

Seeds of Change: Growing a Living History of Bristol

Project Evaluation
YA – 11 – 04292
Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund
bristol.ac.uk/seeds-of-change
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1. Executive summary

With funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) the *Seeds of Change: Growing a Living History of Bristol* project has offered diverse experiences to a large cross-section of Bristol's residents – from listening in awe as a Venus Flytrap devours its prey to travelling on a boat for the very first time. This innovative programme of work has brought heritage to life through the medium of plants. It has educated, captivated and surprised participants through its workshop content and has involved impeccable management across and throughout the programme.

- **Introduction:** this ambitious project has involved building relationships with 11 partner primary schools and 5 community groups. 28 student volunteers were also recruited to support the programme, broadening their perspective on the city and the people who live there. An additional 10 primary schools and approximately 5000 members of the general public were given access to the project through the *Seeds of Change* tent during the *Bristol Festival of Nature*. The project has increased understanding of different heritages within Bristol's primary schools and community groups and has offered people the opportunity to share and celebrate these heritages with one another.
- ***Seeds of Change* staffing:** a large team of people have worked on the programme with Project Coordinator, Martha Crean at the helm, supported by staff from: the Centre for Public Engagement; University of Bristol Botanic Garden; partner organisation, Arnolfini; and student volunteers. This has been a dynamic, dedicated team that have managed to maintain effective lines of communication despite their number, geographical spread and the diversity of 'languages' spoken – those adopted by the arts, academics and botanists to name but a few.
- **Launch Event:** this event attracted 32 individuals representing schools and community groups who were undeterred by horrendous weather. It was a high quality event held at Arnolfini that involved a comprehensive introduction to the project, a film screening about the *Floating Ballast Seed Garden*, a taster workshop and plenty of opportunities to ask questions, plan their project and network.
- **Creation of the Ballast Seed Gardens:** following the delivery of introductory workshops in every setting - introducing the ballast seed plants, exploring their use, following their journeys as well as those of the participants - 16 gardens were formed. These have been grown in pots, window boxes, planters, sinks, and newly created constructions including a fleet of small boats. Seeds have been planted, grown, died, been replanted, grown some more, nurtured and enjoyed.
- **Creative Workshops:** artists and academics have come together, most for the first time, to share approaches, ideas and to devise whole new ways of working. The outcomes have included travelling by boat to a floating garden while being told captivating stories, exploring plant connections to fairytales and folklore and listening to plants as they drink and feed. Participants have been taken on a journey - intrigued, captivated and delighted, while learning new things in new ways.
- **Festival of Nature:** provided the opportunity to share some of this journey with a new audience of around 5,200 (including school groups and members of the public). Seeds were planted; plants were identified, smelt, touched and understood; people explored their own heritage and that of their fellow citizens.

- **Project Impact**

- People** - the programme has educated over 6000 people about ballast seeds, plant life, heritage and history. Over 500 school pupils, teachers, community group members and community workers have benefitted from the project, coming together, many for the first time, to share stories around their personal heritage.
28 student volunteers, as well as learning about plants, have learnt about their city and the people living there and ventured out of the bubble that is university life. 3 artists and 4 academics have built new professional networks, developed new ways of working and enriched their own practice. All those involved in the project have had the opportunity to explore their own heritage, share it with others and celebrate their family's legacy.
- Resources** - a website has been developed to profile each participating school and community organisation and celebrate their individual gardens, share resources and encourage future networking:
bristol.ac.uk/seeds-of-change
- Environment** - spaces in both schools and the community have been transformed through the creation of 16 ballast seed gardens as well as a temporary garden being built in the city centre as part of the *Bristol Festival of Nature* seen by more than 5,500 people.
- Organisations** – University of Bristol Centre for Public Engagement, University of Bristol Botanic Garden and Arnolfini plus 16 school and community partners have developed successful collaborations, enriched their programmes, learnt from each other and been inspired for the future.



2. Research Methods

This report attempts to offer a rich, comprehensive evaluation of the *Seeds of Change* project. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation data was collected in a variety of different ways, through:

- Case studies
- Interviews
- Questionnaires
- Informal conversations
- Written and verbal participant feedback
- Participant numbers and attendances

There has been a wealth of material collected and compiled to fully document the project and its impact. By necessity, this report presents just a fraction of this evaluation material collected from project staff, collaborating organisations, artists, academics and project participants.

Names of individual teachers, participants and student volunteers have been removed from this report due to confidentiality but these can be provided on request.



Pupils from Easton Church of England Primary School at the *Floating Ballast Seed Garden* © University of Bristol

3. Introduction

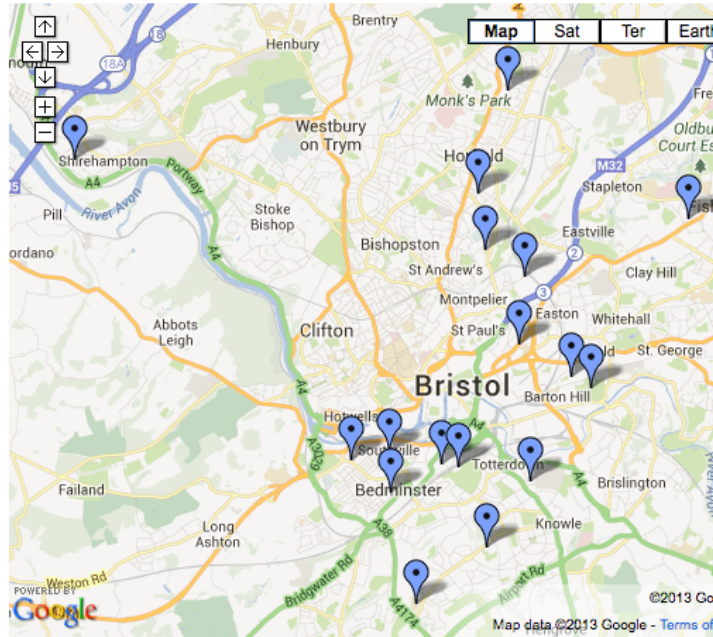


Planting session at The Park Community Learning Centre, May 2013 © Kamina Walton

All children involved were really enthusiastic about the project from start to finish. This has continued into the summer holidays, with there being no shortage of volunteers to keep the garden watered over the summer break.
Teacher at Sefton Park Primary School

The *Seeds of Change* programme, supported through HLF funding, has been an ambitious and rewarding project. Taking place over a 9 month period across the city of Bristol, relationships have been developed with 11 partner primary schools and 5 community groups with around 650 people being directly involved in the project. During this time 16 ballast seed gardens have been planted, nurtured and enjoyed. Children and adults alike, some of whom who had never grown anything from seed before have had the satisfaction of growing up to 9 different ballast seed species themselves. An additional 5000 people have been directly exposed to the project though visiting the *Seeds of Change* tent at the *Bristol Festival of Nature* on Bristol's harbourside in June with a further 200 taking part in the Schools' Day, introducing the project to a further 10 primary schools.

In many respects the project has exceeded expectations and amply fulfilled all its original aims. It has enriched participants' skills, knowledge and understanding and inspired all those who have had contact with the *Seeds of Change* programme. The feedback from participants, volunteers, artists, academics and partner organisations has been overwhelmingly positive with great praise for the project's management and delivery.



Location of the partner settings across the city of Bristol

bris.ac.uk/public-engagement/events/seeds-of-change/projects

The Seeds of Change staff and volunteers I worked with were all absolutely brilliant, interesting, fun, kind and all round wonderful people. So were the groups we worked with. Meeting these people was an invaluable privilege, which made the experience as a volunteer rewarding and worthwhile.
Student volunteer

This report includes quotes from in-depth interviews with project staff, partner organisation staff, horticulturalists, student volunteers and project participants including children, adults, teachers and community workers. Where impact is particularly evident throughout the report, often through these direct quotes, it has been highlighted with in the following way: **(Impact)**.

4. What We Wanted to Happen

4.1 Original Project Aims

1. To increase the understanding, and understanding of value, of different heritages within Bristol's primary schools and community groups and through this increase community cohesion within schools and communities
2. To enable university students and volunteers from the community to participate in activities that value Bristol's diverse heritage.
3. To increase university students' understanding, and understanding of value, of different heritages within Bristol.

4.2 Map of Intended Activity

1. Recruit project coordinator 0.5FTE
Outcome: Martha Crean appointed
2. Recruit and train up to 40 student volunteers
Outcome: 28 recruited and trained
3. Hold a project launch event for 20 primary schools, 10 community groups and 50 members of the public
Outcome: 38 people attended representing 14 schools and community groups
4. Create a minimum of 10 ballast seed gardens in primary schools and 5 gardens in community settings
Outcome: 11 gardens were created in primary schools and 5 in community settings with a further temporary garden in the city centre created as part of the *Bristol Festival of Nature*
5. Create a menu of free events and activities for school children from 30 schools that will provide opportunities for learning and skills development
Outcome: an introductory workshop, 4 creative activity workshops and a workshop at *Bristol Festival of Nature* were delivered to a total of 21 primary schools
6. Develop a set of resources to help schools engage with the project
Outcome: resources were developed and are now available on the project website
7. Develop a website for the project to host the resources and oral histories
Outcome: a website has been developed to host resources and to document and celebrate all 16 ballast seed gardens and provide on-going communication between partners and participants
8. Evaluate the project
Outcome: Kamina Walton was commissioned to provide an evaluation of the *Seeds of Change: Growing a Living History of Bristol* project
9. Final showcase event
Outcome: it became clear that the logistics of delivering a successful final showcase were extremely complex given the locations of the participating schools and groups, issues of transport and mobility. Therefore the activity at *Bristol Festival of Nature* acted as a platform for celebrating the

project as a whole and the project website is also acting to showcase the work and ensure the project's legacy.

5. What Actually Happened

5.1 Overview of the project in numbers

Participating schools

SCHOOL	INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP	PLANTING WORKSHOPS	CREATIVE WORKSHOP/TRIP
Ashley Down Primary School (Year 5)	59 Children 4 Adults	59 Children 4 Adults	58 Children 7 Adults
Ashton Gate Primary School (Year 5)	53 Children 2 Adults	53 Children 2 Adults	53 Children 4 Adults
Compass Point South Street School and Children's Centre (Year 4)	25 Children 3 Adults	25 Children 3 Adults	25 Children 3 Adults
Easton Church of England Primary School (Year 4)	58 Children 4 Adults	58 Children 4 Adults	58 Children 6 Adults
Fishponds Church of England Academy (Year 4)	58 Children 4 Adults	58 Children 4 Adults	58 Children 5 Adults
Greenfield E-ACT Primary Academy (Year 5)	45 Children 5 Adults	45 Children 5 Adults	45 Children 5 Adults
Hillcrest Primary School (Year 6)	62 Children 4 Adults	62 Children 4 Adults	62 Children 4 Adults
Sefton Park Primary School (From years 4 & 5)	18 Children 2 Adults	18 Children 2 Adults	18 Children 3 Adults
Shirehampton Primary School (Year 5)	60 Children 2 Adults	30 Children 1 Adult	60 Children 3 Adults
Upper Horfield Community School (Year 4)	21 Children 1 Adult	21 Children 2 Adult	21 Children 3 Adults
St Werburgh's Primary School (Year 4)	28 Children 3 Adults	28 Children 3 Adults	28 Children 6 Adults

Participating community groups

COMMUNITY CENTRE	INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP	PLANTING WORKSHOPS	CREATIVE WORKSHOP/TRIP
The Park Community Learning Centre	7 Adults 5 Children	12 Adults 5 Children	7 Adults 2 Children
Wellspring Healthy Living Centre	6 Adults	5 Adults	4 Adults
The Southville Centre	13 Adults	13 Adults	13 Adults
Windmill Hill City Farm (with St Mary Redcliffe CE VE Primary School)	16 Children 3 Adults	16 Children 3 Adults	16 Children 3 Adults
Friends of Netham Park	6 Adults	6 Adults	5 Adults

Other project participants

Core Staff team	CPE UoB	7
	Arnolfini	4
	Botanic Garden	2
	Workshop Leaders	8
	Evaluator	1
Student Volunteers		28
Festival of Nature attendees to SoC tent		5000
Festival of Nature Schools Day pupils participating in workshops	10 Schools	200 pupils

5.2 Overview of project management, partnerships & staffing

Centre for Public Engagement: Project Lead

From the outset *Seeds of Change* Project Coordinator, Martha Crean, working closely with staff from the Centre for Public Engagement (from here on referred to as CPE), has been pivotal to the success of the project. She has expertly managed the planning, administration and delivery of the project's concept across a wide network of organisations and individuals; recruited volunteers, artists and academics; liaised with the CPE project team and external evaluator Kamina Walton. At times the sheer volume of people and places involved in the project has been a huge challenge but she has managed this throughout with a calm, professional and endearing manner. She has received vital support from CPE staff member Fiona Hyland who has acted both as Martha's line manager and offered all round project support, including working as one of the individual garden-build coordinators. The two have worked successfully as a team and they have maintained clear lines of communication throughout the project.

Maggie Leggett, principal applicant and Head of CPE assigned additional staff members to the project to working alongside Martha and Fiona, thus ensuring its success: Diana Thorne (finance); Amanda Edmonson (also acting as the lead from CPE on the *Seeds of Change* presence at the Festival of Nature), Mireia Bes and Kate Miller acting as coordinators for the individual garden builds. Sarah Gosling, a student intern, was also appointed to support Martha on the project between February and June.

University of Bristol Botanic Garden: Partner organisation

The Botanic Garden has been partners in Maria Thereza Alves' Bristol based *Seeds of Change* project and *Floating Ballast Seed Garden* project since 2007 when Arnolfini invited artist Alves to participate in the group exhibition, *Port City*.

Floating Garden © Max McClure

The Botanic Garden is home to the largest collection of documented plant species (circa 4500) and educative plant displays in the Bristol area. This coupled with expert staff in the field of Botanical Horticulture and a strong and diverse volunteer base enabled the project to be strongly supported in horticultural training, growing facilities, volunteer practical help, advice and interpretation. A trial display of Ballast Seed Garden plants was planted at the Botanic Garden in 2010 from which plants could be assessed as to their suitability for establishment on the Ballast Seed Garden and for the *Seeds of Change* project partner gardens. The Botanic Garden provided the plants and containers for a temporary ballast seed garden at the Festival of Nature *Seeds of Change* stand at In June 2013.



Nicholas Wray, Curator at the Botanic Garden, offered specialist plant advice on the project from the outset and was responsible for the design of the planting and establishment and nurturing of ballast seed plants on the Floating Garden. He collaborated closely with partners at Centre for Public Engagement particularly with Martha Crean, *Seeds of Change* Project Coordinator and Helen Davis, Curator for Learning and Jess Rolls, Assistant Curator of Public Engagement at Arnolfini. He also collaborated with sound artist Matt Davies to devise *The Secret Sounds of Plants* workshop, one of 4 activity workshops offered to participating groups in June and July.

Horticulturalist Nicola Rathbone, better known as Froggie, worked closely with Nicholas as gardening advisor and volunteer trainer on the *Seeds of Change* project, visiting each partner setting and assessing the spaces they had allocated, collating ballast seed packets and offering on-going advice and support if settings had any problems with or queries about their gardens. She has also produced a valuable resource on collecting seeds to replant in gardens next year.

Kasha Smal, an ex-teacher now based at the Botanic Garden, acted as education advisor on the project, creating an introductory workshop for partner settings, *Growing your living history of Bristol*. She delivered this workshop a total of 21 times throughout April to accommodate the large number of classes and community groups involved, as well as running workshops for the 10 additional schools at Bristol's *Festival of Nature* Schools Day.

Arnolfini: Partner organisation

The Learning and Participation team at Arnolfini has advised on and supported the *Seeds of Change* project from the outset. Helen Davies, Curator of Learning, had input in to the original HLF application, supported work on the Launch Event, supplied lists of schools/community groups and contacts, building on previous relationships Arnolfini had developed with these groups, and advised on artists who might work on the programme. Arnolfini's Learning and Participation team had previously commissioned artists Matt Davies (paired with Nick Wray) and Michael Loader to devise artist boat tours and experimental performances on the Floating Ballast Seed Garden the previous year in 2012, which both served to introduce the artists to the concept of Seeds of Change and idea of producing work by collaborating with other disciplines/ areas of research. Jess Rolls, Assistant Curator of Public Engagement led on the overall development and delivery of the *Seeds of Change* programme at the *Festival of Nature*, coordinating the public programme of activities, temporary ballast seed garden design display and boat tours to the Floating Garden, managing technical and staffing arrangements, maintaining relationships with artists/ BNHC festival staff/ other key stakeholders and communications of the project, working closely with Amanda Edmondson (CPE) who supported on logistics, volunteer management and signage and Jenny Cooper (Arnolfini) who supported on Festival production. Ellie Jeffs, Assistant Curator of Learning and Participation and Kasha Smal led on the planning and delivery of the school's day learning programme and hands on learning in the Festival of Nature tent with support from Arnolfini/ University of Bristol staff and volunteers. Arnolfini's Technical and Front of House Teams (AV and art handling Technicians, Box Office, Stewards) provided support on the installation and public engagement efforts of the Festival. Aside from the Festival of Nature, Jess and Ellie worked closely with Martha/ CPE to coordinate the *Roots and Routes* workshop, integrating and facilitating a storytelling boat trip taking school groups to the floating garden.

Student volunteers



Student volunteer at Shirehampton Primary School © Kamina Walton

The project met and exceeded my expectations. The garden aspect was my main motivation initially, but through the project the parts that interested me most were the links with Bristol's heritage and meeting new groups of people.
Student volunteer

In the original HLF application CPE hoped to recruit and train up to 40 student volunteers from both University of Bristol (UoB) and University of the West of England. From the recruitment drive 28 student volunteers were successfully appointed; 27 from UoB and 1 from UWE. These included PhD, BA and BSc students studying a range of subjects from Ecology to Evaluation Methodologies, Biology to History of Art. Students were paired on the basis of their interview assessment and each pair was then assigned to a setting.

Once on board every student was required to attend at training day at the Botanic Garden in March. On the morning of the training they were offered a comprehensive horticultural introduction to preparing seed-beds and growing seeds delivered by Nicholas Wray and Froggie. In the afternoon introductory approaches to working with schools and community groups were explored with Ed Drewitt, Learning Officer at UoB.

The session on preparing seed-beds began with practical advice about health and safety issues and the recommended groups sizes volunteers might work with. Demonstrations as to correct digging, raking, hoeing, sowing and watering offered invaluable information that ensured all volunteers went into their setting with the skills needed to support the planting of each ballast seed garden. Similarly with the session on seed planting in pots everyone had hands-on experience of soil preparation, planting, labeling and watering.

The highlight for me was to be able to work with the undergraduate, postgraduate and staff communities at the University, as a group of volunteers who had come forward to be trained in basic horticultural gardening activities and then to pass these skills on to teachers and community settings... This, for me, was special because they're an audience we don't normally meet here at the Garden. We interact with biology students – we don't interact with chemists, art history students, mathematicians, and Faculty of Art students. So having them all together in the same subject area was really important.
Nicholas Wray, University of Bristol Botanic Garden

In the afternoon Ed Drewitt began by exploring the hopes and expectations of the group around volunteering and went on to look at the benefits to participants and partner organisations. He explored the structure of a classroom-based session in comparison to a community-based session, the perfect learning experience, learning styles and an effective session structure.

I thought the stress on heritage, origins, locality, links to other countries, my family and me was really well communicated throughout the day.
Jess Rolls, Arnolfini staff member

The students' incentives for volunteering on the project included a love of plants, a desire to gain experience in public engagement, an interest in working with children, an increased understanding of Bristol's culture and a good reason to get away from a desk and computer and break out of the university bubble.

I am interested in learning how to communicate with people from different backgrounds (i.e. Not Scientists!). I also wanted to get to know the culture of Bristol a bit more and thought the heritage side of the project sounded really interesting. Finally, I like gardening!
Student volunteer

I feel the training day was very helpful and informative.
Student volunteer

As well as the initial training day they were encouraged to attend the introductory workshop in their allocated setting in order to meet staff and participants, view the proposed garden site and plan the first planting session. After this they were asked to attend up to 4 half-day planting sessions in their setting. Volunteers' commitment to *Seeds of Change* varied but, as is so often the way, those who put most in to the project inevitably got the most out of it.

The work I did with the Knowle community group at Youth Moves (The Park Community Learning Centre) was emphatically one of the best volunteering experiences I've ever had.

Student volunteer

This way of working with a large number of volunteers on one project has offered valuable insight and experience into organisational requirements and management for staff for future working. **(Impact - Organisation)**



Student volunteer working with children at The Park Community Learning Centre © Kamina Walton

*Student engagement is an area that CPE would like to see expanding further at the University and there are plans to explore more offers of community-based learning in the future. So our experiences of involving student volunteers in the *Seeds of Change* project will feed in to this forthcoming work. **(Impact - Organisation)***

Fiona Hyland, CPE staff member

5.3 Seeds of Change Activity

There have been 4 key areas of activity across the *Seeds of Change* programme, each of which has had significant impact on those involved.

1. A project launch event was held at Arnolfini. This was attended by 38 individuals representing 14 schools and community groups, 11 of who were recruited to the project. A further 5 settings were recruited shortly afterwards. The **impact on people** was two-fold: those attending the event gained a greater insight into ways in which heritage can increase our understanding and knowledge of and engagement with the world around us. The **organisational impact** was that those delivering the event benefitted from one another's expertise and their joint delivery enriched the experience of those attending the event.
2. A total of 16 ballast seed gardens were planted, 11 in primary schools and 5 in community settings. These gardens have made a significant **impact on the environment** – improving otherwise neglected open spaces, empowering people to have a positive impact on their immediate surroundings. The gardens have **also impacted on the people** planting them – both in terms of increased knowledge of plants, gardening skills and community cohesion.
3. Introductory workshops were delivered in partner settings a total of 21 times, having an **impact on people and heritage** through the sharing of information about ballast seeds, discussing the history of the shipping trade and by exploring participants own heritage. Four creative activity workshops were run by artists and academics for partner schools and community groups a total of 21 times. These **impacted on people and heritage** through the further exploration of local history, participants' increased knowledge of the world of plants, shared mapping activities that both imparted and reinforced participants' geographical knowledge, and through the opportunity to share personal stories of heritage and migration.
4. The *Seeds of Change* project had a strong presence at the *Bristol Festival of Nature* where a temporary garden was created in the city centre and a *Seeds of Change* workshop was delivered to 10 primary schools on Schools Day. The Festival as whole achieved visitor numbers of 12000 members of the general public over the weekend. The **impact on people and heritage** was clear through their engagement with the planting and mapping activities that took place over the 3 days and were carried out with approximately 5000 visitors to the Seeds of Change tent.

5.4 Launch Event

The recruitment strategy for the launch event was to focus on schools within the least affluent postcode areas of Bristol, drawing on previous contacts and making direct contact with head teachers in other schools to promote the event. The launch was held as a twilight session on 22 November 2012 at Arnolfini and, despite torrential rain on the night, of the 38 teachers and community workers registered, 32 attended. They represented 14 schools and community groups, 11 of who signed up to the project. Another 5 groups were subsequently recruited through CPE's email contacts and face-to-face meetings, resulting in a total of 16 *Seeds of Change* partner settings involved in the core programme in total.

It's an amazing concept; I'd be very keen! I would be more than happy to assist with developing workshops if you'd like any teachers' input.

Teacher attending the launch event

The launch event also demonstrated the value of the partnership working that was taking place between CPE and the Botanic Garden at UoB and staff at Arnolfini. This collaborative relationship was crucial to the overall success of the whole project.

(Impact – Partnership working)

Arnolfini, UoB, the Botanic Gardens... each one has had something very specific and very valuable to offer to the HLF programme and it absolutely couldn't have happened without all of those 3 partners being involved, so we've been very interdependent. Hopefully it's been mutually beneficial for all three, so I think as partnerships go it's been a very fruitful combination of expertise.

(Impact - Partnership working)

Martha Crean, Project Coordinator

5.5 Creation of the Ballast Seed Gardens



Ballast Seed Garden, Ashton Gate Primary School © Kamina Walton

The *Seeds of Change* project has involved the growing of ballast seed gardens in the following 11 primary schools and 5 community settings across the city:

- Compass Point South Street School and Children's Centre
- Hillcrest Primary School
- St Werburgh's Primary School
- Upper Horfield Community School
- Easton Church of England Primary School
- Ashton Gate Primary School
- Sefton Park Primary School
- Greenfield E-ACT Primary Academy
- Fishponds Church of England Academy
- Ashley Down Primary School
- Shirehampton Primary School
- Wellspring Healthy Living Centre

Friends of Netham Park
Windmill Hill City Farm (with St Mary Redcliffe CE VE Primary School)
The Southville Centre
The Park Community Learning Centre

Each setting has taken its own unique approach to the project and the gardens have ranged from a collection of planters or window boxes to specially designed large scale spaces. This report will go on to draw, in particular, on one school, Easton Church of England Primary School, and one community setting, The Park Community Learning Centre, Knowle, to illustrate the breadth of participation, planning and engagement in the programme.

5.6 Introductory Workshops



Kasha Smal delivering introductory workshop at Shirehampton Primary School © Kamina Walton

One of the programme's key aims has been to increase understanding, and understanding of, the value of different heritages in primary schools and community settings. The carefully devised workshops and activities delivered through *Seeds of Change* have ensured that this aim has been successfully achieved in a number of different ways: via workshop content; through working with diverse school communities; through involvement of student volunteers and staff from diverse heritages; and through magical stories shared of heritage and migration. **(Impact - Heritage)**

We were able to talk a lot about where different people in the class come from and since we have a high ratio of ethnic diversity, it worked very well with this school and my class in particular. We have Bulgarian, Hungarian, Jamaican, Polish, German, Pakistani, Canadian, Iraqi and Somalian children in my class alone, so it was apt that it (Seeds of Change) dealt with Bristol's diverse heritage. (Impact - Heritage)

Teachers at Upper Horfield Community School

In a way it was the university that provided the 'diverse heritage', including my Italian self, the Spanish coordinator of the project and the German student who facilitated the workshop.

Student volunteer

Kasha Smal adapted the introductory workshop for primary children and community groups, ensuring that the activities were appropriate for the different audiences. Her delivery in both settings was inspirational – engaging, well paced and well conceived. Her educational background was key to the workshops' success as she was experienced in holding a group's attention and offering activities for the 3 key learning styles – visual, auditory and kinesthetic. She gave encouragement and positive feedback to participants while also supporting the volunteers during sessions. She introduced new words to the children such as 'dispersal' and 'stowaways' as well as the Latin names of plants. She also clarified terms in relation to the ballast plants such as 'dormant' and 'identification'. The session involved mapping shipping trade routes and the journey of the ballast seeds as well as the participants' own journeys and migration history, thus making connections with participants' own and their families' experiences. Kasha also explored participants' experience of growing from seed.

I've grown tulips by singing to them.

Pupil at Shirehampton Primary School

I grew up in Pensford where we had a big garden and grew lots of potatoes.

Group member at The Southville Centre

She gave the groups the experience of learning new information - about plants, history and migration – while also instilling inspiration for the project.

We could do a whole school assembly on what we've learnt today.

Pupil at Shirehampton Primary School

It was a real challenge to get all the key information – heritage, ballast seeds, migration, plant identification - into a one hour session while making sense of the project's roots, aims and ambitions. In schools the emphasis in terms of curriculum links was often, inevitably, within science.

I think it's quite difficult - how do you get heritage in as the main learning objective... We always had that conversation at the end but it was a challenge.

Kasha Smal, University of Bristol Botanic Garden

Participants were also encouraged to share their own personal stories. One elderly woman at The Southville Centre shared a story about her neighbour who used to boil up poppy seeds during the World War 2 and put them in her husband's tea when he came home on leave. She believed it would prevent him from returning to war.

I thought 'Oh no! I'm not interested in this' but as soon as she (Kasha) started off I thought it was lovely. She's a good teacher. I'm not a gardener, I'm not interested in seeds, but you've made it very interesting. Thank you. (Impact - People)

Group participant at The Southville Centre

I thought Kasha was brilliant. It was so engaging. Absolutely brilliant.

Group leader at The Southville Centre

I loved the fact it brought so many people from different sectors together to celebrate Bristol's links with the rest of the world.

Kasha, Smal, University of Bristol Botanic Garden



Sharing a story at The Southville Centre, April 2013. © Kamina Walton

5.7 Planting Sessions

Our garden has flowerbeds that are designed as ships as our school is near Avonmouth docks. The flower beds have a variety of the ballast seeds we were given and the ground has been covered with shingle. The garden is outside the main entrance of our school so it is the first thing all visitors to the school see and it provides a great first impression.

Teacher at Shirehampton Primary School

The spaces chosen to plant the ballast seed gardens varied hugely from one setting to the next. In some instances the space only allowed for pots or window boxes and in others large and sometimes elaborate structures were built to house the plants. Each setting was given an allowance of £300 to buy the planters, soil, materials and tools needed for the project and they then had the responsibility of building the garden in advance of the student volunteers coming in to help with sowing.

The Botanic Garden provided the seed for 9 ballast seed plants:

Nigella damascena (Love in a Mist)
Ecballium elaterium (Squirting Cucumber)
Setaria viridis (Green Bristle Grass)
Calendula officinalis (Marigold)
Avena sativa (Oats)
Verbascum nigrum (Dark Mullein)
Eruca sativa (Rocket)
Linum usitatissimum (Flax or Linseed)
Papaver rhoeas (Wild Poppy)

Student volunteers worked to support the planting of the gardens, often in challenging weather conditions and sometimes in situations where the garden area had not been properly prepared in advance as expected.

The planting side has made me more interested in plants and more aware of a career in horticulture. I've also learnt I don't want to be a primary teacher! It's just given me more career choices, like being in touch with the Botanic Garden.

(Impact - People)

Student volunteer

We had a lot of children saying they now wanted to become gardeners. I think a lot of them were really amazed by the idea that a tiny seed was going to grow into one of these plants.

Student volunteer

For many children the project was their first experience of germinating seeds. This had a huge impact in terms of their understanding of the scientific process, the connection between plant species and countries of origin, the various means of seed dispersal and plant links between school, home and the local community. **(Impact - People)**

My favourite plant is OATS because it sounds so cool – and they look cool. I'm now growing oats in my garden... I learnt that oats grow in Egypt, poppies grow in France, linseed in Italy and marigolds in Spain.

Pupil at Ashton Gate Primary School

5.8 Creative Activity Workshops

Some of the creative activities that Martha and the team have put together have been new collaborations for us – for example combining academics with a sound artist or storyteller and it seems that schools are reporting the success of these collaborations.

(Impact – People, Organisation)

Fiona Hyland, CPE staff member

The creative activity workshops were a key aspect of the *Seeds of Change* programme in terms of innovation and learning. They were also a very effective way of embedding the project's generic learning outcomes. Every group chose one of the following workshops designed to provide opportunities for creative learning. The first three of these were specifically aimed at schools and the fourth was devised for community groups:

1. *The Secret Sounds of Plants*: a micro-sound tour of the ballast seed garden and other plants in the Botanic Garden's worldwide collection.

Facilitators: Matt Davies (artist), Nicholas Wray (curator, Botanic Garden)

2. *Folktales and Footprints*: an exploration of the magical features of plants through various plant-related fairytales from African, Slavic, South American, British and Asian folklore.

Facilitators: Milica Provic (postgraduate researcher in history), Alice Vandeleur-Boorer (artist)

3. *Roots and Routes*: a storytelling boat trip along Bristol's harbour to the Floating Ballast Seed Garden, exploring roots and relationships to the city.

Facilitators: Michael Loader (storyteller), Naomi Millner (lecturer, UoB School of Geographical Sciences)

4. *Where are your roots?* Sharing stories of moving and staying, of leaving home and finding home and discovering a sense of place.

Facilitator: Marcel Thomas (postgraduate researcher in history)

The nature of Seeds of Change is that it encompasses so many different disciplines and areas of interest. Naturally we had to explore all of them – science and art, geography and history. Heritage was central to the project, supported by all these other areas.

Martha Crean, Project Coordinator

Each of the schools' workshops was delivered by an artist or storyteller alongside a researcher or academic from UoB, the intention being to deliver a cross-curricula programme addressing culture and heritage, social history, geography, art and science. This joint delivery not only enriched the content of these workshops but also provided invaluable collaborative learning opportunities for the artists and academics delivering them.

It was all about bringing people together, trying to encourage understanding and awareness of different cultures within our culture... Essentially it was about looking outward and beyond the academic community to the rest of the city and trying to create new connections. (Impact – People, Heritage)

Martha Crean, Project Coordinator

*The Secret Sounds of Plants and the Roots and Routes workshops were particularly successful due to their innovation both in terms of location and workshop content. The Botanic Garden moved to its current site from Bracken Hill relatively recently in 2002 and many Bristol residents still do not know of its existence. Through these workshops large numbers of children and their teachers were given first hand experience of the grounds, the glasshouses, the plant species and staff. Many children talked about bringing their parents back to visit, and a number of the schools were very keen to continue working with the Garden beyond the *Seeds of Change* project.*

The Secret Sounds of Plants offered a unique insight into a world that very few of us have access to – that of the sounds of plant movements and the direct exposure to their morphology. Here was an example of the key role that Arnolfini played in the programme, bringing in artists who might offer a different approach to learning about ballast seeds, heritage and migration, thus complimenting the academics that UoB brought to the project. The symbiotic relationship that developed between the artists and academics was instrumental in leading to new approaches to engagement practice.

Working with Matt Davies has enriched my practice and what we can deliver at the Botanic Gardens... The project that we ran enabled me, as an educationalist, to introduce a whole new dimension to the children that I wouldn't normally have covered in a standard Botanic Garden interpretation session... We were really able to take them to a different place and that's something they will remember. (Impact – Collaboration)

Nicholas Wray, curator, on the collaboration with sound artist Matt Davies

It was very much a conversation... I really tapped in to Nick's expertise and his knowledge... and I would say the Gardens and their resources was the other collaborator – to use that moved me outside, pushed me into different areas. To tap into the expertise, Nick's knowledge and these resources moved me to produce something completely different.

(Impact – Collaboration)

Matt Davies, sound artist on the collaboration with Nicholas Wray

The *Roots and Routes* workshop used the Ballast Seed Floating Garden, Arnolfini's art project that can only be accessed by boat, as a springboard to link the academic research offered by Naomi Millner and the powerful medium of storytelling offered by Michael Loader, into one cohesive workshop. On the boat trip Michael shared two stories – both of which had the children enthralled - successfully referencing the local surroundings, aspects of the *Seeds of Change* project, plant species, heritage, history and migration. The content of these stories were enriched through Michael's contact with Naomi and her knowledge of both historical details and resources that Michael was previously unaware of.

As a creative person it's a real gift to be given anchors or central posts to create around... There's an integrity within any story that needs to hold it together. Some of the facts in the stories were linked to real people – the blend of using my own stories and linking with history is a beautiful thing to do. It would have made my job double in size if I didn't have Naomi (to work with).

(Impact – Collaboration, Heritage)

Michael Loader, storyteller, on his collaboration with academic Naomi Millner, School of Geographical Sciences

For some parents it was their first experience of open water. One mother had never been on a boat before and was really excited and texting her husband to tell him all about it. Travelling on the story boat was an extraordinary experience for many individuals and one they are unlikely to forget.

*For me the *Roots and Routes* workshop really did look at the crux of the thinking about your place in Bristol, your local heritage and then thinking about international heritage. For Michael it seemed to have a really positive impact on him working with an academic – it pushed his discipline further and the way he communicated that discipline. **(Impact – Collaboration, Heritage)***

Jess Rolls, Assistant Curator of External Projects, Arnolfini



Michael Loader and children on the *Roots and Routes* boat trip © Kamina Walton

5.9 Bristol Festival of Nature

The *Bristol Festival of Nature's* Schools' Day was the perfect vehicle for sharing the *Seeds of Change* programme with a wider audience and building on the success of both the introductory workshops and the creative activity workshops. It gave 7 additional schools the opportunity to visit the *Seeds of Change* tent, take part in a short workshop run by Kasha Smal, (adapted from the introductory workshops she had delivered to the partner schools) and learn about ballast seeds, migration and map their heritage. During the 3 day festival a temporary *Seeds of Change* garden was created in a city centre location. The Schools' Day in particular was a chance for CPE to work closely with Arnolfini, planning and delivering the day together. At the end of the day participants at the Southville Centre, one of the community partners, also visited the tent and took part in mapping and planting activities. During the Festival weekend there was a real emphasis on mapping visitors' heritage on two giant maps – one showing England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and a map of the world. By the end of the weekend these maps offered a fascinating insight into the movement of Bristol residents and their diverse of heritage.



Families and individuals plotting out their family heritage during the *Bristol Festival of Nature*. **(Impact – Heritage)**



Kasha Smal working with children at the Festival of Nature Schools' Day © Kamina Walton



Kasha Smal working with children at the Festival of Nature Schools' Day © Kamina Walton

6. Case Studies

6.1 The Park Community Learning Centre, Knowle

Coordinated by Ben Carpenter, Youth & Community Worker with Youth Moves, this was a highly successful intergenerational approach to *Seeds of Change* that involved 3 separate organisations plus volunteers based at The Park: Youth Moves who coordinate Youth Work in Knowle West for the 11-19 age group; Filwood Chase History Society, a group run by local people for local people to meet and talk about the history of the area; staff and users at Silva Care, a drop-in centre working with adults with learning difficulties; along with Year 4 and 5 children and parents from nearby school, Knowle Park Primary. In total 17 young people and 30 adults were involved.

The Park were one of the first settings to start on their garden as Ben saw the opportunity of engaging all the participating groups, local school children and their parents through Easter holiday workshops based around seeds, planting and the local community. This linked directly with the intergenerational, environmentally focused *Community Space Challenge*¹ that Ben also coordinates as part of his role.

We talked to the youngsters about what it was like in our day. We had to go and plant seeds, veg, flowers and fruit and that's how we learnt, as there weren't supermarkets in those days.

Filwood Chase History Society member

One of the initial activities before building their own garden involved the groups going out on to local Novers Slopes 'guerilla seeding' in true guerilla style with tights on their heads. This was an inspired way of building group cohesion and engaging these diverse groups in transforming neglected local spaces through seed planting. The children retained a great deal of information about the plants' origins and went on to be totally committed to the construction of their own *Seeds of Change* garden within The Park setting, working through challenging weather with heavy materials and unwieldy tools.

¹ The Community Space Challenge is for young people to change forgotten and neglected areas of their neighbourhood into fresh green spaces for the whole community to enjoy. Intergenerational work often emerges as a central theme as the young people involved make connections with both older and younger people within the community.



Planting session at The Park Community Learning Centre, May 2013 © Kamina Walton

We've enjoyed all of it. We can get time off school, plant some seeds and get mucky a bit. We don't get to plant at school, but we've got a Suggestion Box and I might suggest it.

Pupil at Knowle Park Primary working on The Park Community Learning Centre garden

The garden design and construction has been on an ambitious scale, involving hundreds of bricks, tons of soil and a huge amount of work from dedicated participants. It is sited in a communal open space at The Park and is a horseshoe shape with a bench in the centre where people can sit and eat their lunch. Construction took place over a number of weeks with all participants being actively involved. The creation of the garden structure itself will ensure the legacy of this project within this particular setting. It is a great illustration of the potential the *Seeds of Change* project holds for participating schools and community groups in terms of collaborative working, engagement with history and heritage, science and the environment. **(Impact - People)**

*For Tom and Andrew it's helped them a lot. Tom's autistic and didn't socialize much but now goes up and shakes hands with people. A couple of weeks when he couldn't do it (the project) he got really upset. **(Impact - People)***

Staff member, Silva Care (names changed)



Pupils from Knowle Park Primary planting at The Park Community Learning Centre, May 2013 © Kamina Walton

(The project) confirmed how much I like facilitating intergenerational projects and blending different abilities to break down potential discriminatory barriers between those different groups. The different ages working together and having fun will definitely add to the community spirit in Knowle. (Impact - People)

Youth & Community Worker & Seeds of Change project coordinator at The Park Centre

6.2 Easton Primary School

The project at Easton has been shared between two Year 4 classes, two class teachers and a volunteer gardener. The school is situated in a multicultural area of Bristol and the children have strong links to many of the countries that the ballast seeds originate from such as North Africa, Asia and the Mediterranean. As with some other school settings the project has had additional benefits for many of the children taking part.

The project particularly benefitted some of our EAL children (English As Additional Language), who it appears did not have the same access to gardening experiences out of school as some of the other children. (Impact - People)

Teacher at Sefton Park Primary School

At Easton Primary heritage has been integral, however staff emphasised the importance of learning in science as being the most significant aspect of the project for them. Their gardens have been more modest than many other settings, with plants in pots, planters and old sinks, but they have been grown on multiple sites around the school. The children feel real ownership over them and their engagement with, knowledge of and ability to identify and describe the different species of plants has also been striking.

The year 4 classes from Easton took a trip to Bristol's harbourside for the *Roots and*

Routes workshop in June, where they travelled by boat to visit the Floating Ballast Seed Garden in Bristol's floating harbour. On the journey they were accompanied by a storyteller who told dramatic stories of seed travels and global migration hundreds of years ago. This included a story of a young girl on a slave boat, which communicated Bristol's role in the slave trade. Teachers fed back that the detail in the story was 'informative and important' and that the central theme of the story had been treated sensitively.

(Impact - Heritage)



Pupils from Easton Church of England Primary School listening to stories during Roots & Routes © Martha Crean

The harbourside trip also included an art workshop in the galleries at Arnolfini, which involved each class visiting an exhibition of work by artist Jutta Koether and trying out some experimental drawing inspired by Koether's painting techniques. For some of these children it was their first experience of an art gallery and one that made quite an impact. This experience in the art gallery also helped to increase understanding of how *Seeds of Change* stemmed from the ideas of an international artist – Alves' project began in the gallery space of Arnolfini. **(Impact - People)**



Pupils from Easton Church of England Primary School exploring the floating garden
© Martha Crean

When asked what they would like to see happening to their garden next year one child answered:

Take it home and look after it, and when it grows really, really long you can bring it back again. You can write it in a book what happened, if it grew and how you felt about it.

Pupil at Easton Church of England Primary School



One of the growing areas at Easton Church of England Primary School © Kamina Walton

The challenge in this school, as in many others, will be tending the gardens over the summer holidays and into the next academic year, as in this setting the role of volunteer gardener has come to an end. With information being given to all settings about seed collection and the time, energy and commitment that has gone in to each garden it would be a real shame if they were left to run wild. This seemed to be a real possibility just before the summer holiday with some planted areas appearing overgrown and untended. This raises the key question of sustainability for the future.

We'd like to see children having an opportunity to take some home – they've definitely expressed an interest in that...It's a bit of a learning process for all of us... we've got more plants than we know what to do with right now. (Impact - People)

Volunteer gardener at Easton Church of England Primary School

It has made a huge impact on the children – we've now got a Gardening Club. If you look all the way around the school there's plants that weren't there before Seeds of Change, so it's amazing the impact it's had on the school... It has developed their (the children's) enquiring mind and they have gained additional knowledge.

Teacher at Easton Church of England Primary School

7. Review

7.1 Project Outcomes and Impact

The *Seeds of Change* programme has reached over 6000 individuals; educated people about ballast seeds, plant life, heritage and history; brought together artists and academics; engaged with a large number of student volunteers; further developed the successful working partnership between CPE, the Botanic Garden and Arnolfini; and has resulted in the creation of 16 new garden spaces across the city. Workshops have been inspiring, people who never considered planting before have been excited by growing their own ballast seeds and individuals have come together, many for the first time, to share stories around their personal heritage.

Some of the most inspiring aspects of the project have been the bringing together of artists and academics in unusual settings, where they have worked together to create rich, exciting and captivating creative workshops. The more challenging aspects of the project have been working with such a large number of schools, trying to communicate effectively and efficiently with them, managing their expectations in terms of what could be realised in a limited amount of time, and how much was dependent on their own resources and their commitment to the project.

The feedback from student volunteers, participating groups and schools, staff and partner organisations has been overwhelmingly positive. The project has benefitted all those who have come into contact with it – by increasing their knowledge of the city and its diverse population, of ballast seeds and horticulture; developing their understanding and appreciation of heritage; environmental impact on waste ground, playgrounds and entrances to participating buildings.

In terms of legacy an on-line web resource has been developed to celebrate the project's achievements, share resources and build connections and continue a dialogue across the city based around the development of the individual gardens:

bristol.ac.uk/seeds-of-change

Without the *Seeds of Change* project it is highly unlikely that any of these gardens would have been created, that the working partnerships would have been allowed to grow and flourish between organisations, groups and individuals. It is also unlikely that those people participating in the project would have got excited about seeds, planting and heritage in the way they did. Residents of Bristol would know less about the history of their city, the shipping trade and each others' heritage. The *Floating Ballast Seed Garden* would continue to offer opportunities to individuals and small groups to explore these issues but could never have achieved the depth and spread of this knowledge without the *Seeds of Change: Growing A Living History* project.

Here are just some of the comments that have been received about the impact the project has made...



I've learnt loads about horticulture and that's taught me a lot about learning outside the classroom in general. The experiences the project has been able to provide in terms of informal learning have been quite varied... It was creative learning in very unusual settings, art in the public realm, in new ways for me. It's opened

my eyes to other sorts of organisations that can offer exciting opportunities.
Martha Crean, Project Coordinator

A lot of the children had never been on a boat before so to get that opportunity was something special for them. Being down by the harbour was also a novel experience for many of them, not to mention stepping inside an art gallery and having art explained to them. The children got a lot from the project and as a school, I feel that we gained an awful lot. I am so glad that we signed up to it!

Teachers at Upper Horfield
Community School



The trip to the Botanical Gardens was amazing and the children got so much out of it. They said it was the best school trip ever!

Teacher at Ashley Down Primary School

The children and staff were very impressed with the enthusiasm and support the Seeds of Change team gave and found the whole experience very valuable. Many thanks to all involved we will be singing the praises of the Seeds of Change Project for some time to come.

Teacher at Shirehampton Primary School

We have thoroughly enjoyed being part of this project. It has brought together friends, neighbours and family to help look after the garden, because of the interest in the origins of the seeds. The introduction of the information board has livened up the garden and given a meaning to this rather tangled array of flowers, some of which are struggling to survive in what at times is quite an arid situation.

Friends of Netham Park

We applied for the Primary Quality Geography Bronze Award this year and I used Seeds of Change as part of my evidence. We have just been given the award!

Teacher at St Werburgh's Primary School





Messing around in boats, getting muddy, meeting lots of interesting and lovely people, growing plants and learning about the world. What more could you ask of a project!

Kasha Smal, University of Bristol Botanic Garden

Overall, it has been a brilliant project. It was very well organised and the children have enjoyed it immensely. Thank you!

Teachers at Ashton Gate Primary School

7.2 Learning

Schools

- In future ensure that the key contact in the schools is the person delivering the project. In this way they feel ownership over the project and, as a result, are likely to have more investment in it.
- Wherever possible meet with these key contacts, go through the letter of agreement with them and ensure they understand the commitment required.
- Stress to schools from the outset that gardens need tending over the summer months. If they want a vibrant garden they need to plan ways of ensuring that garden is watered over the summer holidays.
- Make more time to explore the project's legacy in terms of the benefits to the curriculum e.g. how they can use activities and learning from the *Seeds of Change* project to enrich their lessons in future academic years.

Volunteers

- Ideally volunteers should visit their school/community group setting before the planting session, to build a rapport with their setting and ensure they are less dependent on the workshop leader.
- Ensure that any volunteers who do not have a DBS check are not placed in settings without being partnered with someone who is DBS checked.
- Stress to schools the role that volunteers will play so they have a clear understanding of what to expect and how best to work with them.
- When training is being offered to volunteers working in schools in the future it would be helpful to explore key aspects of classroom delivery e.g. forms of questioning, sitting at eye level to the children.
- Volunteer training could have brought out the diversity element more strongly. This would possibly have required a further trainer with particular skills in this area.

CPE

- To acknowledge that work of this kind is hugely demanding and requires ample planning time, resources and time to forge relationships with partners – organisations, schools and community settings.
- To continue to support the project's partner settings and their ballast seed gardens partnership working with the Botanic Gardens is key. CPE could also be instrumental in supporting the Botanic gardens to develop their engagement programme.
- For CPE to actively look for further opportunities to bring together academics and artists in order to ensure future programmes of work.
- CPE should flag up their presence at *Bristol Festival of Nature 2014* to all partner schools, encouraging an on-going relationship.
- For CPE, working across so many settings is hugely demanding and cannot be sustained without further funding. Therefore having a presence at community festivals in the future will ensure the continuation of this positive community engagement.
- CPE could consider building a 'resource bank' of academics who are interested in working on projects of this kind in the future and of the idea of collaborating with artists.

Workshops/staffing

- The logistics of one person transporting large resource boxes around and getting these into schools and community settings proved quite a challenge. In future, if resources of this kind are used, it should be arranged for someone to meet the workshop leader at their car on arrival and help transport them to the workshop.

Partnership working

- As with all big partnership projects everyone feels ownership. In order for this to be successfully shared there needs to be clarity around each partner's offer and clear lines of communication need to be maintained throughout. It may also be helpful in future for the partners' marketing teams to meet and develop a joint strategy.
- There needs to be an investment in partnership working from the top down, ensuring everyone is on board and feels ownership of the project.
- It might have been valuable for partners if the steering group meetings had continued on a regular basis as this was a platform for people to express concerns, ensure effective communication and share in the project's successes.
- Also, a discussion of the difference in the partners' overall organisational missions and communications strategies would be useful.
- Managing time and people's expectations of time is key to a successful collaboration. Good communication helped this.
- The relationships that developed from partnering academics, artists and organisations had a considered and thoughtful impact on approaches to practice. An area Arnolfini are keen to explore further with CPE. For example, Arnolfini are forging further links to work with Naomi Milner (Routes and Roots Workshop academic) – this relationship has grown out of Seeds of Change.

Kamina Walton
External Evaluator
August 2013

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