



THE GREAT SOLVA MOSAIC STEPS PROJECT

EVALUATION REPORT

May 2018

drafted by

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SUMMARY

Background

Solva Care is a community-development project centring on social support and wellbeing activities run at the locality level. The Great Solva Mosaic Steps Project was a project funded by the Allen Lane Foundation. The project commenced in October 2017, and first stage – completion of the mosaic panels by the community – ended in December 2017. The installation of the panels on the steps, along with the fitting of new handrails and step re-surfacing, was completed in May 2018. Solva Care would like to thank the Allen Lane Foundation for funding the mosaic masterclasses, as well as those individuals who raised funds for the new railings, and Pembrokeshire County Council who re-tiled them.

Project Objectives

Solva Care set up a community-mosaic arts project that involved members of the community learning how to create mosaics, and putting the skills learnt to use by producing mosaics to decorate a set of unattractive village steps.

The project aimed to demonstrate wellbeing outcomes amongst participants from the community who were involved in producing the mosaics. The aims of the project were to:

- Bring the generations together in an enjoyable and productive social activity, which would improve the village environment.
- Enhance the wellbeing of participants – happiness, confidence, creativity and enjoyment.
- Improve the participants' sense of creativity, interest in the arts and other community activities.
- Develop existing skills and learn new skills.
- Extend the participants' social connections and connectivity.

The intended physical outcome of the project was to decorate the steps with mosaics and make them safer.

Tools and Methods

The evaluation was based on the following methods:

- A questionnaire completed by the participants in the mosaic-art classes.
- Comments recorded with participants at a 'Next Steps' meeting held in March 2018.

The draft questionnaire was piloted by Solva Care's Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Group, and the final version was distributed in paper format at the penultimate classes (afternoon and evening), and collected in those, or the final classes.

Outcomes

Artist-led sessions were held with 29 members of the community to produce the mosaics. Of those, 18 completed evaluation questionnaires to record the outcomes of the community-arts activity, making the overall response rate 62%.

The age range of participants was from the 20s through to the 70s, with the majority being in their 60s. 89% of respondents reported gaining high levels of enjoyment from the project, whilst 83% of participants had reported gaining a greater sense of creativity. 94% of respondents reported that the sessions had enabled them to make new connections with people. A very high percentage said that they would like to be involved in more arts projects, and were interested in attending further community activities.

Conclusion

The participants in the classes reported an improved sense of wellbeing. They had learnt new skills or reinforced those that they already possessed. New social connections across the ages were also facilitated by the project. The study did not undertake a pre-survey, nor verify the self-reports. Nevertheless, we can conclude that it was successful overall in meeting its objectives.

INTRODUCTION

Solva Care

Solva Care was set up in 2015 as a voluntary-service pilot project to support and protect vulnerable and isolated members of the community in the Pembrokeshire village of Solva. The work of volunteers was then expanded into daytime social activities in the village, and trips to nearby places of interest.

The overarching aim of the project is for people to feel as well as they are able, and in every sense – mentally, physically and socially. Solva Care wants older people in its community to be resilient, feel valued and be fully integrated into the life of their community, whilst remaining in their own homes for as long as possible, and be discharged after hospital stays in a timely manner.

In August 2017, the pilot project ended; Solva Care was mainstreamed and became a registered charity. Solva Care has extended its aims into the realm of prevention, community-wide. This involves ‘focusing upstream’ to prevent ill health and prolong good health and life. The Allen Lane Foundation awarded a grant to Solva Care to pursue that aim.

The Project

The Great Solva Mosaic Steps Project was a project funded by the Allen Lane Foundation. The key milestones of the project set-up were the canvassing of interest from members of the community using the services of Solva Care, and its weekly coffee mornings. Information was also circulated via the monthly Solva Newsletter, which is delivered to all houses in the village and distributed at the local shop, in order to widen the scope of take-up. Posters were also placed on local noticeboards.

Following the launch of the project on 19 October 2017, 12 mosaic-making sessions were held at the village’s Memorial Hall over a period of 6 weeks, commencing on 7 November. On 13 December – the evening after the final class – the completed panels were exhibited to the community.

A follow-up ‘Next Steps’ meeting to inform participants – and those interested in future projects – of the forthcoming installation phase of the project was held on 21 March 2018. The re-tiling of the steps, fixing of the new handrails and installation – by the artists – of the mosaics took place during April and May, followed by a launch event on 24 May 2018.

Solva Care would like to thank the Allen Lane Foundation for funding the mosaic masterclasses, as well as those individuals who raised funds for the new railings, and Pembrokeshire County Council who re-tiled them.

Objectives

There is a growing body of evidence that engaging in the arts can improve people’s health and wellbeing.¹ Based on this evidence, Solva Care set up a community-mosaic arts project that involved members of the community learning how to create mosaics, and putting the skills learnt to use by producing mosaics to decorate a set of unattractive village steps.

The project aimed to demonstrate wellbeing outcomes amongst participants from the community who were involved in producing the mosaics. The aims of the project were to:

- Bring the generations together in an enjoyable and productive social activity, which would improve the village environment.
- Enhance the wellbeing of participants – happiness, confidence, creativity and enjoyment.
- Improve the participants’ sense of creativity, interest in the arts and other community activities.
- Develop existing skills and learn new skills.

¹ All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (2017) *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing*, London, APPG.

- Extend the participants' social connections and connectivity.

The intended physical outcome of the project was to enhance a set of steps leading from outside Capel Mynydd Seion/Mount Zion Chapel to the area opposite St Aiden's Church in Solva. The requirements of the brief were threefold:

- Make the treads of the steps safe.
- Replace the existing handrail.
- Produce and apply mosaics to the risers of the steps.

TOOLS AND METHODS

Evaluation Design

The evaluation was summative. It involved a survey of the participants of the art classes, and observation of a follow-up meeting that took place 14 weeks after the final class. The artists and one participant were also interviewed and filmed at the exhibition following the last class (not reported in this evaluation report).

Method of Evaluation

The evaluation was based on the following methods:

- Self-completed, structured questionnaire developed by Solva Care's Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Group.
- Comments recorded with participants at the 'Next Steps' meeting held in March 2018.

Questionnaire

A draft questionnaire was piloted by Solva Care's Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Group, and was based on one developed and used for the evaluation of a community project called Inclusion Through the Arts.² The final version was distributed in paper format at the penultimate classes, and collected in those, or the final classes.

The questionnaire is in Appendix 2.

Attendance Data

A register was kept of attendees, using weekly signing-in sheets.

Follow-up Meeting

Participants, and other members of the community, were invited to a 'Next Steps' meeting on 21 March 2018. 21 people attended: participants of the mosaic project, and also some who were interested in future community-arts projects. Attendees were asked about their experiences of the project, and whether they were interested in future mosaic and community-arts projects.

² Annabel Jackson Associates (2007) 'Community Arts Impact – Evaluation Model and Toolkit: Evaluation Report to the Arts Council of Wales'.

EVALUATION OF PROJECT OUTCOMES

Project Set-up

The mosaic-making classes were held at the village’s Memorial Hall over a period of 6 weeks, and were led by artists Maddie Janes and Penny Dafforn. They tutored the participants in techniques and designed the overall layouts of the final panels. All sessions were free to participants. The tutors were paid and provided the materials.

The first four sessions were 2 hours long, and the final two sessions were increased to 3 hours to enable the mosaics to be completed on schedule. Participants could attend either an afternoon session (starting at 2pm) or an evening session (starting at 6pm).

Attendance Levels

The following information is taken from the signing-in sheets:

There were a total of 29 participants in the project, of which 17 attended the afternoon sessions and 12 the evening. All were female, with the exception of one male. No information on disabilities or language was recorded.

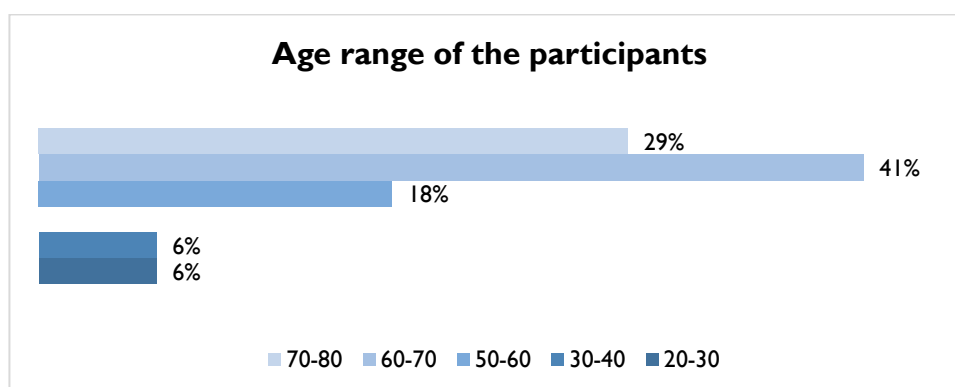
The majority of participants pre-registered; however, some came along to the first session without doing so. One participant changed from the afternoon classes to the evening classes after the first session, and remained in the evening class. Two participants swapped one class each between the afternoon and evening sessions. Seven dropped out – and of those, reasons given were bereavement or inability to use cutting tools.

There was a lower drop-out rate – and more regular attendance – from participants who attended the evening classes, than from those who attended the afternoon classes. Those who dropped out of the afternoon sessions tended to be those who had not pre-registered, which suggests a greater commitment by those who had pre-registered to attend all the sessions.

Age Range of Participants

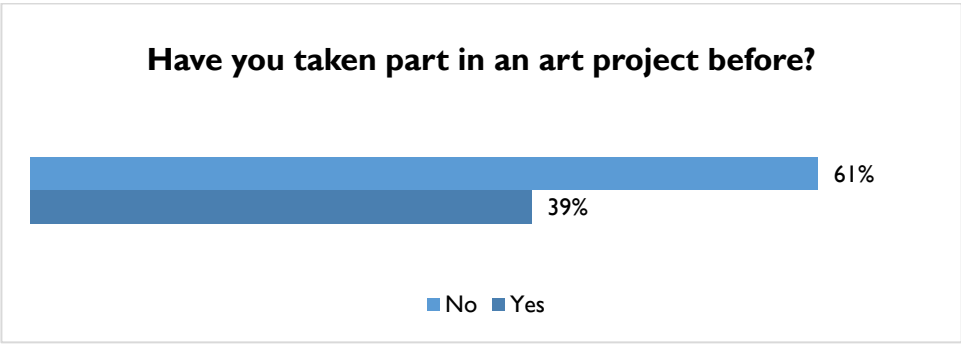
The information in this, and the following sections, is from the questionnaires.

18 questionnaires were returned at the end of Stage I. The majority who recorded their age were between 60 and 70.



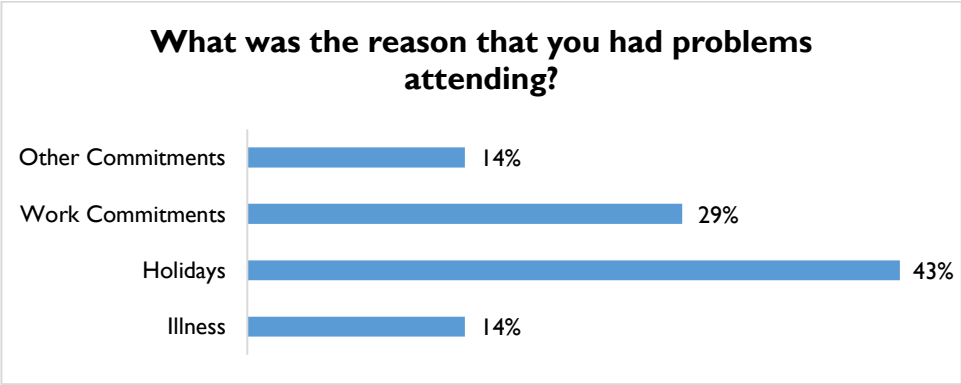
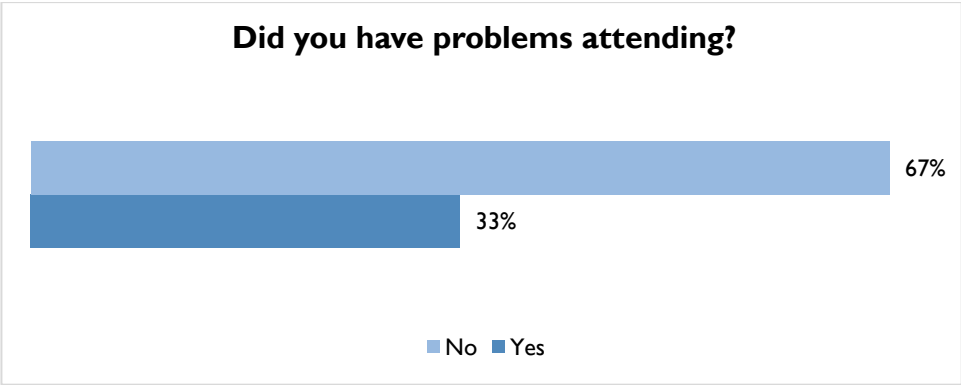
Participation

39% of respondents had taken part in an arts project previously. 84% of respondents had attended all or most (5 or 6) of the sessions.



Attendance

33% said that they had problems attending. Of those, the most common reason was holidays.

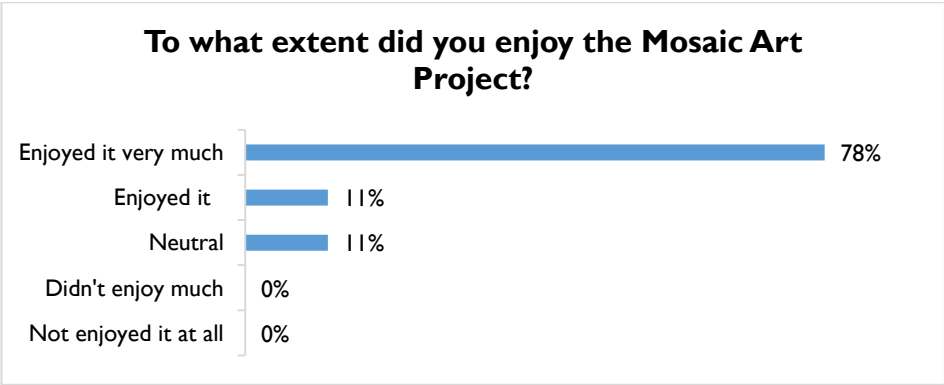


Outcomes

The following outcomes are scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest score to 5 being the highest.

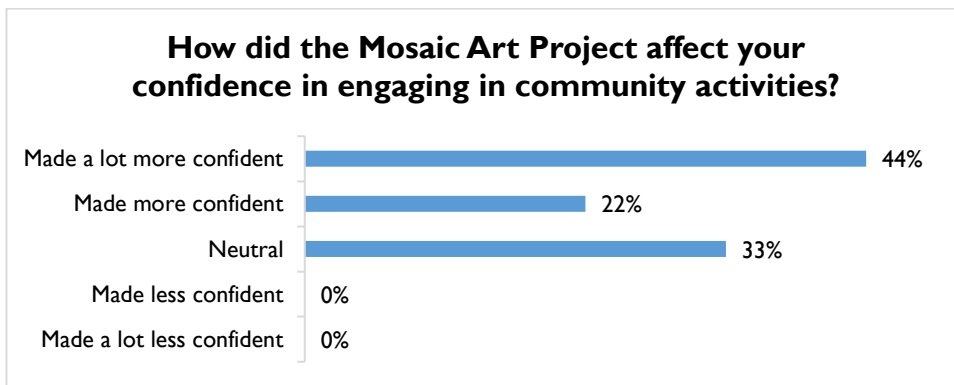
Enjoyment

89% of respondents had gained high levels of enjoyment from the project, scoring 4 or 5.



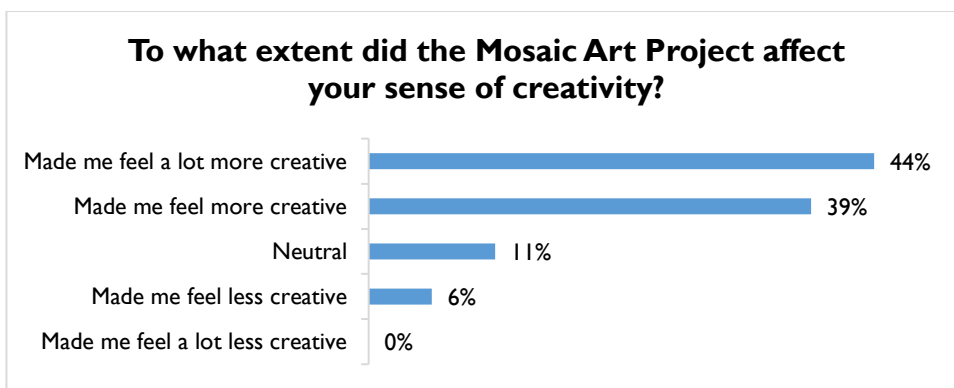
Confidence in Engaging in Community Activities

66% of respondents had gained confidence from participating in the project, scoring 4 or 5. One lower score came from a person who said that confidence 'has not been a problem for me'.



Creativity

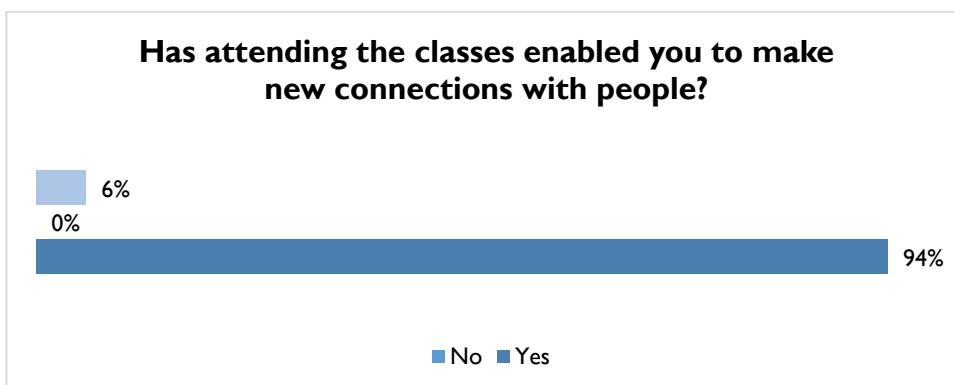
83% of participants had gained a greater sense of creativity, scoring 4 or 5.



New Connections

94% of respondents reported that the sessions had enabled them to make new connections with people.

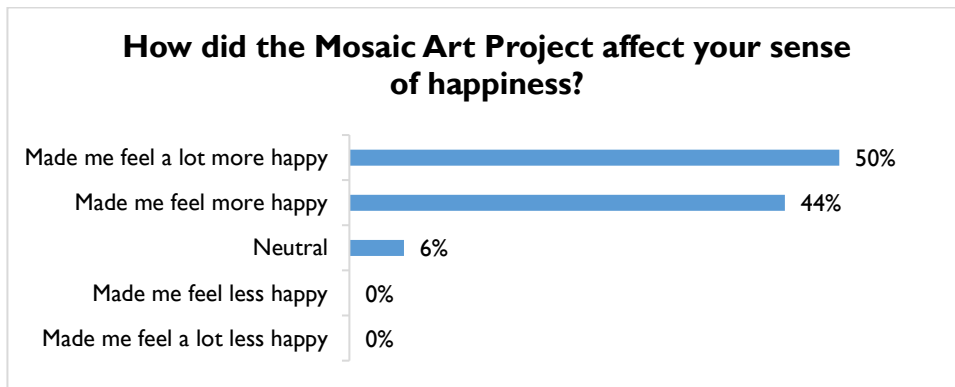
There was a comment from one participant who reported that they 'had met some more (especially younger) people'.



Happiness

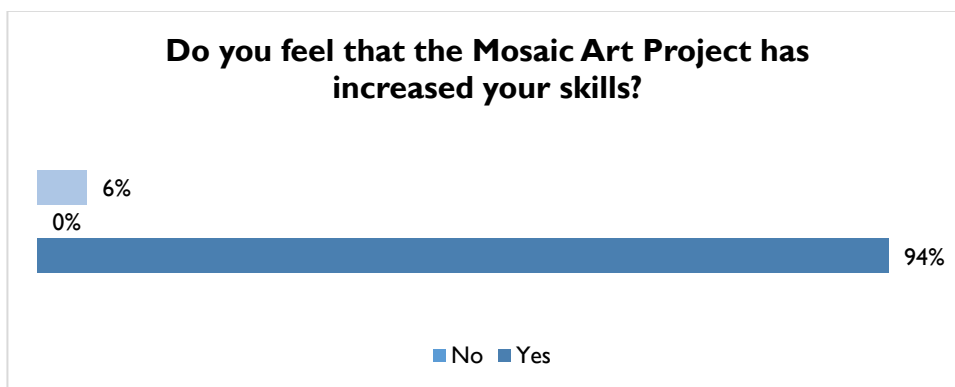
94% of respondents had an increased sense of happiness, scoring 4 or 5.

The inclusion of this question was subject to discussion by the Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Group – given the subjective nature of the question – however, it was decided to include it.



Skills

94% of respondents felt that the project had increased their skills.



Respondents were invited to comment on their developed skills. Many commented on learning a new skill, and some commented on increases in dexterity, and other practical abilities:

'Have wanted to create mosaic in garden after seeing them on holiday - now have skills to take this forward'

'I would be confident to undertake a small mosaic project on my own having learnt the basics'

Learnt a new artistic method'

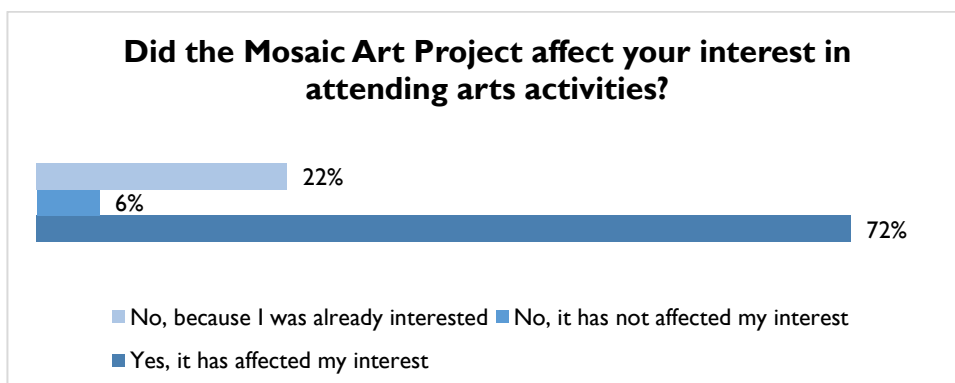
'Cutting, making patterns, awareness of colour, shape and space. Seemed to improve my dexterity surprisingly'

'Helped with dexterity!! I think!'

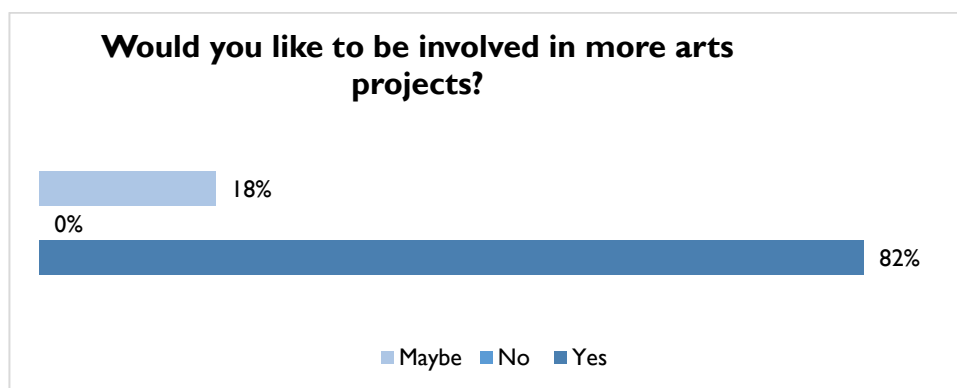
Future Participation

Future Participation in Arts Activities

72% of respondents reported that the project had affected their interest in attending arts activities, with a further 22% saying that they were already interested.



82% of participants would like to be involved in more arts projects, with the remainder saying that they would be interested depending on the subject and time involved.



Respondents were invited to comment further:

'More community art projects - especially ones working with younger and older people'

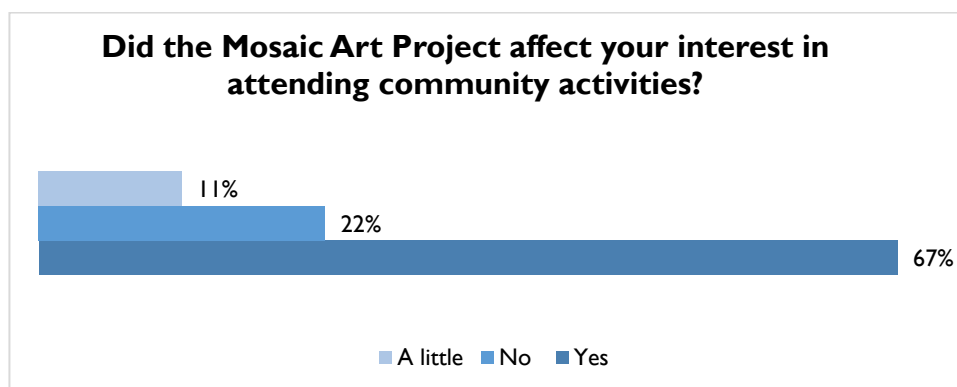
'Community art project would be interested in supporting'

'I'd be happy to use my ceramic skills in any community project'

'Was a great social activity and gave me a chance to try something new'

Future Participation in Community Activities

89% of respondents would be more interested, or are already interested, in attending further community activities. Those who said no commented that they were already interested.



Other Outcomes

Participants were also encouraged to share views or suggestions. Some are recorded below:

'It's been a very happy and enjoyable experience. I've learnt a new skill and met many new folks I didn't know before. I'll feel very proud of the finished steps because of my contribution. Thank you to all the organisers and leaders.'

'I found it difficult in every sense and have a long way to go before I will feel satisfied with my output. Loved the classes. The teachers were so helpful and encouraging. Met new people and it was refreshing to meet some younger ones who I had never come across before. It felt great doing something positive as part of a group for the community! Thank you.'

'Very friendly gathering enhancing community spirit, creating friendship links and awareness of others.'

Post-project Outcomes

Participants, and other members of the community, were invited to a 'Next Steps' meeting on 21 March 2018. 21 people attended, included some who were interested in other community-arts projects. Of those attending, 10 were interested in doing more mosaic projects for the village. There was a discussion on possible projects, and a number of suggestions were made.

It was agreed to investigate the possibility of running another mosaic project, starting in October 2018. Solva Care agreed to consider the funding implications and report back. Consent was obtained to keep in contact with the group by email.

Conclusion

At the end of the project, this evaluation evidences positive outcomes for the participants in the project. Overall, it was a valuable experience for the majority of participants; the participants in the classes reported an improved sense of wellbeing. They had learnt new skills or reinforced those that they already possessed. New social connections across the ages were also facilitated by the project. Practical skills have been either learnt, or reinforced. Community links have also been strengthened for many people, and a wide age range of people participated.

The response rate of the questionnaire was good, and the follow-up meeting was well attended, showing the sustained level of interest in the project. New people attended, which is encouraging for the reach of the Project, in the future, to new participants.

It is clear that the project contributed to the strengthening of the partnership between the community and the county council. The council arranged and paid for the re-tiling of the steps, and the steps were officially opened by a cabinet member, with the council's press office leading on the publicity and providing a photographer.

Small local businesses were also supported by the project, as it engaged artists and handrail manufacturers to deliver it.

Solva Care's work, and reach, has also benefited by increasing the charity's public profile through the fundraising event linked to the project and the visible nature of the ongoing project – encompassing both public exhibitions and the actual installation work.

The evaluation had certain shortcomings. For example, a pre-survey of participants was not carried out; nor was a follow-up survey to check if the reported outcomes were sustained. The questionnaire was also self-reporting, and the responses not verified.

Nevertheless, we can conclude that The Great Solva Mosaic Steps Project was successful overall in meeting its objectives.

APPENDICES

Appendix I – Record Photographs



Artist Maddie Janes, Solva Care Trustee Jonathan Higgins, Solva Care Treasurer Bruce Payne and Pembrokeshire County Council's Highways Asset Manager Rob Evans in front of the steps, before the start of the project.



Tuesday class: first lesson, learning colour and shape using beads to make colourful little birds.



Wednesday class in the second week: making borders for the step risers, which will be completed with mosaic fillers.



A participant preparing the mosaic for the steps representing the sea, and already showing great mastery of the art form.



Some of the artists involved in the project, photographed at the December exhibition.



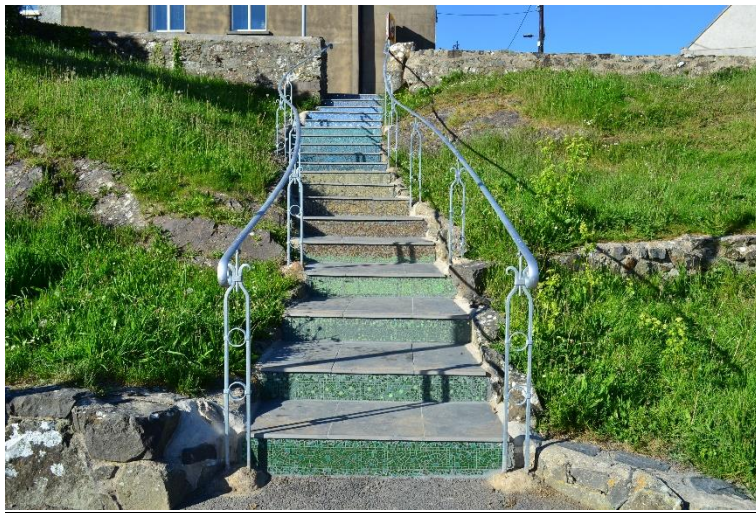
The exhibition was well attended. The community very much liked what had been achieved so far.



A close-up of the completed mosaic panels.



Pembrokeshire County Council's team installing the tiles.



The final product!

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire

Evaluation of the Great Solva Mosaic Steps Project

We would like to see whether the Mosaic Art Project has been successful in connecting people in the community and if participation has contributed to their sense wellbeing. Please spend a few minutes completing this form. There is no need to give your name unless you want to. The information you give will be anonymised.

1. Have you ever taken part in an art project before the Mosaic Art Project? *(please tick one box)*

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

2. How many sessions of the Mosaic Art Project did you attend? *(please circle one answer)*

6 5 4 3 2 1

3. If you had problem attending please write why in the space below:

4. ENJOYMENT

On a scale of 1 (not enjoyed at all) to 5 (enjoyed it very much), to what extent did you enjoy the Mosaic Art Project, if at all? *(please circle one number)*

1 2 3 4 5

5. CONFIDENCE IN ENGAGING IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

On a scale of 1 (made you a lot less confident) to 5 (definitely made you a lot more confident) how did the Mosaic Art Project affect your confidence, if at all? *(please circle one number)*

1 2 3 4 5

6. CREATIVITY

On a scale of 1 (made me feel a lot less creative) to 5 (definitely made me feel more creative) to what extent did the Mosaic Art Project affect your sense of creativity, if at all? *(please circle one number)*

1 2 3 4 5

7. Has attending the Mosaic Art classes enabled you to make new connections with people? *(please tick one box)*

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

8. HAPPINESS

On a scale of 1 (made you feel a lot less happy) to 5 (definitely made me feel happy) how as the Mosaic Project affected your sense of happiness, if at all? *(please circle one number)*

1 2 3 4 5

9. Do you feel that the Project has increased your skills? *(please circle your preferred answer)*

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If you replied yes to Q9, please write below the way in which you feel your skills have been increased:

10. Did the project affect your interest I attending arts activities? *(please tick one box)*

- Yes, it has affected my interest
- No, it has not affected my interest
- No, because I was already interested

11. Did the Mosaic Art Project affect your interest in attending community activities? *(please tick one box)*

- Yes
- No
- A little

Would you like to be involved in more arts projects? *(please circle your preferred answer)*

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

If your answer was yes of maybe to Q12 please give more details in the space below:

Your age *(please circle)*

20-30 30-40 40-50 50-60 60-70 70-80 80-90

Please write any other comments of suggestions, below:



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THANK YOU for filling out this questionnaire. Now please return your completed form to [redacted] at the last class or to [redacted].