

## **ONGOING SUPPORT WRITE-UP**

**JULY 2020**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document serves as a summary of two workshops facilitated by Spring Impact on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2020. It summarises the key decisions and provides recommendations on how Core Arts can build on these decisions going forward. The workshop followed almost a year of support provided to Core Arts by Spring Impact as part of the National Lottery-funded Scale Accelerator programme. During this work, Core Arts articulated a plan to replicate the impact of its Core Arts college, through a toolkit supplemented with training and consultancy support.

The ongoing support workshop provided an opportunity for Core Arts to explore steps required to create the replication offering, as well as any other adjustments required for its model. The purposes of the ongoing support workshops were to:

- Create a high-level implementation plan to understand priority actions for Core Arts, that factors in the effect that COVID-19 has had on staffing and resources
- Explore how Core Arts should adapt and package its college to commissioners, in light of the move to online channels of delivery due to COVID-19

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Through the Scale Accelerator programme, Core Arts had developed a plan to replicate the impact of Core Arts college, by creating a toolkit, supplemented with training and consultancy support (the 'toolkit and training offer'), to allow other organisations to deliver Core Arts-like programmes with minimal ongoing involvement from Core Arts itself.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Core Arts has been in 'emergency response mode', rapidly transitioning its services to online channels. This has given the team limited opportunity to plan the implementation of the replication model. The team was keen to ensure that a high-level plan existed so that once the crisis subsided, progress could be made towards finalising and rolling out the support offer.

The high-level plan produced is demonstrated in Appendix 1, while an interactive version of the timeline above can be found at the following [link](#).

The different priority areas were as follows (colours correspond to the diagram in Appendix 1), along with Spring Impact's recommendations:

PRIORITY AREA	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p><b>Other organisational priorities</b></p>	<p>Core Arts should consider what its other organisational priorities are as it decides how to implement the new offer.</p> <p>While Core Arts decided that the toolkit would be lower priority during the period of immediate COVID-19 response, <b>Core Arts will need to ensure that it completes the planning and organisation so that the team is ready to hit the ground running once the COVID-19 crisis subsides</b></p>
<p><b>Developing toolkit and training</b></p>	<p><b>Core Arts will need to dedicate protected time to developing materials in a structured way, that meet the needs of its target audience. The team will need to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Define objectives and scope:</b> What is the purpose of the material, who is it aimed at, and how will this impact on the style and format?</li> <li>• <b>Decide the structure:</b> What are the key points that need to be made, what order should those points be made in, and what format will convey those points most effectively?</li> <li>• <b>Conduct an audit:</b> What material exists already, how will these need to be adapted for this new purpose, and what new materials will Core Arts need to develop?</li> <li>• <b>Develop content:</b> How can Core Arts produce material within the defined structure and that meets the objectives and scope?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pilot</b></p>	<p>Core Arts will need to test that the model works and that the assumptions that informed the creation of the model are valid. This should be achieved through a series of review cycles, where Core Arts clearly articulates what it wants to test as it rolls out the model, and then ensures that it has mechanisms in place to assess these.</p> <p>Among other questions, Core Arts may want to answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will organisations want to pay for this support and how much?</li> <li>• Will the toolkit, training package, and consultancy offer be sufficient to replicate the impact of Core Arts college?</li> <li>• Will organisations appreciate the need to replicate a specific approach, as opposed to simply a series of programmes or classes?</li> <li>• Will Core Arts have capacity to deliver this on top of existing services?</li> </ul>

**Core Arts will need to further define the assumptions that it wants to test as it pilots the offer, and ensure that it is building in specified points to take stock and update the model as required.**

Core Arts will need to complete the timeline, considering the following questions:

- **Evaluation:** How can Core Arts show that the model is having the intended impact?
  - Core Arts has articulated a short-term impact goal of enabling *three providers to successfully implement a Core Arts associated creative education programme, funded by statutory sources, across the UK and Ireland by 2024*. However, Core Arts' model currently includes limited opportunities to obtain feedback and monitor impact. **Core Arts will need to plan for ways that it can collect data from those implementing its model**, to ensure that the model is delivering high quality impact that meets Core Arts' definition of 'success'.
  - Core Arts should approach this in a similar way to the pilot, **building in review cycles to analyse and update the model as required**
- **Fundraising:** How can Core Arts ensure that it has the finances to deliver this model?
  - Currently, Core Arts does not have specific funding to deliver this model. It needs to assess whether it can cover the set-up costs through existing means, or whether it will need to grant fund to fill the deficit.
- **Communications:** How will Core Arts communicate this package to others?
  - In order to get this model running, Core Arts will need to ensure that stakeholders are aware of and engage with the model. **In order to do this, Core Arts will need to plan action points such as:**
    - Packaging and presenting the offering
    - Creating a marketing strategy
    - Developing branding and stylistic features
    - Developing marketing tools

**As a next step, Core Arts should identify specific action points based on the above, adding them to the timeline in order to understand dependencies and chronologies. The team should ensure that the ordering of activities makes sense given organisational priorities and capacity.**

### 3. DEFINING THE ONLINE OFFER

In light of COVID-19, Core Arts has had to migrate its Core Arts college to online channels of delivery, such as holding classes by Zoom, posting instructional videos, and engaging members through social media. Inspired by the success of this approach in reaching members from wide geographic areas and whom Core Arts has struggled to engage previously, and the increased interest from commissioners, Core Arts is keen to articulate more clearly what this might look like as an offer in the future. Core Arts feels that this can open the door to greater scale without needing to involve partners.

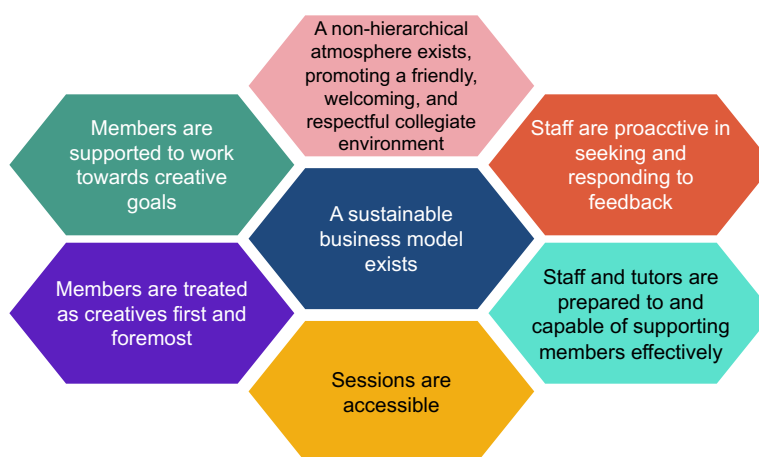
### 3.1 UPDATING THE CORE

During the Scale Accelerator process, Core Arts articulated the 'core' of its programmes: The **essential elements** that drive Core Arts' **intended impact**. Elements of the core can either be:

- **Exact:** elements that are essential and must be delivered in a prescribed way
- **Flexible:** elements that are essential but their delivery can be flexed to the local context
- **Bolt-on:** non-essential elements that increase impact but are not required to achieve the prescribed level of impact

Figure 1 shows the main categories of Core Arts' core. Greater detail can be found in the Core Arts Design Report (December 2019).

*Figure 1: The main areas of Core Arts' core*



During the workshop Core Arts assessed the different elements of the core, to understand how they would need to be changed or updated in light of online delivery, and which elements of the core were no longer suitable.

While for the most part, elements of the core could easily be realised through online delivery (for example, members can leave and rejoin Zoom classes easily, just as they would leave and rejoin a physical class), there were areas where Core Arts needs to accept the limitations of the online offer. The Core Arts team may need to critically consider whether the online offer truly represents a pathway to greater scale of its college, and what compromises this may entail.

#### 3.1.1 Online classes are a blocker to accessibility and member-led classes

Moving classes online poses a barrier to engagement in classes that require expensive equipment or lots of space. While Core Arts is able to use personal budgets or access grants to provide equipment for its most in-need members, this is not possible for all, especially those with lowest need. Core Arts acknowledged, for example, that the guitar

classes now can only be attended by those who already own a guitar, and so they must be pitched at intermediate level rather than beginners.

While this is unavoidable, it poses challenges for delivering certain elements of Core Arts' core, such as *"A diverse range of sessions is available, that appeal to a diverse membership base and marginalised communities"*, and *"Members can request and run new sessions"*. While Core Arts will do all it can to respond to members' wishes, and ensure that classes appeal to a diverse membership base, its flexibility to do this is limited when delivering classes online. **Spring Impact recommends that Core Arts assess the effect that a limited schedule will have on the impact that it is able to guarantee before communicating with commissioners.**

### **3.1.2 Online delivery makes it more difficult to recreate a social, collegiate atmosphere**

There are a number of elements of Core Arts' core, related to the social or collegiate side of things, that cannot be easily replicated through online channels. Most notably, while there are opportunities for spontaneous social interaction between Zoom classes, these are limited to those most in-need who are able to access these classes with tutors. Individuals with less need who are accessing video classes only will find it more difficult to engage with other members in a sociable way, as happened in the college with shared social spaces. Core Arts acknowledged that following the move online, social elements were of lower priority (compared to, for example, quality of teaching), however social engagement was originally defined as an essential element of impact. **Spring Impact recommends that Core Arts explore how it can recreate the collegiate atmosphere online, find other ways to achieve the same impact, or understand the effect that this will have on the impact that it is able to guarantee before communicating with commissioners.**

### **3.1.3 Online delivery makes it more difficult to display or showcase members' work**

When originally defining the core, the team identified that showcasing members' work, – either through displaying art in communal spaces, or hosting events – was an important way of treating members as creatives first and foremost and helping them to work towards creative goals, a crucial means of achieving impact. As Core Arts college moves online, there are fewer opportunities for members to publicly showcase their work. **Core Arts will need to consider how members can be supported as creatives in other ways, and understand the effect that inability to showcase work will have on the impact that Core Arts can guarantee.**

## **3.2 Critically considering the offer that Core Arts can guarantee to commissioners**

As Core Arts moves its college online, it has successfully recreated many of the elements that made the in-person college so impactful. However, there are a number of elements, discussed above, that are less suited to online delivery. In the workshop, Core Arts acknowledged that online delivery would not represent a way to scale *all* of Core Arts, and

that the support it currently offers to its most in-need members, which requires a lot of devoted staff time or equipment, could not be massively scaled with current online infrastructure. Instead, online delivery offers an opportunity to reach a greater number of lower-need members, who require less one-on-one support, or whom do not qualify for personal budgets.

As Core Arts develops its online offer, it should **articulate what it is able to offer to commissioners**, and be **realistic about the level of impact that can be replicated through online means**. It should be clear on **what elements of the online offer are aimed at the most in-need members, and which are aimed more broadly**.

Following piloting the online offer, Core Arts may want to revisit the assumptions that underlay the core, and **assess whether all the elements originally articulated are indeed essential drivers of impact**.

As Core Arts works with commissioners to develop the online offer, it should be wary of overcommitting. Core Arts has spoken about how it could reach most-in-need members beyond London – even those who require equipment to be delivered to them or one-to-one support – by partnering with more local organisations. During the Scale Accelerator programme, Core Arts identified a number of factors that dissuaded it from considering partnership: Notably the lack of team capacity and a desire to focus energy within Hackney. **Should Core Arts choose to pursue scale through partners, the team must be realistic about the time and resource that will be required to build up a model, bearing in mind the support it will need to provide to partners**.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

As Core Arts develops its toolkit and training offer to replicate impact, it should do so in a structured way, considering how the timelines fit into its other organisational priorities.

As Core Arts further develops the online Core Arts College, it should consider which elements of the college will be harder to recreate online, possibly looking to recreate the impact through alternative means, or critically assessing whether elements previously thought to be crucial for impact are indeed as important as first thought. As Core Arts speaks to commissioners, it should be clear on what the move to online channels of delivery means for the service that it can provide and the impact that it can guarantee.

The next steps for Core Arts will be to:

- Complete the timeline to account for the remaining tasks to complete the toolkit and training offer (outlined in section 2), ensuring that the timeline makes sense given Core Arts' team's capacity and other organisational commitments
- Articulate what it is able to offer to commissioners, and be clear on what elements of the online offer are aimed at the most in-need members, and which are aimed more broadly

## 5. APPENDIX 1: TIMELINE OF NEXT STEPS REQUIRED FOR IMPLEMENTATION

<p>Recruitment of staff for online offer</p> <p>Online service delivery</p> <p>Reduced but ongoing Core Landscapes delivery</p> <p>Reduced but ongoing Core Sports delivery</p> <p>Trustee development and governance</p>	<p>Increased Core Sports and Landscapes delivery</p> <p>Recruitment of additional creative / tutor staff</p> <p>Transitioning to hybrid online/in person provision of Core Arts college</p> <p>Building Eastway depot</p>	<p>Decide which team will be in charge of developing this</p> <p>Decide on roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Define objectives and scope for toolkit</p> <p>Define objectives and scope for training</p>	<p>Revisit boat project</p> <p>Develop the structure for toolkit</p> <p>Develop the structure for training</p> <p>Conduct a thorough audit of existing materials and identify areas for development</p>
During intense Covid response	1 month following Covid response	3 months following Covid response	6 months following Covid response





			
			
			
 			
			
9 months following Covid response	1 year following Covid response	18 months following Covid response	2 years following Covid response