

Trustees Annual report  
2022 - 2023

The Boom! Creative Programme is a year round activity ,established by artists wishing to deliver frontline arts, creative or cultural activities to the wider public.

It continues to re-establish delivery during April 2022 - March 2023, support by Covid recovery grants enabling Boom! Inc to invest in stronger and more strategic marketing and communications.

For 2022/2023 the programme has three main achievements :

- the continued delivery of our face to face delivery, supported by digital skills.
- the re-establishing income generation to support the programme.
- increase audience engagement with our activities.

We continued to support our facilitators, investing in or finding training that would continue to embed confidence in their work. This included First Aid training and Safeguarding training. This continued to embed the safe delivery and returning to "The Workshop" for face to face delivery of activities.

In 22/23 the Creative Programme generated £21,637.

( £1 of investment has created £4.60)

We have provided quality arts experiences to the wider public, through the delivery of 406 creative workshops.

Of these , We have hosted 140 events that have focused on the sharing of technical, professional and entrepreneurial skills.

This year we have had 2644 participants in our workshops who spent on average £8.18 per workshop.

During this year we have continued to develop and deliver activities under 3 key themes

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**“Trade” - Professional Development**

The focus of this strand in 22/23 was to provide support through a blended delivery model. With online content and monthly meet-ups taking place.

We have had 12 local artists, designers and makers that have engaged with the 12 months of the professional development programme, providing skills, training and support for creative practices that are fostering entrepreneurial approach.

We are also including activities specific to artists. For example Life Drawing.

We delivered workshops/activities under this theme including Life Drawing, Abstract Art, Meet-ups, peer-2-peer training, support and mentoring and skills sharing.

**“Creative Days” - community arts programme.**

This is our year round programme delivered for local residents and visitors to the area to take part in creative activity.

It has evolved from the needs of the community and the needs of our local facilitators.

It is centred on the delivery of a range of creative or cultural activities that local residents wish to engage in. This year it has included a wide variety of activities delivered on a regular basis.

It includes - Art for the Heart - Art Journaling for Teens and Adults, Create & Chat, Drawing Skills - Beginners, Field Sketchbooking, Afterschool Art Club, iCreate Digital Art Club, iCreate Minecraft Club, Jewellery making workshop, Patchwork and Quilting, Water Colour Painting and Macrame.

It is influenced by the needs of the community and our facilitators.

This programme has delivered a total of 32 different workshops or classes.

This year the delivery continued with the Boom Digital Hub, offering 2 activities as blended delivery ( online and In Real life simultaneously) reaching people that may have barriers to engaging with arts activities.

### **Reach-Out (& Pull-in)**

Boom Studios is viewed as a space where people are allowed to be creative, have fun, develop skills and connect to each other.

We have supported outside organisations to deliver their work including, North Down YMCA, Bangor Drama Club, Kilmoody Art Club, Main Street My Street and Sostrene Grene, the Fostering Network, Price Waterhouse Cooper,

This year we have seen an increase in requests for use of our spaces to support mental health and wellbeing, via organisations like Inspire, Nexus, Uhub, Belfast Central Mission.

We have continued to engage with other organisations to develop, support and advocate for the local creative sector. This includes positions on the Bangor Chamber of Commerce Board, Seacourt Print Workshop Board of Trustee, Codo DropsNI, the Bangor City Centre Advisory group and the Asylum Seekers/Migrants/Refugees Working Groups.

We also engage with the European Creative Hubs Network, learning from our peers across Europe and attending their meet-ups this year.

### **Charitable Purpose**

Education - through the delivery of 34 different types of regular workshops that develop artistic and creative skills, and created confidence as we continued through the CV 19 Post Pandemic Recovery Phase. Including Life Drawing, Drawing Skills, Painting Skills, Quilting and Sewing Skills, Artists Support, Digital art.

New additions this year have included Jewellery Making, Landscape Painting, Field Sketch-booking,

Through 22/23 we have provided 259 workshops that has provoked participation in arts and creative arts activity.

Through the coordination of a shared workspace we have provided workspace for 31 artistic and creative practices.

We have delivered a number of opportunities and supporting services for the wider local artists and creative practitioners to develop their work including signposting to training, Professional support through the Trade programme , peer to peer exchange, mentoring and 1-2-1 coaching and paid work opportunities.

### **Mission**

This year has seen normality return to how we deliver on our mission as we continue with face to face delivery. However we have taken the opportunity to embed the learning and skills gained from the pandemic and change for the better.

This year continued to see changes in our income streams as we move back to income generation and away from reliance on funding.

The rising energy costs have significantly impacted on our finance model, compound with reduced sales triggered a full cost review of the organisation in Autumn 2022. This has resulted in an increase in the price of our core services.

Boom! Inc has recognised that through funding streams, we will be able to develop our work. Where possible we continued to have a “paying it forward” ethos to ensure we and our community of artists, designers and makers have a strong and sustainable recovery to the CV19 Pandemic. This has included applying for 14 different funding pots through 2022/2023, with various successes and failures.

These strand of work includes addressing issues such as :

- lack confidence and motivation to
- To engage in a studio practice: having external challenges that are preventing them from returning to their studio practice:
- having increased financial pressures making maintaining a studio challenging:
- feel unsupported and disconnected from each other and their audiences.

Through 2022/23 our aim has been to have a clear strategy that will support the survival of our organisation, our immediate community of studio tenants, facilitators and local artists/designers makers aligned to our purpose through : -

- The Investment and support for strategic marketing and an advertising budget for workshops
- Raising investment in and continued delivery of the Trade forum to develop and establish continuous professional development for the creative industries ;

This totals an investment of £XXXX to the local art and creative industry.

We have maintained a high level of studio use and occupancy through 2022/2023, and continued to provide an affordable space for the wider community to engage in creative activity, to provide a platform for arts and creative activity that is accessible, to increase the area that we catch our audience from and to create a place where the local creative sector can develop their skills, their network and

### **Highlights:**

The highlights of this year have included the investment for outside organisations to help us support and develop our work, involvement in national pilot programmes, visits to European Hubs, improving our human resources and communications.

In November 2022, we received an award from The Arts Council of Northern Ireland to support our work with young people, this project was also supported by the AND Arts Challenge Fund. We finished off the year with confirmation of funding to support people newly arrived in the financial support from The Executive Office, via Ards and North Down Borough Council to establish a weekly drop-in art making session and other activities.

During the year we have seen the benefit of creating 2 freelance roles to aid the recovery from the global pandemic. These significantly improved our communications and event delivery. With these resources, we have delivered a month-long pop-up shop in Bloomfields Shopping Centre, a Winter Exhibition in The Curve Gallery, Bangor Library and an open event studio for the Christmas light-switch.

We have created a signposting service, that is gathering the opportunities for the sector into 1 place and communicating this out on a regular basis.

Behind the scenes we have held a significant review of the organisation as we approached the end of our first strategic plan. Using the Social Value Engine we gained a deeper understanding of the impact we make in particular the work we are doing towards the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

This led into public engagement to inform the creation of our next Strategic Plan, with ambitious goals for Boom! Inc over the next 5 years.

This year we have created a further 2 studio spaces improving our income generation.

We participated in 'The 4 Day Week pilot' - a notional pilot programme researching the impacts and challenges of moving to a 4 day work week.

Our studios members have continued working in a creative hub together, with a strong community of creatives developing as we work on projects together.

During this year we have continued to develop the Trade Project, 10 Studio members and 2 non-members. This forum began in the Autumn as a dedicated space to think about their creative practice, upskill, and develop peer to peer support. We are continuing to see the impact of this work with the individual's practice, developing, increasing income and improved confidence.

### **Benefits to Participants**

The 2022 - 2023 year has seen Boom Studio returning to “normal” activities following the pandemic.

Boom Studios is a space where our participants are allowed to be creative, have fun, develop skills and connect to each other.

Participants in our activities have also been able to develop skills and confidence through the continued delivery of workshops.

We have maintained a high level of use and occupancy through 2022/23, despite the financial pressures on people. Creating a place where the local creative sector can develop their skills, their network and their confidence.

We provide an affordable and safe space for the wider community to engage in creative activity, to provide a platform for arts and creative activity that is accessible.

### **Challenges**

The biggest challenge this year for the organisation has been to ensure that enough income has been generated to cover the significant costs in energy, alongside a general rise in costs for services, art materials etc.

We have increased our payment to artists that provide services to Boom by 16.5% to continue with our paying it forward ethos.

During this year we still experienced a “hangover” from the pandemic, as we return to normality. This can be explained by changing expectations and what we are able to deliver with-in our income levels.

In June 2022 we measured our social impact towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

We know that through the delivery of our activities we have a number of social, economic and well-being benefits that fall in line with the UNs Sustainable Development Goals.

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|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. No Poverty                      | ( we create £180,101.19 of social value.) |
| 3. Good Health and Well-Being      | (we create £50,384.62 of social value)    |
| 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth | (we create £689,944.20 of social value)   |

- 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (we create £8,585.46 of social value)
- 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities (we create £11,294.98 of social value)
- 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (we create £73.84 of social value)

They include a greater sense of support and community, a willingness to contribute to the community through community work or volunteering, increased income, increased skills and other benefits, more entrepreneurial.. but mostly our participants at all levels continue to have fun!

Our Social Value measures £7.83 per £1 invested.

Our full Social Values Report for 2022 - 2023 can be found at :