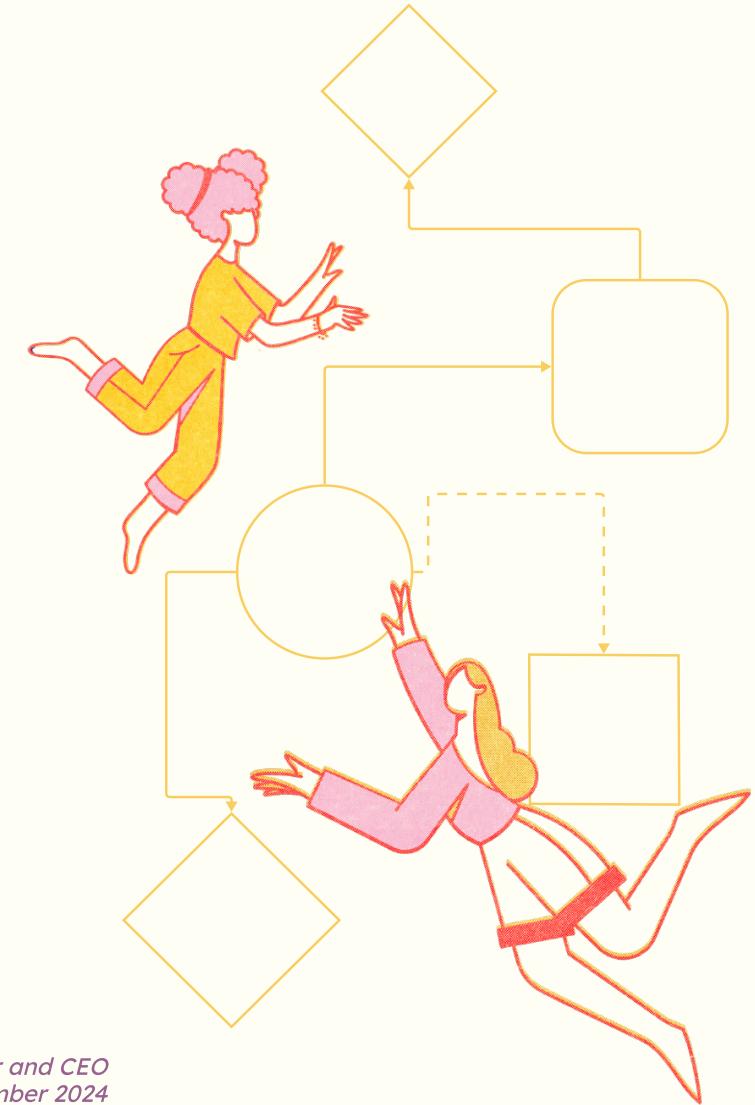
We launched two new programmes, Creative Courage and Creative Cultures. The former ran from April-October and has been hugely successful, using a collective creative process to support individuals to make change in their work and personal lives. The latter will run in 2025 and will see organisations coming together to develop their workplace cultures into more innovative, inclusive and courageous places to be.

We welcomed our fantastic new COO, Rathi Kumar, to the organisation in September 2024 and the team continue to go from strength to strength. Taking August off together was again transformational, with the team coming back energised and full of ideas that are now being implemented.

Working with tialt has continued to add depth and rigour to our work, and the emerging 'Impact Wheel' feels like a hugely valuable underpinning of the work we do, which can often feel very broad ranging and hard to bring together. In the work we share in this document we can start to see how the wheel brings together the core dimensions of creativity that show up in each aspect of our work, and it not only informs our learning but future design and iteration of our work.

I am incredibly proud of the courage the team, our board, and associates have shown in what are increasingly difficult social, economic and often personal times over the year and I am grateful for all the people we have met along the way. I am excited to see where the next year takes us.

*Jo Hunter, Founder and CEO
November 2024*



Timeline



• October 2023

- Launch of January Challenge and recruitment of Creativity Ambassadors
- Leading Researcher workshops and Spotlight sessions
- Campaign and Communication Manager starts

• November 2023

- Creativity Ambassadors training
- Six Leading Researcher Ideas Summits across the UK and a Spotlight on Wellbeing
- Tialt and 64 MA Development Day

January 2024

- The January Challenge shares daily creative prompts and engages more than 160,000 people, supported by online and in-person workshops from 'Creativity Champions'
- Elevate, Climate and Thrive workshops begin
- Creativity for Wellbeing workshops launched with Barbican and Lloyds Bank



credit Donna Ford

• March 2024

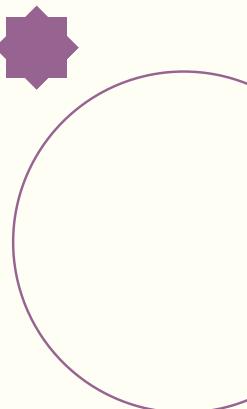
- Free training on facilitation offered to national Creativity Champions
- Elevate, Thrive and Climate workshops continue
- 64MA is nominated for a Company Culture Award

• December 2023

- Elevate, Climate and Thrive – senior academic development programmes are launched
- Everyone takes a winter rest

February 2024

- Weekly creative prompts takeover from London Writers Salon – including an online workshop
- Elevate and Thrive workshops continue





April 2024

- Weekly creative prompts takeover from Bomb Factory including primary school workshop
- Elevate and Thrive workshops continue
- Associate Facilitator starts

May 2024

- Free online workshop offered on how Fandom is a force for change
- Leading Researchers 2024 core programme begins
- Creative Courage programme is launched



credit Donna Ford

June 2023

- Weekly creative prompts takeover from Month of Community
- Manifesto for Transformative Workplace Culture launched
- Leading Researcher workshops continue

July 2024

- Free Creative Collage workshop with Cut Out Club
- Together Gloucester Community Building Project begins
- Creative Courage workshops continue
- Leading Researcher workshops continue



September 2024

- Launch a creativity pack with Cultura Inglesa Festival in Brazil
- Together Gloucester and Creative Courage workshops continue
- Leading Researcher workshops continue
- Chief Operating Officer starts

August 2024

Everyone takes a summer rest



Introduction from tialt

This report presents a summary of the key activities and impact of 64 Million Artists in 2023–24. It presents the work of the organisation according to six core impact dimensions that describe what creativity does for people, and how 64 Million Artists can support as many people as possible to flourish through creativity.

Moving towards an Impact Wheel

In broader conversation with the 64 Million Artists team over the past year we realised there is an opportunity to develop a tool that helps people to understand the different ways that creativity affects people. This can be used across the organisation's work to develop a shared vocabulary around the impact of creative activities and processes. It can encourage those the organisation works with (e.g., partners, participants, 'Creativity Ambassadors') to develop creative methods and research approaches, but within a framework that has been established by the research evidence (from 64 Million Artists, Tialt, and many other sources).

This has led to the development of an 'Impact Wheel', a research tool that breaks down the different dimensions of the impact of everyday creativity in the context of 64 Million Artists' work. The wheel is used to organise how the six core impact dimensions (ideation, technical skills, collaboration, connection, mental wellbeing, and joy) are linked to subdimensions, and help us to piece together lots of complex processes into something simple, engaging and playful.

Sitting behind the wheel are a range of questions and methods that allow us to explore the different dimensions in a way that feels appropriate for different users. The wheel also acts as a useful way of analysing and organising data once it emerges. Overall, it helps us to engage in discussions of impact in a clearer way, pinning down language and terminology, while at the same time remaining open and exploratory to emerging concepts.

The six main dimensions represent the areas of change that we consistently observe as a result of people taking part in creative activities, although we know that not all of them are present all the time, and some may be stronger with certain groups or in certain activities over others. This version of the tool has been designed to support those who are doing creative activities with people to think about the questions they may want to explore with the people they are working with, to design a research approach that can help to explore these questions, and collectively develop an evidence bank that helps us to talk about the impact of the work.

Definitions:

Creativity Ambassadors -

Individuals from a range of backgrounds who were paid to develop creative prompts for the The January Challenge and in most cases ran parallel workshops on and offline

Leading Researchers -

A series of workshops and bespoke coaching delivered to emerging professors across six universities. The programme aims to build confidence, innovation and collaborative skills among senior academics.

Creative Courage -

Designed to give people space and support to explore and develop a change in their lives, nurture creativity and build community over a 6 month period.

The January Challenge -

A series of creative prompts shared on each day of January, seeking to support connection and wellbeing across the general public. Specific settings can also download packs of challenges to use in their workplace or other settings.

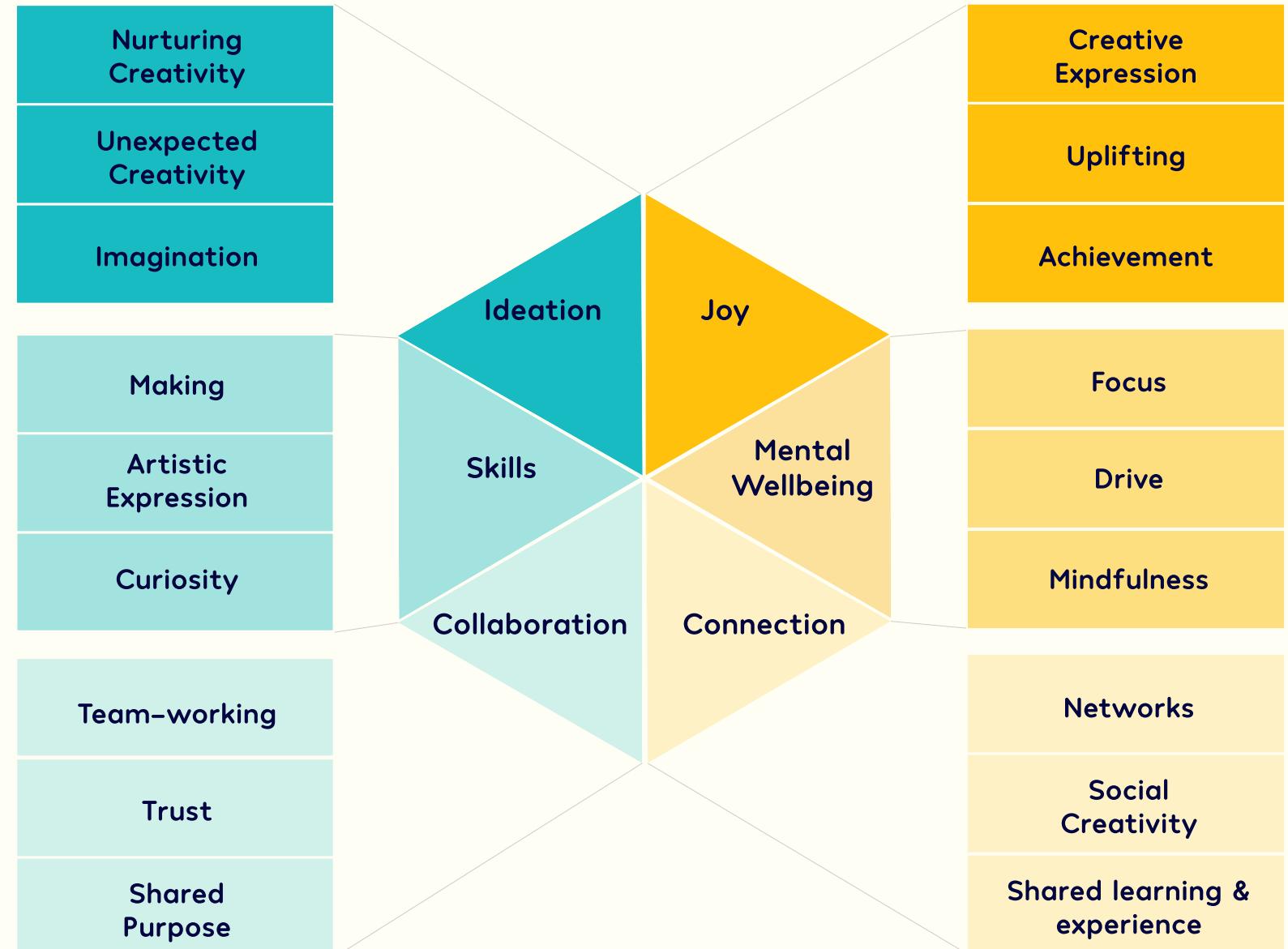
Future uses and intentions

At this stage we have shared the prototype tool in an academic conference exploring everyday creativity, we have shared it with the 64 Million Artists team for testing and feedback, as well as developing the approach in a workshop with the next cohort of 'January Challenge Ambassadors' (i.e., those developing the prompts and content for the 2025 January Challenge), and those taking part in the Creative Courage programme..

From this testing we will update the physical version of the tool, as well as further develop an online digital version which we hope will further extend the reach of the concepts and practice. By continuing to use the tool to support the development of creative research approaches we can further support 64 Million Artists as an organisation, as well as the broad and varied populations the organisation supports, to co-develop an evidence bank enabling better understanding of the impact of creative activities and a stronger voice to advocate for this work at a population level.

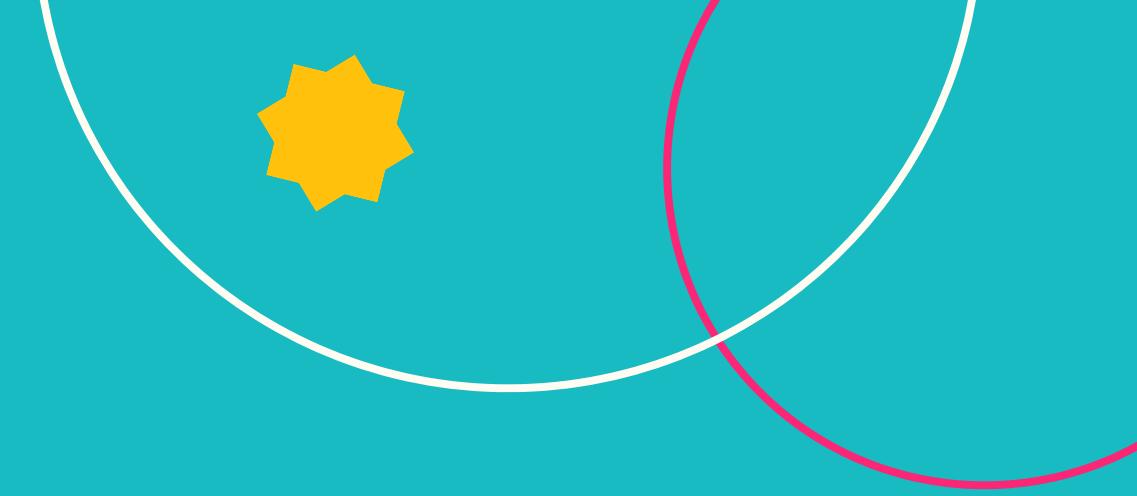
How we align responses to the wheel

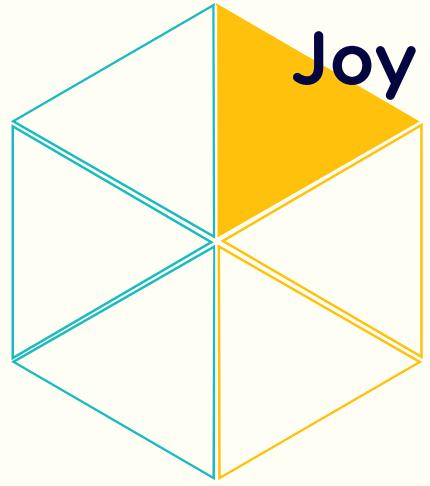
For this report we have arranged evidence we have gathered from the Creativity Ambassadors supporting the January Challenge in 2024, feedback from participants of the January Challenge, feedback from Creative Courage participants, and reflection interviews we held with four participants from the Leading Researcher programme who have taken part in the past two years.



section 2

Mapping activities on the Impact Wheel





- Creative Expression
- Uplifting
- Achievement

Achievement in Leading Researchers

The workshop content encouraged participants to think about their personal growth, goals and how they can champion these whilst leading and working in academia. This created a sense of inspiration and achievement throughout the programme, being inspired to consider new projects and goals. Ultimately making decisions around new career moves and project proposals. This came in part due to the focus on future thinking. Participants said they had not traditionally had the space to think about this outside current projects before. The Leading Researchers workshops gave participants moments to reflect on themselves, consider their goals, what they had achieved and what they wanted to achieve.

Creative expression for Creativity Ambassadors

Projects prioritised participant wellbeing and joy, especially Ffion's workshop, which celebrated the fun of throwing paint and working with natural materials. This joyful approach helped people who hadn't made time for art to reconnect with creativity.

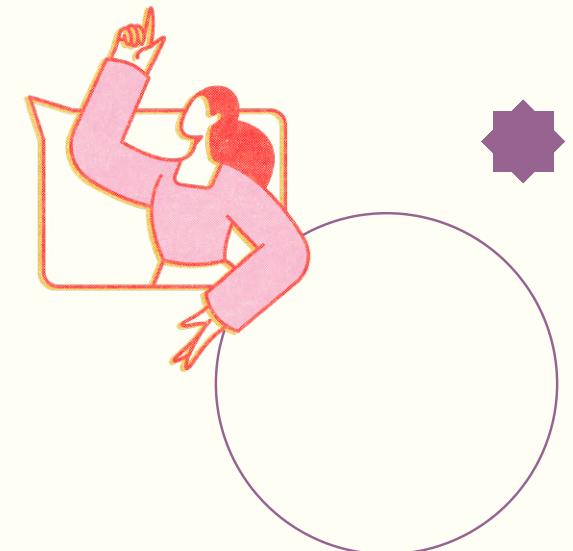
"The short-term impact showed us the level of engagement and desire for creative sessions in our locality. It has also made us think about the sessions we offer. We will definitely be including more prompt style sessions alongside making a workshop. We have noticed that people enjoy the space to 'play' with materials and ideas."

(Creativity Ambassador participant 'change' story)

Creative Courage as a site for uplifting experiences

Participants frequently highlighted moments of joy and satisfaction in exploring their creativity. Activities like drawing, writing exercises, and facilitated prompts were especially appreciated for their ability to reduce stress and bring fun into the process. Sessions like the "Creative Courage Cake" exercise were especially uplifting. However, a lack of structure and clarity at times impacted the experience for some participants making it harder for them to consistently engage with all elements of the programme.

"I've realised I am more creative than I give myself credit for... It's given me back some fun and joy."





Focus in Leading Researchers

All participants we spoke to highlighted the stressful nature of their academic roles, balancing teaching, research and personal lives. Through conversations with peers, understanding roles and the programme content directly, they were aided in balancing workload with their personal management. With one participant speaking of the first proposal they put forward after the workshop, focusing on championing themselves within that, putting in an understanding of their personal and professional needs together. Despite challenges generally in implementing the content institutionally, they managed to implement some of it directly within their own project. For them this created improved wellbeing, reducing stress and creating a method in which they can put themselves first - challenging the traditional institutional structure at a micro-level.

Mindfulness for Creativity Ambassadors and January Challenge participants

The Creativity Ambassadors found the process therapeutic, with some rediscovering their "mojo" and experiencing positive mental shifts. Pavani's poetry sessions nurtured a supportive space for self-expression, with participants sharing personal growth and joy from exploring new creative identities.

Connections and community created, links with my own city and discovery of spaces - For a few new to the city, it was a gentle introduction into the LGBT community. The sessions themselves allowed people to get lost, be reflective, get messy. Having the location in community gardens, it also linked up people to a new space they really enjoyed.

(January Challenge participant survey)

It reaffirmed my trust in the power of culture, song/music and community. I know now more strongly than ever that these tools are pure medicine. It is really moving. The sound recordings that I made are truly amazing! they make me smile every time I listen to them

(January Challenge participant survey)



 Focus

 Drive

 Mindfulness

Focus and drive in Creative Courage

Participants joined the programme for a range of reasons, often linked to personal growth, career transitions, and a desire for creative exploration. Many participants sought to reconnect with their creativity after experiencing burnout or significant life changes.

"I wanted to bring the creativity and joy back into my professional practice (as an innovation lead) – after a destabilising and demotivating period at work. I wanted to reconnect with my creativity and develop a practice that worked for me."

Other participants joined during pivotal life shifts, both personally and professionally, such as retirement, redundancy, or role transitions. For some, the programme offered a way to explore creative ideas and build new connections.

"I have recently retired from academia and am looking to focus my creativity on new independent work but finding 'starting again' on my own, at a more advanced age, very challenging."

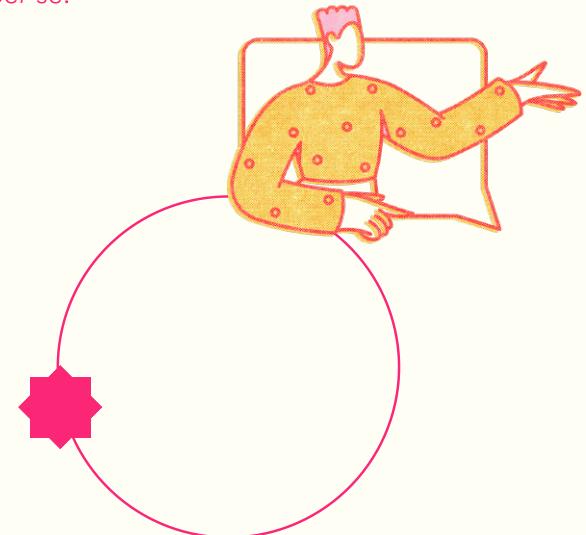
"I was looking for a collaborative way to boost my creativity and strengthen my writing practice."

In addition the programme appealed to those eager for inspiration and community. Participants felt motivated to join the programme for the opportunity to be part of a supportive creative environment while addressing personal and professional goals.

Therapeutic effects of Creative Courage

Creative Courage positively impacted mental wellbeing by offering a therapeutic and reflective space. Activities like journaling and mindfulness exercises allowed participants to process their emotions and find clarity. However, some participants struggled to balance personal challenges with the demands of the course, highlighting the potential value of additional support mechanisms to complement the programme's offerings.

"My reflections became quite therapeutic and introspective as opposed to being about creative output per se."





Shared learning and experience in Leading Researchers

A key component of the workshop content is creating connections between faculties and departments. A strong takeaway for the participants was meeting and working alongside others who, outside a workshop setting, are difficult to meet or collaborate with. By expanding these networks they learned about other roles and their experience. This wider institutional knowledge has proven important when dealing with the institutional barriers participants can face, being able to understand some of the challenges from both sides.

However these relationships are hard to maintain and haven't formed into full networks. Despite initial buzz after workshops, institutional barriers can often get in the way. More understanding around what the institutional barriers are and a realistic understanding of how to overcome them would be appreciated by those we spoke to.

As a result of this 64MA are now doing more work on Research Culture, engaging some of our Leading Researchers universities in programmes that allow them to address some of these systemic barriers alongside the leadership development.

Leading Researchers found value in having the space to work and talk collaboratively with peers from across their institutions. They often find that they don't have the chance to speak or work with peers from other departments unless around specific issues or projects, which can be a barrier to developing supportive relationships. Having the space to work directly with peers sharing their experience allowed for a greater understanding of the shared issues they all face within their roles. A strong highlight for participants was how these conversations were held. Sharing with peers in a context that champions the time and space for more open-ended conversations is rare within academia and was crucial to participants working together to explore topics and issues.

Building connections among Creative Courage participants

Building meaningful connections was a strong motivator for many participants. Some formed deep bonds, however, while connection was felt during sessions, others noted a lack of connection in Creative Courage Groups, especially in groups where members struggled to engage or commit. The absence of a platform for broader networking across the programme was also highlighted as a missed opportunity to build and maintain connections. As a result 64MA are adapting elements of the programme for next year to give stronger wraparound support

Social creativity for Creativity Ambassadors

Connecting with others was central to each Creativity Ambassadors' project's success. Deirdre's work highlighted the geographic and psychological nuances and considerations of Northern Ireland, building connections and broadening perspectives. Nathan's workshop in Wolverhampton connected musicians and artists, blending music and visual art to engage people in unique ways.

I have been working with a man in his late 50's and he has experienced a lot of stigma relating to his disability and ableist attitudes. He found the project to be empowering and shared that he felt a sense of connection and belonging and most of all understanding about living in the world as a disabled person and our collective spirit. We have had other members say that they felt freedom and joy.

(Creativity Ambassador participant 'change' story)

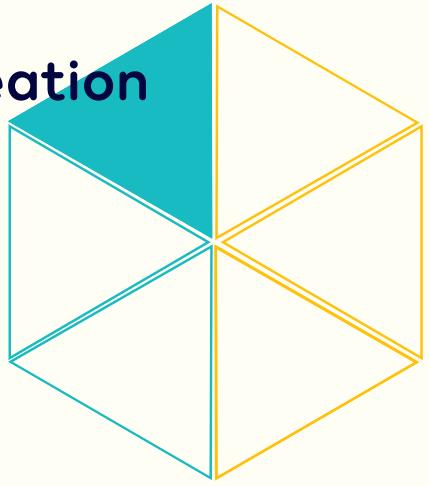
We are a team that really care about what we do and really care about each other but we are spread geographically and it isn't always easy to connect with one another on a personal level; this changed through January and has remained since. In sharing creations - photography to pottery, drawings, painting and sculptures created alone or with the whole family involved - others showed up with comments, emojis and all the enthusiasm. Whilst the challenges ended in January the conversation, human interaction, support and care continued.

(Creativity Ambassador participant 'change' story)

"I wanted a way to connect with the wider group to find those who shared my level of engagement."

"Lovely group, and we self-managed well and connected deeply."

Ideation



- Nurturing Creativity
- Unexpected Creativity
- Imagination

Nurturing creativity for Creativity Ambassadors

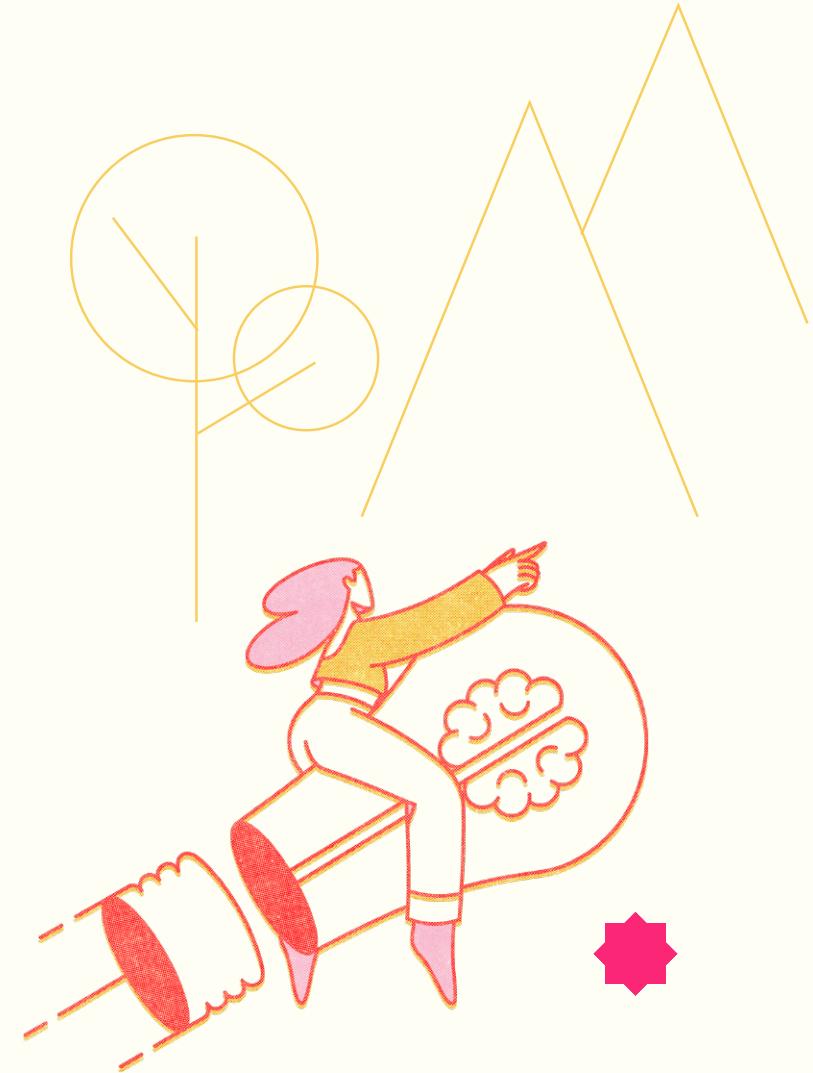
The diverse projects inspired new creative ideas and encouraged participants to view themselves as creators. Pavani transitioned from a non-writer to a writer, inspired by poetry workshops that led her to compile a zine of participants' work. Nathan's workshops explored how creative prompts could be expanded for greater impact, even suggesting potential for brand partnerships. Ffion's workshop, which encouraged painting with natural materials, sparked a joyful engagement with art that appealed to people seeking new, light-hearted creative outlets.

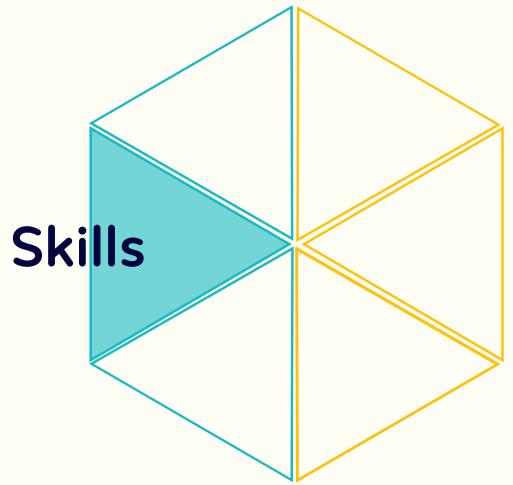
Unexpected creativity for some Creative Courage participants:

Participants appreciated how the programme encouraged them to think creatively and reframe challenges. As one participant shared,

"To be creative in both thinking and doing is possible... It has reframed how to approach life and especially difficult parts of life."

While the prompts often led to unexpected ideas, some participants desired more structured guidance to translate their creativity into actionable steps, such as clearer frameworks for brainstorming and goal setting.





Curiosity in Leading Researchers

Participants expressed that the workshops provided a strong platform on which they could build and develop personal skills and confidence. Having a less traditional approach to other leadership workshops using a creative approach to frame thinking and reflection. By encouraging conversations around personal goals and motivations participants were able to learn and develop a new way of thinking about their work through self and peer reflection. Being provided with new perspectives from others, aiding in a personal shift in thinking and exploring new ways of planning and leading projects.

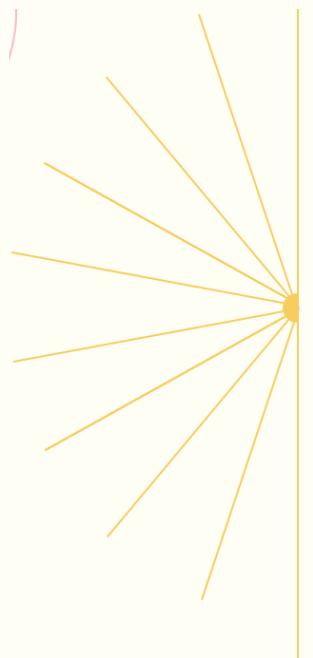
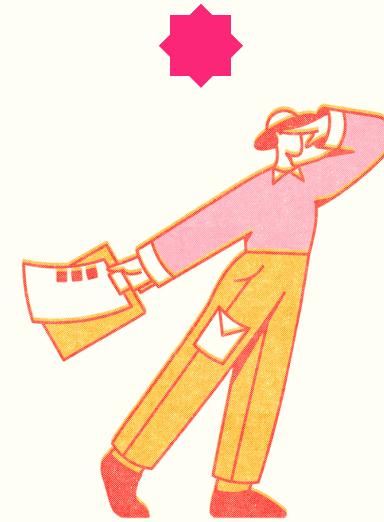
Understanding what skills are needed in Creative Courage

The programme was likened to a "gym for creativity," providing participants with a space to practice and develop their skills. While some participants felt their skills improved, others expressed a desire for more targeted skill-building workshops that focused on practical applications and professional development

"Creativity is a muscle that requires regular practice."

Making and artistic expression for Creativity Ambassadors

Nathan's workshops taught scriptwriting and storytelling skills to fellow autistic individuals, significantly impacting participants' lives and boosting their confidence in creative expression. Deirdre's work with stop-motion animation brought new skills to participants, who even engaged in modelling work outside of workshops. Pavani's experience expanded her confidence in running workshops and podcasting, laying a foundation for creative career development. She also highlighted the benefit of skill-building through co-design and training opportunities.





Collaboration

- Team-working
- Trust
- Shared purpose

Trust and shared purpose in Leading Researchers

For many of the programme this was their first experience working with or meeting others from their wider faculty or department. By holding a space together they were encouraged to learn and work together, discussing issues which would normally be held in isolation. This created a sense of trust and a new understanding of the wider teams. Not all participants reported maintaining collaboration after the programme, but there is still a greater understanding of other's roles and responsibilities which aids in navigating collective and individual problems.

Team-working for Creativity Ambassadors

Deirdre's project *We Garden Together*, demonstrated collaboration by including storyboarding and character development in a social setting, creating a relaxed space for tea and coffee, creating connections among participants in a gentle way. Pavani benefited from networking opportunities, seeing the 64MA team and other Creativity Ambassadors as an alumni network that offers support and knowledge sharing. Deirdre emphasised the benefit of connecting across regions, suggesting language parity with Welsh and Irish cards in future projects to foster inclusivity.

We were surprised how far the reach went. We had a gran visiting her grandchildren from Bristol that had heard about our event and brought the little ones along. We were thrilled by the amount, quality and variety of responses to our challenge prompt. We were really pleased to see families creating together.
(Creativity Ambassador participant 'change' story)

Team-work in Creative Courage

Collaboration experiences varied widely among participants. Some groups thrived finding supportive networks beyond the programme, while others felt disconnected due to uneven participation or mismatched expectations.

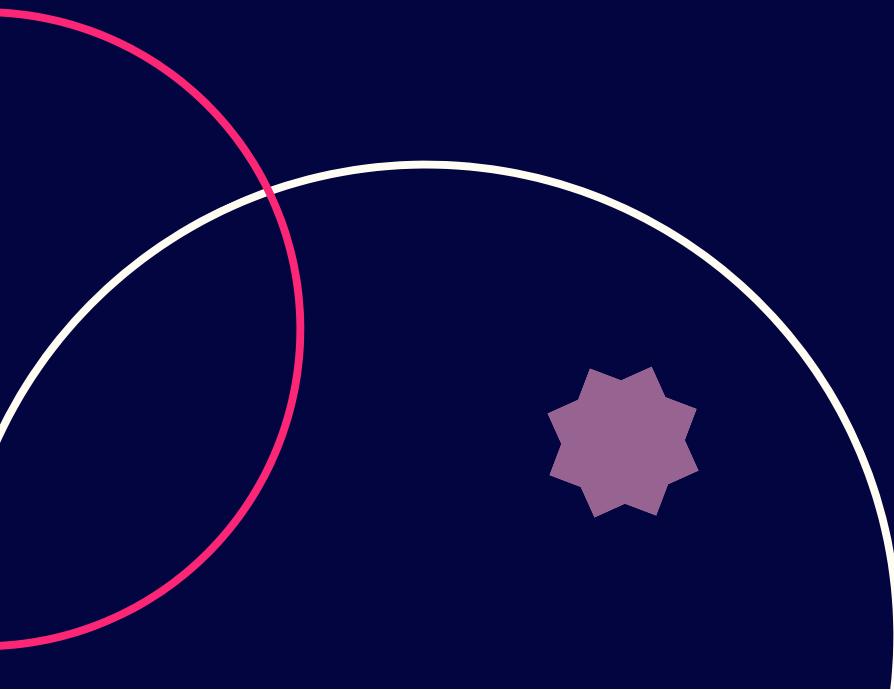
"We were lucky that our group were really proactive and so we met up regularly in between sessions and have just set dates for six sessions to support our journeys through 2025."

"Our group only met twice, and there wasn't an equal commitment to setting up and running the group."

Suggestions included matching groups based on shared goals, setting clearer expectations for involvement, having buddy schemes for more 1-2-1 support and having ways of being in touch during and beyond the programme to check in.

section 3

Next steps



Next steps

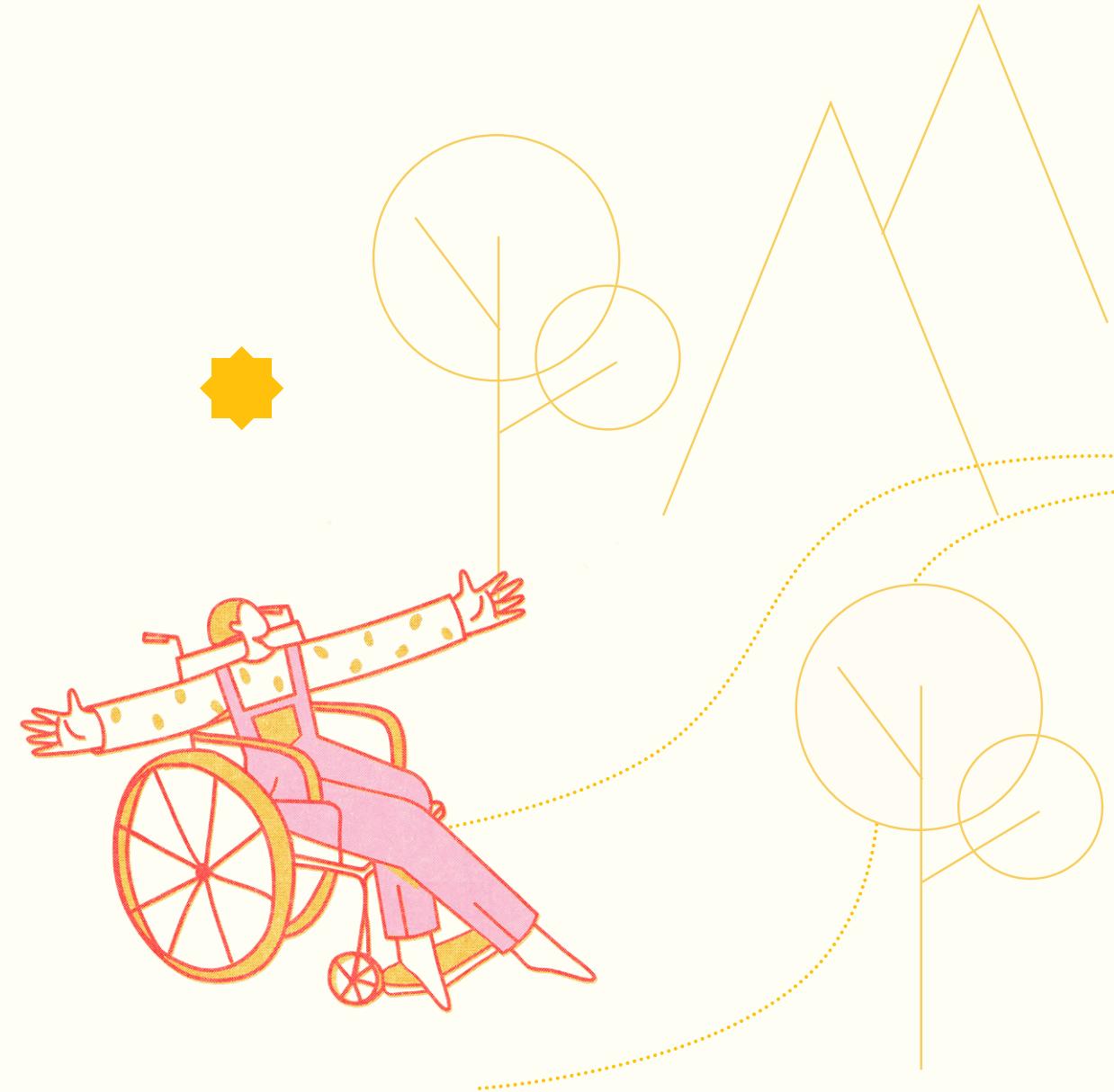
As a partnership between tialt and 64 Million Artists we will ensure we are working holistically across the organisation to gather stories and data that can be embedded in our broader campaign for change.

We will work collaboratively as a team to make the best use of our resources and networks across the year to leverage the greatest change.

We will continue to develop the Impact Wheel and supporting resources, including a digital version that can enhance and support 64MA stakeholders to develop theory-informed methods for exploring the impact of their work.

We will collaborate on workshops and seminars to share findings, alongside our innovative and creative research approaches, with arts and culture organisations and adjacent sectors. This will highlight creative practice as fundamentally inquiry-based, and enable deeper understanding of the effects of creativity on people and communities at scale.

We will develop a research project exploring how creativity can lead to systems change, particularly focusing on the Leading Researchers work and the new Creative Cultures programme. This will also unpack how intentional creative interventions are contributing to complex and embedded social issues.



Thank you!

64 Million
artists

tialt

THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE



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