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Special issue call: The Role of Governments and Public Policies in Social Innovation Processes

The Dumfries Arts Award Project:

towards building a programme theory of innovation transfer across two social organisations

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### **Design/methodology/approach (limit 100 words)**

By means of gaining insight into the complexity of the transfer of innovative practices between two socially oriented organisations and theoretical insights into conducive contexts and optimal processes, the work utilised realist evaluation resources within a longitudinal ethnographic approach. Within this, a series of specific methods were deployed, including semi structured key stakeholder interviews, non-participant observation and ‘walking’ and ‘paired’ interviews with service users in each organisation.

### **Purpose (limit 100 words)**

The purpose of this work was to critically understand a programme theory of the ‘transfer’ of work in one social organisation and sector (an innovative and successful social enterprise community café, The Usual Place that seeks to enhance the employability of young people with additional support needs in ‘hospitality’) to another (Dumfries Theatre Royal, a regional theatre and registered charity, specifically the ‘Dumfries Arts Award Project’ and more generally, ‘the arts’).

### **Findings (limit 100 words)**

Our principle finding is that with attention being paid to the context and intervention processes associated with transfer processes and having sufficient capacity and strong partnership working, it is possible to take an innovative idea from one context, transfer it to another setting and have relatively immediate ‘success’ in terms of achieving a degree of sustainability. We propose a provisional programme theory that illuminates this transfer. We were also able to show that, whilst working with the potentially conservative concept of ‘employability’, both organisations were able to maintain a progressive ethos associated with social innovation.

### **Originality/value (limit 100 words)**

The work offers theoretical and methodological originality. The significance of ‘scaling up’ social innovation is recognised as under-researched and under-theorised and our use of a realistic evaluation approach and the associated development of provisional programme theory addresses this.

### **Introduction**

Many have conceived of shifts in the direction of social policy since the 1990s as transformative ‘turns’ (UNRISD, 2016). Such ground has expressed various aspirations including, seeking social justice, promoting universalist and rights-based approaches and pursuing more inclusive and participative policy processes (Koehler, 2017). In this context, this paper reports on a project drawing on some of these resources – a desire for ‘social innovation’ (Ayob, *et al*, 2016), the role of ‘social enterprise’ (Monroe-White and Zook, 2018) and the potential of ‘inter-organisational transfer’ (Battistella *et al*, 2016).

Funded by the European Social Fund/Scottish Government's 'Social Innovation Fund' (SIF) and The Holywood Trust and undertaken between February 2018 and June 2019 by a practice/academic partnership in Dumfries and Galloway (D&G), south-west Scotland, the project involved an exploration of the potential inter-organisational 'transfer' of values and practices for a particular group [young people with additional support needs (ASN)] in an innovative social enterprise to another socially oriented organisation. This 'source' organisation, who acted in a mentoring role throughout the project was *The Usual Place* (TUP), an established community café that seeks to enhance their trainees employability, remove barriers to attaining paid employment and promote social inclusion. This is achieved through a nuanced mix of café work placements, intensive needs-led support and externally accredited vocational qualification ('Scottish Vocational Qualifications' - SVQs).

The 'target' organisation was Dumfries Theatre Royal (DTR), a regional theatre and registered charity chosen because of an existing informal relationship between TUP and DTR and a belief that there was both congruence in ethos and the possibility of extending the remit of TUP's employability work to young people with ASN interested in the arts. This was branded the '*Dumfries Arts Award Project*' (DAAP) and was enacted by a SIF-funded 'Project Manager' (responsible for administration) and 'Project Officer' (responsible for delivery). The project was undertaken using the Trinity College, London/Arts Council England 'Arts Award' qualification. An appraisal of this process was undertaken by researchers from the University of Glasgow (UoG).

Central to the significance of this project is the problematic social status of people with ASN (Quarmby, 2011). Their life expectancy is 15-20 years shorter than the general population (University of Bristol, 2017), their physical health significantly poorer (IHE, 2018) and they are more likely to experience psychological problems (Hatton *et al*, 2017). It is also recognised that people with ASN disproportionately experience exclusionary forces (IHE, 2018; 13). Of specific interest, the employment status of people with ASN is particularly disadvantageous; the employment rate of people with disabilities at 50.7% compared to 81.1% for the general population with those aged 16-24 experiencing an even lower rate of 38.2% (House of Commons Library, 2018).

In keeping with the 'transformative' turn established above, these circumstances have prompted calls for actions directed at what are perceived to be non-universalist, low rights circumstances and the injustices that follow (Scio and Werner, 2015). A series of measures have been proposed, ranging from enhancing access to health services (for example, an annual health check) through to more profound 'anti-poverty' strategies that address the structural roots of social exclusion (IHE, 2018). Enhancing employability is seen as particularly effective in achieving these latter goals (Lindsay,

2011), gaining recognition within Scottish policy (SCLD, 2016). The Government's strategy for learning disabilities, '*Keys to Life*' (Scottish Government, 2013) has four strategic outcomes: 'a healthy life', 'choice and control', 'independence', and 'active citizenship' - including "*facilitating employment opportunities*" (Smith, 2018; 1). In line with fostering inclusive participation, this ground suggests approaches that: promote what people *can* do (not what they cannot); deliver needs-led, tailored training opportunities with 1-1 support in *various* workplaces; and nurture a wider 'joined up' system, populated by a *range* of employability-related organisations (Scottish Government, 2013).

Located in the increasingly prominent 'Work-Integration Social Enterprises' (WISE) context that suggests the particular suitability of social enterprise models (Vidal, 2005) and social innovation (Roy *et al*, 2014) in promoting employability, over the past five years and with employability as its founding *raison d'être*, TUP has aligned itself with these principles, creating a place that Power and Bartlett (2018; 337) see as a "bespoke space" and "welcoming community" for young people with ASN. So, in summary, the project sought to explore the potential for complex innovative work in one socially oriented organisation to be successfully transferred and sustained to another novel socially oriented organisation.

Exploration of this ground was initially based on the localised foundational research questions:

1. what core features within TUP are significant and necessary for transfer?;
2. what CMO configurations are significant in the transfer of these features?;

Insights from these grounded observations informed two broader questions:

3. to what extent can transfer of innovative practice be achieved between two socially oriented organisations?;
4. to what extent can the progressive orientation of these organisations be maintained in this transfer?

Empirical work was constructed around three components: a capturing of the nature of the work being undertaken in TUP and an assessment of initial perceptions of the nature and feasibility of any TUP/DAAP transfer; grounded observations of the implementation of DAAP in DTR; and a concluding synthesis of these insights.

The observations reported here have value and originality in two respects. First, they exist in a context described by Monroe-White and Zook, (2018; 506) as often ‘anemic’, lacking critical scrutiny of the theoretical and empirical basis of social enterprise as inherently ‘innovative’. As such, Jessop *et al* (2013; 111) note a narrow “reductive interpretation” of social innovation, with a tendency to rely on affirmative “wisdom of practice” perspectives (Sinclair and Baglioni, 2014; 472). Our exploratory work addressed this by adopting a theory informed, longitudinal and interpretative approach (Ayob *et al*, 2016). Second, whilst the social innovation/enterprise literature occasionally alludes to notions of practice ‘transfer’ (Moulaert *et al*, 2013), some point to the difficulties of actually achieving this in ‘non-market’ and complex circumstances that involve “a new process, or a new way of organizing production activities” (Borzaga and Bodini, 2012; 8). Others also suggest that little attention has been paid to this matter (Phillips *et al*, 2019). As such, our use of resources from the ‘inter-organisational transfer’ literature (Battistella *et al*, 2016) provides novel insights. Given these deficiencies and the complexity inherent in both the delivery of innovative practice *and* its transfer, we felt that a realist evaluation approach (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) would be most suited to these circumstances, allowing us to develop a programme theory of the multiple interactions taking place within and between the social organisations.

The paper outlines various conceptual resources relevant to our project, describes the methodology that was used, sets out and reflects on our key empirical findings and explores wider implications that flow from these insights.

### **Conceptual resources**

In its instigation, three related conceptual bases were important to the project and formed an explicitly ‘theoretically informed’ approach (ICEBeRG, 2006). These were: ‘social enterprise’ (in relation to the socially oriented nature of our two case organisations); ‘social innovation’ (in relation to our SIF research), and the potential within these contexts for ‘inter-organisational’ transfer (the basis of our SIF proposal). These themes informed practical project work, shaped the various forms of data collection undertaken and ultimately, influenced the way this data was analysed and understood.

Primarily, we saw ‘social innovation’ as our over-arching aspiration, whose fulfilment can potentially be optimally achieved by ‘social enterprise’ models (Phillips, Lee and Ghobadian, 2015). The core normative notion of ‘originality’ within ‘social innovation’ literature is naturally prominent; for example, Ayob *et al* (2016; 637) see it as offering the possibility of “generating *new* ideas and in

delivering *new* solutions". The simple ability of "meeting a social need" has been one way of characterising innovation (Mulgan, 2006; 146), the products of it being only *one* element in an existing market economy. Furthermore, some see social innovation as a defensive means of patching over various health and social 'crises', filling gaps from the withdrawal of 'the State' and/or offering cheaper alternatives (Moulaert *et al*, 2013).

Alternatively, others see a desire for innovation as arising from a fundamentally different set of values (Jessop *et al*, 2013), antithetical to the above conservative expediency (Sinclair and Baglioni, 2014). For example, the *process* by which innovation occurs is made central (Sinclair and Baglioni, 2014) and shaped by the view that certain features are essential, including that they: are underpinned by 'collectivist' and 'mutual' principles (Ayob *et al*, 2016); offer the potential to challenge prevailing service delivery systems (Montgomery, 2016); potentially re-orientate existing power relations, (Ayob *et al*, 2016); ultimately resulting in 'transformational' social change (Sinclair and Baglioni, 2014). These aspirations have been located in a 'democratic' frame and a contention that, "the satisfaction of basic needs cannot be guaranteed through either market allocation mechanisms, or free-market democracy" (Moulaert and Nussbaumer, 2005; 50). As such and of most significance to this paper, some see social innovation as being a particularly relevant model in meeting, "alienated needs... raising participation levels....of marginalised groups" (Montgomery, 2016; 1991).

The related concept of 'social enterprise' and its central feature of the "primacy of social aims" via "trading" (Teasdale, 2011, 101) is seen as *one* way of achieving 'social innovation' (Sinclair and Baglioni, 2014) and conceptually it displays variability along similar lines (Teasdale, 2011). Some suggest that social enterprise is inherently innovative (Chell *et al*, 2010), this contention being supported by both theoretical (e.g. Phillips *et al*, 2019) and some empirical (e.g. Monroe-White and Zook, 2018) evidence. In this sense, social enterprise *can* have the potential to fulfil the progressive ambitions outlined above. Again, the potential for progressive social entrepreneurship to drift towards conservatism is however noted (Dey and Steyaert, 2012).

Beyond these bases, the notion of inter-organisational 'transfer' was a central concern that can be seen as, "an active process during which the technology (and the knowledge related to it) is transferred between two distinct entities" (Battistella, *et al*, 2016; 1196). Practically, various 'objects' of transfer are suggested, including: policy goals; structure and content; administrative techniques; institutional arrangements; and various values and attitudes (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996; 349-350). Mavra (2011; 5) establishes various rationales for seeking 'replication', spanning the pragmatism of looking to 'scale up', diversify and increase income to wider aspirations of spreading

socially innovative practices and “message(s) of the social enterprise movement” (Mavra, 2011; 5). Mavra (2011) goes on to posit a range of degrees of ‘replication’, from ‘franchising’ and ‘licensing’, to a softer ‘collaboration’, involving “informal partnerships and resource pooling” (Mavra, 2011; 5). Some see this process as being made up of two phases (Nicholls and Murdock, 2012). First, a creative ‘ideational’ one, emphasising the mobilisation of knowledge from a range of stakeholders (Phillips *et al*, 2019) as part of a “communicative process” (Park *et al*, 2017; 6). Second, an ‘implementation’ phase is suggested, where innovative ideas are enacted with a view to, “embedding effective and sustainable social enterprise and social innovation” (Sinclair *et al*, 2018; 1317). In this context, Hartley and Benington (2006) propose variables that can facilitate or impede translation, including: features in the ‘originating’ organization that will suggest whether it *can* communicate knowledge; the quality of the articulation process itself; and an ability to recognise and *use* knowledge in the recipient organization. This territory suggests the significance of relational and potentially transformational interactions (Hartley and Benington, 2006; 103). Significantly, some have pointed to the tendency for transfer processes to be relatively functional and driven by rudimentary transactional models of change (Park *et al*, 2017).

## **Methodology**

In order to establish a strong ontological foundation and as suggested above, our research approach was informed by the use of ‘realistic’ approaches (Pawson and Tilley, 1997) as an analytical tool and a desire to ultimately build a provisional programme theory of the transfer. This theorises the outcomes of interventions being one manifestation of ‘CMO configurations’ involving, an interplay between ‘context’ (policies and priorities related to employability and young people with ASN) and ‘mechanisms’ (both the ‘stand-alone’ internal workings of TUP and DTR *and* the specific dynamics of the transfer processes). Koenig (2009; 10) sees this resource as particularly compatible with the subtleties of case studies and “the capacity of a ‘critical’ case study to sustain theory building” – here, not simply asking *has* transfer happened, but *how* it has been done (or not).

The nature of the organisational circumstances then suggested the use of an ethnographic approach (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). This orientation was felt particularly suited to our study research questions in that it allowed data collection to be guided by conceptual resources, whilst acknowledging the importance of the grounded cultural features within TUP and DTR. Furthermore, this ethnography drew on ‘critical realist’ resources (Porter, 1993) that allowed us to recognise the potentially complex and contested nature of ‘reality’ in TUP and DTR whilst also arriving at pragmatically useable end points (Barron, 2013). Hartley and Benington (2006; 107) see this as being particularly useful in understanding processes of *translation* - with, “close participant observation

and engagement by the researcher, within organizations and networks .... illuminat(ing) the subtle factors which explain why knowledge transplants”. This was enacted by having a UoG researcher located in both TUP and DTR, undertaking data collection in various forms (see below). Furthermore, the work was structured as a ‘locality’ case study (Aaltio and Heilmann, 2009), allowing the possibility that insights might be ‘telling’ beyond this particular case (Mitchell, 1984).

Data collection was undertaken in 2 phases and sought to develop comprehensive perspectives by accessing insights from a wide range of informants (internal staff within TUP and DTR, the young people working in TUP and DAAP and various external stakeholders). Phase 1 was concerned predominantly with TUP in order to build up an in-depth picture of their model and understand the means by which they have been seen to successfully promote trainee employability and social inclusion (see Table 1).

**<Table 1: Research conducted which focused predominantly on TUP (June –Sept 2018)>**

Phase 2 involved further stakeholder interviews and grounded observations of the implementation of DAAP within DTR (see Table 2).

**<Table 2: Research Conducted which focused on the DAAP (Oct-Dec 2018)>**

Different aspects of this data offered insights into different parts of our CMO configuration: perceptions of ‘context’ came particularly from historical recollections from stakeholder interviews; insights into delivery and transfer ‘mechanisms’ also came from these interviews but were strongly complemented by trainee’s grounded experiences gleaned from walking and paired interviews; and perceived ‘outcomes’ were drawn from all aspects of data collection (as well as routine TUP and DTR data sources).

Analysis was undertaken within each of these strands throughout the project using a form of ‘thematic analysis’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006) where data was classified into categories, reduced and arranged into manageable forms and patterns developed and substantiated. Using guidance offered by Morse *et al* (2002) on the notion of achieving ‘verification’ via a series of phases that progress from data confirmation to theory building, a form of analysis was particularly prominent in the concluding part of the work that involved a series of knowledge exchange workshops between researchers, TUP and DTR participants, the young people and wider stakeholders. Here, provisional reflections were interrogated and eventually amended in an inclusive way. Subsequent finalisation

of empirical themes in relation to our theoretical bases was again done collaboratively within the core project team.

### **Key findings**

The following section addresses the first two of our research questions; a grounded review of the key CMO features within TUP and DTR relevant to transfer.

#### *Context: conducive policy and an empowered community*

As the 'source' organisation, two contextual features within TUP were particularly significant. The first was what John Kingdon terms a 'policy window of opportunity' (Kingdon, 1995); the generalised recognition in formal policies such as 'Keys to Life' of a 'social need' for opportunities to enhance the employability prospects of young people with ASN - a perspective that could be considered as having been traditionally unheeded. Many stakeholders within both TUP and DTR highlighted the generally hostile economic climate that this work was being undertaken in and a paucity of such opportunities for young people with ASN in D&G; a parent of a young person with ASN who is now a TUP trainee highlighted the social isolation their child had experienced when leaving school and that *"employability support was almost non-existent"*. Whilst this might suggest the very need for a response, some within TUP and DTR acknowledged these difficult circumstances as making 'employment-related' interventions practically challenging and possibly insubstantial given the hostility of the environment.

The second was a local articulation of this 'need' within D&G. The specific origins of TUP lay in a conference in 2011 (*'Youth Matters: what needs to happen for me to reach my full potential'*), where frustration over these circumstances was expressed by young people and a desire for innovative and equitable employability approaches articulated; for example, a health professional delegate felt, *"at the end of that conference....what they told us was they wanted exactly the same as any other young person....a career....jobs....to be able to go to college...a future...but they just couldn't access it as easily as anybody else"*. With respect to CMO configurations within DTR, informants were clear that the founding of DAAP within DTR was facilitated by drawing upon the same conducive contextual policy resources described above that TUP had originally exploited; for example, a DTR informant suggesting, *"in many ways....TUP had made the case for this type of work that we could use"*.

#### *Mechanisms: strong leadership and supportive organisational values and culture*

Returning to TUP as the 'source' organisation in the transfer, three 'mechanisms' were identified as being crucial to the successful establishment of TUP and its ultimate sustainability. First, determined leadership was considered to have been a significant driving force across all informants. Those from outside TUP (local politicians and local authority officers) cited various attributes such as "*belief*", "*ambition*" and "*determination*" to 'sell' the innovation; one of these stakeholders (a politician) suggested, "*I don't think I've ever met a more determined group of individuals in all my life*". This resolve was also recognised within TUP, a senior worker suggesting, "*we just went to people and said we want your help.....this is the situation..... we know we can make a difference here*". Additionally, a more critical ethos towards what was perceived to be a prevailing disinterest in the needs of young people with ASN was also evident, an internal TUP stakeholder stating,

*"we feel quite able to challenge... we did get turned down for some funding from the Scottish Government and we invited them to come down and speak to us....we're not happy about this... tell our young people that you're not going to fund this....and when they came down they reversed their decision"*.

This willingness to act as wider advocates was thus identified as an increasingly prominent feature of the work done by TUP, linking the grounded experiences of their employability concerns to the general status of young people with ASN in society.

Another feature of TUP leadership often cited was their 'reflexivity' – an ability to accept feedback and willingness to adopt new ideas. An external stakeholder (local politician) talked of how TUP leaders were constantly reviewing their systems, "*at both micro and macro levels*" and this leadership approach was confirmed by an internal TUP stakeholder stating, "*we're not precious about anything....we're happy to take comment....to learn from anyone...we can work with imperfectness*".

This ground leads on to a second mechanism -that of an organisational 'ethos' and associated 'values'. TUP was founded on three such tenets: 'everyone can contribute', 'everyone is of equal worth' and 'everyone should be treated with dignity and respect' and they find continual expression in both the strategic direction of the organisation and its day-to-day work; for example, an internal TUP stakeholder suggested, "*we really believe as an organisation that if you keep your core values at the heart of everything you do.....you're not going to stray too far from that*". Many also expressed a belief that this was a "*whole organisational approach*" (a TUP informant) articulated across paid staff, volunteers and trainees alike; for example, an internal TUP informant felt, "*I would expect*

*every member of staff...for that to be tripping off their tongues..... not as words....it's what we do...creating a value-based culture".*

The final mechanism was what participants described as the fact that TUP *"is a real café"* (a DTR informant). Many expressed that the 'social purpose' basis of the café was not explicitly conveyed to customers, one DTR informant feeling that TUP *"don't go for the sympathy vote"*. This 'authentic' orientation was considered central to creating *"true to life"* experiences for trainees, expressed by a TUP internal informant as,

*"they're having to interact with the public... these people who have been shielded away for however many years and stuck in a separate classroom at school or in college.....they're now having to work in a public domain...(and) because it's happening in a natural way.... I think both attitudes are changing for the better".*

As well as these productive features, a series of issues related to mechanisms were highlighted as significant to potential transfer. First, as with many social enterprises, funding was cited as an ongoing challenge. Although the café does make some profit, external funding is still required to sustain the organisation and allow its social goals to be achieved; this being in the words of a senior TUP informant, *"a constant fight"*. The *variety* of funding sources and associated demands for evidence was also seen as challenging, an internal TUP informant suggesting, *"we have to fit into people's funding guidelines....so sometimes we've had to change aspects of what we do...to get the funding we need to carry on"*.

Second, some highlighted the delicate balance that exists within TUP between sustainability based on some external funding and the possibility of it moving towards being a more *"free-standing"* (TUP informant) business. Accepting this tension between ambitions to grow as a business and the effect this may have on maintaining its social goals, a range of suggestions from across all informant groups were made on how TUP might enhance its status as a commercial business, including: extending opening times and utilising weekends; widening the range of functions undertaken to include events such as weddings; and offering paid consultancy to other Third Sector organisations.

Third, despite acknowledgment that the exposure the local community has had to young people with ASN in TUP had resulted in positive changes in attitudes towards this group (as a form of 'inclusion'), it was felt that some societal orientations were still challenging. One TUP participant reflected on this, *"I think attitudinal stuff is a challenge.....our young people say that it's the biggest challenge..... attitudes towards them"*. The views of some local employers were considered particularly problematic in terms of employing young people leaving TUP, one internal TUP informant

suggesting, *“getting businesses on board was very hard....a lot of businesses were probably scared by what it could entail”*.

Our exploration of the transfer of ‘mechanisms’ was conducted at two points: an early ‘concept testing’ appraisal, followed by a deeper review later in the transfer process. In the foundational work, most stakeholders within TUP and DTR expressed confidence for the *potential* of transfer. The notion was seen as a fundamentally robust one, many expressing the potential the ‘arts’ sector has in fostering the same developmental outcomes achieved in TUP; a DTR informant believing, *“all drama is very good for young people.... it builds confidence....encourages empathy by putting yourself in someone else’s shoes”*. It was also felt that the ‘public-facing’ asset of TUP was one that was replicable within DTR, a DTR stakeholder suggesting, *“it offers people an opportunity....to be part of something in the community”*. In a wider sense, the creation of DAAP was seen as an opportunity for mutually beneficial partnership working between the DTR and TUP. This had been instigated by means of an 8 week induction placement that the DAAP Project Manager and Project Officer undertook within TUP with the aim of immersing and familiarising them with the practices and cultures of TUP.

At the same time, a series of potential challenges were identified. Most immediately, the short-term nature of the SIF funding suggested the need for project initiation and embedding to be done relatively quickly. Practical concerns over having the basic capacity to deliver this complex programme were also expressed. It was felt that having only two staff members might limit the scope of the project in terms of how many young people could actually enrol; for example, a DTR stakeholder suggested, *“we feel that we should have two project workers on the project....should always be present with the young people”*.

It was also recognised that DAAP was being implemented in an established organisation with historical, structural and cultural features that would not necessarily be compatible with DAAP innovation. Potential resistance was felt to be possible due to a lack of experience of working with people with ASN [from a TUP informant, *“the main barrier is the people that they’ll be working with in the theatre... not being used to working with young people with additional support needs”*] and organisational traditionalism [again from a TUP informant, *“the biggest challenge is overcoming the inertia of an existing place....having its own way of doing things...doing things differently”*]. The need to quickly build support for the project across the whole of DTR was therefore seen as crucial, particularly using the local reputational ‘capital’ that TUP had in fostering the required cultural re-orientations. A TUP stakeholder saw this DTR scenario as requiring *“leadership....to take the theatre with them”*.

Beyond these pragmatic concerns, two broader themes were reflected on in this preliminary context. The crux of the 'transfer-translate' relationship expressed in the academic literature was articulated. The notion of simply 'transferring' the TUP model was universally seen as inappropriate; for example, an informant from within DTR felt,

*"what we got from The Usual Place was a framework.....they're not so precious that we can't adapt it and tweak it as the theatre approach would need" and "they've been great really...of saying to us....this is what we do....but now it's all very much about you...learning what works for you in the theatre".*

However, there was also a consensus that the one feature that *should* be transferred was the TUP "culture" and associated "values" (from TUP sources). A TUP informant captured this as, *"I suppose it's about value transfer...what I hope is that the Arts Programme will be able to pick up our values and culture.....in a way that works within that organisation"*.

In the second part of the review conducted 6 months later, at a point when significant DAAP development had occurred, a number of actual 'mechanisms' from the TUP model were considered to have been directly transferred to the DAAP. The most prominent consisted of the more intangible aspects of the model that can be seen to align with TUP values. For example, it was felt that an accommodating approach, in which individual capabilities of the young people are not pre-determined had been directly incorporated into DAAP practice, a DTR informant suggesting, *"that's been transferred....that sense of....let's not make any assumptions about what people can do"*. Similarly, the TUP leadership style, based on inclusion and equality was also seen to have been integrated within DAAP, again a DTR informant expressing, *"there's been a collaborative leadership approach.....everything that we've done we've said to the young people.....you must tell us if this is working for you....not working for you"*. On a more practical basis, TUP had provided various hands-on insights and materials on for example, fostering volunteering, health and safety and safeguarding policies.

The grounded 'front facing' TUP mechanism was also transferred, the tasks undertaken by DAAP trainees being both firmly pragmatic [a DTR informant suggesting, *'everything the young people do is real....they haven't done anything pretendy'*] and integrative [a DTR informant stating, *"we've managed to get 8 trainees embedded in the organisation....they really are doing the jobs everybody else does"*]. This engagement was considered to have had a positive effect on the wider organisation, acting as a prompt for making DTR more inclusive; for instance, during the implementation period, DTR held its first ever 'relaxed performance' pantomime. A DTR informant

attributed this innovation to the DAAP, stating, “*that would never have been done if it wasn’t for the arts award*”. Two specific transfer ‘processes’ were seen as underpinning such success. First, a number of informants identified the extended induction time the DAAP project staff spent in TUP at the onset of the project (seen by a DTR informant as an “*immersed experience*”) as crucial in fostering this part of the transfer, particularly intangible service values; a DTR informant cited, “*I think that that was an invaluable experience...I learnt a lot in those 8 weeks...the way that the Usual Place work with young people and I brought a lot of that with me*”. Second, particularly in the early ‘ideational’ phase of the work, the monthly steering group meetings with project partners were universally commended for fostering trusting relationships and enabling effective communication; a TUP informant suggesting, “*...I think bringing everybody together has been really effective*”.

At the same time, many recognised that a number of aspects of the TUP model had more precisely been “*adapted*” in DAAP (DTR informant) to fit the existing organisational context of DTR. Three examples were pertinent. In relation to values, whilst as a discrete initiative, DAAP aligned itself to many TUP principles, these values were accommodated *alongside* DTR’s existing codes of conduct and organisational values. DAAP trainees were expected to conform to *both* of these sets of principles. Some of the practicalities of project delivery were also modified. For example, the length and format of the TUP induction process where trainees experience different aspects of the theatre was felt to be inappropriate to the circumstances within DTR and was significantly shortened and simplified. Finally, DAAP’s engagement with external partners was also different. For example, whilst TUP has significant links with D&G’s ‘Totally Access Point’ (DGTaP) - a public/private/third sector partnership that fosters access to employment and had helped trainees transition from TUP to mainstream employment - the more complex and profound needs that DAAP trainees had meant that this aspiration was not so immediate and as such, this link was not so significant. So, although DAAP does have a strong focus on building employability skills, it was quickly recognised that the needs of some individuals on DAAP differed from those at TUP and efforts were made to signpost trainees to more appropriate goals, such as internal DTR workshops.

Related to some of the ‘mechanisms’ issues identified above that TUP had faced, two fundamental challenges to transition were identified. The most significant was an organisational one - the fact that the TUP informed DAAP model was being introduced into an *existing* establishment, captured by a TUP informant, “*we started from new.....they’re having to go in and change the old*”. The second was a more practical one based on the nature of support actually given to the young people. Whilst the size and multi-faceted nature of TUP resulted in support being extensive and varied, it was felt

that the more focussed scope of DAAP meant that assistance came from a relatively limited group - predominantly the two project workers and captured by a DTR informant as, *"they'll certainly see the two support workers doing all the tasks all the time....but they may not get to be working alongside everybody on all trades"*.

One of the main consequences of such circumstances was that some problems emerged in relation to the integration between DTR staff/volunteers and the young people. Some felt that DTR staff could have been more clearly informed about DAAP; for example, a DTR informant felt, *"if we had done more communication...people would have been quicker to be more comfortable working with people"* and as such, one DTR participant talked of *"a hidden separation"*. Furthermore, a range of operational barriers to sustainability were identifiable *within* DTR, including: problems in quickly recruiting trainees [*"it took us a little bit of time in the initial stages just to recruit and get the word out there"* (DTR comment)]; concerns over adequate staffing levels and subsequent programme capacity [if both project staff were absent at the same time the programme would *"run into the ground quickly"* (DTR comment)]; the notion of programme activity straying into mainstream DTR work, [couched as *"project drift"* (DTR comment)]; and concerns over longer-term funding sustainability [*"I would be concerned about there being enough funding available to do this kind of this high level support"* (DTR comment)].

#### *Outcomes: individual and collective*

The final element of the realist model involves understanding the outcomes that arise from the interaction of contexts and mechanisms in each organisation. In relation to TUP, a series of tangible achievements were visible, for example: the numbers gaining SVQ and associated awards (such as first aid and food safety qualifications); those leaving TUP and gaining employment in other organisations (including becoming self-employed); and those going into modern apprenticeships and further education. A range of more complex outcomes were also cited; for example, enhancing wellbeing and promoting social inclusion. Here, TUP informants highlighted growth in the notion of *"confidence"* in the trainees, associated with the conducive social environment described above; and this was confirmed by an external DTR stakeholder who felt, *"it's great to see the work that they are doing with the young people..... their confidence has just grown because of the work they do"*.

The interactive aspect of the work involving 'walking' and 'paired' interviews also provided rich insights into the experiences and outcomes of the young people. This work highlighted the wide variety of tasks and related learning that was on offer spanning, the kitchen, front of house, shop/retail and general facilities management. Conducive features of the TUP environment not identified by stakeholders were also highlighted, including: the general 'calming' nature of the café

setting; the ethos of 'equality' and involvement; the ability for there to be flexibility over the types of tasks being required of them; and the accessibility of the building. Similar themes arose within the 'paired' interviews, which we presented as an accessible infographic.

### <Figure 1: TUP insights>

Outcomes were also felt to extend beyond trainees. As discussed above, many felt that the "*front facing*" nature of TUP (TUP informant) and its "*real café*" status (DTR informant), created an environment in which constructive interactions between those with ASN and the public that otherwise would not have been possible. This was linked to both creating a situation where 'enablement' was prominent (a TUP front line worker suggesting, "*the trainees are more capable than traditional expectations believe*") and 'normalised' (an external political stakeholder concluding, "*the Usual Place has become a normal part of the landscape*"). This impact extended even further. As a '*shining bright light*' (external political stakeholder) of good practice, informants across all groups identified a 'trickle-down effect' to other forms of community action - for example, the creation of an accessible park adjacent to TUP was frequently cited. As previously mentioned, an 'upward' dynamic was also recognised, where TUP had been able to act as advocates for young people with ASN regionally and nationally; a TUP informant suggesting, "*people in key decision-making position....are seeing that young people can do it*".

In relation to DAAP, a range of positive outcomes from the transfer was also seen to arise within the trainees. In general terms, a collection of broad insights on DAAP related outcomes was gleaned from our participant observation work and expressed in the infographic below.

### <Figure 2: DAAP insights>

Despite the programme being in its early stages, informants stated that they were already seeing detectable changes within individuals, including increased personal confidence and self-belief as well as gaining sector specific knowledge of the theatre. One parent informant provided an emotive portrayal of the effects of DAAP on their daughter noting that, "*she is now saying 'my friends' for the first time*". Individuals had also attained a series of tangible achievements: 11 young trainees had been awarded their Bronze Arts Award and 4 have gone on to the Silver Arts Award; 5 had demonstrated practical employability skills by organising a performance as part of an arts festival; 9 had demonstrated increased knowledge of different art forms and development of their own

creative practice; and 4 had demonstrate their increased independence by working independently alongside DTR staff.

## Discussion

We now move on to our final two research questions – how these localised insights might be understood theoretically and potentially extrapolated to wider circumstances. Earlier, we established a series of conceptual resources that informed the project. In light of the empirical observations above, we return to this ground to reflect on the articulation between TUP and DAAP within DTR and more broadly, from one socially oriented organisation to another. Our observations are structured around two concerns reflected in our latter research questions: ; the extent to which socially oriented organisations can achieve transfer of such potentially innovative practice; and the degree to which social organisations can maintain a ‘progressive’ purpose in this ‘employability’ context.

Our work hypothesises a provisional ‘CMO configuration’: “the existence of a national level ‘policy window’ creates an opportunity for a localised expression of the needs young people with ASN that in turn fosters the creation of a series of organisational mechanism within TUP and DTR that result in the achievement of a wide range of individual, social and political outcomes”. Figure 3 summarises this CMO Programme Theory.

### <Figure 3: CMO Programme Theory>

In relation to the second theme, work in both organisations can be considered progressive in that they met the ‘social needs’ of groups that have traditionally been marginalised and in a way that exhibited a social purpose and collective organisational orientation. In keeping with Power and Bartlett’s (2018) notion of ‘bespoke spaces’ and ‘welcoming communities’, this was practically expressed in relation to trainees finding TUP and DTR both “*safe*” (TUP informant) and “*supportive*” (DTR informant) and suggests the potential for these organisations to be seen as providing what Vlot-van Anrooij *et al* (2020) have recently termed, a holistic ‘setting’ for meeting the needs of people with intellectual disabilities. Here, a ‘setting’ comprises a multitude of features - conducive policies, pleasant structural environments and collaborative communication and participation. Significantly, the project context allowed all of these features to be expressed within TUP and DTR *in unison* and resulted in trainees attaining a series of achievements from these supportive bonds

*within* the organisations, including gains in individual wellbeing, strong collective experiences and tangible employability skills. The latter theme of inclusive participation was also inherently associated with the ability within TUP and DTR to pursue a ‘values-led’ approach to leadership (Humble *et al*, 1994) and as such achieve social advancement.

Beyond the organisations themselves, the robustness of these foundations gave TUP and DTR the assurance to foster wider bridging and linking into employment opportunities in destination workplaces *beyond* theirs. In TUP, partnerships have been formed with many agencies (e.g. D&G College and Local Authority employability support services) and trainees have gained employment in a range of sectors such as, hospitality, care and retail. As a result of the transfer process, the visibility and status of young people with ASN within DTR is much higher and constructive links have been made with other local arts initiatives. These actions suggest that broader ‘ecologies of support’ (Duclos and Sanchez Criado, 2019) with significant links with a range of associated agencies are possible.

As suggested above, the deployment of employability as an innovative means of promoting social inclusion is not however without its critics within the ‘WISE’ literature and the issue was alluded to in our fieldwork. Such critique exists in relation to a wholly ‘supply side’ approach to employability (Peck and Theodore, 2000) and the particular suitability and effectiveness of a social enterprise model in this domain (Teasdale, 2010). Here, simply promoting *individual* employability is seen as a relatively conservative response to deeper failings in employment policies and as such, might not conform to the progressive aspirations of ‘social innovation’.

In our context, this critique can however be qualified. Whilst employability was *the* central feature of the day-to-day work in TUP and DAAP, it can be seen as a *facilitatory* resource that informed a *wider* concern of promoting the wellbeing of young people with ASN as individuals, as well as elevating their visibility collectively in society. This coming together of mutually re-enforcing practice and political action can be seen as a form of “capabilities-focussed praxis” (Le Fanu, 2014; 70), recognised in the disability (Le Fanu, 2014) and human rights (Falcón, 2016) literatures as an effective way of mediating between “dominant” and “counter-public” positions (Falcón, 2016; 816), thus addressing, “educational exclusion and marginalisation prevent(ing) young people with disabilities from accumulating the various types of human capital” (Le Fanu, 2014; 69).

Both organisations were therefore acutely aware of the need to engage locally and nationally with various stakeholders to address *systemic* issues and this was effected via various channels; for example, building partnerships with local businesses and community groups and lobbying Scottish and UK Governments. Crucially, the basis and currency of this political engagement came from the real-world experiences that arose from employability work.

Finally, the dynamics of the actual transfer can also be seen in relation to the various theories of transfer established above. Contrary to simple technocratic transactional models, the mechanisms here were highly complex, social and essentially transformational. Again, the most striking feature of the transfer was its grounded nature - where relational and communicative 'micro' interactions between TUP and DTR were prominent. From the onset, such mechanisms were embedded in the interaction; for example, the initial TUP placement undertaken by the DAAP project workers, the regular project team meetings and joint work that was subsequently undertaken. In this communicative context, it was clear that TUP as an 'originating' innovative and entrepreneurially successful organisation was able to communicate their prior experiences and as recipients, DTR was willing and able to accept and use such insights. The relatively open-ended rationale and expectations underpinning this relationship - based on a 'non-competitive' desire to spread socially innovative practice - was particularly conducive to this relationship.

Similarly, the 'objects' of transfer were varied and often ephemeral. These spanned the intangible notion of organisational 'culture' to tangible features like policies and procedures. This was not to say that transfer was always done on a simple 1-1 basis. Whilst some aspects were 'replicated' within DAAP, there were some accommodations and divergences. This is suggestive of forms of 'grafting' and 'transplanting' rather than 'copying' and 'pasting' and an ongoing mutually beneficial relationship *between* the organisations rather than a unique one-off and one-way process.

## **Conclusion**

At the start of the paper, we suggested that there has been relatively little exploration of the development and particularly transfer of innovative practice within the context of socially oriented organisations. In bringing together a nexus of features – two socially oriented organisations, complex and nuanced innovative practices, an explicit transfer goal and a multi-faceted research approach, we sought to address this gap.

In these complex circumstances, we have learned that with appropriate attention being paid to transfer processes, having sufficient change capacity (funded DAAP project officers) and strong partnership working, it is possible to take an innovative project from one context, broadly transfer it

to another and have fairly immediate success. The mutually beneficial 3-way TUP-DTR-UoG project partnership provided an effective balance between learning, action and evaluative reflection. Most importantly, the theoretically informed, research driven and properly resourced context we were operating in allowed us to pursue a series of planned, incremental processes over the space of 18 months that created an environment where relatively subtle and intangible relationships could be nurtured and as such relatively profound 'transformative' change achieved. These 'trust-based' foundations became an indispensable basis for implementing more tangible actions later in the project.

We did naturally experience difficulties. The timescale was pressured in terms of bringing about and 'fixing' the change that was required. TUP is a complex organisation and formally mapping out the core features of it that acted as a basis of the 'transfer' was in itself a major task. Relatedly, the initiation of DAAP was multifaceted and complicated. However, we achieved a series of successes, most specifically: securing follow up funding within the DTR allowed DAAP work to continue in the organisation at least in the medium term; the modified form of vocational arts based qualification ('The Arts Award') is now accessible to young people with ASN; and the project has created a strong partnership between TUP, DTR and UoG. Consequently a series of successes and forms of learning are visible. For TUP, it has offered the chance to reflect on its own work and the way that it interacts with other 'start up' ventures. For DTR, as well as the DAAP specific impacts, it has raised the profile of work with those with ASN in the wider theatre; For UoG, it has presented opportunity to develop familiarity and capacity in evaluating complex interventions and transfer.

Finally, and returning to our research questions, both disciplinary and project specific reflections are possible. We have suggested the existence of contrasting paradigms within the social enterprise and social innovation domains that spans pragmatic, functional stances through to more radical possibilities where innovative social enterprise can foster genuine participation, engage politically and create social change. In relation to 'praxis', our work suggests that a productive interaction *between* these positions is possible and consequently, any simple dichotomy is theoretically and practically unhelpful. We also established a gap in 'transfer' research in this domain and our work sheds light on the mechanisms and resources that inform successful transfer. Additionally, we show that sensitive ethnographic approaches to research can successfully illuminate such processes.

In relation to the project, we are conscious that in further enhancing accessibility and inclusivity, the TUP and DTR nexus is still relatively narrow. We therefore see the need to engage with a wider system and associated assets in both civic communities (e.g. individuals, formal community groups, libraries, schools, etc.) and the agencies and organisations associated with promoting employability

(e.g., employers, employability services, education, health and social care services). Additionally, our vocational focus has been fixed on 'hospitality' and 'arts'. In being able to meet a range of employability preferences, we are aware of the need to explore the feasibility of working in other potential domains such as, leisure & sport and horticulture.

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Figure 1: TUP insights

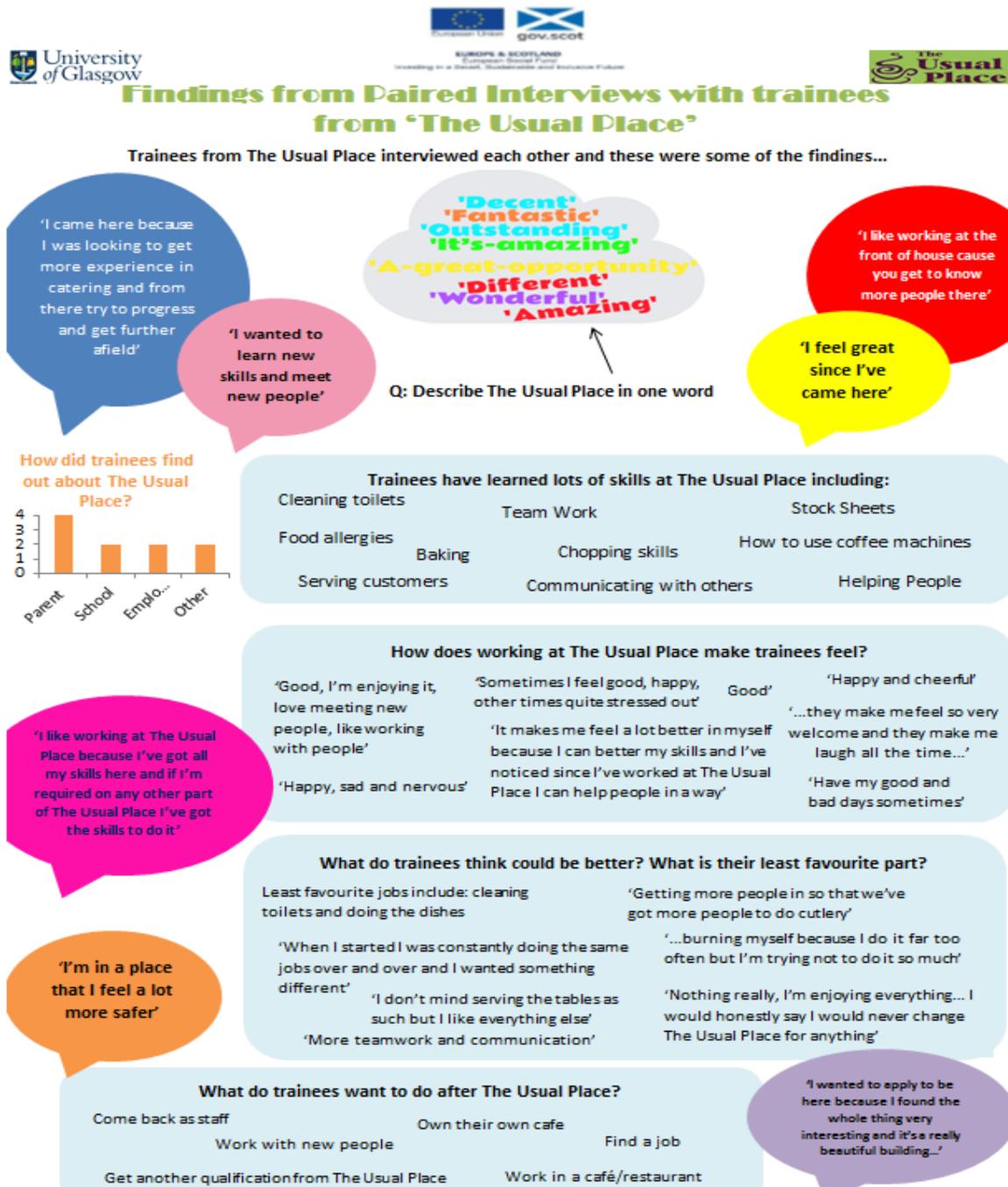
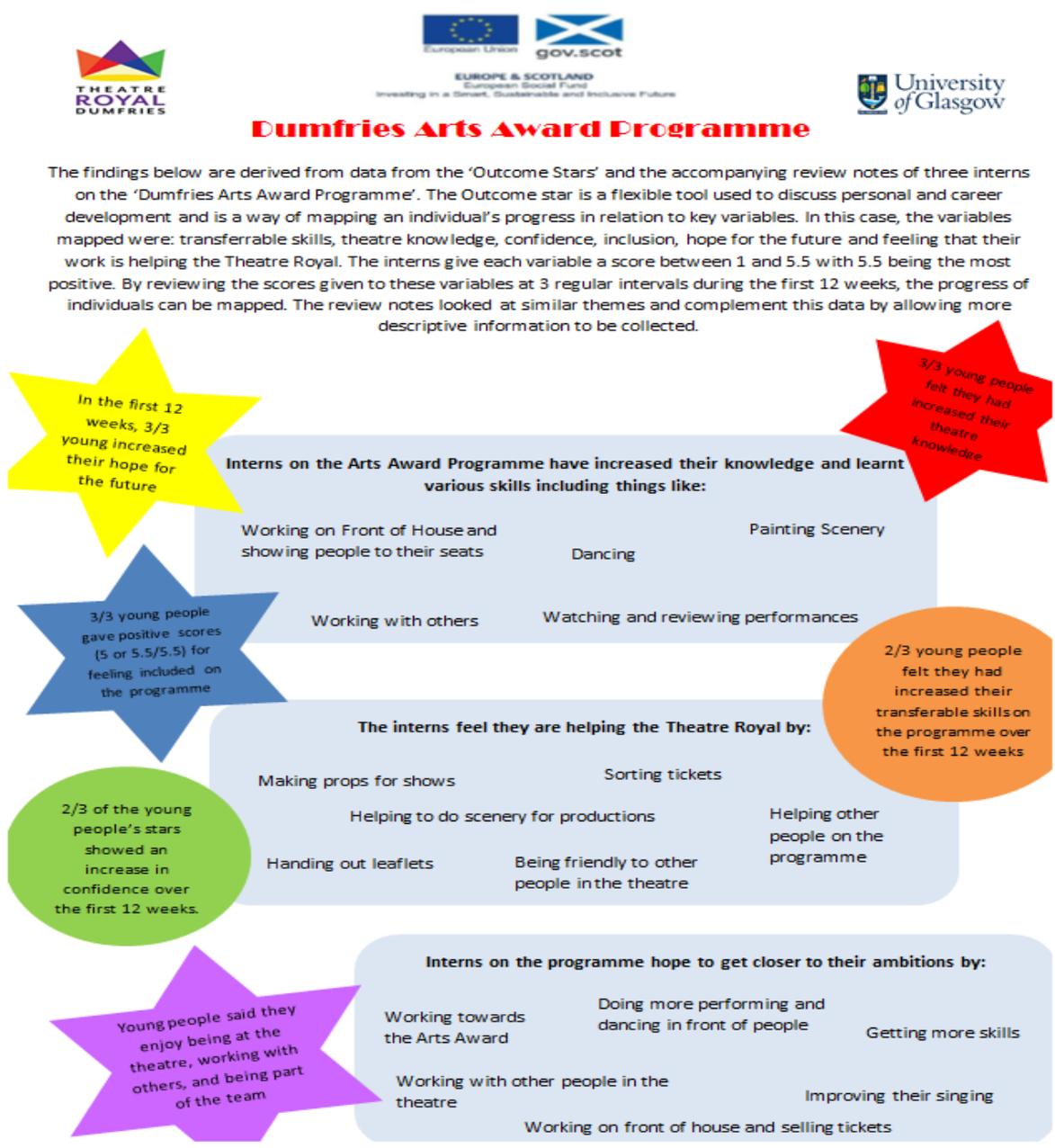
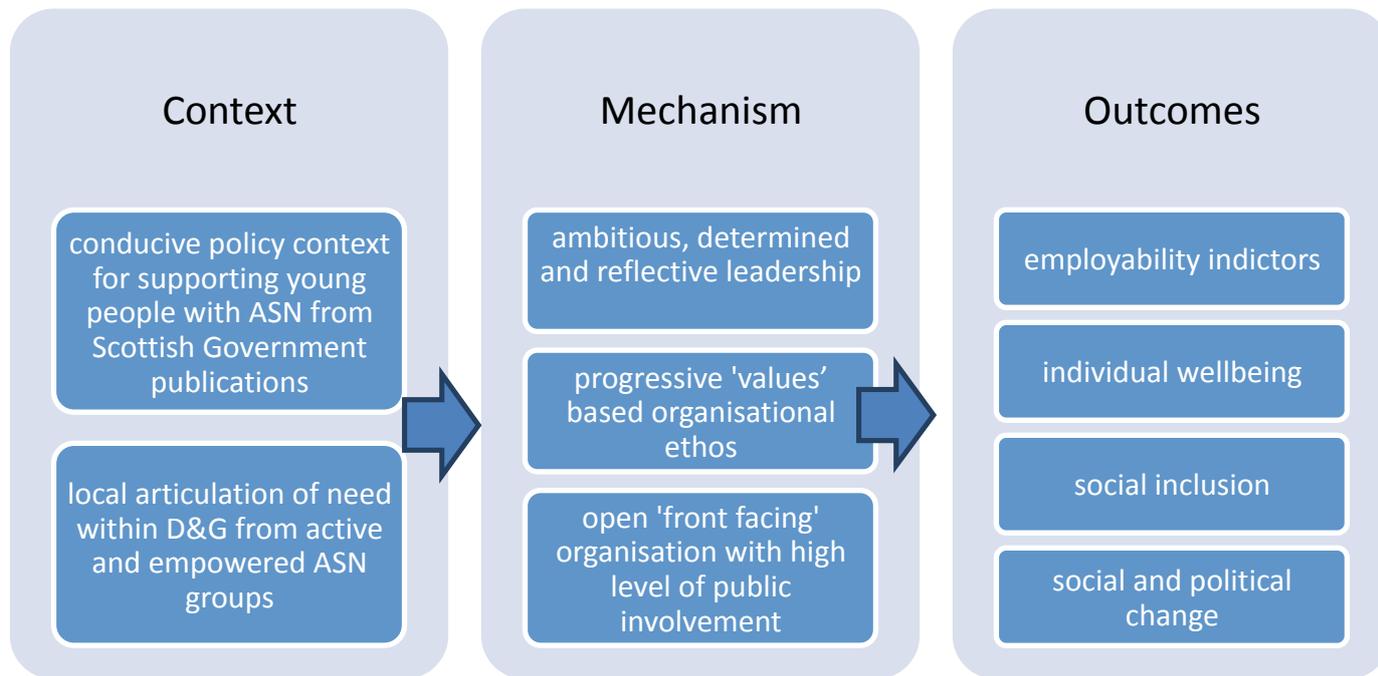


Figure 2: DAAP insights



**Figure 3: CMO Programme Theory**



**Table 1: Research conducted which focused predominantly on TUP (June –Sept 2018)**

Method	Participants	Details
'Walking' Interviews	17 trainees from TUP	<p>Walking interviews are a form of a participant observational method whereby the researcher walks and interacts with participants during an interview in a natural location. This work helped to build rapport with young people at TUP and gain deep insights into the grounded experiences trainees had in TUP.</p> <p>Offered particular insights into 'mechanisms' and 'outcomes'.</p>
'Paired' Interviews	9 trainees from TUP	<p>Trainees from TUP attended a training session in which the basic principles of conducting interviews were explained and the young people also devised the questions that were asked.</p> <p>Trainees interviewed each other about their experience at TUP, with support from the research team (2 interviewers – 1 interviewee).</p> <p>Offered particular insights into 'mechanisms' and 'outcomes'.</p>
Semi-Structured Interviews	<p>17 Stakeholders (6 Internal and 11 External)</p> <p>Interview schedule structured around resources pertaining to CMO configurations and theories of 'transfer'.</p> <p>Internal stakeholders included senior members of staff at TUP (CEO, COO, Chairperson); key individuals within DAAP (DTR Director, Project Manager and Project Officer); various external stakeholders (SVQ assessor, a parent of a trainee, local MSPs, employees from D&amp;G Council and disability organisations).</p>	<p>Used to gain an understanding of TUP's position within the community and its strengths and weaknesses. Insights into early expectations for DAAP and early transfer were also sought.</p> <p>Offered insights into 'contexts', 'mechanisms' and 'outcomes'.</p>

**Table 2: Research Conducted which focused on the DAAP (Oct-Dec 2018)**

Method	Participants	Details
Semi-Structured Interviews	<p>5 internal stakeholders and 1 external stakeholder.</p> <p>Interview schedule structured around resources pertaining to CMO configurations and theories of 'transfer'.</p>	<p>Conducted almost a year on from the creation of DAAP, this work reflected on the pilot year by exploring the nature of this transfer to date, reviewing its implementation and analysing the success and difficulties of the programme.</p>

	Stakeholders included: the Chief Executive Officer and the Chairperson of TUP, the Project Manager and Project Officer on the DAAP, and the Director of DTR. A parent of a young person attending DAAP was also interviewed.	Offered insights into 'contexts', 'mechanisms' and 'outcomes'.
Outcome star and accompanying notes	Trainees on the DAAP.	Trainees' outcome stars and accompanying notes were used to gain an insight into their experience on the first 12 weeks of the programme from their own perspective. Areas explored included: transferrable skills, theatre knowledge, confidence, inclusion, hope for the future and feeling that their work is helping DTR.  Offered insights into 'outcomes'.