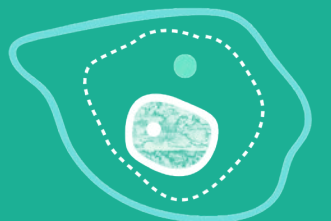# THE VALUE OF CREATIVE GROWTH
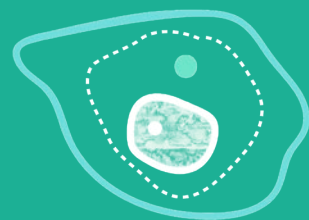
VoCG

Microcluster Networks in Argyll & Isles

INNOVATION SCHOOL
THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

CHARTS.
ARGYLL & ISLES

CHARTS.
ARGYLL & ISLES

INNOVATION SCHOOL
THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

CREATIVE SCOT LAND
ALBA CHRUTHACHAIL

Argyll & Bute COUNCIL

Lead Author and Researcher:

Dr Michael Pierre Johnson
The Innovation School,
The Glasgow School of Art

Foreword

The Culture, Heritage and Arts Assembly, Argyll and Isles (CHARTS), is a membership guided network founded in 2019, to support and promote the cultural sector across Argyll and Bute. This role includes to broker partnerships, facilitate collaborative projects, business and learning opportunities, and raise place-profile across Argyll's mainland and twenty-three resident islands. Membership of circa 500 people, at the time of writing, includes individual practitioners and organisations working in the creative and heritage industries, as well as others nationally who have an invested interest in the area.

The ethos of CHARTS is to develop a culture of cooperation and to meet its goals the organisational infrastructure relies on a dedicated Board, small staff team and a steering group made up of regional member representation and key sector stakeholders. Including representatives situated within the Argyll and Bute Council Community Areas of Bute and Dunoon, Oban, Lorne and the Isles and Mid-Argyll, Kintyre and the Isles, this ensures linkage at local area level and helps maintain overview for regional network support.

In 2020, Dr Michael Pierre Johnson from the Innovation School at The Glasgow School of Art approached CHARTS with the view to establish a research partnership based around the potential impacts of microcluster networks. This proposal was firstly considered by the steering group, leading to the exploration of their own role and the overall value and needs of the Argyll and Bute network from their unique stakeholder perspective. Thereafter, the steering group's ambitions for in-depth regional research grew to inform the basis of a successful partnership funding bid to the Creative Scotland CREATE: Networks fund (2020), authored by CHARTS towards joint working with Michael. This was further complemented by the support of Argyll and Bute Council.

What do we mean by 'microcluster'?

A cluster is a term that has gained increased usage in relation to regional development. Regional clusters refer to groupings of businesses or organisations that not only share a geographic location, but share interests socially, culturally and economically and will often organise to collaborate around those interests. For example, a whisky trail of distilleries may share the same water source, but also organise as a shared tourism experience or support training and local employment. This project recognises that some aspects of the creative and cultural sector naturally form such clusters at the sole trader and microenterprise scale (e.g. craft trails or open studios) and seek to expand and build on such models.

How are we defining 'placemaking'?

In the broadest terms, when creative or cultural work contributes to a sense of place and identity for people. However, this partnership explores how CHARTS members define or propose placemaking to be, as we feel this is highly subjective depending on the context, and this work aims to frame this with a clearer sense of impact for a local context.

Jo McLean, Chair of the CHARTS Board:

'From conception to completion the project exceeded all expectations and, situated unexpectedly against the backcloth of pandemic, included mostly work to be undertaken during national lockdown. Digital programming co-designed with the steering group, forged the most extensive cross-regional dialogue known across the membership around pivotal themes and throughout the project the development outcomes grew to broker new relationships regionally, nationally and internationally. Critically, members mapping of cultural ambition, assets, and cluster needs undertaken at the outset of the project, helped underline the need for programme topics and feedback about mapping sessions indicated accelerated confidence and professional growth for participants. As an organisation, CHARTS looks forward to growing strands of networking success based on the excellence and evidence demonstrated by this work.'

Contents

Introduction

Creative practitioners, microenterprises, venues and cultural organisations across Argyll and Bute have been engaged in bespoke development support through an innovative initiative from CHARTS in partnership with Dr Michael Pierre Johnson from the Innovation School at The Glasgow School of Art.

Backed by The National Lottery through Creative Scotland's Create:Networks fund and Michael's AHRC Innovation Leadership Fellowship in the Creative and Digital Economy, *The Value of Creative Growth*, interconnected creative communities throughout the region participated in mapping, knowledge sharing, peer-to-peer networking and direct development support.

The partnership did this in five key stages:

A scoping stage, working with CHARTS' steering group in a mapping workshop to identify areas for development for culture, heritage and arts in Argyll, followed by interviews with each steering group member to develop themes with which to engage the CHARTS network membership on the identified areas for development.

A cultural profiling stage, where CHARTS' network members (practitioners and organisations) contributed to individual sessions titled, *Mapping Your Creative Growth*, which were based on profiling their cultural narrative, their networks of potential growth and a visual action plan to map their trajectory of development.

A themed engagement stage, where Dr Johnson and a CHARTS working group co-designed and co-delivered a programme of online engagement and events including social media questions, we-

binars and workshops under five themes – *Digital Stories, Slow Growth, Creative Production, Island Life and Audience Development* – derived from the initial scoping work.

Place Makers: Microcluster Networks, where Creative Scotland's Create:Networks fund led to awards of £5,500 for each of three creative 'place making' collaborations across Argyll and Bute, which built on the evidence and engagement derived from earlier stages.

Developmental evaluation throughout, where data has been collected and shared with invited collaborators at each stage in order to enable a mutual understanding of progress, adaptation and contextual learning to support project development.

This report presents these stages in sequence, sharing the approaches used, insights gained and recommendations identified for how CHARTS, its members and its wider network of regional partners can build on the insights and opportunities identified on:

- how mapping and modelling 'creative growth' can enable the understanding and development of creative and cultural microenterprises;

- how 'microclusters' can contribute to the sustainability and resilience of culture, heritage and arts in Argyll and Bute.

MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL

SCOPING
working group workshop
9 Interviews
Create:Networks funding
themes review

▶ £28,800 Creative Scotland funding
5 engagement themes
effective use of working group model

**MAPPING YOUR
CREATIVE GROWTH**
32 mapping sessions
with 37 CHARTS members

▶ 96 maps on narrative, network & trajectory
12 categories for member development
methods for CHARTS to take forward

**PLACE MAKERS
THEMED ENGAGEMENT**
social media
5 webinars
5 workshops

▶ 28 paid contributors
90 attendees
26 ideas developed
5 videos (over 500 views)
forum for CHARTS to take forward

model of support based on
'microclustering' for CHARTS to
promote tangible and sustainable
models of creative-led 'placemaking' ▶

**PLACE MAKERS
MICROCLUSTER NETWORKS**
Dunoon Goes Pop
Eco Creative Cluster
Take Flight - SO:AR

dunoongoespop.scot

synthesise organise : act reflect

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENTAL EVALUATION

scoping workshop
themes review workshop

co-design sessions for each theme
MYCG survey
WG evaluation workshop
WG evaluation interviews

baseline interviews
expert support
Place Makers mid-review workshop
CHARTS digital review
Place Makers evaluation & showcase

The Creative Growth Model

Developed from a trajectory of AHRC-funded design research based on an Actor-Network Mapping methodology.

CULTURAL

NETWORK GROWTH

MARKET GROWTH

Potential Actors

Live Actors

SOCIAL

ECONOMIC

CREATIVE GROWTH CHALLENGE

KNOWLEDGE GROWTH

VALUE GROWTH

PRACTICE
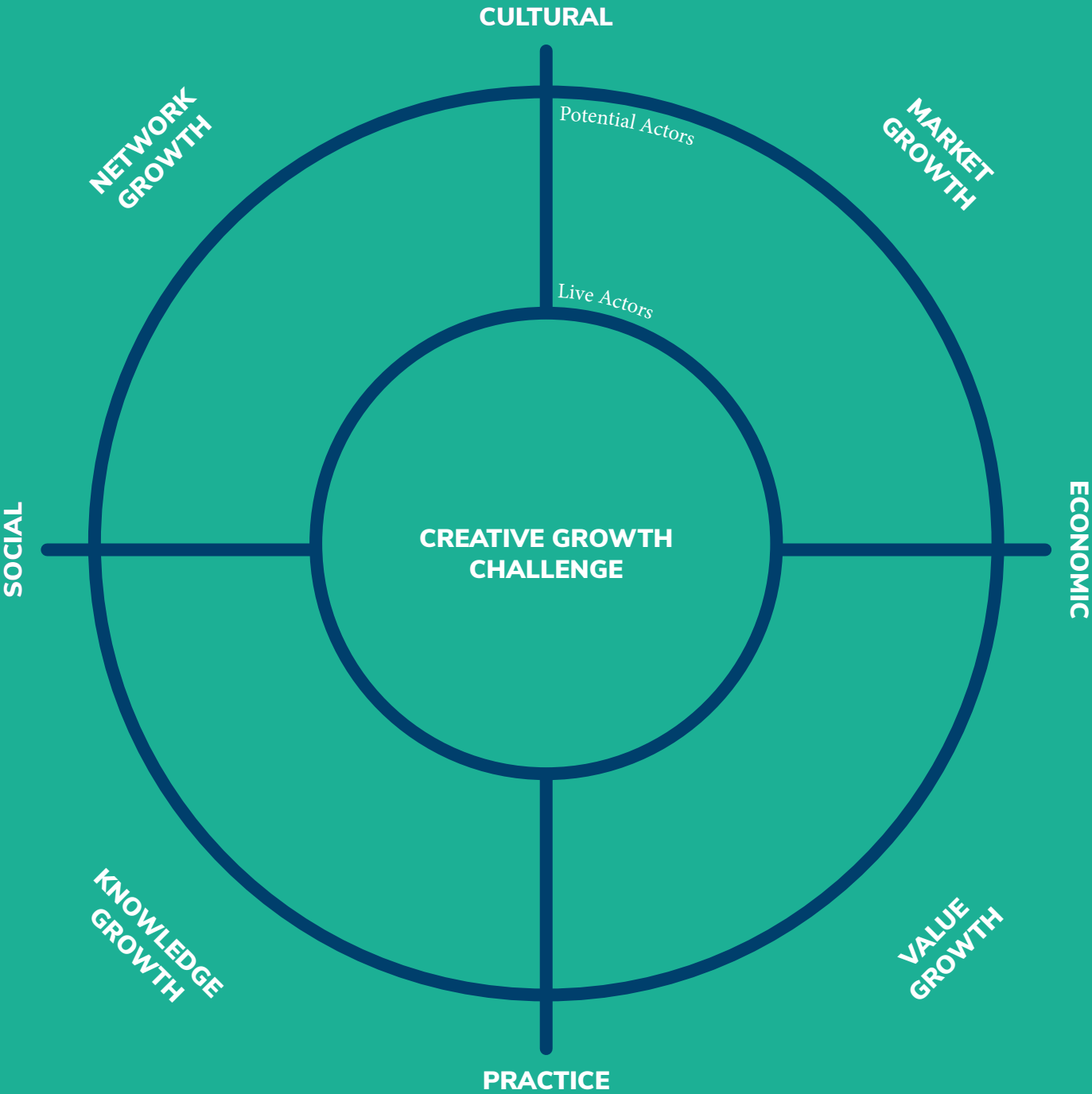
The Value of Creative Growth: Making growth work for creative enterprise

The Value of Creative Growth is Dr Michael Pierre Johnson's Innovation Leadership Fellowship in the Creative and Digital Economy (Jan 2019 - July 2021), funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) - AH/S004653/1.

The Fellowship aimed to advance approaches to developing and evaluating creative enterprise by testing more relational and qualitative measures of growth that better represent the interests, exchanges and impacts of creative work in their situated contexts. It does this by applying design approaches of mapping and modelling creative growth to enable individual creative enterprise development at the sole trader and microenterprise (1-5 people) level, and collectively at a cluster and regional level, based on the networks of people, organisations and cultural assets they work with..

The Creative Growth Model (left) underpinning this Fellowship identifies four perspectives of stakeholder interests in creative work - **economic** (*how it can be modelled sustainably*), **cultural** (*how it influences communities of practice*), **social** (*how it brings actors together*) and **practice** (*how it provides ways of working*) - which frames four areas of relational growth based on interactions of networks of actors:

network growth, new and enhanced relationships and communities;

knowledge growth, new and enhanced skills, know-how and knowledge;

value growth, new and enhanced products, services, experiences, models and impacts;

market growth, new and enhanced audiences, constituents and communication.

The Fellowship has been applying this Creative Growth Model as mapping methods and co-design programmes to foster development, collaboration and developmental evaluation across three regional contexts of creative and cultural enterprise development in the UK. The Model is being tested by asking how effectively it captures the changes in results (progress), changes in process (adaptations) and contextual factors (learning) that impact creative enterprise development in collaboration with network-based organisations.

Between January 2019 and February 2020, the Fellowship partnered with a network of four cultural hubs in the South West of England (The Guild, Watershed, Spike Island, KWMC: The Factory) and UWE Bristol to support the evaluation of the Network for Creative Enterprise (NfCE) programme.

Between November 2019 and July 2021, the Fellowship also partnered with North East of North (NEoN) digital arts festival in Dundee to review and evaluate their history of impactful work in order to guide its re-emergence and development going forward.

This report presents the Fellowship partnership and collaboration with Culture Heritage Arts Assembly Argyll and Isles (CHARTS) between January 2020 and July 2021.

Image credit: Michael P Johnson

> "The role of arts and culture in sustaining a resident community is really important.
>
> If we want to tell the world about ourselves in ways to make them think about us, don't think about the cliches, examine those cliches.
>
> The idea of art having a role in the cohesion of communities is really hard, as it's not about money."
>
> ~ CHARTS Steering Group Member

Scoping

On 12th March 2020, CHARTS steering group underwent a collective network mapping activity based on the Creative Growth Model. This activity asked the group to identify the existing strengths or assets of the CHARTS culture heritage and arts network and the potential areas for growth and development.

From the mapping activity, four aims were identified for the collaboration to focus on:

1. to develop **opportunities through network building** and connecting member activities;

2. to support **creative entrepreneurial development** of individuals, organisations and collaborations;

3. to actively **promote the creativity & culture** in Argyll and the Isles;

4. to develop expertise, resources, and **a clear role for CHARTS in the region**.

Interviews were then delivered with each of CHARTS' steering group to support the identification of themes and opportunities with which to engage CHARTS membership on the above areas for development. The final selection of themes was facilitated in collaboration with the steering group through a remote workshop, which identified the following five themes (right), framed with questions to be explored with members.

An early success from this period of initial scoping work was that CHARTS and Dr Johnson co-authored a funding bid to Creative Scotland's Create:Networks fund, which was awarded in September 2020. This enabled paid contributions from members and iwder expertise to the themed online engagement during the Covid-19 pandemic, and included the coordination and award of three creative 'placemaking' collaborations across Argyll and Bute. The details of the themed engagement activities and awarded projects are presented in later sections of this report.

Digital Stories
It was observed that there is a lack of digital visibility of both past and present creative and cultural life in Argyll and Isles. How can we best capture, archive and share current and past stories of creative and cultural activity? What are the digital assets we need to develop for the region to do this accessibly and effectively?

Slow Growth
Creative and cultural life in Argyll and Isles can over rely on voluntary time and resource, which can impact its development and quality. How do you rebalance growth that relies on volunteers? How can a positive acknowledgement of 'slow growth' shape individual, organisational and collaborative models and practices?

Creative Production
Creative and cultural work can certain lack skills that can impact its ongoing sustainability. What individual skills and resources need developed? How can we develop organisational models? What are the best options and practices for sustaining creative and cultural work?

Island Life
The islands have distinctly rich and impactful forms of creative and cultural activity, beyond the stereotypes. How can we celebrate and support the quality and diversity of what's happening on the islands? How harmful are the stereotypes of island culture and how could we overcome them?

Audience Development
Creative and cultural audiences can be local, national or global, but it can be challenging and requires a deep set of skills to reach and engage them. How can you identify the right audiences and what are the best ways to reach them? How can audiences be shared for mutual benefit? How do you ensure diversity and inclusivity?

Mapping Your Creative Growth

Between August and December 2020, CHARTS members (practitioners and organisations) self-selectively responded to an extensively advertised opportunity to contribute to individual mapping sessions, using three mapping templates, which were designed to frame valuable conversations on their 'creative growth':

Narrative Mapping, which profiled the constituent motivations and manifestations for each participant's creative work;

Network Mapping, which identified a central growth challenge to then holistically map the actors and interests as opportunities for development; and

Trajectory Mapping, which produced a visual action plan setting out key goals as a balanced vision for growth and key milestones to tangible realise them.

The maps were co-produced using online collaboration software, Miro and Zoom, and were then made available as a pdf or image file as a reference to work with. All the maps were made available to both Michael's research and CHARTS for analysis and evidence capture on the needs, motivations, resources and challenges of CHARTS members.

On the right maps the geographic spread of where contributors to the mapping sessions were located across Argyll and Bute. There were a total of 22 sole traders (self-employed) participants in the mapping sessions, including: artists, makers, potters, jewellers, textile artist, photographers, producers, musicians, videographers, and educators. 10+ further participants were cultural microenterprises involved in theatre, film, music, festivals, cultural production, heritage and cultural venues.

The following pages illustrate the three mapping activities and include a summary of the data contributed by the 32 participants in these mapping sessions. These insights are seen to provide a voice to places across the region, which led to the identification of 12 categories for creative growth for Argyll and Bute.

32 mapping sessions
each lasting 2 hours 30 minutes
with 37 different participants
**80 hours direct support
producing 96 maps**
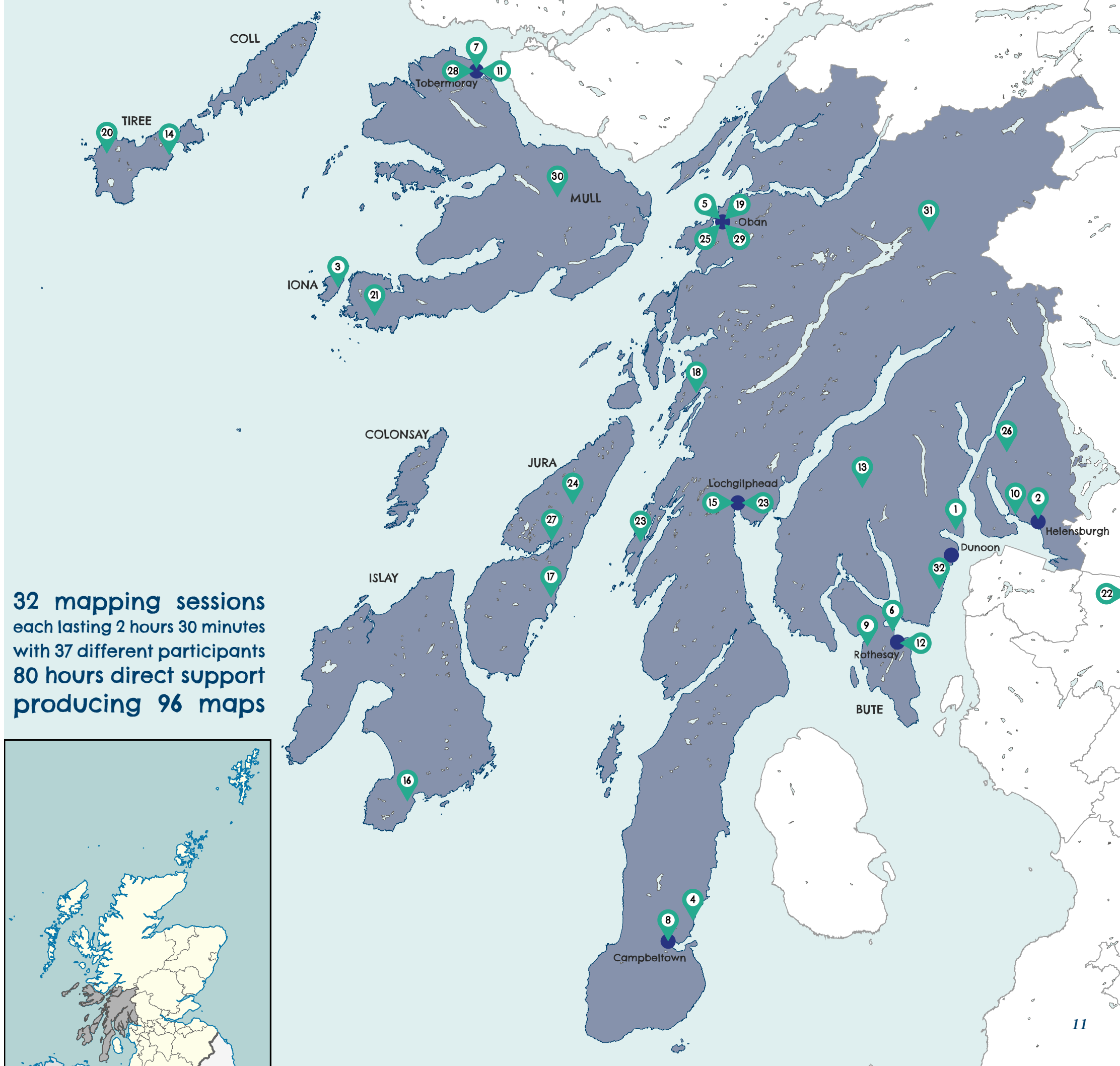
Narrative Mapping

Each session began with Narrative Mapping, which aimed to provide an in-depth introduction (and introspection) to each participant's practices and/or enterprise. The session would proceed through the following questions in relation to the template sections pictured opposite:

You – *how do you describe the discipline(s) and the role(s) that you do?*
Your offering – *what are the products, services or experiences you deliver through what you do?*
Your values – *why do you do what you do?*
Your approach – *how do you do what you do?*
Your tone – *how does what you do look and feel?*
Your touchpoints – *where do people experience what you do?*
Your audiences – *who is your work for?*

Most time (around an hour) would be spent on this initial exercise, as participants were encouraged to take time to reflect on their responses and articulate them succinctly. As such, this activity proved a powerful reflective exercise on identity as constituted through each participant's motivations, assets and environments.

Presented opposite is an overview summarising the responses mapped from across the participants. While these don't fully capture some of the specific motivations and circumstances of some participants, they provide insight on the rich human and cultural capital that exists within Argyll and Bute.

In relation to **social interests**, narratives revolved around how creative, made accessible in a multitude of ways, could make a difference for communities and how they understand and engage with local heritage, landscape and culture.

In relation to **cultural interests**, narratives touched on how creative work can offer new, authentic ways to connect with important wider issues.

In relation to **economic interests**, narratives wrestled with the value of creative work, ways to build reputation and to make it sustainably accessible.

CULTURAL

SOCIAL

ECONOMIC

YOUR AUDIENCES

YOUR TOUCHPOINTS

YOUR TONE

YOUR APPROACHES

YOUR VALUES

YOU
creative disciplines
previous experience
organisational roles
community roles

YOUR OFFERING

telling a compelling story of their work

challenge developing confidence in social media

showing a compelling body of work

challenge developing opportunities with wider networks

individuality uniqueness storytelling

work experienced in the right places alongside the right artists and orgs

connecting to a wider ethos of heritage environment people

professional practice authentic & ideas-led

membership in formal and informal associations and groups

learning by doing developing their artistic process

contemporary arts & craft

challenge articulating value & impact for funders

inclusive accessible open transparent playful

advocacy for what arts can be for Argyll & Isles

developing sense of belonging in one's place

relationship to place through people, stories, heritage archives & landscape

practice as interpreting relationship to place

expressing a story through creative practice

building trustworthy reputation

leading workshops and local events

keeping tradition relevant

enterprise providing cultural assets for place

providing opportunities for creativity

valuing their time and quality in their work

direct selling online shops local shops galleries trade fairs

shared process of creative learning

deeply engrained principles of community engagement

community driven "power of creativity"

investment of time and craft in creative work

sustainable arts and culture in Argyll and Isles

connecting networks

organisational roles - admin. manage, coordinate

creative workshops

creative roles teaching or production

collaborations & residencies

artworks & craft products

open studios & cultural events

Network Mapping

Each session would proceed to Network Mapping, which aimed to provide a focus on what growth and development meant for each participant's practices and/or enterprise. The session would proceed through the following questions in relation to the template sections pictured opposite:

Your Growth Challenge - *what do you want to focus on as part of your next period of development?*
Network Growth - Who With? - *what relationships or communities do you have or need to build?*
Knowledge Growth - What With? - *what know-how do you have or need to develop?*
Value Growth - What For? - *what value do you create or want to create?*
Market Growth - Who For? - *what audiences or constituents do you have or want to reach?*

One of the most important moments for each participant would be articulating their creative growth challenge, as a moment of self-assertiveness. When they did, the exercise would flow quickly at first to identify the obvious actors and interests, but then they'd spend time on the boundaries of their knowledge of who else and what else could contribute to their development challenge. As such, this exercise proved valuable in opening up the **possibilities for development**, identifying gaps in their networks and the options to be pursued.

Presented opposite is an overview summarising the responses mapped from across the participants. While mapping the internal, current networks proved fairly systematic for most, the potential areas for growth could prove 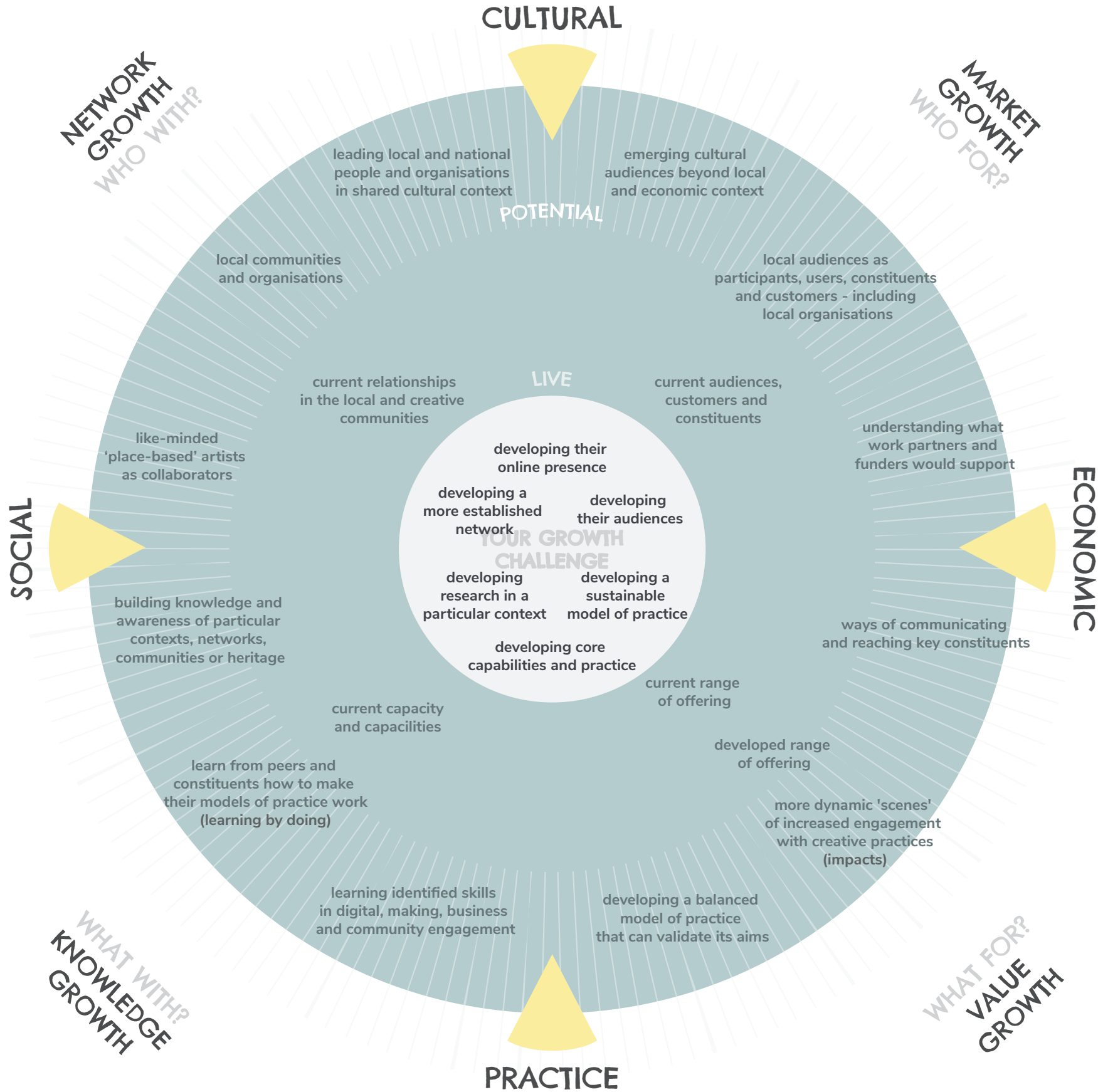diverse, provocative and sometimes challenging, particularly in pushing **what their practices could be** and who else would **value what they wanted to do.**

Strategies that proved useful in developing some participants' thinking included framing their potential knowledge growth as questions and by framing value growth not just as products, services and experiences, but as models of practice and different forms of impacts in their contexts of work.

CULTURAL

NETWORK GROWTH WHO WITH?

MARKET GROWTH WHO FOR?

leading local and national people and organisations in shared cultural context

emerging cultural audiences beyond local and economic context

POTENTIAL

local communities and organisations

local audiences as participants, users, constituents and customers - including local organisations

LIVE

current relationships in the local and creative communities

current audiences, customers and constituents

understanding what work partners and funders would support

SOCIAL

like-minded 'place-based' artists as collaborators

developing their online presence

developing a more established network

developing their audiences

YOUR GROWTH CHALLENGE

ECONOMIC

building knowledge and awareness of particular contexts, networks, communities or heritage

developing research in a particular context

developing a sustainable model of practice

ways of communicating and reaching key constituents

developing core capabilities and practice

current capacity and capacities

current range of offering

developed range of offering

learn from peers and constituents how to make their models of practice work (learning by doing)

more dynamic 'scenes' of increased engagement with creative practices (impacts)

WHAT WITH? KNOWLEDGE GROWTH

learning identified skills in digital, making, business and community engagement

developing a balanced model of practice that can validate its aims

WHAT FOR? VALUE GROWTH

PRACTICE

Trajectory Mapping

Each session would finish with Trajectory Mapping, which aimed to translate the motivations and possibilities identified in the previous two exercises into a visual and balanced action plan. The session would proceed through the following questions in relation to the template sections pictured opposite:

Your Vision - *What do you want to achieve in 3-5 years time? What networks will you have? What does your work look like and what influence will it have? What is sustaining your practice or offering?*
Your Assets - *What are you starting out with on your journey?*
Your Actions - *How can you bridge this gap in a balanced and viable way?*

Following the more expansive nature of the prior exercises, the trajectory mapping would prove the most focused and shortest exercise for all participants, as assets and expressions of vision could simply be carried over from earlier stages. However, as expressed through the questions presented above, the vision was most important in pushing **the difference growth would make**, not just to the sustainability of their work and their practice, but in the communities and cultural contexts they sought to impact.

This activity provided a tangible resource for establishing ambitious goals and processes that still felt clear and realisable.

Presented opposite is an overview summarising the responses mapped from across the participants. Due to the focused nature of the activity, this proved quite a consistent structure for how each participant's maps would transpire, translated to their own practices, projects and networks.

Of particular note in the structure of many action plans was the iteration from an initial **development plan**, to **pilot project**, to established **partnerships** and **model of practice**, validated through enhanced connections and methods of documenting development and evidencing value.

SOCIAL   CULTURAL   ECONOMIC

YOUR VISION

Dynamic Network developed range of local, national and international relationships and partnerships

Portfolio of Great Work visibility of creative and cultural work individually, locally or through partnerships

Established Model of Practice developed a way of working that delivers

'Go-To' Cultural Actor are established in their context of practice & impact - including stronger story

'market' of support reaching wider audience that sustains the model of practice

YOUR ACTIONS

further development building on the pilot project to deliver more ambitious proposals

partnerships develop shared aims with orgs connected to identified context of practice/impact

model of practice articulating the learning from initial development to shape a way of working

community relationships closer ties with local people and orgs have been created who advocate development

pilot project project or proposal to try out, deliver and learn from

further funding targeting wider funding, market or investment that enables further development

initial collaborations often pre-identified people and organisations to work with initial ideas

evaluation documenting the 'evidence' needed to demonstrate the value of what they want to do

conversations current or approachable networks to support learning for development plan

initial development plan sets out timeframe, key questions,

initial resource investment that permits initial development process

YOUR ASSETS

existing experience, set up, skills & identity

existing networks and relationships

range of situations where funds and resources are already in place or needing to be attained

place they're based as part of attraction

12 Categories for Creative Growth

These categories provide an overview of what is driving creative practice and enterprise in Argyll and Bute and can be used to build arguments for collaborative development and investment in these areas.

Digital Skills/Profiles

10 members most directly sought to develop their presence online and to support reaching new audiences using digital technology and media.

The skills development they sought ranged from how best to capture and tell the story of their work, through to how best to disseminate, reach and connect with others using digital platforms.

Strategic

10 members directly referenced evidencing impact and cross-sector connections.

The development they sought was to lead projects that made a difference to communities and projects based on creative and cultural disciplines.

Tourism

12 members directly identified visitors and tourism as defining their context for development.

The development they sought ranged from products and services to collaborations that could attract visitors as audiences and consumers of their work.

Advocates for Creative Work

14 members directly wished to advocate for creative work in their disciplines and regions.

The development they sought was more focused on providing access to creative practice and culture for local communities, heritage and place, rather than developing enterprise or economic growth.

Finding New Audiences

13 members directly sought to expand their audiences, including international reach and reputation.

The development they sought ranged from making their work more sustainable and/or more influential using the reach of digital media or enhanced partnership working.

Socially-Engaged

16 members were artists involved in participatory and community engagement practices.

The development they sought focused on enhancing their own practice alongside participation and impact with local communities as a model of practice.

Island Life

13 members were not only based on islands, but seeking to contribute to placemaking on their islands.

The development they sought explored models to sustain and grow creative practice on the islands both for residents and visitors.

Environmentalism

7 members' core work was directly related to environmental issues or resourceful practices.

The development they sought ranged from developing practices, models and discourses contributing to sustainability.

Wellbeing

5 members directly acknowledged benefits to wellbeing in their contexts.

The development they sought focused on how best to serve or enhance the benefits of creative practices on wellbeing.

Heritage

8 members directly reference heritage as part of their context.

The development they sought included ways to better access, work with and share the value they saw in heritage sites, places and practices.

Education

8 members directly reference formal forms of education in creative practices.

The development they sought looked at ways to increase access to creative practices for young people and practitioners at various stages of development.

Venues

7 members directly reference a site or building as part of developing their offering.

The development they sought directly linked to the establishing models of practice and/or enterprise with such sites, either based on tourism, community engagement or residencies.

Evaluation

An evaluation survey was sent out to each of the participants to capture what development may have occurred since the mapping sessions and to what extent the seesions contributed. There were 18 respondents to the survey out of 32, with a significant minority of members citing how, despite severe disruption to their work due to the covid-19 pandemic, the maps made them feel ready to re-engage in their work and ambitions.

Here we present a selection of responses sharing progress or adaptation for participants as a result of the sessions and the new perspectives they brought.

What was most valuable about the mapping session for you?

"Together we traced important movements, promising plans and dead ends. Confronting and promising at the same time. [...] We were surprised that everything we mentioned could be positioned on the maps. We both felt this was very precious and instructive. Nobody before gave us so much precise support. We started to feel we have a grip on the often chaotic organisation of the projects." - island contributor

"The session helped me recognise that I am surrounded by inspiration to draw on to validate myself and I have taken a lot of confidence and strength from this." - mainland contributor

"The particular structure and approach of the mapping session, i.e. the process itself, allowed me to see, as I was speaking, the interconnectedness of my thinking in the social, cultural and economic areas of my life and practice. Acknowledging this and seeing this cohesive connectedness as a strength was the most valuable aspect of the session." - island contributor

Have the MYCG session, maps or templates supported you in your progress?

"The [session] sharpened our thinking and made us take some radical action. It was stimulating to work out a few things on our to-do list for a long time. We looked at unfinished projects from another perspective, with new ideas on how to reconnect with them." - island contributor

"The maps emphasised for me the importance of collaborating and looking further afield beyond art organisations. I think the session helped me to build a relationship with CHARTS" - mainland contributor

"Yes, hugely! They are a reminder; they keep my thinking in the room with me; they are there whenever I need a reference point to move off from or root down into" - island contributor

"I recognised from the session that I must apply for public funding to equip myself, create new work and make connections with galleries, artists and audiences." - island contributor

Have you adapted or changed how you work since?

"It has to be acknowledged that this has all taken place against the backdrop of the pandemic [...] I have taken full advantage of the move online of many events, talks and conferences and this has increased my network, contributed to knowledge growth and led to a wider recognition of my work - all aims identified within the mapping process." - mainland contributor

"This is a work in progress, I still struggle to organise my day, week, month [...] I have got better at prioritising what needs doing first and thinking about what I want to take on or not." - island contributor

"More refreshed and renewed my enthusiasm and encouraged me to collaborate. I have collaborated before but I think I view collaborations from a different perspective and with more insight as to where they can lead" - island contributor

Have you grown or developed your enterprise or model of practice?

"We have been developing our sales methods, including exploring taking on ticket selling ourselves directly instead of our clients" - mainland contributor

"I have grown by getting memberships with organisations to make connections and to improve my professional presence. I would say as well that my sales are up on the previous year as my website is improving as I learn more, making my work more accessible online." - island contributor

"We do not really want to grow bigger but we do develop our model into a more defined practice, staying in touch with all participants, and already contacted possible partners for the coming years." - island contributor

Learning

The 12 categories for creative growth identified across the 32 mapping sessions represent the substantial motivations and ambitions of contributing practitioners and microorganisations, with individuals often identifiable under multiple categories. However, across the sessions there was one discernable split in motivations.

17 of the participants can be argued to have been mostly **'enterprise-driven'**, looking to develop or sustain an economic entity, while 11 can be argued to have been **'enquiry-driven'**, looking to develop or sustain their creative practice, often in relation to a wider social or cultural context. Only 4 can be argued to substantially balance both. This articulates the challenge of how CHARTS can meaningfully engage and support both mindsets, and how the microcluster approach can bring such mindsets together as part of 'placemaking'.

It is important to acknowledge the **pandemic context** of these mapping sessions, as many members sought to use the opportunity to make sense of their circumstances. It also ensured the adaptation of this mapping approach to use **online visualisation and video software** to facilitate sessions. This is a major reason why a successful geographical spread of contributors has been reached, with islanders representing nearly half (15 of 32) of the sessions.

While each mapping session contributed unique stories and situations, there were particular voices on the places of Argyll and Bute. Coastal areas, both on islands and mainland, unearthed an extensive body of knowledge and practice in the heritage stories of the sea and **coastal cultures**. This body of interest was not just constrained to stories in Argyll and Bute but many connections and journeys to coastal places and heritage internationally, demonstrating rich potential for growth in such communities of interest.

Across the majority of contributors accounts, there was a strong belief in the **role of creativity** and creative practices in contributing to the people and places where they reside. On islands and mainland regions with less developed tourism, creative roles could be diverse to account for local communities, schools, organisations and events. This arose as an important factor in developing a **sense of belonging** and connection to place for both the members and communities they'd engage. In regions where tourism was a more developed, there were still examples of community-engaged practices and partnerships, but often more formalised networks and trails established to sustain seasonal patterns of work.

These learnings do not intend to focus judgement on how creative practice and enterprise is positioned in the region, as each contributor gained **bespoke forms of validity** once mapped into a wider eco-system. There are a broad set of variables to be considered when framing development for culture, heritage and arts. This process doesn't happen often in this way, with in-depth, constructive reflections on the values and motivations of creative work. This is where **building connections and dialogue within, between and beyond** the regions of Argyll and Bute are so important. It is in these meaningful relationships, between peers and constituent actors, that opportunities and growth will occur.

Place Makers Themed Engagement

The CHARTS Steering Group was extended into a working group of ten members who were assigned in pairs to collaborate and programme online engagement and events, including social media questions, webinars and workshops under five themes (Digital Stories, Slow Growth, Creative Production, Island Life and Audience Development) derived from the initial scoping work.

Social media question cards were prepared to frame each theme and promote the upcoming webinar and workshop. The webinars would invite CHARTS' members and wider expertise to present on their experience working in Argyll and Bute or participate in panel discussions. The workshops shared examples of innovative projects then asked participants to share their ideas in response to the theme and then develop them in discussion with other participants, using simple prompts based on the Model.

In total, there were 28 paid contributors to the webinars, mostly CHARTS members sharing their stories and insights. The webinars attracted 65 people to register with 45 attending, while the workshops attracted 72 people to register with 45 attending, making a total of 137 registrants and 90 attendees across the programme. The workshops also supported 26 ideas for development. The following pages provide an overview of the questions, webinars and workshop outputs under each theme, with reflections on how they develop perspectives on 'placemaking'.

Videos of all the webinars can be viewed at:

www.chartsargyllandisles.org/news/placemakers/

"Using the themes lightly, there was something in there about processes taking time. How do you follow up and sustain this kind of contact?

Generally across practitioners there's common ground, but when people are busy, it's about working out that common ground and building up trust.

It's important that a project is led by a creative person with strong people skills, who is able to facilitate the reasons for bringing people together."

~ CHARTS Steering Group Member

Digital Stories

Q1. WHAT NEW DIGITAL EXPERIENCES HAVE YOU HAD IN YOUR WORK DUE TO LOCKDOWN? #placemakers #digitalstories	Q2. WHAT GREAT EXAMPLES HAVE YOU SEEN OF CREATIVE WORK OR CULTURE MADE DIGITAL? #placemakers #digitalstories	Q3. HOW HAVE YOU LEARNT TO DEVELOP NEW DIGITAL SKILLS & ASSETS? #placemakers #digitalstories	Q4. WHAT CREATIVE WORK & CULTURE NEEDS CAPTURED & ARCHIVED DIGITALLY? #placemakers #digitalstories	Q5. WHAT NEW AUDIENCES HAVE YOU BEEN ABLE TO REACH SINCE WORKING MORE DIGITALLY? #placemakers #digitalstories

Image credit: Mull of Kintyre Virtual Festival

Webinar
On 6 October 2020 a panel from the **Virtual Mull of Kintyre Music Festival 2020** shared their experience of going fully digital; **James Coutts** from CHARTS talked about the top social media needs of members; and **Hannah Clinch** (designer, enterprise consultant and founder of Tacit Tacit) shared how to make the best use of digital skills, assets and services. This was followed by a panel discussion on the needs and opportunities for developing digital skills, resources and archives in Argyll and Isles.

Workshop
On 8 October 2020, CHARTS members gained peer input on their ideas for developing **digital archives**, with expert input from Donna Holford-Lovell at NEoN Digital Arts.

Ideas Developed
- *Accessible heritage content & narratives*
- *Using past & present festival footage*
- *Documenting work from artist collective*
- *Vamping an historic cultural venue website*
- *Game app to learn architectural history of a place*
- *Digital archive of lost archaeological sites*

Participant Reflections
"'Digital' means quite specific technical things, but a lot of content is perhaps more analogue."

"Developing archives is perhaps a stronger context of 'digital' for the region."

"I gained a lot for thinking how to take what we've learned and move forward with it."

Slow Growth

Q1. What new or unexpected creative learning opportunities have you benefitted from? #placemakers #slowgrowth	Q2. What are your motivations for volunteering as part of creative or cultural work? #placemakers #slowgrowth	Q3. What are the great ways for sustaining creative work you've seen? #placemakers #slowgrowth	Q4. What insight can you share from leading and facilitating collective work? #placemakers #slowgrowth	Q5. What tips or practices help to build trust in relationships locally and beyond? #placemakers #slowgrowth

Image credit: Ali Mills

Webinar
On 20 October 2020, a panel shared reflections on creative learning, volunteering, collaborating and building relationships as part of sustaining their work in Argyll and Bute. This included sculptor **Melanie Chmielewska**, Oban-based textile artist and tutor **Deborah Gray**, community song leader **Ali Mills** and potter **Michaela Goan** from Seatree Argyll.

Workshop
On 26 November 2020, CHARTS members gained peer input on their ideas for developing **sustainable models for creative collectives**, with a video commissioned from Argyll Arts Collective.

Ideas Developed
- *Prioritising newcomers, young professionals*
- *Growing community-facing collective*
- *Build awareness of Mull artists (online)*
- *Mull arts project at community gardens*
- *Co-working for viable practitioner work*

Participant Reflections
"The theme was slightly abstract but did grow during discussions as we heard each other's experiences."

"There was an interesting focus on opportunities for young people or newcomers."

"Strong conversations, connections and quite a lot of empathy for each other's practice on the panel."

Creative Production

Island Life

Q1. What has your professional development focused on in the past year?
#placemakers #creativeproduction

Q2. What was the most useful creative and critical exchange that enabled you to progress?
#placemakers #creativeproduction

Q3. How do you know that you're progressing in your work?
#placemakers #creativeproduction

Q5. What does recognition and sustainability look like?
#placemakers #creativeproduction

Q4. How have others expressed their value of your creative or cultural work?
#placemakers #creativeproduction

Q1. Why do you live and work on an island?
#placemakers #islandlife

Q2. How does working on an island differ from other places?
#placemakers #islandlife

Q3. Can you share an example of creative work, culture or an event that reflects island life?
#placemakers #islandlife

Q4. How has lockdown affected creative, cultural and social life on the islands?
#placemakers #islandlife

Q5. What ways have you seen for overcoming or embracing the issues of living on an island?
#placemakers #islandlife

Image credit: Michaela Bodlovic

Image credit: Amy Dunnachie

Webinar
On 3 November 2020 innovative people operating in rural areas shared their stories of creative production. **Rhona Dougall** offered insights on the Fàgail Hiort - Leaving St. Kilda project; **Kirsten Body** shared work from Circus Artspace's annual programme; with **Dr Deirdre MacKenna** (Cultural Documents) and **Brian Barker** (Artmap Argyll) joined a panel discussion on creative production in Argyll and the Isles.

Workshop
On 5 October 2020, CHARTS members gained peer input on their ideas for **creative exchange**, with innovative examples shared by Dr Michael Pierre Johnson.

Ideas Developed
- *Exploring Gaelic heritage through family stories*
- *Expanding sound sculpture reach*
- *Residencies from a rural home*
- *Performance art - hands & stitched blanket*
- *Filming storytellers in creative community*
- *Remote exchange pieces*

Participant Reflections
"The events provided a sustained, trusted space, or 'arena', for 'criticality' as demonstrating an ability to evaluate [...] not about markets"

"More focus on what creative production and process could mean would be valuable to the region."

"We're all put into competition with each other [...] when we'd prefer space to support each other."

Webinar
On 17 November 2020 a panel shared stories and experiences of ways in which arts, culture and heritage contribute to island life on Bute and Jura. Artist and illustrator, **Ruth Slater**, shared her work with Bute School of Art and **Hazel Mulholland** shared her experiences helping to set up and run the excellent Bute Fest. Jura-based artist maker, **Amy Dunnachie**, shared her experiences embracing island life and **Joan Moran** told of how Jura Music Festival became an essential part of Jura life.

Workshop
On 19 November 2020, CHARTS members gained peer input on their ideas to **nourish island life**.

Ideas Developed
- *Physical cultural hub for tourists in summer and communities in winter*
- *Place to celebrate island heritage*
- *Connecting artists more within and across islands*
- *Overcome difficulty of limited audience for events funding*

Participant Reflections
"There's often a little more 'zeal' to conversations and ideas due to the more explicit realities of island context."

"We're trying to build assets on the islands and connections that help overcome limitations (e.g. audiences) - we want to be an exemplar."

Audience Development

Q1.	Q2.	Q3.	Q4.	Q5.
Cultural events, why do you go?	Give a shout out to your favourite cultural venues!	What cultural events are popular with younger people?	How do YOU reach new audiences?	Have audiences ever informed what you do?
#placemakers #audiencedevelopment	#placemakers #audiencedevelopment	#placemakers #audiencedevelopment	#placemakers #audiencedevelopment	#placemakers #audiencedevelopment

Image credit: Screen Argyll

Webinar
On 30 November 2020, a panel shared experiences and approaches to audience development for culture, heritage and arts. **Jen Skinner** (Screen Argyll) shared experience and insights on engaging young audiences. **Jenny Hunter** (Dunoon Burgh Hall) shared experience of audience-inclusive evaluation. **Ann Campbell** (Dunoon Film Fesitival) shared experiences of creatively engaging a whole range of local audiences. **Sarah Boiling**, consultant on audience development and evaluation to the cultural sector, shared key principles to consider.

Workshop
On 2 December 2020, CHARTS members gained peer input on ideas for developing audiences through an activity of Audience Mapping.

Audiences Mapped
- *Arts project on small island with ambition to increase and grow as a community*
- *Workshops on traditional crafts, spinning and preparing yarn, with natural, local dyes*
- *3D artisan furniture, including a terrarium*
- *Arts engagement with small island community and own experimental practice*

Participant Reflections
"I enjoyed each of the contributions and felt invigorated [...] it was a really interesting mix to work with."

"Putting an expert at the end of contextual presentations helped 'translate' the principles really well."

"It was a great opportunity to learn from each other and share experiences that we'll be taking forward."

Learning

From across the five themed engagement activities, the impetus and activity of working group members as co-curators of the events was essential, particularly in providing **clear ways to communicate** and promote the themes. It also followed that when working group members were able to link the events more directly to their existing networks, this would enable stronger promotion and attendance figures.

The **reflective tone** of the events facilitated meaningful connections and sharing of experiences. Many contributors were asked to tell their stories under the themes, encouraging strong levels of honesty and mutual challenges, to the extent that contributors have indicated continuing these new connections.

The provision of a repeated programme of activities enabled some members to iterate on ideas, connections and develop confidence in conversation with their peers. Being a contributor to other people's thinking and development seemed to demonstrate a way to develop **meaningful validation**.

It should be reminded that the videos of these events are still available and still resources to be promoted and shared. This **preservation and organisation** of how members, newcomers or potential partnerships can access such dialogues would be particularly important if a sense of developmental progress seeks to be preserved for communities. The process brought people across disciplines and different sectors together in a unique way for Argyll and Bute; purposefully and constructively. This is argued to have facilitated an '**arena**' for the first time created by a mutual constructive recognition between peers, some form of reification of the things they have in common and a sense that all praactitioners, all voices, all constituents are **entitled to come together**.

Of particular note is how, of the 10 applications to the Place Makers: Microcluster Networks call, 6 had been earlier shared, in part, through the workshop sessions. As such, a major learning is when funding opportunities arise, there is value to be gained through processes or events facilitating collective dialogue, as they **can enhance relevant, quality proposals**.

However, the tone and strucutre does need to be mindful of perceptions or situations where contributors may be competing with other local artists and organisations. This is where reflective dialogue, perhaps as part of more **flexible funding models**, can encourage open and mutual value creation.

Place Makers Microcluster Networks

Funding from Creative Scotland's Create:Networks fund was secured by CHARTS and awarded £5,500 for each of three creative 'placemaking' collaborations across Argyll and Bute, delivered and supported between January and July 2021. We received 10 excellent and diverse applications, which an expert panel reviewed on Friday 18th December to select the three successful projects from a high standard quality selection.

These were recognised as innovative proposals of creative collaborations with local heritage, industry, cultural and community organisations in ways that aim to enable local places to survive and thrive. The proposals showed ambition for partnerships and impacts to last beyond the funding period, with funded collaborations also accessing additional expert support when delivering their projects.

These new microcluster networks are strategically positioned within the development infrastructure of the membership-network (CHARTS), as examples of good practice and points of reference for other developing organisations. The overarching goal is to design and grow microcluster culture, encouraging people to join resources and work together, on the principle that sustainable and resilient regional economies need to be understood as networks.

To support regional development of the creative and cultural sector, including sole traders and microenterprises, we aim to mutually understand the complex relationships between organisations, people, places, institutions and companies at all scales. the following pages present case studies from the early stages of development of these microclusters.

"The projects aren't conforming to other models elsewhere.

I've picked up the blending of the terms 'culture' and 'heritage', which I see as a real positive, alongside an ethos of quoting action and reflection.

There are emerging aspects of time and process as philosophies being explored."

~ CHARTS Working Group Member

Dunoon Goes Pop

Hannah Clinch, Founder of Tacit Tacit
Walter Newton, Illustrator, Brand communicator and Digital Animator
Manda Forster, Archaeologist, Heritage Communicator, and Operations Manager at Digventures

Dunoon Goes Pop builds on *The People of Place: Shop Keepers of Dunoon* project to develop drink products, associated maps, marketing material and an exhibition on Dunoon High St from local heritage narratives and archive material to create new experiences relating to the town's cultural history.

The aim of this microcluster has been to develop a new income-generating, heritage-focused social enterprise building from the story of George Stirling and his soft drinks factory on Dunoon High Street between 1880-1970.

Network Growth - who with?
This more progressive approach to the use of local heritage narratives and non-digitised archive material is structuring collaborations with multiple heritage stakeholders to enhance community engagement with local heritage assets. Beyond the core team, the project is developing collaborations with members of the Dunoon community, local heritage organisations and regeneration initiatives, including the Dunoon Area Alliance, Dunoon CARS, American Years Revisited, Dunoon Burgh Hall and Green Map on board as formal partners.

Knowledge Growth - what with?
A body of market research data is positioning local soft drinks production to inform the development of a new, social enterprise model. This model is being built on an increased understanding of how to progress gender equality through local heritage narratives, alongside testing the digital Green Map platform by creating digital heritage trails using archive material and research on the provenance of sugar and spices.

Additional expert support has been provided by John Ahrens, a consultant on small-scale food manufacture, who has inputted into the recipes, batch production process, test and validation, site management, health and safety, costing, markets and development strategy.

Value Growth - what for?
Illustrator Walter Newman was commissioned to produce 5 A3 posters focused on heritage characters from the *People of Place* archive. Small batches of coke, lemonade, blackcurrant and ginger ale flavour of soft drinks are being developed and packaged using bottle labels and point of sale boards using these illustrations. The packaged drink samples and posters formed the basis of an exhibition at the POP shop and are translated into a digital People of Place Green Map and trails. A webpage and digital marketing material has also been developed to share these outputs with wider audiences.
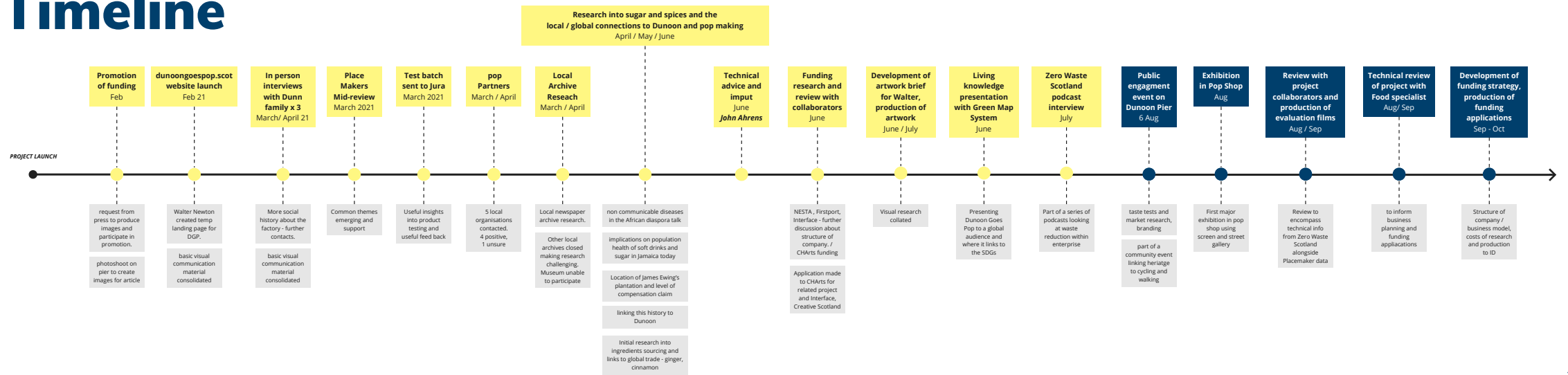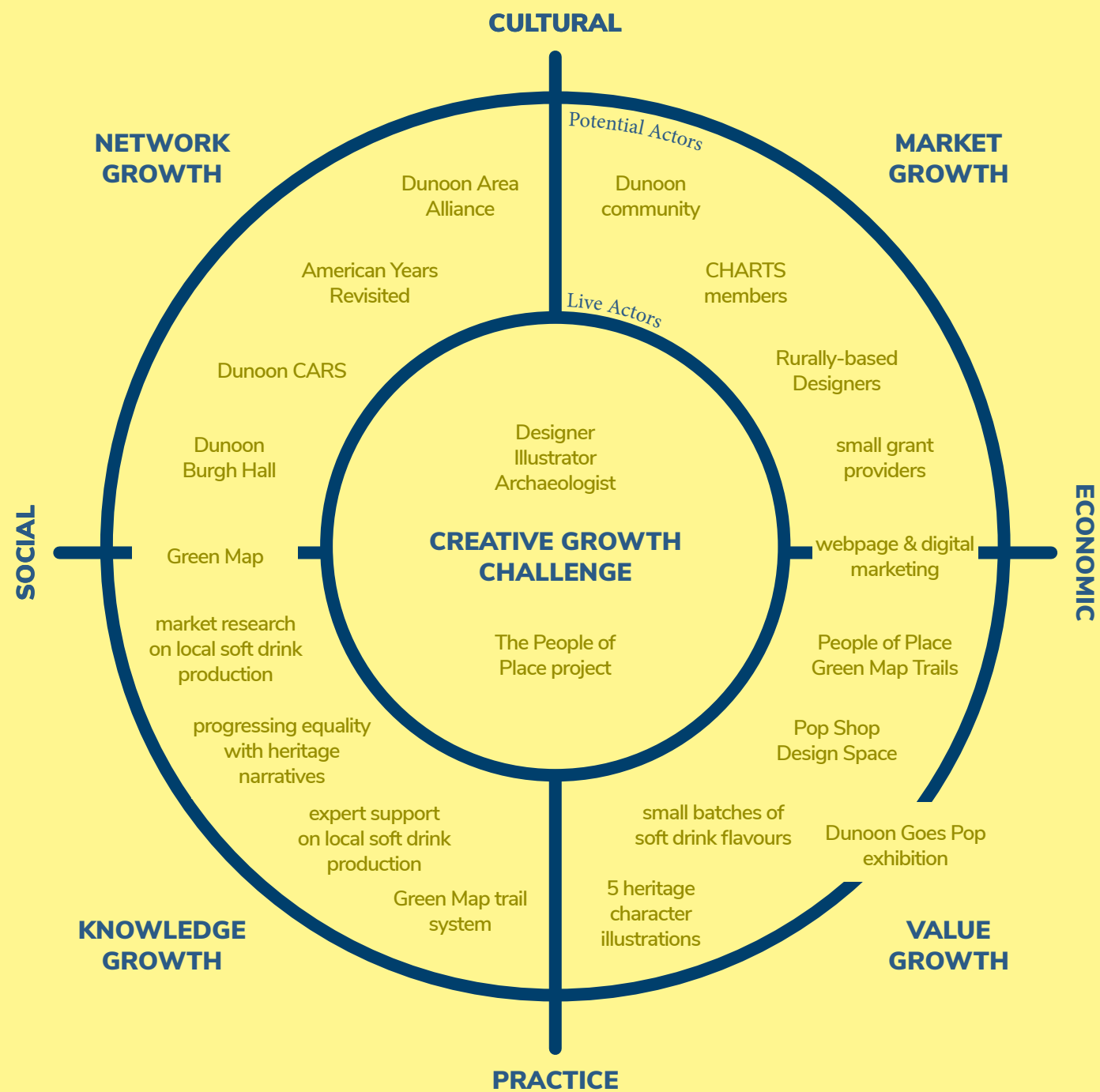
Market Growth - who for?
Dunoon's local community, to learn how it contributes value to Dunoon, its heritage, communities and economy, as a place. CHARTS membership network, to share learning from the project, such as critical handling of what has and hasn't worked in working with small organisations to advance heritage engagement and local income generating products. Rurally-based designers, to show how multi-disciplinary collaborations with multiple levels of impact can happen here. Small grant economic development, that can develop more flexible support structures and broader representation on boards and panels.

Timeline

Research into sugar and spices and the local / global connections to Dunoon and pop making — April / May / June

Timeline item	Date
Promotion of funding	Feb
dunoongoespop.scot website launch	Feb 21
In person interviews with Dunn family x 3	March/ April 21
Place Makers Mid-review	March 2021
Test batch sent to Jura	March 2021
pop Partners	March / April
Local Archive Reseach	March / April
Technical advice and imput *John Ahrens*	June
Funding research and review with collaborators	June
Development of artwork brief for Walter, production of artwork	June / July
Living knowledge presentation with Green Map System	June
Zero Waste Scotland podcast interview	July
Public engagment event on Dunoon Pier	6 Aug
Exhibition in Pop Shop	Aug
Review with project collaborators and production of evaluation films	Aug / Sep
Technical review of project with Food specialist	Aug/ Sep
Development of funding strategy, production of funding applications	Sep - Oct

PROJECT LAUNCH

Lower notes:
- request from press to produce images and participate in promotion.
- photoshoot on pier to create images for article
- Walter Newton created temp landing page for DGP.
- basic visual communication material consolidated
- More social history about the factory - further contacts.
- basic visual communication material consolidated
- Common themes emerging and support
- Useful insights into product testing and useful feed back
- 5 local organisations contacted. 4 positive, 1 unsure
- Local newspaper archive research.
- Other local archives closed making research challenging. Museum unable to participate
- non communicable diseases in the African diaspora talk
- implications on population health of soft drinks and sugar in Jamaica today
- Location of James Ewing's plantation and level of compensation claim
- linking this history to Dunoon
- Initial research into ingredients sourcing and links to global trade - ginger, cinnamon
- NESTA, Firstport, Interface - further discussion about structure of company. / CHArts funding
- Application made to CHArts for related project and Interface, Creative Scotland
- Visual research collated
- Presenting Dunoon Goes Pop to a global audience and where it links to the SDGs
- Part of a series of podcasts looking at waste reduction within enterprise
- taste tests and market research, branding
- part of a community event linking heritage to cycling and walking
- First major exhibition in pop shop using screen and street gallery
- Review to encompass technical info from Zero Waste Scotland alongside Placemaker data
- to inform business planning and funding applications
- Structure of company / business model, costs of research and production to ID

CULTURAL

NETWORK GROWTH

Potential Actors

Dunoon Area Alliance

Dunoon community

MARKET GROWTH

American Years Revisited

CHARTS members

Live Actors

Dunoon CARS

Rurally-based Designers

SOCIAL

Dunoon Burgh Hall

Designer Illustrator Archaeologist

small grant providers

Green Map

CREATIVE GROWTH CHALLENGE

webpage & digital marketing

ECONOMIC

market research on local soft drink production

The People of Place project

People of Place Green Map Trails

progressing equality with heritage narratives

Pop Shop Design Space

expert support on local soft drink production

small batches of soft drink flavours

Dunoon Goes Pop exhibition

Green Map trail system

5 heritage character illustrations

KNOWLEDGE GROWTH

VALUE GROWTH

PRACTICE

These insights are based on a baseline interview, mid-review session and co-evaluation workshop, where all three microclusters were able to share progress and learning with each other and CHARTS.

Differences in Outcomes (progress)
Particular moments of progress for DGP came in their development of key assets, such as the heritage narratives and illustrations, replicable recipes for the pop drink sirops using local ingredients and in establishing committed partnerships to use and promote the drinks and engagement activities.

Progress has also come in the promotion of their story through newspaper articles and establishment of the Pop Shop in Dunoon town centre, where co-working space, exhibitions and face-to-face interaction with locals and visitors have ensured good local and wider interest in they're aims and ambitions.

Differences in Process (adaptation)
An example of adaptation came from insights and impacts of colonial history from DGP's research. This included how international populations where former sugar plantations were sited now see high-levels of non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes, due to globalised promotion of sugar consumption. This raises interesting implications in how such heritage narratives can be framed with criticality and contemporary urgency, in balance with the celebratory recognition of historical local figures. DGP have been using the Green Map system to look at links with ingredients and sugar industry and other pop makers, delivering a presentation as part of living knowledge conference alongside the founder of Green Map.

The expert session on food and drink production with John Ahrens provided valuable detailed input on the production processes and enterprise model DGP seeks to establish. Each decision, on batch production, target consumers they're packaged for, and the seasonality, capacity for sourcing or storing foodstuffs, have informed important strategic planning for the production site and best timeframe for sustainable viability.

Learning on Placemaking (contextual factors)
A crucial learning has been the challenge of engaging largely small, publicly-funded and volunteer-run heritage organisations in collaborative processes. While the Covid-19 pandemic has reduced many organisations capacity to engage, this lack of capacity extends beyond such times and reveals how some organisations can perhaps struggle to fulfil constitutional aims to share the stories they keep.

Image credits: Tacit Tacit and Sureshot Film

Eco Creative Cluster

Deborah Gray, Textile Artist; Natural Dyer/Ecoprinter with Horiticultural expertise
Naoko Mabon, Curator
Fee Shaw, Arts Officer at The Rockfield Centre
Eleanor Sinclair, Marketing Officer at The Rockfield Centre
Eleanor MacKinnon, Transition Operational Manager at The Rockfield Centre

Eco Creative Cluster is establishing a creative community network around a community dye garden set up on the grounds of the The Rockfield Centre, a newly refurbished culture and heritage venue based in Oban.

The main objectives for this microcluster were to create a new network of volunteers and practitioners, create the dye garden with their help and develop a programme of activities to share knowledge on natural dyes and techniques for using them.

Network Growth - *who with?*
Initiated from a core team of textile artists, Rockfield arts officer and six volunteers had set about planning the dye garden online, with delay due to Covid-19 restrictions, while practical connections were made with other local practitioners. Virtual connections were also made with local and international practitioners through an artist conversation series, which shared projects, experience and international contexts of practitioners growing or working with natural dyes to connect to their own localities.

The volunteers have been key and have been growing in number once work could begin on site. People became interested in the dye garden as passers-by, through word-of-mouth or during an open day.

Knowledge Growth - *what with?*
The microcluster is developing learning resources in horticulture, natural dyeing, ecoprinting, natural pigments and researching heritage connections in local plants and their historical uses across Oban. The conversation series also grew knowledge through: basing practice on landscape and establishing criticality around how land is used; how to grow richness across generations (rather than scale); how to rediscover our locality from something neglected; how to enter a new community and do something with that community; and how to be responsible for a community's challenges (economic or heritage of skills). This included expert input from artist, textile practitioner, researcher, and indigo dyer, Lucille Junkere, due to

her artistic connection in the use of natural materials and dyeing techniques, as well as an educational aspect her focus brings to ECC's local soil and heritage.

Value Growth - *what for?*
Fundamental value has come from establishing an active community dye garden, which has improved the site as a visual amenity. The project has created opportunities for social inclusion and physical activity, contributing to wellbeing for volunteers and a sense of community. They've been sharing knowledge by delivering natural dyeing workshops and demonstrations, which included producing a banner of street flora using the *tatakizome* technique.
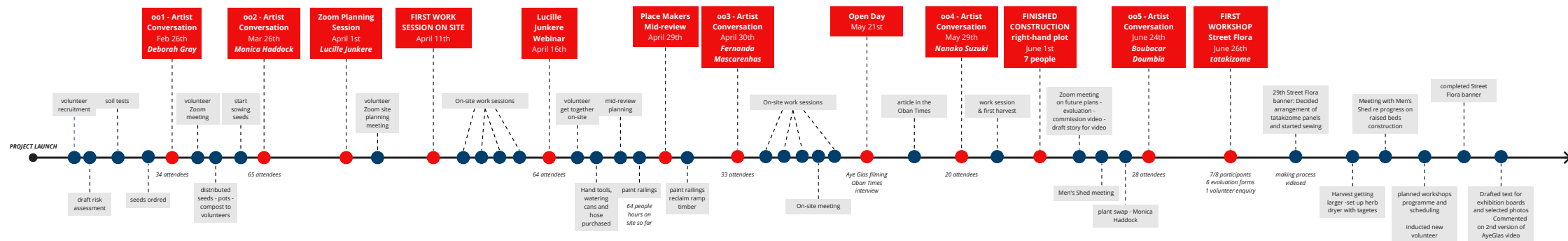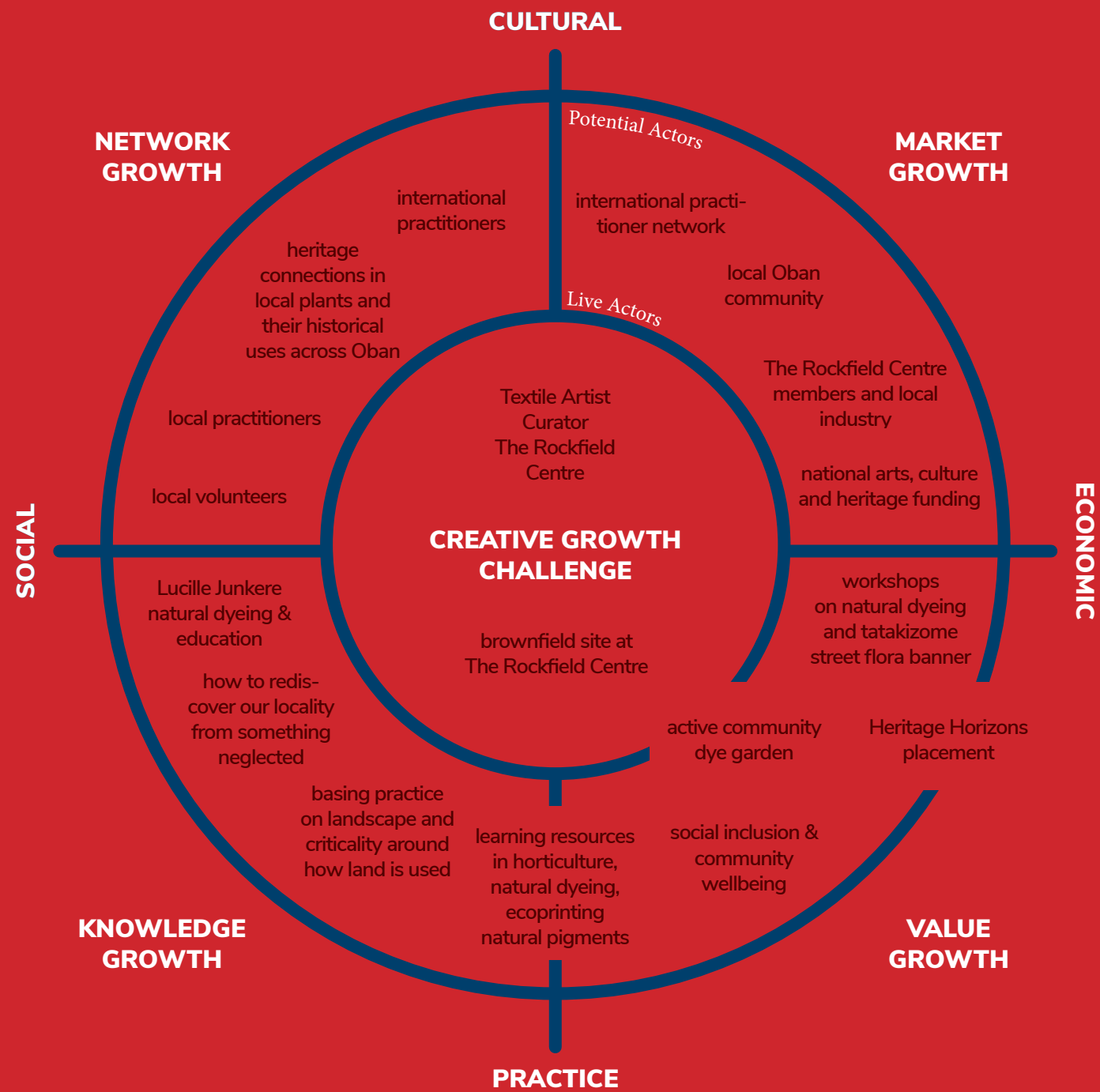
Market Growth - *who for?*
Local Oban Community, to provide a social opportunity to feel part of the community, to gain knowledge on something different, with a global reach. The Rockfield Centre's members, from positive local green development leading to wider activity inside the centre and how it brings extra focus and support to the town and local businesses. International practitioners, whose expertise and attitude to share helps build interest and a wide network, with real detail of how to do x y and z, despite specific practice.

Image credits: Deborah Gray & Naoko Mabon

Timeline

CULTURAL

NETWORK GROWTH

MARKET GROWTH

Potential Actors

international practitioners

international practitioner network

heritage connections in local plants and their historical uses across Oban

local Oban community

Live Actors

The Rockfield Centre members and local industry

local practitioners

Textile Artist Curator The Rockfield Centre

local volunteers

national arts, culture and heritage funding

SOCIAL

CREATIVE GROWTH CHALLENGE

ECONOMIC

Lucille Junkere natural dyeing & education

workshops on natural dyeing and tatakizome street flora banner

how to rediscover our locality from something neglected

brownfield site at The Rockfield Centre

active community dye garden

Heritage Horizons placement

basing practice on landscape and criticality around how land is used

learning resources in horticulture, natural dyeing, ecoprinting natural pigments

social inclusion & community wellbeing

KNOWLEDGE GROWTH

VALUE GROWTH

PRACTICE

These insights are based on a baseline interview, mid-review session and co-evaluation workshop, where all three microclusters were able to share progress and learning with each other and CHARTS.

Differences in Outcomes (progress)
Key progress has been achieved through the growth of ECC's network and in the development of the dye garden itself. Building a growing volunteer group has been essential in this process, while programming the artist conversations has also been key in broadening the network to international artists that shared a focus on locality. There have been practical dimensions to the artist conversations, such as how to use weeds, alongside exchanging plants to be grown in the dye garden.

The Street Flora workshop's tatakizome banner was an ideal way for remote contributors to produce and send panels, making the network growth extra tangible. Developing the dye garden and network is now also broadening ideas and opportunities for engagement and programming at The Rockfield Centre.

Differences in Process (adaptation)
Adaptations were evident in how ECC grew their network during pandemic restrictions (through the artist conversations mentioned above), but also in the resourceful development of the dye garden site.

Early on, local volunteers were sent seeds to nurse new plants from home before the site could be accessed. The nine volunteers (up to July) did a great service to build boxes for planting out of salvaged wood, while much of the soil came from both a local pond being dug up or a local advert for soil needing shifted. With initial concerns regarding access to water, ECC creatively rigged up water collection from a shipping container at the top of the site using recycled guttering, which now flows into a water butt.

Learning on Placemaking (contextual factors)
Learning is developing on the site's burgeoning relationship with the Rockfield Centre. The Centre had been used for polling during a general election, which brought impetus for an open day for the whole building and garden site. This revealed extensive interest through visitor conversations responding not just to a tangible site, but communal activity.

The planning session with Lucille Junkere came at a good time to facilitate engagement with volunteers, due to lack of practical work at that time, but such expert input was reflected to likely have been more impactful as a practical session on site.

Image credits: Naoko Mabon & Deborah Gray

Take Flight

Giles Perring, Artist in music, sound, text, video and analogue photography, member of SO:AR artist collective
Amy Dunnachie, Artist, Maker and Community Practitioner, member of SO:AR artist collective
Gini Dickinson, Multi-disciplinary Artist, member of SO:AR artist collective

Take Flight is an arts programme, led by SO:AR artist collective, of collaborations and workshops across several artforms to introduce ongoing arts experiences and participation for community and visitors on Jura, linking with other island communities.

Network Growth - who with?
The early focus of this work developed the collaborative relationships between the artists, as a collective. They found exchanges of how they wanted to work together, building a perspective of placemaking starting with each individual, 'taking yourself into a vulnerable space by sharing your values and how you move forward from that learning.' This included cycling 125 miles to document their eco-consciousness, setting up a 'communtiy dropbox' and using a pinhole camera to capture profile shots with a focus on physical practice. They then introduced pop-up cafes and activities to engage residents on the island, while finding select opportunities to connect to other practitioners, which included testing out DGPs pop drinks at one of their pop-ups.

Knowledge Growth - what with?
Through early development work, the collective identified a powerful theme to explore *slowcial practice* as a response to contemporary, post-pandemic life on the island. This set a question for their process: what do we learn from engaging with 'lost' practice if we come to it with knowledge of new practice?

Expert support was brought into the project by collaborating with Jen Skinner of Screen Argyll, based on the isle of Tiree, to plan and deliver the *Tailwind* weekend film festival on Jura, curated under the *slowcial practice* theme. This is building learning on how to screen and develop audiences for such events on islands.

Value Growth - what for?
The artist collective developed the SO:AR identity, branding and model of practice for developing Jura as a cultural place. Synthesise (S) looks to identify what they have got around them. Organise (O) works

out what can they do with what they've got. Act (A) takes what they've got into action and experiments in their environment. Reflect (R) finds meaning in what they have made.

The Tailwind weekend film festival on Jura represents a culmination of their engagement and practice development under the *slowcial practice* theme. How do Jura islanders feel, after this pandemic, to come through it all together? This includes producing a short film, *Forward to the Past*, premiered at the festival. Engagement activities include a 'what if' printed news bulletin co-created with the community and making movie cars with young people.

Market Growth - who for?
Diurachs (Jura islanders) are participants or makers, such as part of a music event, or contribute to an artwork/object or actively commment and feedback. Other supportive networks or cultural producers on islands (but also mainland) with shared challenges can share ways to sustain such practices, have interweaving enquiries and develop distinctive assets. Funders of island arts and culture would be interested in the process of an authentic understanding of how island artists are working and what they need.

Timeline
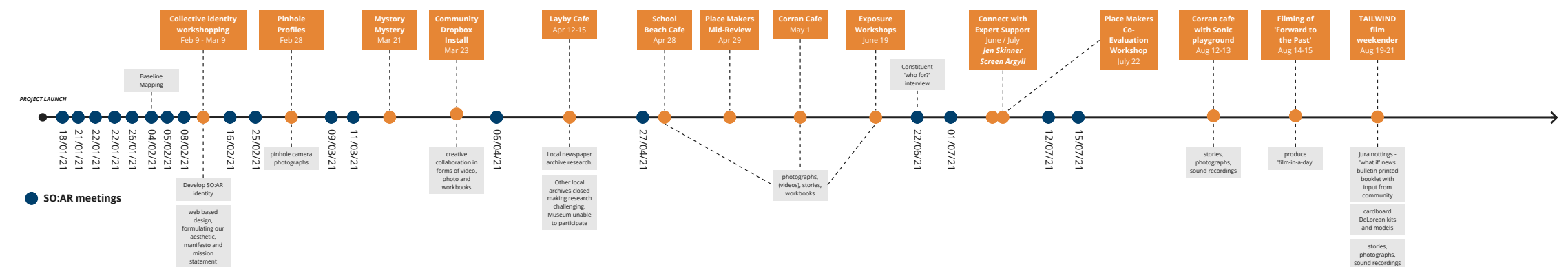
These insights are based on a baseline interview, mid-review session and co-evaluation workshop, where all three microclusters were able to share progress and learning with each other and CHARTS.

Differences in Outcomes (progress)
Progress for SO:AR has come through their development of a model of practice and the emerging role of an island artist collective to facilitate and stimulate community conversations and events. The 'slowcial' theme has been key in developing a confidence in this process, leading to an ambitious film weekend and engagement activities. While outcomes will initially be seen through the extent Diurachs engage, the richest outcomes are coming through how the work connects to existing island culture and activities and enhances experiences of the islands, such as in their debut film, *Forward to the Past*.

Differences in Process (adaptation)
Key influences on how SO:AR have been adapting their model of practice have come through their exchanges with each other and in listening to Jura islanders. A sense of 'self-care and strengthening your arguments' was commented by one artist to emerge in their practice, as they realised the need for a platform for conversations to start happening on the island, inspired by their experiences of 'lay by' chats as islanders. The pop-up cafes moved from lay bys to the beach to avoid busy transit routes from the ferry. They would spend the day on the beach due to finding a positive atmosphere and dialogues on what's going on in the local area.

Learning on Placemaking (contextual factors)
An intrigal aspect of SO:AR's emerging model of practice has been in the roles they've developed embracing a Jura-based enquiry on what makes 'place' with fellow islanders. As such, they are actively documenting and producing learning on placemaking through their work. By connecting with Screen Argyll, this has gained a scale to start influencing programmed activities with an ambition to attract further interest and funding.

A factor to trace from this process is how the core values of the artists influences perspectives, discourse and cultural activities on the island, such as on ecological practices and female empowerment. There is an implicit will to connect to other islands and practitioners on both practical culture delivery and wider discourses, so SO:AR's ongoing documentation of their practices and conversations with islanders will be vital in this learning on placemaking.

Image credits: SO:AR Island Collective

Creative Growth Challenge diagram

CULTURAL

NETWORK GROWTH

MARKET GROWTH

Potential Actors

additional island-based practitioners

other supportive networks or cultural producers on islands

Dunoon Goes Pop

Live Actors

Diurachs (Jura islanders) as contributors

Screen Argyll

collaborative relationships between the artists, as a collective

SO:AR artist collective

funders of islands arts and culture

SOCIAL

Diurachs (Jura islanders) as residents

ECONOMIC

CREATIVE GROWTH CHALLENGE

engaging with 'lost' practice with knowledge of new

Jura experiences of contemporary, post-pandemic life

Tailwind weekend film festival

how to screen films and develop audiences for such events on islands

SO:AR identity, branding and model of practice

creative engagement tools and activities

using documentation of work and co-developed individual skills sets in photography, audio, social media and making

Slowcial Practice theme

eco-conscious practice pop-up cafes community 'dropbox'

KNOWLEDGE GROWTH

VALUE GROWTH

PRACTICE

Evaluating Creative Growth

Bringing People Together

It was observed how each of the microcluster projects were exploring ways to bring people together around culture and heritage in a post-Covid context. This was seen to show an adaptability and sensitivity in the microcluster teams as practitioners, while also framing potential for meaningful contributions to community wellbeing in the social and cultural activities delivered and proposed.

The following evaluative questions therefore emerge to capture what difference these activities are having for people and how collaborative working through culture is making that difference:

What **attracts** individuals to participate and what **energises** them when taking part?

How is **remaking time and space** for cultural exchange different from what came before?

How does participating contribute to a sense of **self-care**, **self-worth** and strengthen **community bonds**?

Such questions aim to tell a story of how and why people assemble and interact from their own perspective and in their own voice. It is one of core reasons cultural and creative work happens and an important way to understand communities and develop coherent and authentic forms of assembly.

Values of Community Growth

Growth was reflected to be strongest through the expansion of communities of interest and practice in and beyond local contexts, rather than economic scale. This was seen to represent growth as generating value through the interactions of new connections that could support sustainable activities for the microcluster.

As such, this evaluative theme generates a set of criteria, terms and questions to identify what value exchanges are happening through these novel interdisciplinary connections:

What **kinds of dialogue** are occurring between peers and what are the values of this peer dialogue?

What **diversity** of perspectives, experience and expertise are being brought together and how does this enhance dialogue or relationships?

What are the **qualities** of the experiences, resources and outputs being produced that show '**provenance**' to such microclusters?

The stories to be told through these questions are ones of cultural wealth, of richness and depth in how understanding and practices are enhanced. These not only then evidence the meaningful and motivated relationships being formed, but traceable expressions of language, heritage, experience and new forms of work.

Open-Ended Progressive Practices

Practitioners from each microcluster shared practices that were generating largely open-ended, participatory processes with a strong sense of determination, discipline and intuition. These were emphasised as not nostalgic exercises, but more progressive and reflective, drawing from existing and missing knowledge and practices.

This highlights the need to support and document what progress means for such practices and what impact this has in the places and situations they're working in:

What identifies **best practice** for your situation (yourselves, your constituents and your aims)?

To what extent are you able to be **transparent** in your practices, processes and outcomes?

To what extent are others able to **access**, **learn**, **validate** and **build** from your work?

Through these questions certain principles of storytelling come to the fore to ground place-based practices. This aims to tell stories of how practitioners and practice can be suitably situated within, and offer service to, a place in ways that enable others to connect and contribute. This can highlight how some funding structures can inhibit such aims, where competition and delivery limit the creation and exchange of knowledge.

Placemaking as Brokering

There was a sense of building confidence in how practitioners articulate and 'broker' the value of their work across multiple aspects of their projects. This can involve how skills and knowledge of place are developed and applied to build recognition and trust with others in a process of 'placemaking'.

This evaluative theme emphasises the utmost importance for practitioners, partners, funders and wider constituents to understand what skills, knowledge, roles and trust are developing:

What **drives progress** within partnerships, what **inhibits progress** and what capacity is there for **adaptation**?

What '**arenas**' are forming across disciplines, communities and sectors that enable **critical exchange**?

What **roles**, **responsibilities** and **leadership** are emerging individually and collectively within such arenas?

Here we can derive stories based on a body of experience that translates all previous themes, values and questions into shaping places, with leading roles for practitioners. Where there is shared understanding of what progress means, this provides impetus and purpose for coming together to constructively address shared concerns. and creates vital channels between decision makers and leading practitioners.

Cultivating Argyll and Isles Creative and Cultural Eco-system
Plenary

This project partnership is argued to have gone above and beyond its initial aims, identified with the CHARTS' Steering Group, to support and evaluate creative and cultural growth in the region.

1. to develop **opportunities through network building** and connecting member activities

Establishing a developmental evaluation process with an incumbent steering group enabled the development of a programme of activities that brought members together in new ways. By sharing and building on insights gathered at each stage, new connections, dialogues and relationships are argued to have grown throughout Argyll and Bute. This has subsequently led to collaborations and opportunities that would not have existed without this project.

2. to support **creative entrepreneurial development** of individuals, organisations and collaborations

The Mapping Your Creative Growth sessions offered the most direct entrepreneurial support to members, with many finding themsleves better placed to re-establish themselves post-pandemic. The Place Makers microclusters have also demonstrated significant entrepreneurial development in establshing themselves and delivering quality assets, work and resources. Importantly, this work has identified the important role of creative *enquiry*, alongside enteprise, as part of developing the sector.

3. to actively **promote the creativity & culture** in Argyll and the Isles

The themed engagement activities not only promot-

ed practitioners work and experiences from across the region, but also initiated dialogues on what kinds of creativity and culture they sought to promote.The whole project has also revealed a depth of human capital across the region for making creativity and culture happen in their locales (or beyond) in often unique and innovative ways. The Place Makers microclusters have provided

4. to develop expertise, resources, and **a clear role for CHARTS in the region**.

Through this project, participants have been expressing a clearer understanding of CHARTS as a mediator and facilitator of creative and cultural work. This has been demonstrated in this partnership through membership engagement to both inform and benefit from funding opportunities. This has also been developed as a networked process, coordinating access, mutual learning and leadership across regions and disciplines. While an element of process has been established, capacity and sustaining progress is still fragile. This needs buy-in at the decision-maker level to enable CHARTS to continue to cultivate a thriving creative and cultural ecosystem in Argyll and the Isles.

For the first time in Argyll and Bute, the Value of Creative Growth has generated an accessible process through which practitioners can reflect upon the values, aims, approach, efficacy and potential of their work in any range of contexts they choose. The Creative Growth Model can be applied by all practitioners, whether working independently, collaboratively, or as part of an institution, and provides a new set of criteria for the culture sector which modernise

categories such as heritage, contemporary etc.

This pioneering work occurs at a time of world-wide reconsideration and redefinition of the role of culture in society, evident in emerging national cultural policies, the rise of institutional interdisciplinarity and in response to the global phenomena of climate-change and the Covid pandemic.

In 'The rise of skills: Human capital, the creative class, and regional development' (2021) Richard Florida discusses how cultural innovation is the key to economic growth and evolves from the constant combining and recombining of ideas and skills [1]. He explains how frequency of exposure to new ideas is essential in overcoming scepticism towards new thinking, and how in practice this can only be made through close iterative interaction requiring both external factors (amenities, industries, academia, diversities, location, and the deliberate mobilisation of skills) as well as the ideas of individual creative people and their unique skills.

At the core of this is enabling people to express themselves, experiment and share ideas in open and tolerant places.

By exploring a microcluster model, we eschew the traditional, hierarchical model of using existing institutions to lead the way, instead fostering constituent-owned 'arenas' for critical exchange which increase the probability of new ideas taking root and growing into action and value .

The question for CHARTS is how it positions its stewardship role towards its members and constitu-

ents, and the extent to which it will act as a provider of opportunities to enable predetermined outcomes, or as a grounded collaborator and co-producer, operating in fluent dialogue with its constituents' strategic selves as they broker new initiatives in their respective places.

This report and the recommendations presented below aim to inform this development. The report has presented details and insights on how mapping and modelling 'creative growth' can facilitate the mutual understanding and development of creative and cultural microenterprises, identifying 12 categories of creative growth in the process. The Place Makers case studies, evaluative themes and recommendations provide early-stage insights of how 'microclusters' can contribute to the sustainability and resilience of culture, heritage and arts in Argyll and the Isles.

"Going back to a self-care point of view, we've identified how we best work and thrive and places can benefit from that.

It's based on what we're comfortable and capable in doing, rooted in the way we've done things to make sure everyone is comfortable and doing ok.

It feels we're creating a model that can have involvement and dialogue from a funding partner"

~ Place Makers project practitioner

Recommendations

Co-develop opportunities for leadership with members across regions and sectors. It is not enough to take models and strategies from off the shelf that you hope might work. The membership need to mutually learn from the rich capabilities, interests and ambitions of members and communities what they want to do and co-develop what value such ambitions can bring. The steering group model provided a strong way to do this. How can this be iterated to diversify leadership opportunities and collaborative projects?

Microclusters can provide a model for developing 'arenas' of purposeful peer dialogues. CHARTS membership can be a key facilitator for purposeful dialogue and activities through clear, sustained programmes, as well as encouraging shared developmental processes across microcluster-type projects. When funding opporunities arise, there can be processes in place to enable members to cconnect and co-develop quality proposals. However, I would also suggest this provides a way to set your own agenda, by establishing and developing 'microcluster networks' that can be flexible to multiple opportunities and gain a voice to demand the opportunities that would support you..

The organisation, production and curation of cultural knowledge is a shared responsibility. This applies across CHARTS membership network, strategic partners and funders of culture, heritage and arts. The investment and development of archives, storytelling and ways to facilitate their access needs to be a fundamental strategy for CHARTS and the region going forward. While CHARTS has gained visibility through the activities delivered above, the role they have played as a facilitator of opportunities still appears less visible to members than required and is unsustainable with such a limited organisational structure. Larger scale strategic bids, such as developing digital archives, storytelling

through videography or collaborative showcasing, would enable the region to benefit from an enhanced capacity to promote itself.

Celebrate and integrate the regions diversity of actors in a broad range of situations. The microcluster approach helps to distinguish between these connections, while allowing new connections, overlaps and opportunities to be made between regions, disciplines or sectors. They are not 'fixed' or formal institutions, but allow for flexibility, and CHARTS can help in mediating this diversity of connections. The ambition and breadth of a network incorporating culture, heritage and arts now has a process for developing meaningful partnerships and collaborations, which can be seen as a body of knowledge to be valued and embraced. Opening up institutions to leading or collaborating in microcluster networks and diverse communities can ensure a dynamic engagement with or development of their own processes.

Placemaking is emerging as a process and practices to develop situated notions of value. This is an ongoing process as times and situations change, sometimes dramatically. The tools and processes offered in this project have sought to underpin this form of placemaking as a process of developmental evaluation. When bringing together diverse voices, this means ensuring time and space is planned to make sense of how projects, collaborations are progressing or needing to adapt. All actors can engage with these techniques at any stage of their development and CHARTS can enable ways these can be shared to support validation and a shared awareness and appreciation of what cultrue heritage and arts in Argyll and Bute is capable of.

References

Find out more about CHARTS:
https://www.chartsargyllandisles.org

Explore the themed engagement webinars:

Digital Stories
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kS4NkZeb6og

Slow Growth
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ElY40MaP_
OA&t=1s

Creative Production
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_zm7iUUp_l

Island Life
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AjRC8bU2Ogk

Audience Development
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72CC6AObtRA

Explore the Place Makers Microcluster Networks:

Dunoon Goes Pop
http://www.dunoongoespop.scot

Eco Creative Cluster
https://www.therockfieldcentre.org.uk/eco-crea-
tive-cluster

SO:AR and Take Flight
https://www.facebook.com/SOAR-Island-Collec-
tive-110660967754311

A Summary of Terms
The Value of Creative Growth process has gener-
ated a range of terms and themes which define the
contexts and issues involved in culture production
undertaken by CHARTS's members, which include
Diaspora (Scottish); *Development* (coastal, cultural,
island, rural); *Entrepreneurship* (cultural, entrepre-
neurial ecosystems (EEs), freelancers, necessity,
own-account, social, productive, solo, unproductive);
Growth; *Learning* (embodied); *Identities* (creative
class, indigenous, diasporic, third culture); *Curation*;
Place (coasts, ecologies of, environments, erosion,
habitats, languages, liminal, local contexts, ontolo-
gies of, politics of, rural, stalled); *Platforms* (arenas,
forums); *Professionalisation* (branding, brokering,
contextualisation, consumers, value); *Resilience*;
Sustainability (Rural); *Tourism* (creative, ecological,
economies, geo, heritage, spiritual); *Territories* (ac-
cess; fluid, mapping; ownership, rights); *Value*.