



arts for good fellowship

SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

An Evaluation of SIF'S Art for Good Fellowship's
Community Project, India

2021-22

fostering a global community of socially good practice

Practice that harnesses the power of arts and culture to create positive social change.

The Arts for Good (A4G) Fellowship is an annual event that seeks to bring together movers and shakers from across the globe, with the intent of taking them on an artful journey aimed at affecting social good.

The Fellowship brings together individuals from diverse sectors, including artists, art administrators, and social sector professionals, on an exciting journey of change. Upon completion of the programme, Fellows join a global alumni network where they continue to connect, support and collaborate with one another.

The 2021-22 edition of A4G was organised in the backdrop of a global pandemic. The theme for the year, therefore, focussed on unearthing the creative potential of digitising the arts. The goal was to build fellows' capacity in art innovation, cultural mapping and creative models for online engagement.

stitching experiences of change together

The arts-based technique of 'quilting' was adopted in the present inquiry to evaluate the impact of the A4G fellowship on multiple stakeholders including the fellows, children and programme facilitators.

'Quilting' in qualitative research, is used to describe the process of connecting individual stories to a larger cultural context (Saukko, 2000).

Quilting was used to bring together perspectives on '*change*' in terms of wellbeing and social good experienced by different stakeholders of the fellowship.

Methodology

A phenomenological qualitative research design was used. The dependent variables were perceived social good and wellbeing; while the independent variable was the community project.

Process

Quilting was used to collect data and make meaning from participants' experiences. Participants were guided to engage in a reflective exercise at the end of the fellowship. Prompts to conceptualise their experience of the fellowship in terms of a visual or literary expression on a 20cm - 20 cm piece of digital/physical patch were sought.

Following this exercise, verbal details of the artwork and their experience were sought using Google Forms/ interviews.

The process was designed in a manner that allows for a balance between open-ended expression and a guided structure. The exercise is inherently reflective in nature encouraging the expression of the unique and personal journeys of each of the stakeholders. At the same time, attempts were made to provide some direction to the expression through the means of prompts.

Analysis

Thematic analysis of the verbal responses was done.

Core themes that bind stakeholders in their experience of meaning-making

Bridging gaps | enthused with motivation to resolve problems and fulfil needs of local community members

Inner-connectedness | an opportunity to look within, reflect and discover quietude

Community & Togetherness | building compassionate relationships with diverse individuals and communities

Instilling hope to realise dreams | reflection-fuelled aspirations and hope to proactively chase one's dreams and best possible selves

Exposure to new skills | exposure to new art forms and learnings



ripples of change

bridging gaps



'Collaboration of creative minds to find ways'

'Needs v/s What we think the community needs'



There emerged a strong need to help others, and support communities, from the fellows. Within the broader theme of conceiving social good as a sense of service, different shades of meaning were reflected. For instance, for many fellows, the act of giving was **reciprocal** in nature, i.e. they give their knowledge, skill or expertise to the community, to receive experience and learning in return, from them. Some fellows elaborated that through engaging in acts of service they are engaging in creating *'ripples of change'*. The impact created, is perceived to be taken forward by the community members to grow exponentially. Lastly, some fellows had a clear direction in their minds, when they engaged in service. Their actions were motivated by **resolving a problem, fulfilling a need or bridging a gap**, in the context of the community.

Facilitators elaborated on how social good was achieved by **being mindful of the needs of the community** and tailoring interventions accordingly. They shared how often one goes in with assumptions about a community's needs, which ends up being counterproductive to the goal of social good. Thus, the importance of a safe, non-judgemental space for addressing the needs that emerge from the community was emphasised on.

inner-connectedness



"Oneness" - Oneness of experience as myself, with the Fellows, Organizers, and Chennai power art girls!

"Inner peace - I'm not overthinking a lot these days"



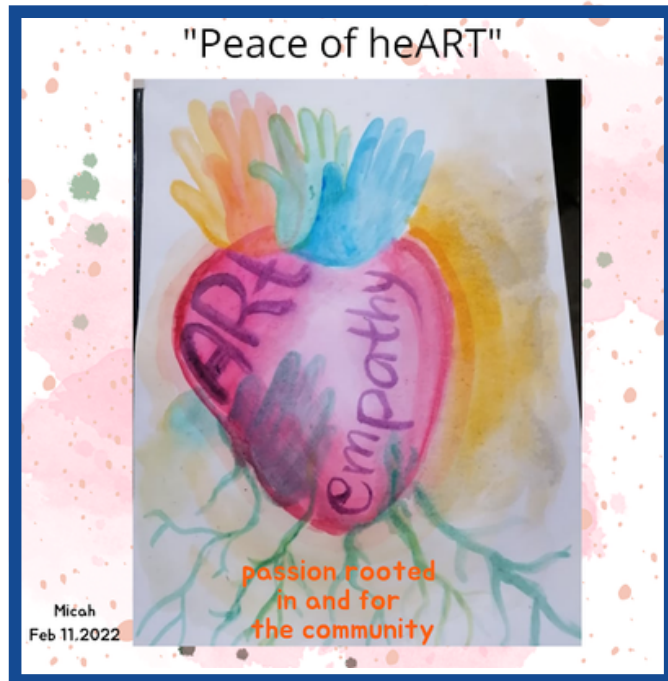
"Journey of self exploration through art "

The experience of the community project enabled **self-acceptance** and **compassion towards themselves**. Some shared that the journey helped them navigate through mixed emotions. This sense of connection with self and others, has been described as **'healing'** by many fellows, given the sense of belongingness and acceptance they experienced.

Children shared that the community project provided them **a safe and non-judgemental space** for **reflection** and **expression**. This enabled **introspection** about their strengths, positive qualities, emotions, and thoughts, whilst also encouraging building on their aspirations. Many also reported learning that *'art is a language'*, and used artistic expressions to narrate their personal stories. The community project was instrumental in providing **a safe and accepting platform for introspection, identifying personal qualities and expressing them through unique mediums**.

The community project was viewed as a **safe and non-judgemental space** for the children to engage in **self-exploration and introspection**. Activities conducted were described in terms of exercises that facilitate **awareness of emotions, personal qualities, dreams and preferences**, contributing to overall self-awareness.

community & togetherness



"Peace of heART: using art to bring peace and establish togetherness amongst people from different backgrounds, cultures, nationality, and colours"

The sentiments of empathy and compassion were prominent in fellows' responses, reflecting the need to connect with others' narrative, both emotionally and cognitively to affect change. Furthermore, given that the fellows were interacting with communities that were culturally distinct from theirs, the notion of togetherness within diversity was reflected. A sense of connecting with the unknown, through the medium of art, emerged. Notions of collective or communal healing, also found prominence in some of the responses.

Working on the community project gave children an opportunity to collaborate with different people, discuss, and understand varied perspectives. Brainstorming and working together led to taking collective decisions in the group.

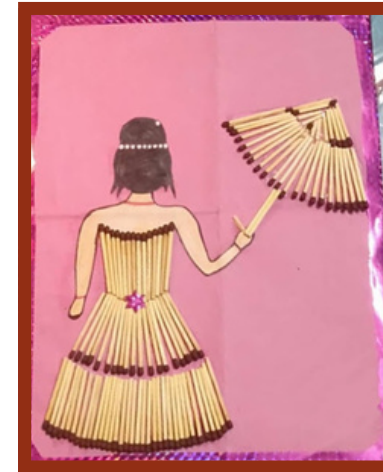
The community project encouraged bonding and a sense of togetherness amongst the children. Facilitators viewed the entire community project as an opportunity that brought together people from diverse backgrounds to work together, towards a common goal.

Belief in hope, persistence and dreams were articulated as motivating factors for both growth and overcoming obstacles. Fellows' efforts in the community project, thus, have been directed towards achieving the same. Further, a number of them conceived social good as **creativity**. Creative endeavours allowed for authentic and non-judgemental expression, which is conducive for growth. Moreover, creativity was viewed as a **vehicle for self exploration and introspection, guiding one to discover one's inherent strengths.**

The community project enabled children to **introspect** about their strengths, positive qualities, emotions, and thoughts. This space encouraged them to feel aspirational and own their dreams.

Facilitators shared that the community project encouraged the children to reflect on their **dreams**, and instilled a sense of **hope** and **aspiration.**

instilling hope to realise dreams

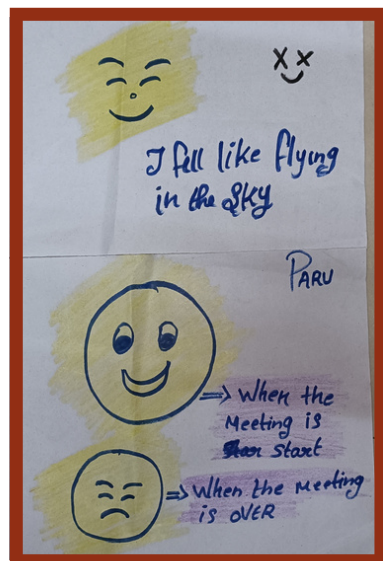


"An island of thousand dreams"



"Butterflies made of dreams"

exposure to new skills



"I feel confident, I feel happy, I feel like flying in the sky!"

"Connecting to the unknown"



Children were introduced to a wide variety of art forms through the community project like puppet making, scriptwriting, theatre, painting and music. They enjoyed engaging in these art forms and understanding how they can be integrated to narrate a story. Some of them reported that the community project was their first exposure to digital art, and they felt more confident about themselves, on learning this new skill. They elaborate on how they feel good about themselves because they know technical words like 'augmented learning' and 'stop motion'. Lastly, a few of them shared that the experience was instrumental in them learning that they can consider arts as a field of inquiry for their careers. Many stated that they felt proud of themselves, to be able to hold conversations with the fellows in English. The exposure to an adult who comes from a different cultural context was perceived to be intriguing and exciting for children. Lastly, it was shared that this exposure to varied perspectives and the non-judgemental attitude of the fellows and facilitators encouraged them to practise the same with others.

answering evaluation questions

1. What did 'change' look like amongst stakeholders who experience the A4G Fellowship?

Change was defined as an act of selfless social service, a sense of interconnectedness, and as healing and growth.

2. How was the relationship between arts and social good perceived by stakeholders?




Art was perceived as a language to artistically express oneself and narrate individual personal stories of change. Fellows used innovative art forms in their community projects to bridge the cultural gap with diverse participants; whilst participants found a safe space to explore themselves and learn.

3. How was the relationship between arts and wellbeing perceived by stakeholders?

Art was perceived to have brought individuals closer to themselves and to one another, leading to a heightened sense of self-acceptance and community. Compassion, healing, introspection and growth were common themes that were seen threaded across stakeholders' experience of the Fellowship.



COLOUR KEY

-  Inputs by fellows
-  Inputs by facilitators
-  Inputs by children

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