

# Making the case for everyday creativity

A rapid evidence review

2025

**64** Million *artists*

**tialt**

THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE

# Introduction

**This rapid evidence review has been conducted to better understand and articulate the business case for the work of 64 Million Artists.**

Tialt has worked as a research partner with 64 Million Artists since 2022, reviewing the emerging evidence on the impacts of everyday creativity, and enabling the organisation to better understand the impact of its programmes and activities.

This review is based on searches of recently published academic and grey literature around some key themes that are relevant to this work. Searches were conducted using an iterative approach, where pertinent articles and papers were identified according to a set of structured research questions and linked articles explored further. This is not a systematic review, but instead a pragmatic review seeking to explore what current published research is telling us about the themes of interest to the organisation. In this document it is enhanced by recent evaluation findings relating to the organisation's work. The paper concludes with a description of ongoing work we have undertaken on how to operationalise some of the core concepts emerging from both sources (i.e., 64MA evidence and published research) to develop an 'Impact Wheel' to help us explore, capture and analyse data and findings from across the organisation's work moving forward.

The paper is divided into three main findings sections relating to the themes of interest, with supporting evidence provided under each impact statement, followed by a case study of pertinent current work by 64 Million Artists.

## Impact themes

### 01

#### Navigating Change

##### Creativity as a catalyst for social change

Impact statement 1 – Creativity promotes wellbeing in individuals enabling positive impact loops to cope with stress and act as the springboard for action.

Impact statement 2 – Creative activities enable emotional and cognitive processes that can enhance social engagement, participation, and action.

### 02

#### Creative Work Cultures

##### Enhancing innovation and retention

Impact statement 1 - Creativity fosters innovation and enhances work performance, supported by creative leadership and organisational cultures.

Impact statement 2 - A creativity-focused developmental culture enhances employee wellbeing and is linked to improved retention.

### 03

#### Fostering Resilience

##### Enabling creative cultures across society (i.e., inside and outside of work)

Impact statement 1 - Individual resilience is fostered through creative activities supporting optimism, self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation and cognitive flexibility

Impact statement 2 - Collective resilience is fostered through community building, social capital, developing collective identity, social inclusion and mutual support

# Defining creativity

We have provided working definitions for ‘creativity’, ‘creative thinking’ and ‘everyday creativity’ to clarify the terms as they are commonly used in the literature. This is important as there can be variations in how definitions are applied in the research. Most of the work of 64 Million Artists relates to be people **doing** creativity (rather than **being** creative), and especially in individual and collective acts of everyday creativity.

## Creativity

**The capacity to imagine, conceive, express, or make something that was not there before**

Durham Commission, 2019. *Durham commission on creativity and education*. Arts Council England and Durham University. Available from: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/creativitycommission/report/>

## Creative thinking

**The competence to engage productively in the generation, evaluation and improvement of ideas, that can result in original and effective solutions, advances in knowledge and impactful expressions of imagination**

OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), 2019. *PISA 2021 Creative Thinking Framework (3rd Draft)* <https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA-2021-creative-thinking-framework.pdf> Accessed 21/07/2022

## Everyday creativity

**A process which brings together at least one active human mind, and the material or digital world, in the act of making something. The activity has not been done in this way by this person (or these people) before. The process may arouse various emotions, such as excitement or frustration, but most especially a feeling of joy. When witnessing and appreciating the output, people may sense the presence of the maker, and recognise those feelings**

Gauntlett, D., 2018. *Making is connecting: The social power of creativity, from craft and knitting to digital everything*. John Wiley & Sons.

The latter definition is included to remind us that creativity can be ‘done’ and learned both collectively and individually.



# Impact theme 1 – Navigating Change: Creativity as a catalyst for social change

Impact statement 1 – Creativity promotes wellbeing in individuals enabling positive impact loops to cope with stress and act as the springboard for action.

## Supporting evidence

A research review of 32 studies found that everyday creative activity had a direct positive impact on individual mood, happiness, and positive relations between people. This was especially true for creative activity (i.e., doing things, using your hands, or making something whether physical or digital) than for creative thinking (e.g., divergent thinking tasks, more often used as a cognitive measure of creativity). The association can be interpreted as ‘creative people have higher wellbeing’, or ‘people with higher wellbeing are more creative’, but the authors consider the first assessment more likely given the large amount of theory linking creative activity with short- and long-term mental wellness. The findings around mood are also highlighted as important given that there is an established link between feeling happy and relaxed and open-mindedness, which can lead to more creativity, rather than feeling fearful or anxious, which can lead to task avoidance <sup>1</sup>

Another study found that there is **“a particular kind of positive upward spiral for wellbeing and creativity - engaging in creative behaviour leads to increases in wellbeing the next day, and this increased wellbeing is likely to facilitate creative activity on the same day.”** Concluding that the findings support the emerging arguments on everyday creativity as a means of cultivating positive psychological functioning <sup>2</sup>.

Research using a large-scale internet-based sample (48,000 people, 44% male), found that participation in self-directed and group-based everyday creative activities (e.g., singing, drawing, painting, dancing, cooking, gardening and more) was directly linked to a range of positive psychological emotional regulation outcomes, especially: distraction from negative thinking, abstract thinking (i.e., thinking about things differently), and improved self-esteem. The authors were able to show a clear emerging framework for how these activities are linked to positive psychological impacts on a day-to-day basis and lead to overall improved mental health <sup>3</sup>.

The research suggests that getting ‘hands-on’ with something new and creative is important regardless of skill level, and that just trying something new has a mental reward. The findings also revealed there are emotional benefits from even a single session of creativity as well as cumulative benefits from regular engagement. The findings highlighted a stronger effect for live and face-to-face creative activities, although virtual creative experiences can also bring significant benefits over nothing at all <sup>4</sup>.

1 - Acar, S., Tadik, H., Myers, D., Van der Sman, C. and Uysal, R., 2021. Creativity and Well-being: A Meta-analysis. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 55 (3), pp.738-751.

2 - Tamlin S., Conner, G., DeYoung, P., J. Silvia. Everyday creative activity as a path to flourishing. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 2016;

3 - Fancourt, D., Garnett, C., Spiro, N., West, R. and Müllensiefen, D., 2019. How do artistic creative activities regulate our emotions? Validation of the Emotion Regulation Strategies for Artistic Creative Activities Scale (ERS-ACA). *PLoS one*, 14(2), p.e0211362.

4 - Ibid

## Impact statement 2 – Creative activities enable emotional and cognitive processes that can enhance social engagement, participation, and action.

### Supporting evidence

A recent study conducted deep onsite research across six makerspaces (i.e., spaces in the community equipped to support professional, amateur, and ‘everyday’ collaborative making) in the UK and found the following seven factors present across each of the sites:

- Makerspaces as platforms (to launch careers, achieve goals)
- Fostering creativity through co-design (sharing ideas, formal and informal peer learning)
- Empowering people to make (developing skills and confidence)
- Empowering people through making (developing self-concept)
- Socialisation through making (networking and building social connections)
- Inclusive design (a welcoming atmosphere and friendly atmosphere)
- Creation of social value through making (individual and shared achievement, belonging and camaraderie) <sup>5</sup>

While there is a spectrum of makerspaces between more professionally focused and market facing, and more community-focused with a broader social remit, the spectrum itself provides a space to engage with opportunities for collective and individual creative development across the life course.

The social value of community craft groups often comes from the very fact that they are not designed and targeted interventions, but are spontaneous and intentional social opportunities, facilitated through creative activity <sup>6</sup>.

Another study proposes a new framework for creativity that can benefit from a socially engaged arts perspective which is based on social engagement, social change, and a social action perspective. It concludes that this interrelationship of power relations, social inequality and social justice is essential for understanding how we can achieve change through socially engaged arts and that **‘creativity should be informed with radical conceptions drawing on inclusion, participation, imaginative space and creative and political imagination.’** <sup>7</sup>

Following a review of the literature on transformations, transformative learning and the role of art, another study describes an experiment with change carried out with students at an Art High School in Lisbon, Portugal, which involved choosing one sustainable behaviour and adopting it for 30 days. A transformative programme encouraged regular reflection and group discussions. During the experiment, students started developing an art project about their experience with change. The results show that a transformative learning approach that engages students with art can support critical thinking and climate change awareness, new perspectives and a sense of empowerment. Experiential, arts-based approaches also have the potential to create direct and indirect effects beyond the involved participants. The study concludes that climate-related art projects represent a process of opening up imaginative spaces where participants can move more freely and reconsider the role of humans as responsible beings with agency and a stake in sustainability transformations <sup>8</sup>.

5 - Lam, B., Choi, Y., Chen, X., Ni, M. and Sousa, S.D., 2021. Fostering creativity through co-design and making: case studies of makerspaces in the UK. *Journal of Design Research*, 19 (1-3), pp.133-154.

6 -Platt, L.C., 2019. Crafting place: Women's everyday creativity in placemaking processes. *European journal of cultural studies*, 22(3), pp.362-377.

7- Hatton, K., 2020. A new framework for creativity in social pedagogy. *International Journal of Social Pedagogy*.

8- Bentz, J., & O'Brien, K. (2019). ART FOR CHANGE: Transformative learning and youth empowerment in a changing climate. *Elem Sci Anth*, 7, 52.

## 64 Million Artists Case Study: The January Challenge

**The January Challenge is 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. It is supported by January Challenge Ambassadors - individuals from a range of backgrounds who are paid to develop creative prompts for The January Challenge and in most cases run parallel workshops on and offline.**



The January Challenge 2025 - Birdwatching Workshop by Lira Valencia



The January Challenge 2024 - Workshop by Ava -Williams

January Challenge Ambassadors' projects prioritised participant wellbeing and joy, helping people who hadn't made time for art to reconnect with their creativity. January Challenge Ambassadors and the people taking part often found the process therapeutic, with some rediscovering their "mojo" and experiencing positive mental shifts. One described how the sessions nurtured a supportive space for self-expression, with participants sharing personal growth and joy from exploring new creative identities.

“ 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)

Connecting with others was central to each January Challenge Ambassador's project's success. One 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.

(January Challenge Ambassador participant 'change' story)



The January Challenge 2024 - Workshop by Golygfa Gwydy

The diverse projects inspired new creative ideas and encouraged participants to view themselves as creators. One January Challenge Ambassador's workshops taught scriptwriting and storytelling skills to fellow autistic individuals, significantly impacting participants' lives and boosting their confidence in creative expression. Another's work with stop-motion animation brought new skills to participants, who then engaged in modelling work outside of workshops. Yet another's experience expanded her confidence in running workshops and podcasting, laying a foundation for her own creative career development. She also highlighted the benefit of skill-building through co-design and training opportunities.

One 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. Another benefited from networking opportunities, seeing the 64MA team and other January Challenge Ambassadors as an alumni network that offers support and knowledge sharing. January Challenge Ambassadors emphasised the benefit of connecting across regions and taking an inclusive approach to language and culture.



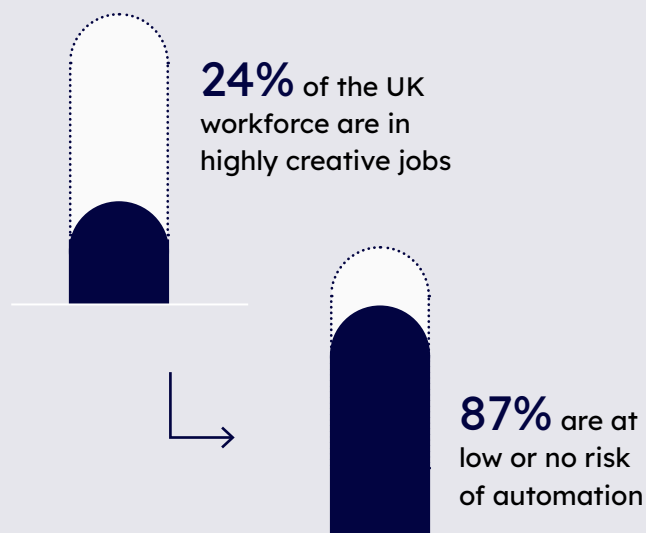
The January Challenge 2024 - Workshop by Zesty's Collective

# Impact theme 2 – Creative Work Cultures: Enhancing innovation and retention

Impact statement 1 – Creativity fosters innovation and enhances work performance, supported by creative leadership and organisational cultures.

## Supporting evidence

Research by NESTA in 2015 defined highly creative work as that ‘which uses imagination or creative ideas to create something new’. This analysis went beyond the classification of creative occupations that is used by the UK Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) and coded a much larger range of occupations based on the skills that were being applied in work (e.g., a business analyst or marketing director could also be considered a creative occupation based on what the work involves, rather than being listed as one for government analysis purposes). The research found that 24% of the UK workforce are in highly creative jobs and that, considering the risk to employment presented by automation trends, 87% of the creative workforce are at low or no risk of automation<sup>9</sup>.



McKinsey & Company explored automation trends and surveyed employers on their adaptation plans and approaches. They found that demand for skills such as creativity, critical thinking, decision making, and complex information processing, will grow by 2030, by 19 percent in the United States and by 14 percent in Europe<sup>10</sup>.

HM Treasury’s Build Back Better plan explicitly mentions creativity as an asset for the UK’s current and future industrial growth in relation to both the ‘creative industries’ as conventionally defined as well as a mechanism for cross sector innovation (a defined aim being to ‘support and incentivise the development of the creative ideas and technologies that will shape the UK’s future high-growth, sustainable and secure economy’)<sup>11</sup>.

Recently published research suggests that creativity significantly enhances work performance through various mechanisms. Proactive vitality management, involving goal-oriented behaviours to manage physical and mental energy, has been shown to improve creative work performance. Organisations can foster employee creativity by providing supportive environments, resources, and valuing diverse perspectives, which in turn reduces job stress and increases job performance<sup>12</sup>. Research

9 - Bakhshi, H., Frey, C.B. and Osborne, M., 2015. *Creativity vs. robots: The creative economy and the future of employment*, NESTA

10 - McKinsey and Company, 2019. *The Future of Work* <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/the-future-of-work-rethinking-skills-to-tackle-the-uks-looming-talent-shortage> Accessed 21/07/2022

11 - HM Treasury, 2021. *Build Back Better: our plan for growth*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-our-plan-for-growth> Accessed 21/07/2022

12 - Alzoubi, A., & Alzoubi, F. (2023). Promoting employees creativity to mitigate job stress: achieving job performance. *International Journal of Theory of Organization and Practice (IJTOP)*, 3(1), 111-126.

indicates that organisational support for creativity plays a crucial role in fostering innovation and long-term success in manufacturing. The relationship between organisational support for creativity and performance is stronger in highly dynamic markets (i.e., those characterised by rapid and constant shifts), emphasising the importance of considering market conditions when implementing creativity-supporting environments<sup>13</sup>.

Further research indicates that organisational culture significantly influences innovation in businesses. A creation-oriented culture positively impacts innovation outcomes, including patent applications and citations<sup>14</sup>. Innovative organisational culture plays a crucial role in fostering employee creativity, with strategies like optimising structure and establishing innovation incentives enhancing this relationship. 'Adhocracy' cultures, characterised by horizontal leadership structures, flexibility and risk-taking, are most conducive to innovation, whereas hierarchical cultures tend to stifle creativity<sup>15</sup>.

Leadership is essential in nurturing creative capital for strategic competitive advantages. High-performance work systems can enhance employee creativity by promoting perceived organisational support. Organisational-based self-esteem influences creativity behaviours, with meaningful work acting as a mediator and supervisor support as a moderator<sup>16</sup>.

These findings underscore the significance of fostering creativity-supporting organisational structures to enhance innovation and market performance, ultimately contributing to the long-term success of work organisations.



13 - Baccarella, C. V., Maier, L., Meinel, M., Wagner, T. F., & Voigt, K. I. (2022). The effect of organizational support for creativity on innovation and market performance: the moderating role of market dynamism. *Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management*, 33(4), 827-849

14 - Hou, F., Su, Y., Qi, M., Wang, L., & Wang, Q. (2021). Entrepreneurial team knowledge diversity and creativity: a multilevel analysis of knowledge sharing, individual creativity, and team creativity. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 717756.

15 - Valentin, G., & Călin, D. (2024). The role of organizational culture in driving innovation: A study of contemporary business practice. *Acta Universitatis Cibiniensis*, 76(1), 46-54.

16 - Ghafoor, A., & Haar, J. (2020). A climate and personality approach towards creativity behaviours: A moderated mediation study. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, 24(06), 2050080.

## Impact statement 2 – A creativity-focused developmental culture enhances employee wellbeing and is linked to improved retention.

### Supporting evidence

Creativity supports resilience by fostering work climates and individual capacities that enable employees to adapt to challenges. In research and development settings, creativity-oriented work practices create an environment of experimentation and freedom that enhances role clarity and strengthens resilience. In manufacturing, distribution, and knowledge work contexts, creative behaviours appear linked to greater resource conservation, positive emotions, and cognitive flexibility. For example, studies report that structured creative practices—such as disruptive creative behaviour and soft skill development—help employees cope with work overload, organisational rigidity, and complex workplace politics <sup>17</sup>.

Across diverse workplaces, research indicates that creativity contributes to resilience in several ways:

- By creating conditions that support resource conservation, maintain positive affect, and stimulate idea generation.
- By promoting adaptive learning from challenging experiences through cognitive flexibility and intrinsic motivation.
- By building organisational climates that balance experimentation with structure, thereby mitigating the impact of external stresses.

Recent research has shown that when employees are enabled to maintain strong interpersonal relationships, their intrinsic motivation increases which then leads to

improved creative performance individually and collectively. The authors use the concept of the ‘resource caravan’ (i.e., a set of interconnected resources that reinforce each other and can enhance an individual’s ability to cope with stress and maintain wellbeing) to describe how this functions, highlighting that creativity is a crucial element of the caravan <sup>18</sup>. Other studies have shown how a work environment that is characterised by experimentation, freedom, and a free-flow of ideas is conducive to both creativity and employee resilience <sup>19</sup>.

Some recent research indicates that creativity and innovation in the workplace play a crucial role in employee retention and recruitment. Employees who perceive their jobs as creative are more likely to stay with their current employer and recommend the company to others. Although organisations should focus on creating environments that foster creativity and innovation **alongside** implementing targeted retention strategies to maintain their competitive advantage in attracting and retaining talented employees <sup>20</sup>.



17 - De Clercq, D., & Pereira, R. (2019). Resilient employees are creative employees, when the workplace forces them to be. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 28(3), 329-342.

18 -Park, I. J., Choi, J. N., Park, J., & Hai, S. (2024). Being resilient to maintain interpersonal stability: resource caravan toward employee creativity. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 33(6), 824-837.

19 -Aparna, S. M., & Sahney, S. (2022). Examining resilience: the role of creativity-oriented high-performance work practices and role clarity. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 35(7), 1047-1060.

20 -styvén, M. E., Näppä, A., Mariani, M., & Natarajan, R. (2022). Employee perceptions of employers’ creativity and innovation: Implications for employer attractiveness and branding in tourism and hospitality. *Journal of Business Research*, 141, 290-298.

## 64 Million Artists Case Study: Leading Researchers

**Leading Researchers is an annual series of workshops and bespoke coaching delivered to emerging professors across six UK universities, aiming to build confidence, innovation and collaborative skills among senior academics.**

Participants consistently described the programme as distinct from more conventional leadership training by being lighter on pre-reading and homework, and more focused on giving people permission to slow down and think. In a sector where burnout is common and time for reflection is rare, this approach landed well. As one participant put it:

“Everybody says we need more time, and we can't listen to ourselves anymore - it's just so busy. So that was a really good pitch: let's focus on setting priorities right so there's sufficient time to also do research.”

A recurring theme was the value of structured space for future thinking. Participants described rarely having the opportunity to step back from immediate pressures to consider their longer-term goals (i.e., where they were headed, what they wanted to achieve, and what might be holding them back). The workshops offered tools for this: grouping ideas, identifying barriers, mapping stakeholders. One participant reflected:

“Maybe it's not a step change, but it's definitely reinforced and given a good framework for thinking about that kind of people-focused outlook.”

Equally significant was the cross-institutional peer learning. Academics frequently noted that their professional networks were quite narrowly departmental, and that the programme offered rare access to colleagues from across the institution in a context free from specific agendas or deliverables. One participant observed:

“Working in a university, we see a lot of our 'nearby' colleagues, but we often don't spend much time talking to people in the broader institution. There's a lot you can learn from

talking with people, particularly in that kind of setting where there's no specific goal, you're just reflecting together.”

Several participants subsequently drew on this wider institutional knowledge to navigate complex professional situations more effectively.

The programme's facilitation style made a direct impression on how participants approached their own work. One researcher described adopting the workshop's facilitation techniques directly in their teaching practice:

“I use a lot of the techniques they used to facilitate the sessions with my students - check-ins, activities to break down habits of thought - all the time.”

Another noted that the focus on self-directed workload management proved valuable when developing new project proposals.

Mentoring was highlighted as a particularly powerful element. One participant described their coach as 'the right person at the right time', and credited the mentoring relationship with changes they later implemented in a new institutional role. This points to a wider finding from the evaluation - that the programme's impacts are often more personal and durational than immediate or institutional, representing a shift in how participants understand their own leadership rather than visible changes in the structures around them. As one participant reflected:

“The programme helped me recognise you can have lots of benefits beyond your own narrow sort of academic success.”

**LEADING  
RESEARCHERS**

# Impact theme 3 – Fostering Resilience: Enabling creative cultures across society (i.e., inside and outside of work)

Impact statement 1 – Individual resilience is fostered through creative activities supporting optimism, self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation and cognitive flexibility

## Supporting evidence

A recent paper discusses several theoretical models of resilience, including biopsychosocial, ecological, developmental, and protective-promotive frameworks. These models emphasise that resilience is not solely an individual trait but a dynamic interaction between personal, social, and environmental factors. Creativity is shown to enhance this interaction by providing individuals with tools to reinterpret experiences and build adaptive responses.

Empirical evidence, though still growing, supports a positive relationship between creativity and psychological resilience. Qualitative studies, in particular, highlight how activities like drawing, writing, music, and visual art can help individuals process trauma and foster emotional regulation. Neuroscientific findings also suggest that creative expression stimulates neurological pathways associated with healing and mental well-being. The article outlines practical interventions that use creativity to build resilience, including mindfulness-based art, creative group activities, and educational programmes that encourage imagination and expression. These interventions have proven effective across diverse populations, especially when tailored to specific needs and supported by community and institutional networks <sup>21</sup>.

An ‘experience sampling’ study with 41 individuals regularly involved in a range of creative activities (i.e., visual arts, photography and performance) and asked people to respond to a 20-item questionnaire asking about different aspects of wellbeing at several times throughout the day over the course of a week. The results showed that the process of making art improved people’s levels of happiness and contentment, as well as showing that the more art-making people did was associated with higher overall scores of life satisfaction and self-regulation (a core aspect of psychological resilience). As with other studies this association does not prove causality (i.e., it may be that more self-regulated and satisfied people have a higher inclination to make art more frequently). Although an interesting additional finding was that for those people who scored lower on life satisfaction the creative process brought more pleasure and happiness than those who were generally more satisfied to begin with <sup>22</sup>.

21- Zawadi, N. K. (2024) *Exploring the Role of Creativity in Psychological Resilience*. Journal Of Research In Education 4(2):62-65, 2024

22 - Holt, N.J., 2018. Using the experience-sampling method to examine the psychological mechanisms by which participatory art improves wellbeing. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 138(1), pp.55-65

## Impact statement 2 – Collective resilience is fostered through community building, social capital, developing collective identity, social inclusion and mutual support

### Supporting evidence

Research indicates that creativity plays a significant role in fostering collective resilience, particularly in contexts where communities face adversity, change, or crisis. Creative practices not only help individuals process experiences but also strengthen group cohesion, adaptability, and shared problem-solving.

Creative practice has been shown to act as a route to mutual wellbeing in the context of group painting and drawing workshops for those in the community at increased risk of mental health issues. Regular attendance at informal classes were shown to increase individual self-efficacy, as well as enhancing social capital and perceived collective resilience to social stressors <sup>23</sup>.

In North Lanarkshire, the **Art is Everywhere** initiative employed arts-informed practices to engage communities in resilience-building activities. By co-producing creative works—such as films, theatre, and visual arts—community members explored local issues, shared experiences, and envisioned transformative futures. This approach highlighted the role of creativity in fostering community engagement and resilience in response to challenges like the climate emergency <sup>24</sup>.

The **Creativity, Community & Resilience** project at the University of Southampton focuses on trans and gender-diverse youth in the UK, utilising participatory action research and creative methods to explore how community belonging and creative expression can enhance

wellbeing and resilience among marginalised groups. This research underscores the importance of creativity in building supportive communities and empowering individuals facing systemic challenges <sup>25</sup>.

Returning to the work of David Gauntlett, who provided the definition of everyday creativity provided in the introduction. His two recent books explore in detail how engaging in informal creative activities provides an essential tool for people to connect with each other across generations, demographic groups, and geographical locations <sup>26,27</sup>.

He discusses many research studies, as well as numerous examples from his own work, that show how communities are being established and strengthened through collaborative creative acts, both online and offline. His work repeatedly indicates how mutual resilience can be fostered through the connections made via a multitude of creative acts.



23 - Argyle, E. (2020). Creative practice as a mutual route to well-being. *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*, 24(4), 235-239.

24 - Davis, S., & de Andrade, M. (2024). Applying A/r/tography as a creative community resilience strategy in response to the climate emergency. *Local Development & Society*, 1-24.

25 - <https://www.createconnectproject.co.uk/>

26 - Gauntlett, D. (2018). *Making is connecting: The social power of creativity, from craft and knitting to digital everything*. John Wiley & Sons.

27 - Gauntlett, D. (2022). *Creativity: Seven Keys to Unlock Your Creative Self*. John Wiley & Sons.

## 64 Million Artists Case Study: Creative Courage

**Creative Courage, beginning in 2024 and repeated in 2025 is an online course hosted by 64 Million Artists, 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. Our evaluation with those taking part showed a range of positive outcomes for participants.**



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. 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.

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.

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. Building meaningful connections was a strong motivator for many 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.”

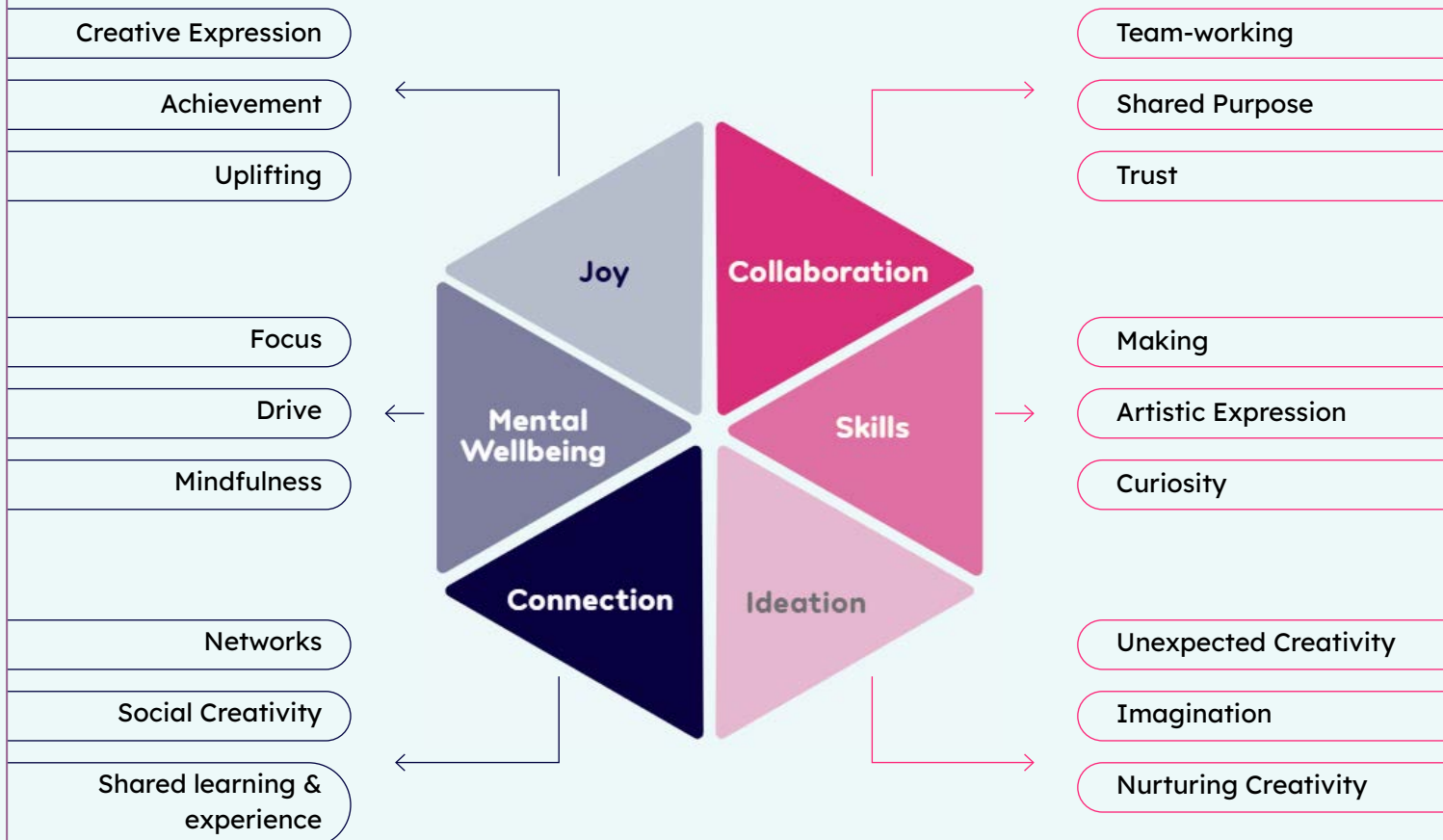
The programme was likened to a “gym for creativity,” providing participants with a space to practice and develop their skills.

# The 64 Million Artists Impact Wheel

## Moving towards an 'Impact Wheel'

Based on these developments and in broader conversation with the 64 Million Artists team we realised that there is an opportunity to develop a tool that helps people to understand the different ways that creativity affects people. This could potentially be used across the organisation's work to develop a shared vocabulary around the impact of creative activities and processes. It could encourage those the organisation works with (e.g., partners, participants, 'creativity champions') to develop creative methods and research approaches, but within a framework that has been established by the research that has come before (from 64 Million Artists, Tialt, and many other sources).

This has led to the development of an ['impact wheel'](#), a research toolkit 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 better demonstrate the impact of the work.

**What is it and how to use it?**    **1. Your Context**    **2. Impact Wheel Board**    **3. Methods**

## The Impact Wheel Board

**Using the Wheel:**  
Click on a section to explore the dimensions related to that area of impact. Each dimension helps you build a fuller picture and is essential to a thorough evaluation.

**Explore the Questions:**  
Browse and discuss the questions for each dimension together. These are a guide, not a script; feel free to adapt the language to suit your context and the people you're working with.

**Next Step:**  
How can you use these questions to shape your research and approach?

Still unsure? Read step by step →

**Wheel Segments:** Joy, Mental Wellbeing, Connection, Networks, Social Creativity, Shared learning & experience, Collaboration, Skills, Ideation, Making, Artistic Expression, Curiosity.

**What is it and how to use it?**    **1. Your Context**    **2. Impact Wheel Board**    **3. Methods**

## Collaboration - Trust

← Back to Board

**Question 01**

**Question 02**  
What do you value about working creatively with other people?

**Question 03**

Click to reveal the questions

**64** Million *artists*

**tialt**

THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE