

Accumulate

The Art School for The Homeless

Accumulate Evaluation 2021

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Introduction and context

About Accumulate

“Accumulate has really been a lifesaver for me” – Nikol, Accumulate Scholarship recipient.

Accumulate, [The Art School for the Homeless](#), uses creativity to empower and increase the wellbeing and mental health of young people who are homeless, living in hostels and temporary accommodation, or with experience of homelessness. It works with hostels and housing organisations to deliver workshops in visual art, photography, fashion and other creative disciplines.

Accumulate delivers its activities in partnership with leading cultural and creative institutions including Tate, BBC, The Guardian, Autograph and Barbican. They also work with creative industry businesses such as D&AD, AHMM Architects and Hawkins/Brown. The work of Accumulate’s participants is showcased in an annual exhibition. Accumulate also provides scholarships for its participants to progress their creative education and embark on the one-year Access to Higher Education course at Ravensbourne University London.

Accumulate’s community are people (target group 18 - 30) who are particularly vulnerable to isolation and depression, in a dependent environment that feeds into a lack of resilience and motivation, and at risk of anti-social behaviour, crime and substance abuse. According to Homeless Link 2021 report, the top 3 support needs of young homeless people are: not being in education, employment or training (53%); a lack of independent living skills (71%); mental health problems (64%). Accumulate’s activities respond to these issues, supporting people on the margins of society, by helping them increase their confidence, skills and self-value and, longer-term, facilitating them into training, education and employment.



Before the Accumulate 2021 Showcase at The Barbican Cinema

Homelessness and the arts surviving the pandemic

Covid has hugely impacted Accumulate's community with 1 in 53 people in London now homeless (Shelter, December 2021). The lack of access to employment contributes to a downward spiral into long-term homelessness. Being forced to isolate in low-quality accommodation with little stimulation or human interaction has also dramatically affected this group's health and wellbeing.

Depaul's *'Everything Stopped'* Report (2022) states 'in London alone, 368 young people aged from 16 to 25 were found to be experiencing street homelessness between July and September this year – a 47 percent increase compared to the same quarter of 2019'. Breakdowns of relationships, deteriorating mental health, and lack of stable employment opportunities and support are all issues our community faces, to which our work responds. Much of their community lives in hostels and many suffer from issues acting as a barrier to employment.

Creativity is widely understood to be vital for improving health and wellbeing, making social connections, building skills and social circles, as well as improving confidence and providing a sense of belonging. Accumulate has continued to work hard to deliver their services in a way that provides continuity of contact in a safe and impactful way. Their work has become crucial, now more than ever and participants have described Accumulate as a lifeline.

“After seeing how much Accumulate was helping me with my mental health during the pandemic I then joined all of the weekly classes they had to offer...Accumulate has opened doors for me that I did not know even existed!” - Anne, Accumulate Scholarship recipient.

How Accumulate makes a difference

Through their work, Accumulate use creative learning and participation to develop skills, confidence and wellbeing in our participants whilst the engagement in the creative workshops themselves provide a sense of purpose, motivation and sense of belonging to a meaningful community. All of which works towards ending the combination of homelessness, depression and negative mental health for vulnerable people which can often spiral out of control and with no way out of what feels like an impossible situation.

The overall aims of Accumulate are to:

- empower and increase the wellbeing of young people who are affected by homelessness
 - reduce negative stereotypes and misunderstanding about people experiencing homelessness
 - help alleviate the ill effects of homelessness on individuals and communities
-

“It’s a community. You build relationships with people who you got to do the workshops with. It gives you a feeling of being part of something.” - Mitchel, Accumulate participant and scholarship winner and Trustee.

Accumulate does this through providing high-quality meaningful, structured and purposeful creative activities that culminate in a focused goal and celebration. This has been the mission of Accumulate since its inception in 2013 and continues to be the cornerstone of their work today. Accumulate were able to quickly pivot at the onset of the pandemic and continued their work through lockdowns. This experience equipped Accumulate in their 2021 planning and activity, developing in-person workshops that could be easily adapted to online. They now look forward to continuing their offering of workshops as well as developing new creative experiences for their community.

How Accumulate evaluated activity in 2021

This report is based upon the following sources of data:

- Project documentation – reports to funders, photographs, videos, blog posts, etc.
- Participant feedback – surveys completed by some of the people taking the Accumulate courses
- Media coverage – write-ups of events and activity in newspapers, magazines and online

- Project outputs – the photographs, books, podcasts, and other creative work generated by learners themselves
- Ad hoc feedback – correspondence between participants and Accumulate staff sent during or after the courses
- Accumulate Showcase 2021 video



Activity in 2021



- Accumulate workshop 2021 participant.

Despite the challenges and barriers resulting from the pandemic, this year was one of positivity and community building for Accumulate for both participants and workshop leaders. When planning their 2021 workshops, Accumulate remained mindful that there was a possibility of going into lockdown once again. This would mean stopping their activity at a time when their support was most crucial to the health and wellbeing of their community. As was the case in 2020, pausing activity during another lockdown would not be an option. Accumulate had to think about how their workshops could be delivered face-to-face in a physical setting with social distancing in place or, if needed, online. Throughout this year Accumulate were able to deliver their programme of activity and were still able to create a sense of community and belonging amongst Accumulate participants.

Despite the obstacles resulting from the aftermath of Covid-19 and the financial and social impacts, they have managed to deliver their programme of activity and improve lives through creativity. Not to mention empower people to live their lives more positively.

This report documents the activity that took place in 2021 and gathers the reflections and experiences of Accumulate staff and participants, as well as demonstrates Accumulate’s creative and compassionate response during what was an unpredictable year.

2021 Activities and Courses:

- Training The Trainer (online)
- Smartphone Photography for Instagram (online)
- Instagram for Beginners (online)
- Making it on Instagram (intermediate and advanced) (online)

- Making Money from Instagram (online)
- Portrait and Pottery workshops, delivered at The Barbican with Headway East Brain Damage Charity.
- Make An Advert, delivered at The Barbican
- Pottery, delivered at Space Studios (self-funded)
- Collage, delivered at Saatchi Gallery
- Accumulate Showcase at The Barbican
- Photography - delivered at Autograph, Shoreditch
- Intro to Art & Sculpture - delivered at The Barbican



Accumulate's Photography workshop delivered at Autograph, Shoreditch

Some headline stats:

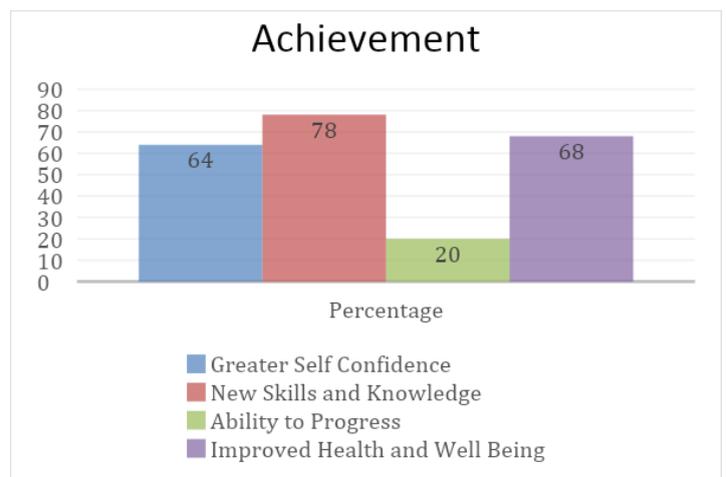
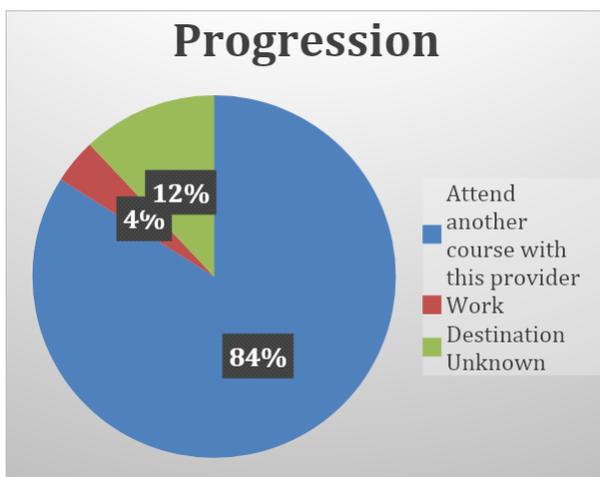
Learners that completed feedback forms reported that:

- 100% felt safe,
- 100% felt they were able to contribute
- 100% felt they were part of the group
- 100% felt they received support guidance throughout the course

89% of learners that completed the feedback reported that they had achieved the goals they set themselves up, while the remaining 11% mentioned they had almost achieved them although they needed more time to do so.

After attending the courses:

- 64% reported that they had achieved higher self confidence
- 78% reported that they had achieved and improved new skills and knowledge
- 68% reported an improved health and well being
- 20% reported an ability to progress to the next step



When asked what learners intended to do after their course had finalised:

- 84% Attend another course with the same provider (compared to 60.4% last year)
- 4% Work
- 12% Destination Unknown

Learners rated the courses as follows:

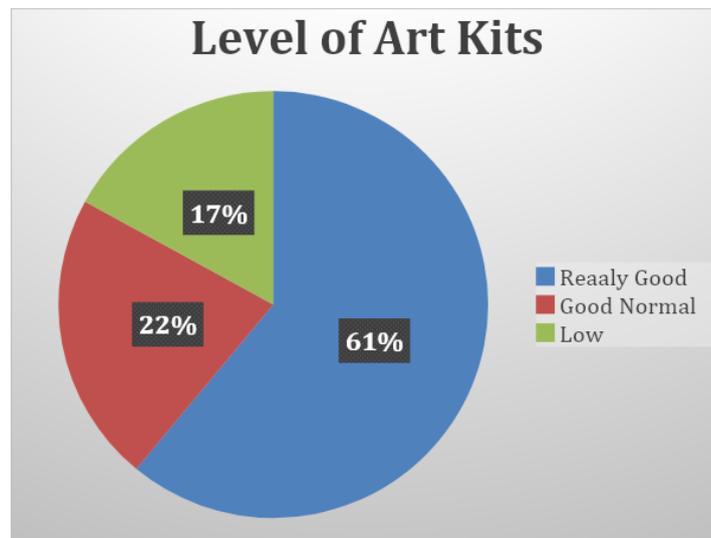
- 92% rated the courses as excellent (compared to 65% last year)
- 8% rated the courses as good

So a total of 100% of attendees thought our courses were either excellent or good. None of them reported any below the above scoring.

Learners rated the teaching quality as follows:

- 92% rated the courses as excellent
- 8% rated the courses as good

So a total of 100% of attendees thought our courses had an excellent or good teaching quality.

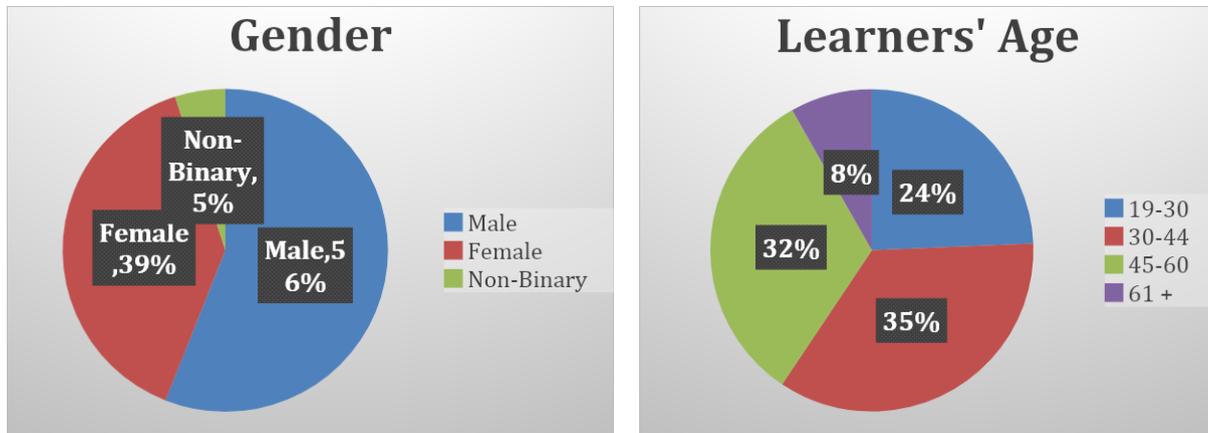


Train the Trainers organisations commented the following when asked about the level of activities of the Art Kits given:

- 61% thought it was really good
- 22% thought it was good
- 17% thought it was normal

About the course participants

The demographics of the learners in 2021 was as follows:

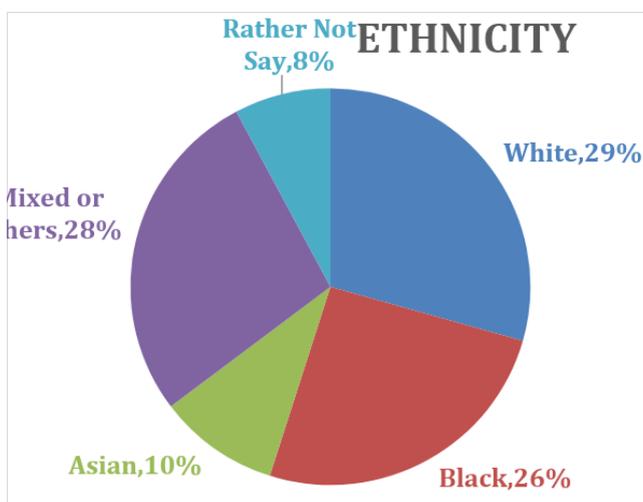


Learners gender:

56% of total learners were male, 39% were female and 5% non-binary

Learners age distribution:

- 24.3% were in the age bracket 19-30
- 35.1% were in the age bracket 31-44
- 32.4% were in the age bracket 45-60
- 8.2% were in the age bracket 61+



Learners Ethnicity:

- White (English, Irish or any other) = 29.4%
- Black (British, African, Caribbean or any other) = 25.5%
- Asian (British, Indian, Middle East or any other) = 9.8%
- Mixed race and ethnicity = 27.5%
- Rather not say = 7.8%

When asked about government support, participants answered as follows:

- 93% of participants receive government support, being Universal Credit the most common one, followed by far from employment support.
- 7% of participants did not get support

Disabilities and/or mental health condition:

- 31% reported experiencing any disability or mental health condition.

Project Partners and Funders in 2021

 <p>barbican</p>	 <p>Hawkins\ Brown</p>	 <p>THE NATIONAL LOTTERY®</p>
 <p>East End COMMUNITY FOUNDATION</p>	 <p>AUTOGRAF</p>	 <p>Adobe Foundation</p>
 <p>ALLFORD HALL MONAGHAN MORRIS</p>	 <p>D&A</p>	 <p>MUSEUM OF YOUTH CULTURE</p>

The 2021 Accumulate calendar

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
General Accumulate activity		How to win at Instagram via Zoom		D&AD advertising project, delivered at The Barbican Make an Advert, delivered at The Barbican		June showcase & Scholarships awarded	Portrait and Pottery delivered at the Barbican	Intro to Pottery	Saatchi 2-day Collage Workshop		Pottery at Space Studios	
			Accumulate Art Kits Train the Trainer via Zoom - Model Making workshops from AHMM architects - Photography and identity workshop – Autograph - Soap Carving- National Justice Museum - Look Book – Royal Pavillion Brighton - Patch making - Museum of Youth Culture - Pinch pots - The Barbican - Magazine Cover - Autograph							Intro to Art & Sculpture, delivered at The Barbican		
	Training the Trainer Online courses - Smartphone Photography for Instagram - Instagram for Beginners - Making it on Instagram (intermediate and advanced) - Making Money from Instagram											

Project: Accumulate 2020/21 Showcase Event

The end of June brought Accumulate participants and supporters together to reflect on and celebrate their work improving peoples' lives through creativity - achieved despite a very challenging year. Their usual in-person showcase event was reinvented for 2021, held at The Barbican, in Cinema 1 where they premiered our Accumulate 20/21 film.

During the event the Accumulate community heard from three past Accumulate scholarship winners who took to the stage and spoke candidly about their own personal experiences of homelessness and how they were empowered to move forwards positively with their lives. Accumulate's annual scholarship awards were also presented, giving the recipient the opportunity to continue their creative education at Ravensbourne University in September.



Nikol DeHaan speaking at the Accumulate Showcase. Photo Credit, Williamz Omope



Mitchel Ceney speaking at the Accumulate Showcase. Photo credit Williamz Omope

Project: Accumulate Art Kits Training the Trainer

Primary funders: The National Lottery, The Adobe Foundation, East End Community Fund

Accumulate Art Kits Training the Trainer scheme was targeted towards hostel support workers, giving them the tools and the knowledge to deliver creative workshops in their hostels using Accumulate Art Kits. Accumulate sent out the art kits to the hostel support worker, which included one for them to do on the training with Accumulate and an additional 10 art kits for them to use in their session for hostel residents. The training took place via Zoom and was led by our project partners who also devised the art activity. These art kit activities included model making with AHMM, photography with Autograph, soap carving from the National Justice Museum and a look book workshop from the Royal Pavilion of Brighton.

The first of these sessions was held in early March 2021. Led by Emelie Helsen, this session included how to deliver a workshop to a group and building the support workers confidence to lead their own workshops. With this training in mind, hostel support workers were able to follow the Accumulate Art Kit activity and then had the confidence and knowledge to deliver their own workshops to residents. A total of 20 hostels were involved across the UK.



Accumulate Art Kits Training the Trainer Badge making workshop via Zoom



Accumulate Art Kits Training the Trainer workshop via Zoom

Media coverage:

- <https://www.p3charity.org/about-us/latest-news/post/138-p3-coventry-delivers-art-workshops-with-accumulate>

Project: Education For All

Instagram for Beginners

Making it on Instagram (intermediate and advanced)

Making Money from Instagram

Primary funders: Greenwich Digital Skills

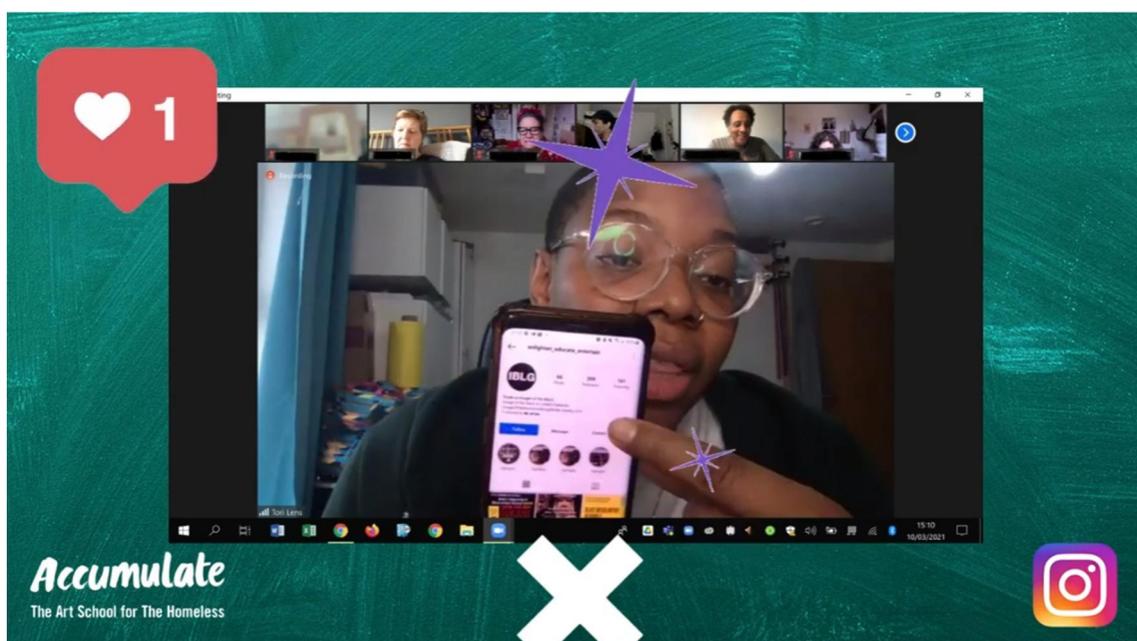
“Creative education should be for everyone” – Marice Cumber, Director and Founder of Accumulate.

After further exploring the idea of accessible creative education, Accumulate wanted to create a series of workshops for everyone - not just Accumulate participants. What developed was their ‘How to win at Instagram’ workshops, led by Williamz Omope and Tori Taiwo (Accumulate lead tutors). This brought a whole different community together, across different demographics and prior educational attainment, and sessions were based solely on the premise of education and learning – not just on one’s background.

Speakers from the Instagram community such as Leanne Pero, founder of Black Women Rising UK) were involved to discuss how she has used Instagram to build her brand and create an engaged & supportive community, raising cancer awareness within the black community.

“Great course really enjoying it, it’s demystifying so many things about Instagram for me. I thought it was all about how many followers you had but it’s not that simple. Looking forwards to the next session.” - Workshop participant.

The success of these workshops was overwhelming and Accumulate plan to carry out more of these sessions in the future.



Project: D&AD advertising project at Barbican

Accumulate's aim of this project was to reverse the hierarchy, bringing top-level creative expertise, teaching and knowledge to people who wouldn't normally be able to access it. Industry experts [Giulio Mazzarini](#) and Natalie Prout from [Jones Knowles Ritchie](#) joined us to talk the group through how strategy and creativity work in an advertising environment. Industry speakers from leading creative agencies including [Saboteur](#), [GEM](#), [Bullet Proof](#) and [We Are Social](#) also joined this project to share their expertise and industry insights with Accumulate participants.

Participants were given skills and experience in following a brief that focused on gaining a new audience for Lego. They also gained access to professional level industry knowledge through the workshop activities and interaction with speakers. This series of workshops culminated in a final showcase in June where participants were able to display their talent and potential.



Accumulate participant in the D&AD advertising project at The Barbican

Other Activities in 2021

Marice and the team were active through 2021, delivering projects for the Accumulate community – including regular participants and new learners. Some highlights include:

Activity: Funding of 4 Ravensbourne University Open Access Course Scholarships

Through various fundraising activity, Accumulate was able to offer the below scholarships and funding for Accumulate participants:

- Keattch family scholarship awarded to Jade Amoli-Jackson
- Say Property travel bursary scholarships to Whitney Stewart and Reuben Dehaan.
- Jon Drori scholarship to Anita Karklina
- The Keattch Family also awarded £1000 each to four Accumulate participants to help with their continuing creative studies.

Activity: Saatchi Workshop (September)

Accumulate's 2-day Saatchi Workshop coincided with the gallery's *JR: Chronicles* exhibition by internationally recognised French artist, JR. The exhibition ran from Jun – October 2021. These workshops involved learning about a variety of collage and photomontage artists. Participants also explored and manipulated copies of JR's portraits to create artworks expressing their own identities and emotions. During the second workshops, Accumulate participants revisited their collages and they were given the opportunity to bring their own materials to further develop and create their work. Participants gained experience in using professional photographic equipment to take expressive portraits of each other, drawing from inspiration of JR's portraits and collaborative approach to creating his work. This project ended with an exhibition of the Accumulate participants work in the learning and education gallery.



Saatchi Workshop Participants next to their final pieces



Saatchi Workshop Participants creating their images



Activity: Intro to Pottery (August)

November brought Accumulate's series of Pottery Workshop's held at Space Studios in Hackney working with The Potting Shed. The brief was to design and create our own pinch pot style plant holder that would then be glazed and fired and then planted up with a lovely succulent. Tutor Liz Jackson guided our group though all the stages from how to use slips and carving tools to decorate their creations to firing and glazing.



Intro to Pottery Workshop Participants



Activity: Intro to Arts & Sculpture (October to December)

Accumulate participants have benefitted from a residency at The Barbican since 2020. This enables Accumulate and its participants to view the exhibitions, have curator talks and access to space to run workshops. In 2021 Accumulate worked in collaboration with The Barbican and ran weekly sculpture workshops based on the Noguchi exhibition. These workshops were led by ELizabeth Jackson.



Discovering Arts and Sculpture at the Barbican Gallery



What people say about working with Accumulate –

This section presents a few examples of the feedback that is typical from learners and project partners.

What learners say:

“Accumulate has really been a lifesaver for me. Why because #1 it gave me confidence in the projects I was learning in the workshops. But also during the 1st lockdown Accumulate gave me a bit of joy with the art projects being sent in post. Not only did it keep me busy but it taught me new skills that I didn’t have before. Now once I got a scholarship well let’s just say that open up a new and exciting journey. Now being in university for BA digital photography I am fulfilling my dream. And that’s to tell the untold stories of the forgot ppl in the world or stories that need to be told to bring awareness to communities. And now I have hope to a better future all thanks to Accumulate.” - Nikol, Accumulate Scholarship winner who progressed from an Access to a Degree Course.

“Ever since I have been declared homeless, my human rights have been stripped away. My voice is either muted or lost. My opinion has no value. I’m treated as nothing more than a dumb person. I truly appreciate what Accumulate is doing and offer (to anyone) Thanks! Thanks! Thanks!” - Make An Advert participant

“When I attended the workshop at Saatchi gallery, the first stage was a guided tour of JR's work. The speaker was really good at helping us understand the artist his process and all our questions about his pieces. His work is incredibly inspiring and let me see a real life hero changing the world with his art.

After absorbing all the information and aesthetics we then began the collage workshop. I loved it because I was pumped with creativity after the exhibition and loved creating with my friends around me. We played music and danced and cut teared and stuck things down to communicate our own unique perspective. I believe JR work wants us to see the capacity in everyday things and I believe in the workshop we were able to join him in this quest. I have been struggling with homelessness since 2018 and having my small piece in the learning gallery gave me such a sense of accomplishment and something positive to share with friends and family. It was a strong light for me to bask in that I am an artist at the beginning of her journey. I used to attend the gallery with friends, and this has made me hope to host my own gallery event one day.”- Ola, Saatchi Workshop Participant.

“Doing the workshop was interesting and fun of course especially with the wonderful tutor we had. But the highlight was seeing my work seen by the public for a few weeks.

That alone gave me a boost of confidence knowing my work was seen at the great Saatchi gallery” - Saatchi Workshop Participant.



Portraits and Pottery Workshop Participant

What project partners say:

“The benefits have been wonderful – The Emotion magazine cover gave the clients an opportunity to explore their emotions and they all did this in different ways, it definitely turned into an art therapy session which the clients seems to naturally turn it into and it was my pleasure to be part of the process. For one particular client this project has been a bit of a lifeline, it has not just given him something positive to do but because I encouraged him to do “happy” as the emotion, whenever he picks up the project he thinks positively.” – Sharon, Training The Trainer participant and hostel support worker.

“Thank YOU both so much too for giving us these opportunities to work with you and these amazing groups! I’m really looking forward to seeing how everyone today gets on passing the project on. I was so impressed with what everyone made.” - Claire Pollock, AHMM Partnerships Lead and Training The Trainer project delivery partner.

Conclusion

This year has seen Accumulate's reach and breadth of activity grow in many ways. The impact of the pandemic has had a two-fold outcome for Accumulate's community. The success of their activity during 2020 lockdowns has engaged a wider audience of participants and this year's programme of activity has deepened their engagement with people who regularly take part in workshops.

Demand for Accumulate's services is clearly very high, but capacity and quality can often be a finite resource. The rise of homelessness numbers in London through Covid-19 is evident – increases in breakdowns of relationships, increases youth unemployment and financial instability, and confidence and mental health issues increasing, all contributing to this. As such the need for Accumulate's services has become a lifeline for many.

Accumulate understand the need for them to consider the way in which they work to accommodate this increase in need, not to mention the types of fundraising avenues they explore.

It is clear that Accumulate has responded with continued energy and considered action in the face of the current climate. It has kept the interests of its users at the heart of all it does and maintaining the quality of their workshops has always been integral to their work. Several achievements and lessons for Accumulate from the year that has been include:

- Raising awareness within the creative industries has been a key achievement for Accumulate. At a time when there is so many campaigns for social awareness, they have managed to share their participants' experiences and the need for support with a wider audience.

“Accumulate really pivoted in 2021 and extended its reach through its online provision and support to hostels and related organisations beyond London. It became evident that using creativity and innovation we were able to carry on supporting our participants through a very uncertain year and our output and impact did not reduce because of these circumstances.” - Marice Cumber, Accumulate Director.

- They have built a real sense of community. Their workshops gave a real sense of purpose, a routine and a support network for participants. This is especially crucial given the impact of the pandemic and lockdowns on their community's isolation and mental well-being.
- Engagement with social injustice and homelessness has continued as a result of the pandemic. This renewed and invigorated audience response has meant more support and recognition for the work of organisations like Accumulate. It also means that more can be done and therefore more funding is needed.

The challenge for Accumulate in 2022 will be:

- Navigating an increasingly changing and competitive fundraising landscape
- Delivering high quality workshops delivered by people from shared, lived experience
- Sustaining that interest and support from funders and audiences, while delivering a high-quality experience to a cohort of young people who will continue to be disrupted by the aftershocks of pandemic and lockdown measures for many years to come.
- Ensuring that we use the best practice learnt and gained to benefit others and so increase the benefits of engaging and participating in creative education for people affected by homelessness.

