

West Midlands Co- Production Practitioners Network Meeting 26th April, 2012 9.30-1pm

Welcome and introduction of the participants for the 4th West Midlands Co-Production event, facilitated by Lorna Reid, *Community Catalysts*

- *EC Arts* and the *48Sheet* project – Claire Farrell
- ‘*Whose Shoes?*’ - Gill Phillips, *Nutshell Communications Ltd.*
- Friends and Neighbours – Rosie Edwards, *Sandwell MBC*

Welcome given to all and new attendees. Thanks were given to *EC Arts* for the use of a great venue and to Elke, Frankie and Yvonne for facilitating the arrangements for this event. Last meeting minutes can be found on the *Governance International* website <http://www.govint.org/about-us/who-we-work-with/west-midlands-co-production-network/>.

The network is for all partner agencies, not just the Local Authority for co-producing, collaborative working to achieve better outcomes for the community. Creating independence using community resources, whilst reducing the dependency on commissioned services.

Previous presentations:

- *Grapevine* service, Clare Wightman, building and negotiating relationships between the individual and professionals, mainstream organisations, local communities and neighbours in Coventry
- *Insight for Carers*, Carers Cafe. Supported by Community Catalysts in Dudley. Next meeting will be held at the Insight house. The work on the building has been secured using skills and equipment from local tradesmen.
- Catherine Needham – presenting on the business case for co-production.



Photographs from the event

EC Arts and the 48sheet Project

Claire Farrell

EC arts was founded in 2006, It is interested in urban design, regeneration and experimenting with different art forms in public space. It questions the notion of public art, including performance, singing, dance, the written form and art that has the ability to profile the city. It provides opportunities to local artists and children, trying to engage as many during the process of inception to completion.

History:

Digbeth Public Art Project - 2 years work, 3 permanent installations, hundreds members of the Irish community and a number of permanent public arts – [click here to read the case study on this project](#).

2009 – Recession hit. *EC Arts* received no money from the Arts Council. Had to question what could be achieved that would have a massive impact but without a budget. Billboards were seen as a platform already in existence that required no planning and stand in a public space.

2010 - The logistics of using 4 billboards in the Digbeth area was tested. Work also started on the idea of walking around a public art trail and different art forms were tested. The 4 billboards were a huge success. *EC Arts* had no idea how much impact it would have on public space, but the billboards got people stopping as they walked past. The billboards were installed not to sell anything, but just for people's pleasure. 100 billboards across the city in as many areas would hopefully make a happy city.

There are 21 clusters across the city. A cluster in Wolverhampton and Walsall, and a series of exhibitions across Birmingham city centre. A decision was made to reach as many areas and so the clusters are spread out and not just concentrated in one area. Clusters were identified with commuters in mind for those stuck in traffic, allowing commuters to engage with art and to transform the environment into a gallery. The art was also designed to get people walking and cycling around the city. A route was also created that runs along the canal as there was a consideration for safety. Parts of the city were rediscovered by those following the routes. Within hours of the billboards going up, *EC Arts* received 250 direct hits and photos had been shared on Twitter by cycling groups and photographic clubs. It spawned a photographic competition for amateur photographers to reinterpret billboards. Photos have been uploaded and a postcard has been designed using the winning photo. These networks have felt part of this project and have some ownership and participation, whether that be by taking photos or tweeting about it.

A number of art works have been co-produced. A cardboard installation was created by Calthorpe School and a day centre for adults with LD. The Pershore Street tree artwork was created with volunteers. This venture has allowed young people and vulnerable individuals to realise talents in arts by working collaboratively with the artists. In essence, this is true co-production

The use of the billboards, were negotiated with advertising companies. Claire researched their values and presented the benefits in terms of their social responsibility. A charge was levied by a

couple of advertisers. *EC Arts* have to fundraise for each project. However the aim is to set up a trust or foundation to give opportunities to young people and artists.

The Mailbox pop-up gallery is a hub to showcase some of the billboard art and the progress of the project.

Feedback from group confirmed that the art was thought provoking and also positive. To be a part of the cluster, *EC Arts* requested submissions and took previous work into consideration. An advisory board including the director of the *IKON gallery* were involved in short listing the art work. There hasn't been any censorship and the art was matched to the site and its immediate environment. Advertisers engaged as *EC arts* have built a good reputation due to high profile projects over a 6 year period, therefore there was little risk for private business.

How do evaluate the project's success and whether it has achieved its outcomes? *EC Arts* are using participant numbers, learning opportunities, workshops and feedback received via Twitter and Facebook.

More information on *EC Arts* can be found at www.ec-arts.com, and more information on the 48Sheet project can be found at www.48sheet.com

Whose Shoes? Exploring new perspectives on more citizen-centred social care

Gill Phillips, Nutshell Communications LTD

Whose Shoes? started as a board game, but is being developed as an electronic game. It is a tool for understanding the Personalisation agenda, whereby the individual has more choice and control regarding how his care needs are met. The Personalisation agenda has readjusted the balance of power from the professional to the individual. The agenda has challenged commissioning practices of commissioning large block contracts to enabling individuals to commission their own support.

Whose shoes? allows individuals to walk in the shoes of other individuals and professionals, enabling a greater understanding of differing perspectives and experience and enables stronger partnership working. The game is a different approach to learning. The *Whose Shoes?* Concept is moving on from the personalisation agenda and new content is being developed including mobility, dietary needs and community engagement. Different groups have been involved with the development of the content, another example of co-production.

Workshops sessions whereby the game has been used has included all partners, Local Authorities, NHS staff and service user led groups. Gill has found that mixed groups provide more interesting debate and conversation. It encourages networking, it has allowed people who would usually quite shy were able to share their views, can change individuals perceptions as it gives an insight into the roles of providers/commissioners, frontline staff, manager, users and carers. Symbolically the game enables individuals from different backgrounds to work together to build a path to personalisation.

You tube videos shown – *Whose Shoes?* workshop with [Force 4 Change](#)

More information on *Whose Shoes?* can be found at www.nutshellcomms.co.uk

Problem solving session – Sandwell Friends and Neighbours: how a problem solving approach can create a means of asset building and local investment.

Rosie Edwards, Sandwell MBC

Sandwell MBC is committed to providing a good service for its community, 'you said, we did' is its motto. Sandwell is embracing an assets based approach from a needs led approach – what can the individual do, what do people have to offer, what qualities, skills and knowledge can be shared? What things are working in the community, what resources are available, what can be built on, how can gaps in need be solved? Looking at skills, talents, buildings, money and motivation = 'Communities are wealthy'.

Rosie went to talk to organisations and individuals in the community, they discussed what needed to change, what was working well, that there were lots of positive networks that they felt the authority ignored and did not take any notice of. People felt a long distance away from Local Authority, they did not know who to contact if support was required. Local people know what is available in the community and how local people can be supported. The concept of running services locally became a requirement. Rosie had conversations regarding how things could be done differently especially in light of Personalisation. An assets map of one ward in Sandwell was completed by staff with community development backgrounds. They went to find out what people like to do in the community and what is difficult to do. Transport was a regular barrier. It highlighted a lot of informal care, neighbours who cook lunches on a Sunday, it showed an active community. Although it is the poorest ward in Sandwell, having high levels of child poverty and being culturally diverse, it proved rich in assets.

At conception, the Friends and Neighbours scheme had no clear plan, but it was developed by communication with community associations. The scheme is therefore a product of co-production. It is directly related to Personalisation – think personal, act local. A community development worker is working with residents to develop life plans, and looking at how needs can be met by a combination of commissioned and local resources. The life plans facilitate better range of support, better outcomes and cost less money. The savings go to Friends and Neighbours, acting as a support planning agency and then it is reinvested into the community for local asset building. The project has supported local individuals to consider and access employment in social care particularly roles as PA's. While there is national interest in the project and a plan to roll the project out later this year, there remains to be a level of anxiety about working so differently from traditional ways of working.

Video from the event

Here is a video that illustrates the work involved with the 48Sheet, Whose Shoes? and Friends and Neighbours – [Click here](#).

Thanks were given for all the speakers and to *EC Arts* for use of venue.

Any Other Business:

Feedback from the East Midlands Co-Production Network Meeting: 20-25 people attended the first meeting. Attendance was a 50/50 split with Local Authority staff and voluntary agencies. Meeting discussed people's understanding of co-production and what examples are happening in the region. Meeting highlighted a lot of activity. The group agreed that there was sufficient interest for another meeting. Frankie has been sent the minutes. Links to be forged between West and East Midlands networks.

Grapevine event on 12th May – [click here for more information](#).

The next meeting for the network will take place on the 28th of June at the Insight for Carers cafe, Pearson Street, Brierley Hill, DY5 3BL ([click here for further details](#))

For information on this forthcoming event and past events please [click here](#).