Cornish+Grey
Helping organisations
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Project Inspire Evaluation Report

For The ASDC

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Contents

Cornish and Grey is a social consultancy providing evaluation and impact strategy support to social purpose organisations. They work with funders, grant makers, capacity builders, umbrella organisations, charities and social enterprises to help develop simple and practical impact or measurement strategies so they can become more effective and ensure that limited funds are spent where they make the most difference. Find out more about our work at www.CornishandGrey.org

1. Project Inspire Evaluation Executive Summary

Programme evaluation - Cornish and Grey believe that Project inspire has met all of the success criteria outlined in the framework for the evaluation. We have been particularly impressed by the amount that each centre has managed to achieve within a short time frame. Importantly, there are indications that the funding will have a significant legacy within each centre, and that its impacts will be far reaching across all centres, beyond the immediate project team.

Process evaluation - The success of this programme has been aided by the ASDC process. All the centres indicate that they have been very satisfied with this process. Particularly appreciated were the masterclasses, the flexible approach to impact reporting, and the ongoing support provided by the ASDC. Those centres who had previously worked with the ASDC appreciated that the bid and reporting in this programme were less focused on the numbers achieved, and more on the softer outcomes and the legacy than in previous funding programmes. They felt that this was appropriate for this type of pilot funding. Centres suggested improvements to the process including extending the time frame of this programme, providing more opportunities to network and learn from other centres, and in the future providing more continuation funding as opposed to just innovation funding, this would allow them to consolidate the longer term legacy of previous innovation funding.

Highlights for us by centre in this evaluation include:

- **Dundee Science Centre** - the shift in how they communicate with community organisations: from a closed approach controlled by the centre - to an open approach where control is ceded to the community.

- **Glasgow Science Centre** - their understanding of the barriers to digital engagement in their community proven by their communications around this programme, which has increased the centre's value as a key Glasgow institution.

- **Kielder Observatory** - their new respect and understanding for the power of involving the community in participative, co-creation projects.

- **National Space Centre, Science Oxford and Winchester Science Centre** - have all built deep and sustainable relationships with new community organisations within a very short time, and in each case the new understanding of the needs of specific target groups has infiltrated across their whole centre.

- **Techniquest** - while Tik Tok did not work as an engagement tool for the very young programme audience, the videos have been hugely successful at increasing centre reach as a whole – there have been over 400,000 views at the time of this report – their use of Tik Tok will be a sustainable legacy for the funding.

- **We the Curious** – for us the most innovative use of the funding was the hiring of Digital Content Creators by WTC – these DCCs came from the target underserved community and is an example of truly participative working. The impacts have been wide ranging across the centre, from informing its digital engagement strategy, to revolutionising the way it recruits new staff.

In the centres' own words, the impact of the funding has….

Given them capacity to experiment:

"I am so grateful for this funding – it was big enough to allow me to shuffle the staff to gauge whether what we are doing digitally is relevant to these audiences – we know what we do face to face works but we had no idea if how we were working digitally was reaching the right people. This gave us the capacity to investigate the barriers – it is not as whizz bangy as some of the science centres who are doing things on Tic Tok and so on, but for us this was really important" Dundee Science Centre

Has had ramifications across the whole centre:

"It's been through our reporting channels, and up to our board right now….they thought it was a fantastic idea ….they're really pleased with it…..they're very excited about us building on it." Glasgow Science Centre

Stimulated new and fun engagement:

"The trackers were brilliant… they brought it all to life… the best example was the meteors and asteroids session…we put the trackers on at the beginning of the session but turned off the screen and recorded all of their movements…. we did a session called Dance by Chance - what does a meteor do? The children decided what movements they would make….how does an asteroid move…that was number 5 and so on, all of the numbers…then throw the dice and move that way. All the movements were collected and then showed on a film, showing them moving through an asteroid field… the chance movements, the chance collisions… this combined gamification, competition, dance, science and FUN!" National Space Centre

- This table summarises the impacts and learning by individual project aim.

PROJECT AIMS	OVERALL IMPACT	LEARNING
New and innovative digital ways to collaborate with underserved audiences	A face to face route was chosen by most centres - particularly for those who did not have existing relationships with their community partners – we believe this is appropriate as a wholly digital route would have excluded those very people who have digital access issues in the first place.	Non-digital methods are important to help explore barriers and work out how to ensure future digital processes are as accessible as possible for each specific underserved group.
New and innovative digital ways to extend and broaden engagement with underserved audiences	The majority of the centres made effective and appropriate use of digital tools to extend and broaden engagement thus ensuring that their co-creation process was as inclusive as possible.	Differences in digital expertise need to be taken account in future funding programmes – perhaps a funder plus model could be taken to ensure specific skill gaps are met
	Each centre has engaged with enough people from their targeted underserved groups to effect real and meaningful outputs and outcomes, and a long term legacy for the programme.	We believe that a focus on numbers should give way to a focus on the quality of the relationships, and the types of people reached in the engagement.
For science centres to understand the needs of the underserved audience	Each centre has provided evidence of how the programme has positively impacted on the understanding of the needs of their target group	There are indications that funding of cross-cutting initiatives like this one which focusses on reaching new underserved communities and building digital knowledge and skills – is likely to have a greater and longer lasting impact than funding which focusses on for example, a specific area of science.
	All the centres provided evidence to indicate that the participants in the co-creation activities felt welcomed, included and empowered.	This evaluation shows how it is possible to gather indicative evidence to support the assessment of impact without being prescriptive about the method used.
For science centres to co-create content with underserved audiences	All the centres have produced co-created digital content resulting from the programme – this varies from content which is explicitly aimed at encouraging specific groups to come to the	The more experienced centres have produced content that conveys this message in a more sophisticated, implicit way – ie, the content centres on the co-design elements and shows that they work ‘together with’

	centre eg. digital sensory maps, or content around a topic such as climate change that has be co-created with specific groups	community groups as opposed to 'for' community groups. As centres increase their experience of working with communities, this more nuanced content approach could be something they work towards – learning from the other centres about how to deliver this type of programme.
For science centres to create a digital engagement legacy	The digital legacy has been more widespread than the specific project team – in every case the centres say that the digital legacy will run across the whole centre.	This funding has had widespread and potentially long lasting legacy. The impacts are cross-cutting impacting on more than just a specific team/ subject area. This cascaded learning means that there is a multiplier effect – the total impact of the programme is greater than the specific elements covered by the funding.
For science centres to create a community relationship legacy	The relationship legacy of this programme is multiple and varied with many centres having more than one type of legacy.	Once again our evaluation shows that the impacts of this funding is greater than the initial project outcomes. This legacy for community relationships is likely to extend beyond the project team and be long-lived. This is another validation of this type of funding approach where the desired aims are flexible enough so that the funding can be used in the most appropriate way within each centre.

2. Background and objectives

The UK Association for Science and Discovery Centres (ASDC) commissioned Cornish and Grey to undertake an evaluation of the ASDC-led Project Inspire: Digital Innovation and Engagement programme. Project Inspire is a collaboration with the Inspiring Science Fund, a partnership between UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and Wellcome.

The aims of Project Inspire were as follows:

- To inspire and support UK Science Centres to develop new participatory and innovative digital ways to collaborate with under-served and under-represented communities and audiences.
- To explore and share digital methods that are most successful in growing and broadening audience engagement across under-represented communities. playing to the strengths of each Centre and those of their communities.
- To collaborate with, and understand the needs of, the groups the Centres chose to work with and to co-create content and ideas with their groups (including youth groups, adults, families, special interest groups or others, but not school groups).
- To create a legacy in the way Science Centres co-create and develop their digital engagement and nurture community relationships that will continue into the future.

Eight centres were funded by Project Inspire as follows:

- Dundee Science Centre
- Glasgow Science Centre
- Kielder Science Centre
- National Space Centre
- Science Oxford
- Techniquest
- We the Curious
- Winchester Science Centre

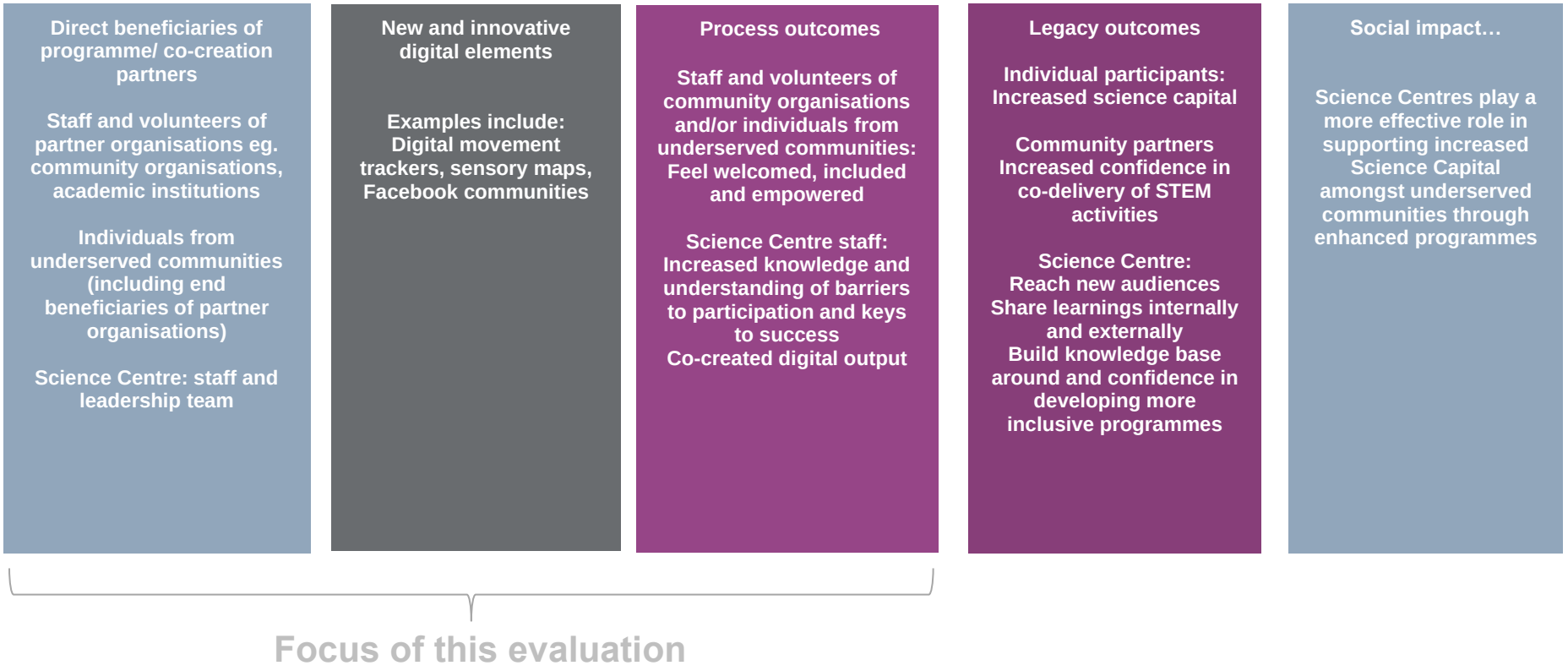
The funding was awarded in Spring 2021 and the funded programme that is the focus of this evaluation, took place March-August 2021.

3. Evaluation approach

3.1 Theory of change – outcomes chain

Cornish and Grey developed an outcomes chain to graphically summarise the nature of the activities and the hoped for outcomes. This outcomes chain was used as a live tool during the course of the project, informing the masterclass session with all the Science Centre grantees, topic guides for the in depth interviews, and has been further developed in the light of the qualitative research findings. The final version illustrated below shows the pathway through process and legacy outcomes to delivering impact. It also shows the focus of this evaluation – what was achieved during the funding period March-August 2021.

Project Inspire – outcomes chain



3.2 Evaluation framework

The next step was to create the evaluation questions, the answers to which would indicate the success of the programme. Each Science Centre project was very different in method, audience type and hoped for outcomes – we therefore, developed a simplified, high level evaluation framework based on the overall project aims and the theory of change to help assess the overall impact of the funding.

PROJECT AIMS	EVALUATION QUESTION	EVALUTION METRIC
New and innovative digital ways to collaborate with underserved audiences	What are the new and innovative digital ways resulting from the funding that allow the science centres to collaborate with underserved audiences?	All centres to provide evidence of digital ways used to help them collaborate.
New and innovative digital ways to extend and broaden engagement with underserved audiences	What are the new and innovative digital ways resulting from the funding that allow the science centres to extend and broaden engagement with underserved audiences?	All centres to provide evidence of digital ways used to help them extend and broaden engagement. Numbers of people participating in Science Centre activities from underserved communities against expectations in each bid.
For science centres to understand the needs of the underserved audience	How has the funding helped the science centres to understand the needs of the underserved audience?	All centres to provide evidence of how they better understand the needs of the underserved audience. All centres to provide evidence of meeting hoped for outcomes – including whether participants felt welcomed, included and empowered across all centres.
For science centres to co-create content with underserved audiences	How has the funding helped the science centres to co-create content - with underserved audiences	All centres to provide evidence of co-created content
For science centres to create a digital engagement legacy	How has the funding created a potential digital engagement legacy for the science centres?	All centres to provide evidence of potential digital engagement legacy
For science centres to create a community relationship legacy	How has the funding created a potential community relationship legacy for the science centres?	All centres to provide evidence of potential community relationship legacy

3.3 Methodology

Analysis of individual Science Centre reports

Each of the Science Centres funded by Project Inspire provided a report detailing the process, outputs, outcomes and legacy of the funding on their programmes. These reports were assessed by Cornish and Grey against each of the evaluation metrics to show the overall impact of the funding.

In depth interview with Science Centre grantees

In-depth Zoom interviews were held with each of the Science Centre participants between the 7th and 20th of September 2021.

Informed by the draft outcomes chain, the interviews explored the difference that the Project Inspire funding made to each organisation in terms of opening up relationships with organisations working with underserved communities, digital innovation, and the legacy of the funding on the staff and systems within each centre.

4 Evaluation findings

4.1 Evidence of digital ways to help collaboration

Only two out of the eight centres ran a wholly digital collaboration process – these were both larger centres. Their digital processes were entirely different – We the Curious hired three Digital Content Creators (DCCs) who came from the communities that they wanted to engage with. These DCCs used their social media skills and networks to reach out and engage people from the communities they wanted to engage. The co-creation events run by the DCCs were a mix of face to face and digital.

The Glasgow Science Centre explored the best way to engage people from underserved communities by reaching out to leaders from organisations they already had relationships with – in this way they identified the potential barriers to digital engagement and were able to ensure that their co-creation events were as accessible to as wide a group as possible.

Three of the science centres conducted their co-creation events face to face – but included digital elements to their process:

- Dundee explored digital barriers with new community partners and made laptops available during visits to the centre to ensure as many people as possible could access the digital elements.

- The National Space Centre used digital devices to track the dance movements of the SEND children taking part in their 6 week after school club programme – these devices supported the dance activities as a method of embedding the learning in the programme.

- Kielder effectively outsourced the engagement process to a third party – Sunderland Culture who used an artist to liaise with academics and run face to face events with children from underserved communities. The co-creation process involved digital elements to help explain the complex science around astronomy and telescopes.

The remaining centres did not use digital methods in their co-creation programmes. Science Oxford and Winchester Science Centre were exploring the best ways to engage specific groups digitally – D/deaf children and their families in the case of Winchester, and visually impaired children and children on the autism spectrum in the case of Science Oxford. Both these science centres felt that they needed to build

trust with these groups face to face in order to explore the barriers to digital engagement.

For the same reasons, Techniquest used face to face engagement methods to build trust with community groups in areas of deprivation that they had no previous relationship with. Techniquest trialled the use of Tik Tok as a method to keep up interest and engagement between face to face sessions with primary age children. They found that this was not a viable engagement tool for this age group – but the videos did engage a considerably wider audience and will be kept on as an engagement tool in the future.

Overall impact – for many of the centres involved in this trial, the first step was to explore the barriers to digital engagement – as a result their co-creation work centred on exploring this issue and developing new digital tools to support digital engagement in the future. Given this aim, we feel that the face to face route chosen by most centres was appropriate – particularly for those who did not have existing relationships with their community partners – as a wholly digital route would have excluded those very people who have digital access issues in the first place.
This nuance should be considered when assessing the success of this aim – we feel overall that appropriate digital innovation has been taken to enhance understanding of and collaboration with underserved communities.

Learning – Appropriate routes to assess digital barriers should be considered in the formulation of future programme aims – ie, digital methods are not necessarily the best way of increasing digital engagement and collaboration in the long term. Non-digital methods are important in the first place to help explore barriers and work out how to ensure future digital processes are as accessible as possible for each specific underserved group.

4.2 Evidence of digital ways to extend & broaden engagement

Most of the centres used some digital elements to engage their audience for their co-creation work. Methods included use of social media such as Twitter and Instagram which were used in the call out for potential participants, and more traditional digital tools such as Facebook accounts, email and websites. Those centres who had to build new relationships with community organisations from scratch for this programme, also used Google searches to find appropriate organisations in their catchment. One centre, Kielder, outsourced the engagement process to a trusted third party in an area of deprivation.

Overall impact – there was a considerable degree of variation in terms of the digital methods used by centres to enhance engagement with participants. Some centres relied on communication staff within their centre with the expertise to run digital engagement processes. We the Curious recognised their lack of digital engagement skills and so hired Digital Content Creators who used their own social media skills to run the digital engagement process from their communities. Smaller centres typically have fewer digital skills within their staff, and some had lost those skills as a result of furloughing/ redundancies made during the pandemic, and so were not able to draw on expert support for this work. Given these limitations we believe that the majority of the centres made effective and appropriate use of digital tools to extend and broaden engagement to ensure their co-creation process was as inclusive as possible.

Learning - this difference in digital expertise needs to be taken account in future funding programmes – perhaps a funder plus model could be taken to provide additional be-spoke support for individual centres in terms of digital skills or those centres with the expertise in house could be funded to support the smaller centres with no/little digital skills.

4.3 Numbers participating against expectations in bids

Each of the participating centres gave estimates of the numbers of people from underserved communities that they would engage with during the co-creation stages of their funded programme. Only We the Curious, the National Space Centre and Science Oxford managed to meet this estimate – in fact they all surpassed it (Science Oxford engaged with 45 visually impaired children or children on the autism spectrum vs 25-35 in their bid, the National Space Centre engaged with 67+ children vs 20-30 in their bid, and We the Curious engaged with 87 young people from under-served communities vs 33 in their bid). The reasons given for the shortfall by the other centres included underestimating the amount of time needed, and the level of difficulty of fostering new relationships with community organisations; not having capacity to run the sessions with larger groups of people – this was exacerbated by centres only opening up during the summer after the funded programme had started; take up being lower than expected because of competing events/ offers during the summer; and Covid still being a barrier for some potential participants who were reticent to join face to face events.

Despite not meeting these initial estimates of people who would take part in the co-creation stage of the funded work – in each case the Science Centres were successful in engaging with enough members of new underserved audiences for

meaningful work and learning to take place, and overall, the centres ran participative events with over 400 people vs 600 in the bids.

The community organisation partners came from a wide range of different groups – in each case the science centre has built up knowledge and experience of working with a new group and has learnt lessons for the future in terms of how to further engage each of these audiences using digital tools both to encourage new groups to come to the science centre and to engage more with the centre and science.

Groups engaged include:

- **Dundee Science Centre**– 53 people from three local charities including Homestart (services for new parents with multifaceted issues), The Hope Group (services for refugees) and The Enterprise Centre (services to increase employability and social inclusion) – 100 in bid
- **Glasgow Science Centre** – 43 people from the Glasgow Disability Alliance (charity run for and by disabled people in Greater Glasgow), Gilded Lily (Govan based charity supporting women 'of the world' overcome barriers), Govan Community Project (supports local communities and asylum seeker and refugees across Glasgow) – 70 in bid
- **National Space Centre** – 5 children on the autism spectrum for the full 6 week engagement – plus 32 children in shorter engagement and 30 families to an open day in the centre – 20-30 in bid
- **Kielder Observatory** – 64 participants in total from area of deprivation in Sunderland – none had previous experience of Kielder – 100 in bid
- **Science Oxford** – 45 children from target groups - 14 children on autism spectrum and 31 children with visual impairments – 25-35 in bid
- **Techniquest** – 97 children from community organisations in areas of deprivation near Cardiff including Rhondda Cynon Taf, Caerphilly and Grangetown (Cardiff). Partners included: new collaborators - Caerphilly County Borough Council 'Family Unit' - Rhymney, The Fern Partnership - Ferndale; Little Lounge – Cilfynydd, and previous collaborators Grange Pavilion, Grangetown. Of these 97 - 45 children attended a day at Techniquest – 129 in bid
- **We the Curious** - 87 children and young people attended the co-creation sessions from underrepresented communities – 33 in bid
- **Winchester Science Centre -** 13 participants from the D/deaf community including 5 D/deaf children and their families plus a BSL expert interpreter and the leader of the local community organisation Chloe and Sophie's Special Ears Fund (CSSEF)

Overall Impact – while the numbers engaged were lower than predicted by each of the centres, each centre has engaged with a meaningful number of people from their

targeted underserved groups. In each case this has led to real and meaningful outputs and outcomes and a long term legacy for the programme.

Learning – it takes time to build relationships, and time was in short supply in this relatively quick turnaround project. Despite this, every centre managed to run an effective co-creation programme with enough participants from their specific underserved target group to make a real difference in terms of learnings, immediate outputs and legacy. We believe that a focus on numbers should give way to a focus on the quality of the relationships, and the types of people reached in the engagement.

4.4 Evidence of understanding needs of underserved audience

All the centres have provided evidence of how the programme has increased their understanding of the needs of their key target underserviced audience. Despite the wide range of audiences, this increase in understanding can be categorised into the following three types:

- **Increase in understanding of how to engage better with these audiences digitally** – either remotely or to increase engagement and learning within the centre
  "We know how to remove the digital boundaries. We know some of the barriers are. And so, we're looking at taking it to the next step and bringing in other organisations "

- **Increase in understanding of the benefits of a participatory/ co-creation approach with this audience**
  "It's all about us accepting that we need to be more open and transparent [and relinquish some control] …. it's all about trust"

- **Increase in understanding about the specific needs of a particular target group** – from children on the autism spectrum, to the D/deaf community, to refugees and long term job seekers – this programme has supported learning within the staff teams at each centre
  "The main learning we will take away from this is the flexible approach to SEND provision. "
  "There is improved disability awareness, we have incorporated a sensory design focus into family activities as part of both our Saturday Clubs for young people and Family Open Days. "

"It has impacted on how deal with neurodiversity as a staff team – both internally and externally"

Overall Impact – Each centre has provided evidence of how the programme has positively impacted on the understanding of the needs of their target group – both digital needs and specific needs relating to each target group. Each centre says that this learning is not limited to the target group, but wide ranging within the centre and will have a legacy on future ways of working across multiple areas.

Learning – despite each centre working with specific target groups, the impact of the programme has been widespread across each centre – it appears that the funding has had a multiplier effect where the total impacts are greater than the initial programme impacts. It indicates that funding cross-cutting initiatives like this one which focusses on reaching new underserved communities and building digital knowledge and skills – is likely to have a greater and longer lasting impact than funding which focusses on for example, a specific area of science.

4.5 Evidence of meeting hoped for outcomes

Centres were asked to provide evidence that the participants in the co-creation activities felt welcomed, included and empowered. Given the wide range of participants from very young children to adults, we advised centres that we were happy for this evidence to be collected in a way that was suitable for each audience and we were also happy to see proxies for the outcome measures.

Evidence included:

- **Dundee Science Centre** – 100% of the partner group members asked if their feelings towards Dundee Science Centre and Science have become more positive over the course of project, said yes.
- **Glasgow Science Centre** - Almost all the delegates felt very confident or confident and safe to take part in discussions at the events and 74% said the events had been very relevant to their interests and everyday lives.
- **National Space Centre** - 92% of children from the spectrum event would recommend this activity to their friends and 100% of the after school club participants would like to be involved again.
- **Kielder Centre** - 76% of participants said they felt they could be like themselves, 88% felt more confident about doing new things, and 80% said the people in the workshop made them feel part of the team.

- **Science Oxford** – feedback collected from the visually impaired participants was very positive – they felt supported by staff. Over half of the children on the autism spectrum felt calm and/ or happy during the morning of their visit.
- **Techniquest** - 82% of the very young children who participated said “science is for me!” (the remaining 18% reported “meh, it’s okay”, with nobody reporting “it’s not for me”- 82% said they felt “right at home”, and the same 18% reporting they felt “sort of at home”. Nobody reported feeling they “didn’t fit in here”.
- **We the Curious** - 100% of Digital Content Creators and staff involved in the project said that they have learned new skills. Participants in the events gave positive feedback and the community organisation leader at The Listening Partnership said “The workshop went very well. Lots of very positive feedback.”
- **Winchester Science Centre** – 75% of D/deaf participants said they “feel welcome attending visitor attractions such as science centres, museums and zoos” and 100% said they “feel confident attending visitor attractions such as science centres, museums and zoos”.

Overall impact – all the centres provided evidence to indicate that the participants in the co-creation activities felt welcomed, included and empowered. The evidence reported here is supported by comments from each of the community partners which in every case was positive about this engagement and the possibility of future work with science centres.

Learning – this evaluation shows how it is possible to gather indicative evidence to support the assessment of impact without being prescriptive about the method used. This is important in instances like this where the audiences and projects are very different and so a prescriptive ‘one-size-suits all’ method of assessment is not appropriate or even possible.

4.6 Evidence of co-created content

Again, each of the centres provided evidence of the co-created content resulting from their work. These include:

- **Dundee Science Centre** - The Dundee Science Centre Community Hub – a closed/private community hub on Facebook as a meeting point for groups and individuals all over the city. They can bring their questions, queries or comments to the Hub, and be confident that they will be met with support and advice from other informed local community advocates. It also allows Dundee Science Centre a platform to engage directly with their community. This hub is different to expected – initially the centre had thought they would run a

website which would give them more control – the consultation indicated that a Facebook group would be more appropriate – the centre had to change its mindset about control.

- **Glasgow Science Centre –** there were multiple digital outputs resulting from the Climate Café events including a short podcast episode for use by the community partners as well as by the centre via YouTube; a social media campaign highlighting the discussions during COP26; a digital dashboard on climate change and an editable equality and diversity monitoring form. In the physical world, an unintended output included content by participants for the Community Tower Exhibition. There is also media content and blog posts based on the programme.
- **National Space Centre** – resources have been con-created in the programme that the team will be able to use in varying situations with face to face participants in the future. Also, videos were co-created with the participants which will be placed on the centre website.
- **Kielder Observatory** – a new digital curriculum/lesson plan directly resulting from the work conducted in this programme will be ready in October 2021.
- **Science Oxford** - the project has resulted in new co-created virtual tours, audio guides and QR-code trails for the centre.
- **Techniquest** – content resulting from the project includes the start of a library of video role models and the creation of a new Tik Tok account that has provided a valuable additional strand of digital engagement and opportunity to reach new audiences of children and young adults.
- **We the Curious** – Co-created content from the events includes multiple digital images for use on WTC social media platforms, on the content hub and on the Big Screen in Millennium Square, and four short videos were produced to be used on social media: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and if possible Tik Tok, as well as on the WTC content hub and on the Big Screen.
- **Winchester Science Centre** – co-created digital content resulting from the programme includes a social story video, a digital sensory map and exhibit videos for use on the centre website and in social media campaigns.

Overall impact – all the centres have produced co-created digital content resulting from the programme. For four of the centres – Dundee, National Space Centre, Science Oxford and Winchester – this content is being used to support building better relationships with their community and to encourage specific groups to come into their centre – ie, to meet an explicit diversity and inclusion aim. For the other four centres the digital output is centred on a specific issue eg. climate change, digital telescope and so on. In these cases, the diversity and inclusion aim is implicit – as the work signifies that the centre has worked together with specific communities to co-create the content.

Learning – the centres who have less experience of working with their communities have tended to produce content that explicitly makes clear that their centre is inclusive/ accessible to groups. The more experienced centres have produced content that conveys this message in a more sophisticated, implicit way – ie, the content centres on the co-design elements and shows that they work 'together with' community groups as opposed to 'for' community groups. As centres increase their experience of working with communities, this more nuanced content approach could be something they work towards – learning from the other centres about how to deliver this type of programme.

4.7 Evidence of potential digital engagement legacy

For all the centres, a key legacy is the increase in their knowledge and understanding of how best to use digital tools to enhance their engagement with communities. Once again this varies by centre:

- **Building digital skills** - For some centres it was about building basic (and advanced) digital skills such as how to make a video, run an online workshop, running co-creation sessions online, or how to build a digital sensory map and use the SGNLY app.
- **Understanding digital barriers** - For some centres it was about building an understanding of the barriers to using digital tools in specific communities.
- **Blending physical and digital** - In some centres it was about how to blend face to face with digital to enhance engagement with specific groups.

Overall impact – the digital legacy of the programme is varied. The types of legacy listed above are not mutually exclusive - for many centres, all three types of legacy have resulted from the funding. Critically, the learning has been more widespread than the specific project team – in every case the centres say that the digital legacy will run across the whole centre.

Learning – this funding has had widespread and potentially long lasting legacy. The impacts are cross-cutting influencing more than just a specific team/ subject area. This cascaded learning means that there is a multiplier effect – the total impact of the programme is greater than the specific elements covered by the funding.

4.8 Evidence of potential community relationship legacy

As with the digital legacy, there is evidence from each of the centres that the funding will have a legacy for their community relationships. Again, this varies by centre:

- **Better relationships with community partners** - For some centres the legacy is a better relationship with their community partners eg. National Space Centre, Techniquest, Winchester and Science Oxford – this is demonstrated in a variety of ways, from community organisations committing to long term initiatives such as a steering group about digital engagement, to already planning future programmes such as BSL interpreter days
- **More open style of working** - For some centres the legacy is about working in a more transparent and open way with community partners eg. Dundee – working 'together with' as opposed to 'for' partners – building true partnerships that are mutually beneficial
- **Co-creation learnings** - For some centres it has been about learning how to conduct co-creation/ co-design programmes eg. Kielder Observatory, or running them online eg. Glasgow – this will have impacts across their whole centre
- **Ceding control** - For some it is about ceding control to members of the community eg. We the Curious with their Digital Content Creators – which has long term implications for how they conduct recruitment across the organisation
- **Better understanding of needs of specific groups** - a better understanding of the needs of specific groups is cited as a legacy for all centres – and it is thought that this will have long term implications in some cases for internal HR as well as external groups.

Overall impact - as with the digital legacy, the legacy of this programme is multiple and varied with many centres having more than one type of legacy.

Learning – once again our evaluation shows that the impact of this funding is greater than the initial project outcomes. This legacy for community relationships is likely to extend beyond the project team and be long-lived. This is another validation of this type of funding approach where the desired aims are flexible enough so that the funding can be used in the most appropriate way within each centre. Again, the less experienced centres will benefit from seeing the outcomes and legacy achieved in the more experienced centres. Beyond sharing of results, less experienced centres say they would like a closer relationship eg. mentoring or buddying to enable better skill transfer.

5 The ASDC process

5.1 What went well?

Respondents from each centre were asked what feedback they would give to the ASDC for future funding programmes. Overall, all the centres were happy with the ASDC process for Project Inspire and would apply for future funding from the ASDC. In detail:

- **Overall -** those centres who had previously worked with the ASDC appreciated that the bid and reporting in this programme were less focused on the numbers achieved, and more on the softer outcomes and the legacy than in previous funding programmes. They felt that this was appropriate for this type of pilot funding.
- **Application process** – all centres felt that the application process was simpler than for previous funding bids – one centre felt that the application was a bit repetitive.
- **Masterclasses** – while some centres had found the masterclasses onerous at the time, on reflection all the centres said that they felt they were relevant and a worthwhile part of the programme. All centres said they came away with concrete learning from each of the masterclasses. Most centres would appreciate more flexibility around choosing which masterclasses they attended and the demand that 2 people attend all masterclasses was difficult for some centres, particularly smaller centres, as they coincided with the centres opening up again after lock down and staff returning from furlough and so it was difficult to free up staff time to attend. One centre said that they liked the mandatory nature of the masterclasses as it meant that they could insist on colleagues attending.
- **Ongoing support by the ASDC during the programme** – all centres found the support helpful and pitched at the right level – all felt that there was a member of the team available if help was needed. The drop in sessions were not attended by all, but respondents said it was useful to know they were there if needed.
- **Reporting** – all centres appreciated the more flexible, less prescriptive style of reporting with headings in a Word document as opposed to reporting in a table. Some would have liked suggested word counts to give a guideline on the detail required. Some centres would have preferred not to have the interim report and would have preferred a one-to-one catch up with a member of the ASDC team instead. But others found the interim report useful as it showed they were on track. Only one centre felt that the reporting task was not in proportion to the size of the funding ie, it was too onerous.

5.2 What needs to change?

Several suggestions for improvements were made by the centres:

- **Timing -** The key negative comment from centres was around the timing of the programme. All centres felt that the timing was too short to deliver all the elements of the programme and that this was exacerbated by delays in issuing the contract at the beginning of the programme. All centres were having to cope with opening up after lock down, staff returning after many months of furlough, and working in new team structures as a result of redundancies. There was a widespread perception that this should all have been considered and that the programme reporting deadlines could have been relaxed to give centres more time.
- **More opportunities to network and learn from other centres –** all the centres said that they would like more opportunities to learn from each other– they would have appreciated more breakout sessions during the masterclasses. And while the Slack channel and the drop-in sessions were useful, all said they would benefit from a more structured networking approach – for example, some centres suggesting matching up centres who are working on similar projects so they could work through issues and learn from each other. Other centres suggested having specific online networking sessions for specific skill sets – for example, a separate session for community partnership staff, or one for digital staff. A further idea suggested was matching up experienced and less experienced staff from different centres, as mentors/ buddies.
- **Funding continuing work –** there was some frustration around funders always wanting to fund new, innovative pilots and not continuing work. While all centres feel that there will be a legacy of this funding, they would also benefit from further funding to progress this participative work to the next level – some centres have already managed to access further funding to do this. There is a widespread perception that participative work of this kind is very time consuming to do properly and funders generally do not understand this and so the centres have to commit additional funds to make a project of this kind work.