



Annual conference: what's next for arts in criminal justice?
4 December 2017

Notes from breakout 1

Arts in criminal justice: building the creative economy

Sally Taylor (chair) is the chief executive of the Koestler Trust. She introduces the session which focuses on talking about; a creative economy, normalising arts in criminal justice system (CJS), opportunities to improve pathways for reoffending and pathways for CJS / voluntary sector organisations and national arts organisations. Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sports statistics from 2012 showed the creative industries contribute £91.8 billion per year. There are circa 2 million people employed in creative industries, and the growth is not just in London.

The question is how can we give more chances to people leaving prison to the get involved in the creative economy?

Simon Marshall works at the Ministry of Justice and is a supporter of arts in CJS. He asks how we can normalise, increase participation and increase access to arts in justice settings. The impact of arts in these sessions is unquestionable and the evidence base is growing. So why does it still feel like a challenge? It is clearly about perception – arts are often seen as treat. Part of perception is that this is also an area that is hard to engage, and the pressure on the sector, and to get funding, is huge. However some of the arts interventions seen have been really challenging for offenders – and more effective than costly Offender Behaviour Programmes.

We can use 'nudge theory' – from behavioural science – to change perception in subtle ways, and change normal behaviour. It is about compliance being achieved through positive reinforcement, and gentle nudges, limiting choices and creating defaults. We can apply nudge theory by making it **Easy Attractive Social Timely**. A good example is the simple 2016 commissioning guide from the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance. It states how arts addressed health, education issues and is full of practical examples and evidence based. It was timely as it came when governments were becoming more empowered regarding spending.

We often hear about the impacts arts make in changing individual's life but we are not talking about the creative industry job opportunities and need to change that. An example of how this can be done is through "Code 4000" and need to build an evidence base around this. The Justice Lab is very useful but the problem is the scale of individual initiatives are often too small to use, and we are working on addressing this.

Finally, we need to get better at promoting current success stories from arts organisations in the CJS.

Lorraine Gamman heads up the Design against Crime Research Centre and has also worked closely with nudge theory. For example on bike stands designed to make prevent bikes being stolen. Most people in prison are incredibly creative. Repeat offenders are part of CJS in big way, so I asked them to design against crime with me, and now at HMP Thameside there are an array of artists and designers we take into prison. Really moved by the presentation downstairs – restorative justice is important.

Makeright is a not for profit programme that uses education techniques using participatory arts and theatre technique. It was made easy and fun; I did pub quiz on what gets lost and stolen and asked participants to come up with personas and journey maps, and that's where empathy comes. Participants would disclose a lot. Lots of guys think sewing is women's work, but that changed on the 8 week project. We came up with range of bags with 50 volunteers support. Took project to India and it worked there too.

I teach design. There is an appetite for social design. I would die for 'arts for arts sake'. But also important to teach people to improve their experience of education. Lots of people want to be self-employed as they know they will be stigmatised so I taught them self-employment skills. The project taught them to deal with criticism through an iterative processes.

Working only in prisons will never solve the problem. We need to do something else. I would like to set up a FabLab (or a "working men shed") – a working exchange in the community for ex-offenders and designers.

Esther Baker and Lisa Stirling (Synergy Theatre and Theatre 503). Synergy do lots of work in prison but normalisation with cultural organisation about arts and CJS benefits is really important too. Synergy put on plays written by prisoners / professionals and try and create employment on these shows. They co-produce with theatres – Unicorn, Soho, Theatre 503 – and do acting, playwriting courses at Young Vic, Royal Opera House, V&A etc. Long term relationships are very important so you can sort what goes wrong. There should be a push in to more mainstream buildings. It's very important to encourage access into these venues, and to validate their voices, but mutually beneficial too as they are crying out for BAME,

working-class audiences, which this work supports. There is a push for more legacy now; free tickets for beneficiaries, paid placements for beneficiaries and more ex-offender staff members too.

Theatre 503 is a new writers / writing theatre. They have a relationship with Synergy because of their entrepreneurial 'making it happen' values. But theatre can be scary, unpaid, threatening etc. Theatres are missing a trick not to develop relationships with organisations such as Synergy as there is expertise and a set of relationships there. The synergy national playwriting competition in prison led to the plays we put on. Work is always professional, at no point were these ex-offenders pandered for. They had to experience the realities of "theatre". Theatre 503 is about stories we don't yet hear on our stages, or told in a way we have heard it before.

The V&A project ran with their exhibition about Black Britain in 1950s – 1990s. Our writers wrote pieces in response to photos displayed and as our participants were predominately black, it brought on an authentic voice the V&A were missing. [Performance of "Let's Dance" by Adrian Sinclair-Boules, from Synergy actors Danielle Vitalis and Jaso Barnett.]

Questions from the floor

Sally Taylor introduces **Sir Peter Bazalgette**. Peter used to be Chair of ACE but now involved in ITV and has written "The Empathy Instinct". She asked, given his experience, *how we can move talent of people in CJS on into creative industry sector. How can we broker that relationship?*

PB – Beautifully written and performed. Thank you. You're jumping ahead – this is what I'll talk about in next session. Until we take rehabilitation seriously in UK we can't take it forward. Until people don't think in the mindset that prison is solely for retribution. "Empathy Instinct" is about how arts get you to put yourself in to other people's shoes.

ST – *Simon would you like to respond?*

SM – Fair challenge. You can only do so much, you have to make societal changes around forgiveness, what justice is about.

ST – We've talked about nudge theory, jobs, impact of evidence base, impact of artists moving into prisons and relationship between mainstream cultural and creative organisations.

Sandra Barefoot, project manager for forgiveness project – I'm an artist and run restorative project in prison. 'Normalising' and 'humanising' – my question is how we do this to bridge understanding. Want to put these two words together. I set up an immersive installation in

OXO Tower to normalise and humanise one another – public and offenders – and the public responded to the human experience.

LG – missing a trick. A political issue. Need to bring army of students into prison – need to figure out how to overcome security issues. Massive potential for forgiveness.

SM – How many of your students have CJ experience?

LG – Have two ex-offender PHD students. Two-thirds of students are upper middle class. 18 of our students set up businesses. Want to see more political engagement.

Audience – I’m an actress but do facilitation in prisons / YOIs. You don’t need a criminal background to do that. Just about going there and being you and me.

Audience – Idea of desistance for current prisoners and at risk is sometimes overlooked.

Audience – Needs to be something in industry as a general rule – about accepting offenders in to their working environment. And about giving ex-offenders a clear pathway into these opportunities.

LG – It’s about people meeting each other and trusting each other – normalising general public and offenders being with each other / knowing each other.

ST – Thanked everyone.

