Notes enquire/envision seminar 5/6 March 2008

Summary of research findings from enquire phases 1 & 2

Nicholas Houghton presented a distillation of research findings that occurred across the ten research reports. He emphasised that he was only looking at the data available to him in the reports, and that not all of the research reports were presented in a consistent format or completed.

His analysis might reveal that particular issues or findings were not coming through in the reports and this should be addressed by the clusters – assuming that they had data to evidence their points - before the reports were finalised. Nicholas would be checking his distillation against the final reports before dissemination. Following this preliminary work and consultation through the seminar, a detailed communications strategy would be developed.

Discussion groups: testing the research findings against experience and comparing methodologies.

The discussions were more wide-ranging than this and have been divided into three sections, starting with comments that directly address the area for discussion.

Testing the research findings:

- There was nothing unexpected in the findings.
- The role of the gallery educator was not coming through.
- The nature of the project had been flattened and this was because the findings were being presented in order to fit the themes.
- The polarising of process and product and the de-emphasising of product was strange. The final product was as important to young people as it was to show the outcome of their skills. Also something finished products provide something to celebrate.
- Looking at the distinction between process and production should not be an issue, or whether process or production is within the curriculum or not. It is not useful to say this as it serves to separate people.
- More detail and some critical perspective as opposed to just positive points were needed.
- There should be a change of emphasis to show the benefit of the project as a whole.
- There was a great deal said about artists but further acknowledgement was needed on art educators and teachers.
- Too much was made of the difference between the project and schools.
- The language needs to adapted to be more familiar to schools
- The way in which the headings were presented used fairly radical terms for normalised activities.

Issues about presentation and advocacy:

- Participants were at different points of the project in UK and European contexts. The UK is more highly developed in the advocacy of the policy of linking galleries and education.
- Questioned whether this was an advocacy document, as this would necessarily affect the way in which the findings were presented.
- More detail was needed as well as the inclusion of negative findings to achieve some balance.

- In terms of negatives the report(summary) misses the initial workings of the project and the frustration of the learning process, instead concentrating on the end points.
- On the one hand we have a report which is a summary and on the other many individual reports. Perhaps other ways of analysing the material could be explored.
- Believed an overarching comment or aim needed to be articulated in the report. Not only a tick box method of the findings but also the nature of the project being represented, i.e. Art for Art's sake.were represented.
- Emphasised the need for trust within the sector. The sector should trust that they have now proved themselves and act with confidence when presenting the report to the government and that it is not merely their role to meet with agendas
- It was necessary to avoid any issues that caused polarisation. For example, the difference between artists and teachers, and introducing any notions of differences in quality. Instead the differing methods and contexts between the two working situations should be acknowledged.
- It was thought that since the research project specifically targeted young people, the way it was communicated should necessarily take this into account.
- There needs to be acknowledgement of any professional development that occurs, there needs to be a legacy of this development and it needs to be sustainable.
- It needs to be made clear what can be gained from CPD, for example using case studies to demonstrate this.
- The report needs to draw out the details, e.g. how much of a contribution is made by artists etc to the project?
- There needs to be more about pushing the boundaries of learning while at the same time acknowledging what capacity there is to learn.
- The need to demonstrate, articulate and make knowledge very accessible should be emphasised.
- Delegates wanted to hear more about the methods by which the results were analysed.
- The statement by the report that the project's system is non-hierarchical needs to be investigated further. The relationships between participants still lead to people being at different levels and stages.
- What were the questions that the participants were being asked? How did these affect the results? How were results measured in the long-term?
- The relationships and networks that have being developed through enquire are becoming self-supporting.
- Freelancers are less well served by the report (summary) and they might not be actively developed if they are contributing to a number of projects rather than concentrating on just one.

General points about gallery education:

- The project has given greater confidence among arts educators as well as effecting art programming. A national network has built up from the ground up and has created a bond between artists and researchers, which is a new culture which should be developed.
- Gallery educators were leading the groups but perhaps there could be a way to involve young people in this so they were more part of the projects.
- There should be some recognition of scale. It is necessary to acknowledge that there are a small number of people involved in projects and a short amount of time; therefore there must realistic expectation levels of return.

- The links to schools should be broadened and links should be established with departments other than art, e.g. science. Also other organisations, not just schools, should be approached as collaborators.
- Currently projects are led by galleries/gallery educators; the question is how to empower that relationship and to move on and innovate the projects created.
- Perhaps there could be a move up to start trying to change the policies of museums, schools etc.
- There needs to be some investigation into how the processes would work that encourage change.
- What are the useful conditions for learning and what are the economics of delivery?
- If the project becomes part of a larger agenda we hope that our voices are not left out.
- A Portuguese representative pointed out that in her country young people's exhibitions could last for around for 4 months, as opposed to the UK where they tend to be very short, even just a few days. Perhaps this is a policy issue enquire could address?
- Measurements and Statistics. Can it be proved that young people are returning to galleries? Is there a way in which we could possibly count return visits?
- All the people involved have different purposes.
- When dealing with problems there are practical changes introduced, which could perhaps be linked to professional development
- Hope that the project allows for future positive outcomes at a policy level
- Delegates wanted to hear about European policies to compare to the situation in the UK
- There are no school teachers present at the conference today but it would be good to work with schools, particularly as good practical methods could be incorporated into teaching.
- The curriculum can be fairly vague when applied to art as a subject, so it might be possible to work with schools to resolve this shared problems.
- How can gallery educators be helped? What CPD is offered? How can we work with teachers?
- Perhaps a conference format that includes young people could be developed so they could learn how it works.

Responses from Nicholas:

- There will probably be more than 1 report and also a report explaining the research methods.
- When researching I found that the products produced by the art department are unique compared with the other subjects in schools, i.e. pieces of work are brought home and proudly displayed on the mantelpiece
- There have been some comments requesting negative points. One was that there was a lack of time for the projects, particularly as it takes time for groups to work together and gel.
- I will take some time to look into the issue of developing networks that has been brought up.
- Unfortunately return visits are beyond our capacity to research and we must take it on trust that if young people say they will visit again that they will.
- The comment that there was not enough detail – in this report today I was only summarising the results. The published reports shouldn't reduce all details and they will come through. The report has scope to show individual cases which was demonstrated through the use of quotes in my presentation.
- The action research methodology in the clusters engaged with the process as the projects often didn't know what direction they were taking and what outcomes

were expected. It is very different with teachers who have a definite end, which I hope will come out in the report

Working with schools

- There are no teachers here today and it's a shame they are under represented. The group observed that it was difficult to find time for schools to come to meetings and possibly the method of 'twilight meetings' could be used.
- An example was given by a member of the group of the project 'Watch this Space' where 6 teachers were taken out of school time and gallery educators were placed in schools.
- In Italy apparently the status of teachers is higher compared to the UK where it seems artists are more valued.
- Every school and teacher is different so its not fair to say they all have a performance approach
- The timing of school work has an effect as everything is planned in advance
- It is a good idea for gallery educators to go into schools and leave their comfort zones.
- There are capacity issues and it needs to be ensured that teachers are comfortable enough to bring their students to the galleries.
- There needs to be confidence in being spontaneous and that there is not necessarily an aim towards a particular outcome

Working with young people at risk

- The group contains a number of Europeans and therefore the group discussed context and different types of programmes used.
- Issues regarding learning and welfare: he group had found that through the project strong partnerships were forged outside the usual areas.
- Capacity - there is a need to establish long-term relationships, and
- projects need to function more over the long term to reflect the complex needs of young people.
- There is a limit to the number of young people that can be worked with needs to be recognised.
- How can we directly reach young people?
- There are tensions when working in partnerships and sometime CPD can be an issue.
- How far do we go to meet the participants' agenda - particularly in terms of learning?
- Terms can become an issue re to young people, e.g 'stigmatisation'.

Working with self-directed young people

- Recruitment – how to get people in to the projects? There are different opinions about the way to get people involved, word of mouth, going into talk at schools.
- It is important to talk to young people as equals
- Young people need to feel a sense of ownership and have fun, be comfortable, listen.
- Organisers need to be honest with them and to tell them what is and what is not possible.
- Further options could be given to them, e.g. as volunteers in other projects.
- Artists working with young people need to maintain a dialogue, to make sure everything is manageable, to develop their knowledge, to describe to young people how to create their own space.

- Organisations need to trust the young people and to make clear what is expected of them.
- What do young people want? - In sessions with young people it is best to make no assumptions
- Young people like to have the sense of a real world impact and this can be achieved by giving the space over to them.
- The process needs to be seen in the context of the wider organisation and staff. Not all the other staff members will necessarily support or understand what you're doing
- Long-term resources and partnerships need to be established.
- Start with art, start with what you know.
- Sometimes an organiser needs to let go, not all the young people will want to stay. The best way is to lead from behind, with a guiding hand. It needs to be acknowledged that some people need more support than others and the process might take time.

The role of artists

- A two tier system can arise with some artists interpreting the exhibitions and others working with schools and teachers.
- Exhibiting artists seem to be accorded a higher status than artist who run gallery workshops.
- It is useful to have an artist who knows the local area and context for the young people.
- How the artist works is the most interesting thing to many young people.
- The terminology used can sometimes reveal tensions e.g. between gallery educators and artists and the idea that belonging to a gallery can lend that title extra validity.
- Re CPD, the relationships between artist and teachers can be very important and gallery educators can have a strong role in brokering these relationships
- Artists sometimes valuably open up their production space and that this can challenge people's view of art and artists' processes.
- Perhaps artists could be brought further into the evaluation process and bring some of their skills to the process.
- It was observed that in Italian galleries only recently have artists been involved in gallery education.
- The question was posed about how artists were recruited- by database or word of mouth etc?

Developing youth friendly venues

- Discussed how spaces could be used for young people in rural areas. Why spaces matter? How to maximise spaces?
- Young people should be consulted when new spaces are being designed.
- The education program needs to be integrated into the main gallery program rather than being a separate entity, as at FACT for example.
- Improvise if there's no space available and use places outside the gallery setting. One person in the group gave the example of a group meeting in a coffee shop. This can also help the programme potentially feed into the community.

Policy and structures

- Gallery educators need to be involved in leading and not just being led.
- There needs to be less polarisations of senior managers and educators.
- Shifts in policies have caused a polarisation of curatorial and education policy.

- enquire is good for networking. The Tate is an example of having a program of gallery educator meetings
- A policy to ensure that there are good quality and longer projects is needed.

What have been the benefits of enquire for the participating organisations, gallery educators, artists and teachers?

- It has supported and identified a wider range of people – including artists.
- The link between educators and museums is stronger.
- It is beginning to or already has had the potential to inform policies.
- It has a beacon status, working in places where young people can be excluded.
- enquire has still not developed the relationship with exhibition artists, there still needs to be a change at a structural level
- As the Cultural Offer is rolled out artists may be put off doing gallery education as it becomes more mainstream and structured.
- Gallery educators need to keep young people as their focus rather than artists, that is their most important role.
- People who are funding or demanding young people's projects must be made aware of the amount of work involved.
- Networking needs some facilitation and leadership for both clusters and individuals.

Developing peer networks and CPD:
Networks and structures

- Discussed sizes of cluster and network groups, and the need for careful management of group sizes. Three or four organisations in one cluster were deemed easy to manage but when this number increased to twelve or more, it became inaccessible and complicated mini-clusters started to form.
- Discussion about the importance and defining the role of the co-ordinator to developing networks - it is important to steer and support the group
- Difficulties of losing members of staff..
- The South East cluster has written a job specification which may be of interest to others.
- Some clusters pay artists to attend meetings – others agreed this was a good idea.
- People were interested in how models of collaboration are created, the possibility of documenting and sharing more widely via websites, and a notion of moving from collaboration to competition.
- enquire was seen as exemplary in the way in which it had set up this structure.
- Barbara added that several enquire clusters had set up Base Camp sites (communication through the internet). An example was used of a Base Camp set up in Manchester. The Cultural Leadership program had also set one up that had taken in 500 people. Like Faceboo, it can be managed by administrators as well as having a wider network. This can be used for emailing, to hold documents and logos and it can be used as a constantly updated archive or to manage a task list as it sends automatic reminders.
- She also suggested using Skype as a good way of communicating when people can't meet.
- Networks are not necessarily geographically based as sometimes members move, leading to expanding networks.

- It was noted that Italy was different in that it was more regionally organised.
- IBC and Mambo in Italy are now going to develop an at risk project for the Learning Partnership inspired by what had happened at the seminar.

- There was general admiration for UK systems in the way networking is so thoroughly embedded.
- Natasha Ba Abdullah had spoken about a European exchange program for volunteers that Fabrica runs with a number of other partners.
- Discussion about action learning sets and how these work regionally or locally.
- It was decided that website links were needed when organising an event, as well as considering whether it could be an international event. This can be done by Grundvig mobility grants.

CPD

- Time spent defining CPD to the Grundvig partners, as they were not familiar with the term.
- It was noted that teachers have a developed CPD network, whereas artists do not, but engage and enquire had helped.
- It was agreed that good CPD should be about partnership.
- Action learning sets could be an emotional process and it was decided that sufficient training should be given before starting.
- It was suggested that similar seminars should be held in the future with goals set in between for the next meeting. The importance of listening skills had been highlighted because of the seminar.
- Sensed a general desire for CPD but also recognised that everyone has very different practices that were quite distinct and specific. How to maintain distinction without homogenising practices was an issue.
- Discussion about CPD being project or program based and what different people's practices required from CPD.
- Also discussed was whether teacher's CPD is in any way comparable to that of an artist.
- There seemed to be an underlying theme that CPD was inherent in strengthening partnerships and networks, and that this could be extended further to include other partnerships or experts depending on what the particular group might want.
- There was a lot of interest in the action learning sets and how they might relate to CPD.
- The point was raised that as freelancers CPD is not provided by an institution, and therefore people take more personal responsibility for it, making it a constant process of redefinition.
- Through an example from the North West cluster it was understood that teachers seemed to know what they wanted from artists, but not vice versa. It was stressed that everyone wanted to empathise with each other's roles but still desired to remain distinct.
- Discussed different ways in which to involve people in CPD, problems with teachers' time and pressures of getting out of the classroom.
- Polly Gifford discussed her program where teachers and art educators were paid for their time was valuable for CPD. Once this had been done they could be asked back in their own time becoming something even more valued and appreciated.
- An emphasis of giving value to CPD was deemed necessary, and it was decided that people needed to pay themselves for time to meet up for discussions.
- Delegates to see a form of recommendation in the report on how they could work together as clusters to provide extra CPD and on the role of the researcher on CPD.

Legacies from enquire

- Discussion about the difficulties of getting senior management, trustees,

senior curators as well as other people to buy into legacy to support participants and to affect change.

- Suggested an exchange scheme for people from other clusters to have a CPD session with different clusters. It was agreed that cross sharing of information models and good practice that was already happening across clusters would be beneficial.
- The forming of clusters and the increasingly expanding networks that had developed.
- Working with a researcher increased the rigour of practice and invited new perspectives on what they were doing.
- Highlighted fact that this requires creative space and resources to try out new ideas and practice.
- Due to the involvement of the research, more focused evaluation had been developed.
- There was a continued sense of validation of what participants were doing as well as new models of practice and practice sharing.
- There was a continued legacy of generating new ideas and wanted to ensure that young people were more involved in this process.
- Concrete legacies from the South East appeared to be the CPD course,
- the East cluster hoped to have an annual exhibition for young people's work from different backgrounds.
- An unforeseen legacy was the discovery of how powerful coming together as a cluster was, being able to share practice and learn together.

Ideas to take forward into continuation

- The general message was how much everyone appreciated enquire and the flexibility it gave. Having the enquire national tag was extremely helpful for getting management involved in trying to obtain bids from other places.
- The continued organic development of the clusters was seen as desirable. Jackie was interested in the way in which the networks were spreading and developing, with people moving across the country or internationally, although there was a query how satellite and mentoring clusters may develop in the future.
- The question of how new people and organisations participate in clusters
- Having obtained a body of learning amongst artists and art educators they no longer had to start from base level.
- Develop new and varied evaluation methods
- Work with clusters to develop more projects with schools
- Explore ways of raising the profile of education within their organisations
- Develop joint news bulletins and links between their websites
- Look at ways of disseminating research and practice through schools
- Look at ways of developing models to reach families through the young people they work with
- Look at varying ways in which young people want to work with the different spaces (galleries) that their areas have to offer
- Have collective critiques of those spaces between colleagues, teachers, art educators and young people
- When discussing European clusters, the value of engage and Barbara Taylor were highlighted. It was deemed important to use these existing bodies and networks, however there was a need to contact people internationally.
- The idea of a map showing international connections was discussed as were exchange visits.
- Discussed what engage wanted as a legacy from enquire to be at the start.
- A legacy is the kudos of academic research gives clout when advocating work
- How clusters overlapped with Engage area networks had been discussed

- It was concluded that action research and the joint projects were inextricably combined.
- The need for artist clusters which could be self supporting and to have some autonomy of their own.
- and a fundraising group to feed into enquire
- When talking about CPD there had been a particular sense of support for the galleries and museums that had put on training programs to help artists to be better able to engage with education with groups and to be proactive in that role. To create a programme to address artists' needs and then visiting the groups and asking them to fulfil those needs.
- A heated debate had taken place concerning the showcasing of young people's work through projects. There was a desire to do more in highly visible venues, but there was a concern that this might make projects vulnerable if they weren't presented sensitively and intelligently.
- An example was then given about through working with enquire, a young person had become very excited about her work being on show and had spoken a lot on camera about her expectations. Due to limited space in the gallery, only a film of her work was able to be displayed which resulted in her being extremely disappointed.
- Looking at youth workers and their roles within these subjects and Sandra mentioned she thought teachers needed a higher profile in the debate.
- Role of the co-ordinator in terms of holding onto the legacy and making the body of knowledge accessible. Concern that this role has changed slightly and that it was more about supporting communities or clusters and being able to broker projects that build on the knowledge that previously existed.
- Debbie Barker wanted to underline how enquire had raised the ambitions of gallery educators. She stressed how participants new to the program are able to hit the ground running and the excitement this generates. Two new clusters were mentioned – Cornwall and Kent - which have been running since October and will be reporting in July, proving that resources are still being produced.

Jonny's (Fruitmarket Gallery, Ediburgh) answer to the question: 'Would you go back and do enquire in Scotland? was that he wouldn't because enquire had done all the research that meant people like him could start on "the third rung up" and could build on work that had gone on in enquire. He would however be taking the framework of action research back to use in Scotland. Those that had taken part in enquire could develop relationships with those that hadn't and learn about their new actions. There was the potential of linking particular areas of expertise.

Jane Sillis talked of a sense of fantastic practice within gallery education across the UK and internationally but very little research had been carried out concerning the benefits young people gain working in galleries, with visual and contemporary art and that this was doing a disservice to gallery education. One of the intentions of enquire was to collect a robust body of research.

One of the huge strengths of engage is its membership and how members and gallery educators work together in a co-operative and democratic way.

Barbara Taylor pointed out that enquire galleries are well poised to work with what comes out of the Cultural Offer initiative and to fight for the opportunities available for young people who do not normally access cultural opportunities. She looked forward to seeing the regional networks feeding into future pilots.