



ARTIVISM IN THE HORN OF AFRICA

Impact and recommendations

Make a change
See the change
Be the change

THE STORY OF ARTIVISM

2

This report looks at the impact of the Artivism in the Horn of Africa pilot project. Between January 2017 and May 2018, Artivism directly supported 70 young, emerging artists from Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan to develop their capacity as change-makers.

WHAT IS ARTIVISM?

Artivism aims to empower young and emerging artists to become leaders and agents of change in their communities.

Artivism is about the link between arts and social impact. It builds an understanding of how creative approaches can influence change and address key social issues, by opening opportunities for self-expression and bringing diverse people together.

Using the Active Citizens methodology and approach, the project equipped young creatives with the skills, tools and knowledge to tackle local issues, improve livelihoods and strengthen community cohesion through cascading their learning and planning and delivering arts-focused social action projects.

WHO ARE ARTIVISTS?

Artivists are passionate, young artists who are motivated to use their creativity to improve wellbeing within their communities. They have an awareness of social issues and are ready to take the lead on enabling positive change.

Through Artivism, these change-makers harness their creativity to advocate for issues they see as important and use their artistic practice for local development, in contexts where art is often overlooked and young people have little influence socially or politically.



3

THE ROOTS OF ARTIVISM

The Artivism project grew out of the experiences of two previous projects in Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan.

The EU-funded Horn of Africa Leadership and Learning in Action (HOLLA) programme demonstrated the power of the Active Citizens methodology to motivate young people to take responsibility within their communities to address social issues, supporting them to develop the knowledge, skills and networks to act. Through HOLLA young people across the Horn of Africa felt empowered to engage in both national and local development issues.

The approach of valuing arts and culture to achieve social change was inspired by Shakespeare Lives, a project that connected young creatives with renowned artists to create lyrics and performance pieces inspired by their region and Shakespeare's poetry. This created a rare platform for the unheard voice of the Horn of Africa youth – a voice that wanted to be heard and had much to say.

YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE UP 62 PER CENT OF SUDAN'S POPULATION, YET 20 PER CENT ARE UNEMPLOYED AND ONLY HALF COMPLETE PRIMARY SCHOOL.

ETHIOPIA WAS RANKED 117 OF 149 COUNTRIES IN TERMS OF GENDER DISPARITIES IN THE GLOBAL GENDER GAP REPORT 2018.



THE JOURNEY OF AN ARTIVIST

4

The Artivism pilot worked with 25 Artists in Ethiopia and 45 in Sudan – including young people with South Sudanese nationality. On their Artivism journey, they took part in training workshops, planned and delivered social action projects in the community, and shared their experiences at a final reflection session. Twelve Artists also had the opportunity to attend workshops in the UK along with other Active Citizens from around the world.

DISCOVERING ‘THE RIVER’

At training workshops in Khartoum and Addis Ababa, the Artists connected with the Active Citizens learning journey, known as ‘the river’. This helped them explore three core stages of understanding, from improving confidence and self-awareness and valuing different perspectives, to building relationships through dialogue and creating trust and understanding, to developing deeper insights into how communities work. These workshops were delivered by global and local Active Citizens master facilitators, who used the Active Citizens approach and methodology, enriched with arts content and creative approaches.

FACILITATING CHANGE AND DESIGNING SOCIAL ACTION

Next, the Artists attended workshops to learn key facilitation techniques and leadership skills, which they could take with them into the community to support the delivery of social action. Here, they developed their own approaches for cascading their learning through artistic practices. They also designed their social action projects, by identifying needs and challenges in their community, and co-developing arts-based initiatives to effect positive change. These social action projects were assessed in relation to planning, feasibility and teamwork. Eight were awarded seed funding by the British Council and received online mentoring at different stages.



DELIVERING SOCIAL ACTION IN THE COMMUNITY

Back in their communities, the Artists began delivering their planned social action, engaging support from a range of community actors, including schools, hospitals, local authorities and NGOs. They also motivated teachers, doctors, students and other artists to volunteer. Many social action projects targeted specific groups, such as marginalised communities, children with special needs and healthcare workers, while others focused on raising awareness around topics such as environmental protection, gender constructs and urban resilience. During these projects, the Artists cascaded their learning to volunteers and community members, passing on an understanding of how individuals can be transformed into Active Citizens and inspiring a greater sense that change is possible. They also demonstrated how arts and culture can play a role in addressing local challenges and uniting people.

TIME FOR REFLECTION

In a final reflection workshop, the Artists revisited their learning journeys, shared their experiences and presented their social action projects through live performances. The workshop enabled the Artists to discuss specific challenges they faced along their Artivism journeys and collectively explore solutions.



5

THE SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS

6

Eight groups of Artists received seed funding to put their ideas into action back in their communities. Working together with teachers, vulnerable children, students, female artisans, health workers and local authorities, they delivered arts-focused social action projects to address a wide range of local issues. These included improving education, gender equality, health and wellbeing, promoting social inclusion, boosting enterprises and livelihoods, protecting cultural heritage and caring for the environment. Through their projects, they also engaged with and inspired support from different community volunteers and other Artists.

‘ART CAN CHANGE A LOT. I’VE THOUGHT ABOUT THE ISSUES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST DOCTORS AND I THINK IT CAN BE SOLVED THROUGH ART.’

Artist from Sudan

SUDAN

OBTAIN A CRAFT worked to empower young women to gain new crafts skills and to make a living from creating leather goods through social and creative enterprise. The project was a collaboration that saw Artists working with Active Citizens from the HOLLA programme.

ART CLINIC helped medical students and doctors cope with community tensions and their stressful work environment by exploring their creativity and learning new artistic processes. The project has created a platform for them to change the public’s perception of healthcare providers, and has led to a reduction in instances of violence towards health workers in hospitals.

ARTS FOR EDUCATION helped school children express themselves and address their individual challenges through forum theatre, within an education system with limited opportunities for self-expression and play. This has helped to create a safe space of trust, where issues such as bullying are discussed, making teachers and parents more aware of these issues and better able to address them.

ARA7KUM helped to raise awareness through creative social media campaigns about environmental issues in the community, such as waste management and pollution. The project encourages a shared sense of community responsibility for creating cleaner spaces and protecting the environment. It is now an online platform for sharing social action by other artists.



ETHIOPIA

SPARK YOUR IMAGINATION developed art classes to help children with special needs at a local centre to use creative approaches as a form of self-expression and therapy. The project created a sustainable space for children to explore their creativity, and teachers at the centre have been motivated to incorporate creative practices into the curriculum, teaching methodology and daily activities.

RASBERAS: PREVENTION FOR NEEDY CHILDREN supported schools to develop the creative and imaginative skills of vulnerable young people, to help them share their ideas and feelings. As a result, students and teachers have gained confidence and become more expressive. Inspired by the Active Citizens methodology, teachers have changed their teaching approach. Lessons are now more interactive, and many classes are held outside, beyond the classroom walls.

ZERAF – ACTIVE YOUTH used artistic approaches to encourage school students to challenge gender constructs and to challenge how women, men, girls and boys are expected to act within society. The project has helped to increase social interaction amongst the young people, while providing new opportunities for self-expression and supporting the future aspirations of female students.

STEP UP engaged a range of community volunteers to restore and protect a neglected historical stairway in Addis Ababa, used by hundreds of pedestrians every day. The change in the area to local businesses and the environment has been so significant, the local government is now rolling out the initiative to other public spaces in the city and is incorporating the approach into a World-Bank-funded programme to restore marginalised areas of the city.

EVALUATING IMPACT

To capture all aspects and dimensions of the project’s impact, the Artivism pilot used a combination of evaluation approaches designed to draw out the full range of participant experiences and community change.

TWO EVALUATION APPROACHES

The external evaluation of Artivism, carried out at the reflection workshop stage of the project, used two distinct evaluation approaches:

THEORY-BASED EVALUATION — this measured the impact of pre-defined objectives set out in the project’s log frame, developed in line with the Active Citizens and British Council Culture and Development theories of change. This approach analysed both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a richer collection of evidence.

OUTCOME HARVESTING — used participatory evaluation approaches to identify outcomes and investigate how Artivism contributed to these to be able to tell stories of change. This approach highlighted the achievements of the Artists, rather than focusing on project activities, and helped to understand the process of change.

THREE DIMENSIONS OF IMPACT

The external evaluation demonstrated three clear levels of impact of the Artivism project:

INDIVIDUAL IMPACT — how Artivism resulted in changes in behaviour, perceptions and attitudes of the participants.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT — how Artivism increased the capacity and skills of the group and developed an increased sense of collective identity.

COMMUNITY IMPACT — how social action impacted on the community and inspired change at the grassroots level.

70 Artists.

From 3 countries in the Horn of Africa.

Equipped with the tools and confidence to launch 8 social action projects.

Creating 45 opportunities and 9 spaces for artists to connect with the community.

Engaging with close to 2,000 people.

16 participated in international workshops in the UK.

38% female participants.

INDIVIDUAL IMPACT

- > Increased confidence, motivation and self-determination
- > A greater sense of purpose and ability to create change through art
- > Stronger bonds with the community

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

- > Increased skills and capacity for social change
- > A new sense of community
- > Access to international opportunities

COMMUNITY IMPACT

- > New spaces and opportunities for self-expression
- > Increased understanding, inclusion and community cohesion
- > Enhanced collaboration and practices

GLOBAL IMPACT

Response to the UN Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals



Artists improved their overall wellbeing by gaining increased confidence and a new sense of belonging and purpose.



Artivism training increased Artists’ capacity for tolerance and intercultural understanding, contributing to an appreciation of cultural diversity and culture’s contribution to sustainable development.



Female Artists gained equitable access to skills and opportunities to become change-makers in their communities.



Artists increased their sense of compassion and understanding, and through social action promoted inclusion, by empowering participation of people irrespective of age, sex, disability, ethnicity, religion and social status.



Through delivering social action in Khartoum and Addis Ababa, the Artists contributed to stronger community cohesion and inclusion and better use of public spaces.



Social action projects enabled Artists to work with institutions to make local issues more visible. Through participation and dialogue, they encouraged and motivated community members to advocate for change, contributing to responsive, inclusive decision-making.



Artists built local and national networks to address social issues in communities, and they connected internationally to share experiences and ideas for tackling global issues.

INDIVIDUAL IMPACT

10

INCREASED CONFIDENCE, SENSE OF BELONGING AND AGENCY

Within the context of Ethiopia and Sudan, where the arts are often overlooked or not valued, Artivism has increased the participants' confidence as artists, and has improved their ability to actively engage or express themselves and their capabilities through their art. Qualitative data showed that confidence was a key outcome of the project, with survey results demonstrating a 25 per cent increase. Through Artivism, the participants developed a general sense of belonging – a consequence of being part of an Artivism network and having the opportunity to share thoughts and emotions through the arts.

Artivism has also contributed to increased levels of self-determination and agency. The Artists now feel free to make their own choices and act independently according to their values and beliefs. They are now more likely to take action, get involved in similar interventions and participate in public debate.

A GREATER SENSE OF PURPOSE AND ABILITY TO CREATE CHANGE THROUGH ART

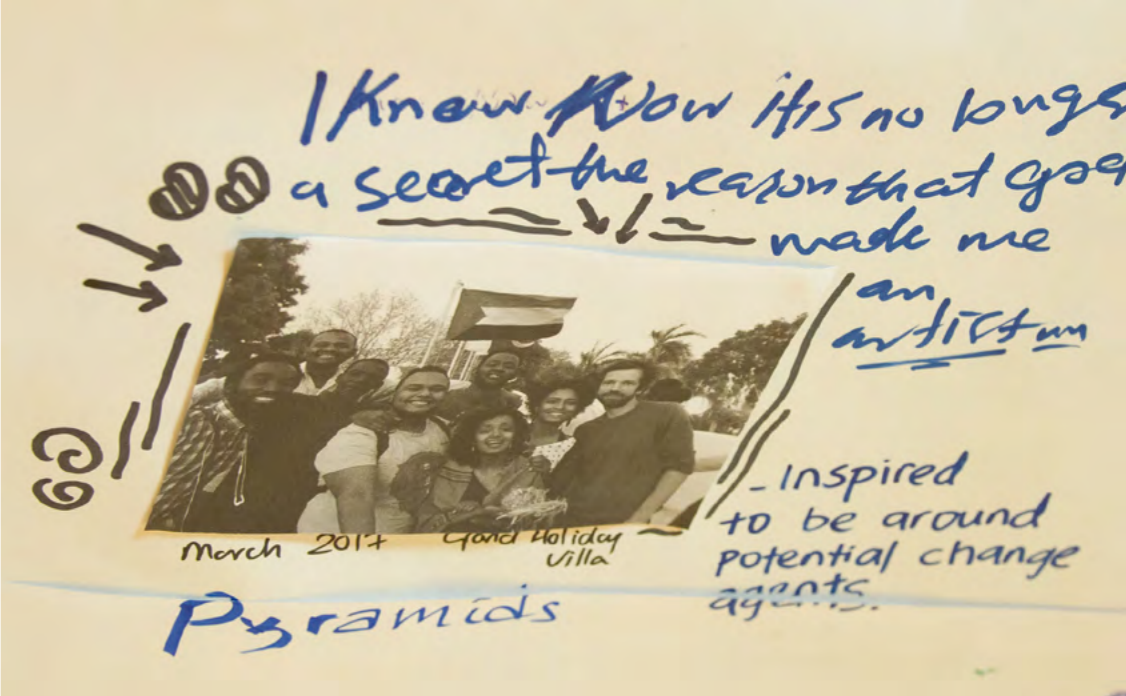
Through their Artivism journey, the participants developed a greater sense of purpose. For many, the understanding that they can contribute to change in their communities has been a revelation. They now feel valued and inspired to contribute to their communities through the arts.

The training workshops equipped the Artists to build a stronger connection between art and social change, which was strengthened through the delivery of social action. Seeing the impact they could have on their communities helped them develop a deeper understanding of how art, and they as artists, can contribute to change.

Through the Artivism experience, participants have become more confident about using their creative talent to motivate change in their communities, and they now feel they have the agency to achieve that change.

‘MINE IS A STORY OF TRANSFORMATION, FROM AN ARTIST TO AN ACTIVE CITIZEN, FROM SOMEONE WHO PERFORMS TO ENTERTAIN TO SOMEONE WHO TAKES PART AND ENGAGES WITHIN SOCIETY AND LOOKS AT THINGS FROM ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW. IT WAS A WHOLE NEW CONCEPT FOR ME – THE IDEA OF ARTIVISM AND USING ART FOR SOCIAL CHANGE – BUT BY THE END OF THE WORKSHOP, I KNEW WHAT I WANTED TO DO.’

Artist from Sudan



STRONGER BONDS WITH THE COMMUNITY

Through social action, many Artists developed strong relationships with the community members they engaged with. Many now speak about feeling a deeper bond with community members, and an obligation to maintain these relationships into the future.

In particular, Artists involved in projects targeting vulnerable or marginalised groups initially felt unequipped to use creative ways of connecting and engaging with these groups. Through social action these participants underwent a learning experience through which they have developed a sense of social responsibility and creative tools to engage.

‘WITHOUT PLANNING FOR IT, WE ENDED UP CREATING A RELATIONSHIP WITH THESE PEOPLE... [RESULTING IN] CHANGES IN PERCEPTION AND BEHAVIOUR, BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER, BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS, IMPROVED SERVICES AND RAISING AWARENESS AROUND THE NEED TO PROTECT URBAN SPACES.’

Artist in Ethiopia



‘NOW I BELIEVE IN MYSELF. I HAD TO LEARN THAT INSTEAD OF CLIMBING A WHOLE MOUNTAIN, TO CLIMB ROCK BY ROCK. DON’T TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER. IN THIS DARKNESS, YOU CAN SEE THE STARS.’

Artist from Sudan



COPYRIGHT KHADIGA SHARFI

KHADIGA’S STORY OF CHANGE

SOCIAL ACTION PROJECT: ARTS FOR EDUCATION

Throughout my journey, I’ve seen how much you can learn about your own identity by reaching out and connecting with others, and how empowering collaborations of change-makers can be. I have seen my own surroundings and attitudes transform – my friendships, the books I read, my everyday routine, even going to work has become more meaningful. I have expanded. I will never shrink again.

Like many Sudanese born and raised abroad, home to me always felt like a phase, a transit, a place I was never meant to set roots. I grew up itching to belong. When I

joined Artivism, I was desperate for a sense of belonging, a place to hold me, and in the process, I learnt that I was the place that holds. I turned from feeling like a foreigner in my own home to an agent of change.

Being a physician and a poet, it was invaluable to learn about the overlap between trying to make a change using my work in mental health, and making a change being an artist. Artivism training has been an opportunity to learn about the various applications of community-based sustainable development and the feasibility of utilising artistic potential as a powerful tool to initiate change.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

INCREASED SKILLS AND CAPACITY FOR SOCIAL ACTION

Through training, the Artivists developed new skills in communication, self-expression, community mapping, project planning and negotiation, which they could apply during social action and community engagement. They also increased their capacity for understanding others and their ability for intercultural dialogue, which were crucial for engaging different community members. In relation to team dynamic, the Artivists also enhanced their capacity to communicate, prioritise and facilitate, and to work collaboratively together.

A NEW SENSE OF COMMUNITY AS ARTIVISTS

Participants together created a sense of community and a stronger appreciation of teamwork as they increased their skills, drive and confidence as a group. During workshops and the delivery of social action, they converged to a ‘collective’ frame of mind, which will continue to characterise them beyond the life of the projects.

This team spirit extended beyond the individual social action project groups and into national Artivism networks, where participants developed friendships and deep bonds based on shared experiences. The value of this network was demonstrated by the number of participants who supported other Artivists and contributed to their social action projects – a generosity of spirit that they see as an essential part of being an ‘Artist’.





ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Twelve Artists took part in Active Citizens International Study Visits in the UK through the Artivism pilot, while another four participated in independent exchanges supported by the British Council. They transferred their international experiences and learning to their own social action projects and to the group of Artists.

These opportunities contributed to the Artists understanding of how young people in other countries identified and chose to address social issues in their communities. It also led to increased motivation, confidence and sense of ability to influence.

Meeting young people delivering social action projects, visiting local communities in the UK, and interacting with other artists and organisations concerned with social issues gave them a more global perspective, but also contributed to their awareness of their local culture and identity, and national issues.

‘PARTICIPATING IN AN INTERNATIONAL STUDY VISIT IN LONDON, ALONG WITH 35 PARTICIPANTS FROM 15 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, AND CONNECTING WITH INSPIRATIONAL PEOPLE FROM ALL AROUND THE GLOBE, LISTENING TO THEIR STORIES AND THE WAY THEY PERCEIVED THEIR CULTURAL IDENTITIES, LEFT ME WITH A TREASURE OF INVALUABLE HUMAN EXPERIENCES AND AN UNQUENCHABLE THIRST FOR MORE.’

Artist in Sudan



MONEIM’S STORY OF CHANGE

SOCIAL ACTION PROJECT: ARA7KUM

I’d joined many personal development programmes, but there was something missing. I was trying to help my people, my family, my local community, and I had many great ideas about developing my community, but I was afraid and unconfident, and that played a big role in pushing me back. Artivism gave me the chance to overcome that issue.

Day by day, as we proceeded through the journey, it turned out it was a life-changing programme. One of the most amazing experiences I’ve had was the International Study Visit in the UK. It changed my way of thinking and made me re-look at many things differently. In Newcastle,



COPYRIGHT MONEIM ALI

I met an amazing Active Citizen with an amazing social action project about cycling. I was impressed by how big the impact was, considering the simplicity of the idea. That made me realise that it’s not about how big the project is, or how much funding it has. It’s all about being creative and adaptive, and looking deeper into your local community.

I always say that Active Citizens is a way of living. It’s about being confident, creative and full of hope and dreams, joined with a big dose of fun. It was a once in a lifetime experience, and I want to thank everyone who was a part of my journey. You made me who I am today.

NEW SPACES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPRESSION AND DIALOGUE

Social action projects were an instrumental platform for raising issues. They provided spaces for people to express themselves more openly and to encourage dialogue. This gave beneficiaries and volunteers the opportunity, through the arts, to share their feelings and voice issues that had previously not found an outlet. Those touched by and involved in the projects were motivated by social action and have described a feeling of being inspired and a belief that change is possible.



INCREASED UNDERSTANDING, INCLUSION AND SOCIAL COHESION

Seven of the eight social action projects either directly or indirectly focused on inclusion and social cohesion, and half directly targeted vulnerable groups within their communities. Approximately 75 per cent of the social action projects contributed to raising awareness and facilitating understanding between diverse groups within society. In Sudan, for example, peoples' ability to communicate despite divides increased by around 70 per cent.



ENHANCED COLLABORATION AND PRACTICES

The social action projects have resulted in new collaborations between authorities and local initiatives, and communication between different stakeholder groups has improved. Teaching practices have become more creative and inclusive in both Ethiopia and Sudan. As a result of the Step Up project in Addis Ababa, five more wardas are implementing a new approach to renovating community areas. While in Sudanese hospitals, health workers have created stronger bonds with patients, resulting in fewer instances of violence, thanks to the Art Clinic project.



HIRUT'S STORY OF CHANGE
SOCIAL ACTION PROJECT: STEP UP

Everything in our surroundings has a story, and the stories get lost so easily in my society, where we throw things away without even thinking about it. My goal was to find ways to get people excited about how art can change environmental issues within the community we live in.

Through the Active Citizens training, I got a lot of confidence and motivation to show how art can make a change. When we started our social action project, to beautify and protect 100 Derja (100 steps) – a neglected and decaying area – there were some challenges. But, as Active Citizens, having a positive

attitude and seeing the realities of our environment, everything can change. The truth is that many of us know our identity and culture, and we care about our environment.

Throughout my journey, I realised how beauty can make everyone happy. There were so many students, communities, government sectors, private workers and differently abled people who were so excited with our ideas and who helped us. So, I advise everyone to think how to contribute to beautify and protect the environment. Because it's us who need our environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

18

An external evaluation of the Artivism pilot led to a series of recommendations to develop and strengthen key areas of the project. Although specific to Artivism, many of these recommendations have already been incorporated through Active Citizens' adaptive model, which enables flexibility through the core programme of thematic and country-specific follow-up interventions. Here is a summary of the evaluator's key recommendations.



PLANNING SOCIAL ACTION

The external evaluation highlighted several opportunities for strengthening participants' skills in relation to social action planning, with a focus on helping them to develop simple, targeted and manageable community interventions and better prepare them to deliver successful projects.

These include providing follow-up sessions with an in-depth focus on:

- > Targeted support to develop effective social action plans.
- > Specific guidance on budgets, risk analyses and monitoring and evaluation, to help participants avoid budgetary miscalculations, anticipate and manage challenges and understand change pathways.
- > Targeted training to build the capacity of participants to deliver social action, including project management skills, fundraising and communications skills.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM DURING SOCIAL ACTION

Alongside the advice and online mentoring participants received during the delivery of their social action projects, the external evaluation highlighted additional areas of support to boost the commitment and motivation of participants.

These include:

- > Linking participants with experienced project managers who work in areas that relate to the issues and themes they are addressing.
- > Providing a line of direct support to social action project groups within the community.
- > Ensuring participants fully understand their commitments during the selection process and offering incentives for participants to remain engaged and committed.



ARTIVIST AT THE INTERNATIONAL STUDY VISIT COPYRIGHT MAZIN URSO

CAPTURING AND UNDERSTANDING IMPACT

Effectively capturing and assessing evaluation data is key to understanding the full impact of social action projects and to helping participants recognise their achievements. The Artivism external evaluation suggests further ways participants can be supported through this process.

These include:

- > Equipping participants with the skills to carry out monitoring and evaluation on their social action projects, and giving them the tools to capture qualitative and quantitative impact.
- > Ensure participants discuss monitoring and evaluation results at the final reflection workshop, and help them to understand beneficiary feedback and how to use it to improve social action design and delivery.
- > Ensure participants reflect the full breadth of impact in their social action project final reports as a way of promoting their achievements.

STRENGTHENING ARTIVIST NETWORKS

19

The Artivism pilot established networks of Artivists in Sudan and Ethiopia, and one across the two countries. It connected participants to local actors, as well as to international Active Citizens through workshops in the UK. Alongside these strong friendships and bonds, the external evaluation highlighted opportunities for the creation of formal networks, with external actors, to increase visibility and public outreach, and to contribute to a ripple effect that will bolster impact and boost beneficiary numbers.

These include:

- > Helping participants make more direct links to other young activists and artists who are active in their communities, including members of youth groups, civil society organisations, and community and cultural centres.
- > Connecting Artivists to existing relevant national networks and arts groups, and supporting the wider promotion of social action projects as youth-led arts initiatives for social change.
- > Creating an Artivism Alumni network to help participants support each other and share experiences, and including trained Artivists in future Active Citizens or arts projects – as trainers, facilitators or mentors.



Editor: Alex Brighton

Based on evaluation by Ellen Lekka, external consultant

Contributions from Rosanna Lewis, Culture and Development global programme manager and Monomita Nag-Chowdhury, Active Citizens global programme manager

Contact: cultureanddevelopment@britishcouncil.org
or active.citizens@britishcouncil.org

www.britishcouncil.org/arts/culture-development
www.britishcouncil.org/active-citizens

© British Council. The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities.