

# AHRC Creative Communities

## Toolkit Module 3: Best Practice in Sustaining Cross-Sector Collaborations

This Creative Communities toolkit module aims to help you build cross-sector collaborations, develop partnerships and enhance your capacity to engage in R&D.

Module 3 builds on the learnings from:

**Module 1:** Community R&D: How to take part in cultural research and development as a creative community

**Module 2:** Communicating Innovation: How to share and profile your research as a creative community



Arts and  
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## What is a Cross-Sector Collaboration?

- Diverse actors from community, government, education, arms length, third and private sector working together in place-based initiative
- Delivers new culture and creates added value
- Generates economic, social and cultural spill overs for wider society
- Brings new skills, experience, knowledge and networks to R&D
- Maximises resource through working more closely together around shared challenges

## What is the Value of Cross-Sector Collaborations?

- ✓ Offer social, economic and cultural value for partners and place
  - ✓ Share information and give communities a voice on local decision making
  - ✓ Attract partners to tackle shared challenges, making research something done by anyone, happening everywhere
  - ✓ Co-create and cross-fertilise innovation through cross-sector engagement
  - ✓ Offer effective models for networking, knowledge development and investment
  - ✓ Build relationships to pool resources and networks
  - ✓ Link leaders by sparking unexpected networks and connections that create value
  - ✓ Focus on process as much as product
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- ✓ Create sustainable solutions by opening up R&D and communities to opportunities and knowledge in new sectors
  - ✓ Engage diverse partners and harness local cultures, raising policy awareness at regional level and contributing to national policymaking
  - ✓ Produce open access resources that create change beyond the lifecycle of funded research
  - ✓ Accelerate impact building on existing knowledge to extend engagement, add value and develop opportunities

# Building Co-Creation Capacity

Once you have secured your creative community partners and identified co-creation goals, consider how to build co-creation capacity:

- Use creative methodologies to unlock cross-sector skills and share diverse experiences
- Amplify community knowledge and lived experience of collaboration
- Mobilise a 'roots not parachutes' approach to ensure those familiar with the area of interest are at the heart of the planning
- Ensure equitable partnerships, where all expertise and knowledge is treated equally
- Review existing research so that your creative community has a strong foundation and evidence base
- Consult with your creative community to understand preferred methods of engagement: design approaches accordingly to develop best practice
- Ensure participants are informed, aware of their role and feel their contributions are valued
- Be realistic in setting goals and what you can achieve: do not underestimate the amount of work or overestimate the contribution partners can make
- Monitor budgets to prevent overruns; establish cost guidelines and benchmarks for activities to ensure effective management of financial resources
- Horizon-scan for funding opportunities for creative community cross-sector collaboration to ensure future sustainability

## AHRC Creative Communities Example:

**Community Innovation Practitioner Áine Brady** used innovative creative methods in her work with a community centre in Northern Ireland, partnering with artist practitioners who used arts-based methods including drama, poetry, creative writing and photography.

This enabled participants to translate emotions, thoughts and feelings – such as anxiety, trauma and shame – into verbal and non-verbal media to give voice to and share lived experience.



## Partnership Development

Partnerships can be integral in creating capacity, growing skills and raising the profile of your creative community R&D:



- Engage partners early in the collaborative process – this encourages adoption and implementation of research findings or products when community members have helped shape them
- Audit everything your partners offer in terms of resources, knowledge and skills, to gain greater insights and identify ways to enhance capacity
- Build resources through pooling knowledge and crowd-sourcing solutions
- Provide training or signposting to resources for your partners and community members to build capacity and skills
- Ensure clear communication to manage expectations and prevent disappointment or misunderstandings
- Implement strategies to grow partners and nurture networks so everyone benefits

### AHRC Creative Communities:

Through Community Innovation Practitioner Alexander Langlands' research, a community of heritage practice emerged with public, private and third-sector partners, and a cohort of FE college students.

This motivated the process of stabilising a historic ruin as part of the community's place-making ambitions for Craig Gwladus Country Park in Wales.



### Ready to learn more?

**Module 4** focuses on Co-Creating Culture Policy:

- How to use co-design in policy making
- How to turn your R&D into an evidence base
- How to make recommendations to policy makers