

# Films to Make You Feel Good

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# Phoenix



## Films to Make You Feel Good

### Evaluation Report



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## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank all the volunteer promoters, staff and audience members who agreed to participate in this evaluation study.

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## Project team

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# Executive Summary

## Overview

This evaluation set out to examine the learning from a nine-month programme of 'Films to Make You Feel Good' screenings delivered by Phoenix Community Cinema in both Leicester city and Leicestershire & Rutland.

The films, screened in local community venues, were specifically selected to help audiences feel inspired and uplifted. Leicester City Council viewed 'Films to Make You Feel Good' as a means of reaching out to people in communities across Leicestershire who might feel isolated, or lonely, and funded a pilot of the programme January – March 2015. Funding for this project, running from September 2015 to June 2016, was then secured from the Film Hub Central & East, Public Health Leicester and Public Health Leicestershire. Further support was gained from St Matthews Big Local, box office sales and in-kind costing from DMLL, Coventry University.

## Audience

In addition to the funders, the intended audience for this evaluation report is Phoenix and the local authorities supporting Phoenix Community Cinema, not least to inform the local authorities' future approach and roll out of funding to support community art programmes. The report will also be of potential interest to the groups identified within the report, and other organisations considering adopting community arts programmes.

## Evaluation question

The evaluation question was:

*"How might the screening of afternoon films attract new audiences to community cinema screenings, including people who are lonely or marginalized, to help enhance wellbeing, to uplift and inspire?"*

## Evaluation framework

An evaluation framework was developed by the research team in consultation with Sallie Varnam, (project manager), John Rance, CEO at Phoenix and Leicester City Council's Neighbourhood Management Team. A multi-methods approach to evaluation was negotiated, framed within arts-related research (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014<sup>1</sup>). This involved the researchers using mixed methods to capture both qualitative and quantitative data to examine participants' responses from the project. The evaluation took place across the project lifetime with the aim of making study findings accessible to multiple audiences.

The following **evaluation aims** were addressed:

1. To understand the benefits of being involved in the Films to Make You Feel Good project from the community participants involved, in particular individuals' response to the film screenings and their ability to uplift and inspire and impact wellbeing.
2. To examine how the use of film can present a useful way of connecting people with other members of their local community

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<sup>1</sup> Savin-Baden, M., & Wimpenny, K. (2015) *A practical guide to arts-related research*, SENSE Publishers

3. To understand best practice guidelines when designing/curating and delivering community arts programmes which can address the needs of new, harder to reach audiences
4. To explore Higher Education undergraduate students' perspectives about how experience of volunteering on live arts and health projects can be used in the design of pedagogy for effective learning gains.

### **Ethical Approval: Gathering data from people and groups involved in the programme**

Ethical approval to gather data from people and groups involved in the pilots was granted from Coventry University Research Ethics on 10.09.15 (Project Ref / P36337).

### **Evaluation Methods**

- **Participant and stakeholder interviews** – short interviews were conducted with audience members attending the film screenings to gain an understanding of their hopes, expectations and responses to the screenings. Phoenix projectionists, volunteer venue staff members, and media communication student volunteers were also interviewed at interim stages during the project and on project completion.
- **Video shorts** – of participant perspectives at various stages of the project were captured to be used as both part data collection and part dissemination.
- **Art icons** – (designed with cinema themes) were used to capture short answer responses from audience members to the films. The icons were shared in interactive exhibitions across the venues as both part data collection and part dissemination.
- **Audience survey** – used at the screenings to capture audience members' attitudes and responses towards the film, as well as their views on how the film was able to uplift and inspire and impact wellbeing. (The survey design was inspired by the WEMWBS, the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well Being Scale<sup>2</sup> - a health outcomes framework tool, recommended by the NHS Confederation, 2011).
- **Other creative methods** – taking the theme of the film, a music and song session was used to engage with audience members and gauge responses to the film.

### **Data Analysis**

Parametric and non-parametric methods were used for analysis of the quantitative data. Documentary and thematic analysis were used for the qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006<sup>3</sup>). Arts-informed analysis and interpretation methods (Wimpenny &

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<sup>2</sup> <http://hqlo.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1477-7525-5-63>.

<sup>3</sup> Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. 3 (2), 77–101.

Gouzouasis, 2016<sup>4</sup>) were also drawn upon in order that the research findings could be made accessible as outputs for dissemination to diverse audiences.

### **Project findings**

The project took place from September 2015 to June 2016 to examine if a season of specifically selected films could contribute to improving the mental wellbeing of targeted audiences, and bring people at risk of isolation together with other members of their communities.

Six key themes emerged from analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data:

- 1. Community Venues: use of space**
- 2. The Feel Good Experience and Community Engagement**
- 3. Impact on sense of self**
- 4. Accessing the hard to reach members of the community**
- 5. The influence of others**
- 6. Student learning gains**

The issues arising from these themes are summarized below:

- 52 screenings were held at 13 venues, selected for particularly targeted audiences: older people at risk of isolation, parents/carers and young children. Venues in Leicester City were managed by Leicester City Council's Neighbourhood Management team, Leicestershire and Rutland venues were supported by groups of volunteer promoters, most of which already support Phoenix's community cinema programme, which has been running since 2004.
- The venues which participated in the programme were:
  - In Leicester City: Fosse Neighbourhood Centre, the Tudor Centre, Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, St Matthews Community Centre, Beaumont Leys Library, the East West Centre, Church Court Sheltered Accommodation
  - In Leicestershire and Rutland: Newbold Verdon Library, The Rothley Centre, Kegworth Village Hall, Rutland County Museum Oakham, Melton Carnegie Museum,
- A total of 733 audience members attended the screening events. Those audience members aged between 65 – 75 were the most frequent to attend with the percentage of women attending to men 26% male to 71% female (3% didn't specify).
- A significant number of elderly people attended the matinee screenings (the largest frequency of cinema attendees were aged 65 – 75 and the second highest frequency age group were over 75) highlighting the need for matinee screenings alongside evening events

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<sup>4</sup> Wimpenny, K., & Gouzouasis, P. (2016). *Analysis, interpretation & representation using arts-related research*, American Education Research Association (AERA) Congress, Washington D.C., US. Washington D.C., US. April 8 – 12, 2016.



- 97% of audience members stated the experience had been positive
- When asked what had occurred at the screenings in addition to watching the film:
  - 32.4% said they had met new people
  - 54.8% said they bumped into an existing friend / neighbour
  - 86.3% said they laughed
  - 67.1% said they felt uplifted
  - 42.5% said they felt connected with their community
- Almost all respondents said they would like to attend such events again adding how enjoyable the film screening had been, and an excellent way to spend the afternoon and the refreshments were well received.
- Despite the overwhelming positive response of audience members, the numbers of people who attended the screenings was disappointing, and the challenge of engaging those people in communities considered 'hard to reach' was viewed as the most significant challenge by venue volunteers
- The programme faced significant challenges with the city based venues as Leicester City Council's restructure of its Library and Community services department resulted in many of the people involved in delivering the events being made redundant. Without this on the ground support, attracting audiences and delivering events at the numerous venues made it challenging, and several venues included in the original programme plan had to be removed from the programme from January 2016.
  - Coleman Neighbourhood Centre, Fosse Neighbourhood Centre, Tudor Centre, Pork Pie Library & Community Centre, East West Community Centre.
- Despite such challenges, the project manager approached the St Matthews Big Local partnership and a number of screenings in both a residential centre for older people and the local community centre occurred. This partnership resulted in the programme's highest audience numbers (57 at St Matthews Community Centre on 4 June) at a family screening attended by newly arrived families.

### **Important Features**

The key findings appear to indicate a number of important features:

1. Watching the films provided forms of social encounters that were valued by group participants.
2. Participants expressed that getting out of the house and watching the films in local community venues provided an opportunity to address and influence a range of physical and psychosocial issues, for example, reducing loneliness, and enabling participation despite disability.

3. Participants' wellbeing was enhanced through sharing of enjoyment of the films. Attending the films was viewed as positive and rewarding.
4. Participant wellbeing gains were evident from an immediate perspective from those people attending the screenings; however, due to the short time frame of the evaluation it is not possible to give clear indications of possible medium and longer term benefits.
5. It was less easy to judge how social interactions amongst participants extended beyond the film screening and influenced the roles, relationships and routines of participants' everyday lives. However, audience members commented on how they had enjoyed meeting with family, friends and neighbours whilst at the screening events.
6. Accessing the target audience of older adults considered lonely and marginalized was the most challenging task for the community venue volunteers. The Project Manager worked with Public Health partners to support venues in attracting the project's target audience and this intervention was more successful at some venues than others
7. Encouraging people to attend the community film screenings was a labour intensive task for the venue volunteers who, despite use of a range of marketing strategies, viewed attendance at the screenings as generally disappointing.
8. The skill set of the venue promoters in the most well attended venues was viewed as the key to the success of those venue screenings. It was evident that the commitment, energy, generosity and encouraging nature of these philanthropic volunteers in promoting the events, and ensuring all those who attended were made to feel welcome, enabled the events to thrive. Examples of engaging with the audience to host other community events, seeking feedback on audience's ideas and future film suggestions, putting on art activities for younger audience members, and offering to drive the less mobile to screening events, all contributed to developing positive audience engagement.
9. The relationships between the project manager, the cinema projectionists and the venue volunteers were important for the overall success of the project. At certain locations the relationships between the venue volunteers and projectionist was very positive and led to the projectionist experiencing a positive sense of job fulfillment. At other venues there were concerns about the projectionist not turning up, or turning up late, resulting in delays in the start and finish times, and creating stress for the venue organisers. Films did not arrive, leaving the venue promoters having to arrange for alternative films to be screened (from personal collections).
10. The film projectionists' were requested to take pamphlets / leaflets about health and wellbeing out with them to the community screenings. It was evident this task was not viewed by the projectionists as an integral part of their role and so

opportunities for health organisations to disseminate their information was not properly utilised.

11. The relationships between the project manager, Phoenix, Leicester City Council and the Neighbourhood Management teams provided a strategic interface between the project and its aims. The Leicester city events were initially coordinated through regular meetings of the Neighbourhood Management team, the scheme coordinator/ lead projectionist and the project manager. Volunteer promoters liaised directly with the project manager; most of whom had already been involved in promoting community cinema events in partnership with Phoenix.

### **Recommendations and next steps**

- Substantial subsidy needs to be in place to enable projects such as Films To Make You Feel Good to take place. A key finding indicates that the target audience of the project would not be able to access the events should ticket prices be increased. Additionally, there are significant resources required to develop and sustain the numerous partnerships required to support both the range of venues involved and the development of the target audience.
- Participant wellbeing gains were evident from an immediate perspective from those people attending the screenings; however, due to the short time frame of the evaluation it is not possible to give clear indications of possible medium and longer term benefits. Further research needs to take place following a longitudinal study of the impact of regular attendance at community cinema events and how this impacts on health and social care provision. For example, follow up evaluation at six and 12 months.
- The findings suggest that there is a need to examine how venues who were unsuccessful but had potential to engage communities could be supported in promoting their venues and vision so that they too could be successful community cinema venues. Future project work should examine more closely how learning can be shared from successful venues to assist with development and sustainability for all venue and local community groups. This could be facilitated, for example, through peer mentoring through online forums or development sessions to disseminate good practice and share learning amongst volunteers.
- Volunteer support and development is crucial in ensuring such projects are successful. It would be useful to compare the venues volunteers, for example, in the form of visionaries/per mentors /leaders, and how the skills and expertise of such people can be recognised for sharing with other groups / communities who are interested in development and delivery of community arts programmes.

- Relationships between venues and the hosting cinema are vital in terms of offering reliable access to films. Development of collaborative approaches between the hosting cinema and promoters are required in order to achieve project aims, promote dual ownership of the programme, and to improve relationships.
- There is an opportunity for universities to be involved in community projects, both as subjects of research and as providers of experience for students to take part in live community projects. Developing relationships with universities has been seen to effectively contribute to community partnerships and has enabled students to gain invaluable situated learning experiences.
- Students require ongoing support once recruited, to enable them to gain the best learning experiences from live project work. Effective communication, planning, preparation and monitoring, amongst project staff, university staff and students is required to enable students to be able to fulfil their roles while maintaining effective delivery of the programme.

### **Beneficiaries and future project potential**

This project and its evaluation have a wide range of beneficiaries, both current and potential.

- All audiences viewing the films had opportunity to see and reflect afresh at first hand perspectives about how film can serve to inspire and uplift and make people laugh. These testimonies offer opportunity to connect people, places and events, and to explore ways forward to build community cohesion.
- Local government bodies have the opportunity to see the impact of a specifically curated film programme on targeted audiences of vulnerable community members, with potential to work more closely with local authorities to track these impacts in conjunction with strategic objectives.
- Public Health bodies have the opportunity to utilize such programmes to focus directed support, developing community venue based events as hubs for vulnerable people to access support.
- Opportunities exist to engage with GPs surgeries to develop referral schemes to community led programmes for targeted audiences.
- Development of partnerships with Local Area Coordinators' work to ensure increased take up of events amongst target audiences.
- The contribution of the arts to both education and wellbeing offers potential for future artistic work, for example the participants' stories have potential to be developed into written scripts and performed by community youth theatre groups.

- The students involved in working with Phoenix and with community participants, benefited from gaining first-hand knowledge, understanding and experience of how arts and health projects impact people and communities.
- The learning gained from recruiting and supporting media students to engage in volunteer work experience placements on community arts and health projects has informed the development of frameworks of good practice for experience-based learning.

### **A Poem created from audience members' words and phrases<sup>5</sup>**

It was very nice,  
Lovely, great laugh, made me smile,  
Warming, enjoyable, fun.  
Happy, not sad,  
A feel-good movie,  
I was really pleased to have come.

It got me out of house,  
The films were emotional too,  
As well as funny, some were sad,  
Yet happy tears shed – not blue.

Coming back out into the daylight,  
Watching those films I have missed,  
Enjoying the feel good experience,  
And looking at what's next on the list!

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<sup>5</sup> by Charles Legge & Katherine Wimpenny

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# Main Report

## Background Information

Phoenix is an independent charity specialising in world cinema, digital arts and education relating to film and digital media. Its main stakeholders include the British Film Institute, Arts Council England, De Montfort University and Leicester City Council.

Phoenix has worked in partnership with the local authorities of Leicestershire and Rutland to deliver Phoenix Community Cinema, a community led rural cinema scheme with support from groups of volunteers in community venues since 2004. Phoenix Community Cinema is one of the most successful rural cinema services in the UK and supports local promoters and volunteers throughout Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire to provide regular cinema events in community venues to audiences of 12,500.

Phoenix Community Cinema was developed to bring a programme of high quality, inspirational film, curated by Phoenix's experienced team, to rurally isolated community venues. The scheme aimed to address issues of social isolation and community cohesion by enabling communities to connect through volunteering opportunities and regular events held at community venues. The Phoenix team has worked closely with groups of volunteer promoters to develop audiences and bring together communities in areas which currently lack cultural provision/engagement, due to rural isolation and/or poor transport links to cultural facilities. Phoenix Community Cinema has been supported by Leicestershire County Council, Rutland County Council, most of the district councils and various British Film Institute funding streams, which along with a box office split (divided between the scheme and the volunteer groups), have enabled the programme's continued success. Phoenix Community Cinema's operating principal is to foster regular film programmes in alternative venues, such as village halls and community centres, by developing and supporting networks of local volunteers. The scheme currently supports over sixty groups of volunteers who together deliver approximately 320 events each year, donating a total of 6200 volunteered hours.

Although Phoenix Community Cinema has been successful at establishing audiences at rural venues, the strategic objectives of the programme needed to align more closely with those of Public Health and local authority objectives around vulnerable adults to ensure the continued support of local authorities. *Films to Make You Feel Good* was, therefore, modeled on Phoenix Community Cinema's established programme, but specifically aimed at engaging vulnerable adults who may be isolated from their communities during the daytime, with a programme of films specifically selected to impact positively on audience members' mental health and general wellbeing.

The programme grew from the Leicestershire Culture Health and Wellbeing Partnership, which was formed in 2012 to promote the correlation between engaging in cultural activity and improved mental wellbeing across cultural organizations in Leicester and Leicestershire. The partnership brought together strategic bodies from the local arts and cultural sector with representatives from Public Health in Leicestershire and Leicester, whose main aim was to extol the notion that 'culture is good for you'. This assertion is based on the New Economic Foundation's (NEF) 'Five



Ways to Wellbeing<sup>16</sup> a set of evidence based actions designed to improve wellbeing, which was commissioned by the Government's Foresight project in 2008.

## Literature Review

In health policy it is recognised that certain groups of people may be more likely to experience social isolation, such as older people, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health issues and people with long term health conditions (Wimpenny & Savin-Baden, 2014<sup>7</sup>). Social isolation needs to be understood in a wide sense; whilst often being linked directly to the politicised term of 'social exclusion' it also cuts across divisions of social class, ethnicity, gender and disability. Creative activities and health are an integral element of government policy and health guidelines (Department of Health, Arts Council England, 2007<sup>8</sup>; National Arts Policy Roundtable, 2011<sup>9</sup>; National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence [NICE] 2008<sup>10</sup>; Social Exclusion Unit, 2004<sup>11</sup>). Yet whilst the link between (arts) activity and health is well established through research (for example, Macnaughton, et al, 2005<sup>12</sup>; Greaves & Farbus, 2006<sup>13</sup>; Belardinelli et al., 2008<sup>14</sup>; Howells & Zelnik, 2009<sup>15</sup>; Hampshire & Matthijsse, 2010<sup>16</sup>; Skingley & Vella-Burrows, 2010<sup>17</sup>; Stacey & Stickley, 2010<sup>18</sup>) the current evidence base regarding the effectiveness of interventions targeting social isolation is poor (Dickens et al, 2011<sup>19</sup>), and requires further development.

In the paper commissioned by DCMS, 'Quantifying and Valuing the Wellbeing Impacts

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.fivewaystowellbeing.org>

<sup>7</sup> Wimpenny, K. & Savin-Baden, M. (2014) Using Theatre and Performance for Promoting Health and Well Being amongst the 50+ Community: An Arts-Informed Evaluation, *The International Journal of Social, Political, and Community Agendas in the Arts*, 8 (1), 47-64

<sup>8</sup> Department of Health, Arts Council England, (2007) *A prospectus for Arts and Health*, [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication\\_archive/a-prospectus-for-arts-and-health/](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/a-prospectus-for-arts-and-health/)

<sup>9</sup> National Arts Policy Roundtable (2011) *Innovating for Impact: Arts-Based Solutions for a Stronger America* [http://www.americansforthearts.org/information\\_services/research/policy\\_roundtable/006.asp](http://www.americansforthearts.org/information_services/research/policy_roundtable/006.asp)

<sup>10</sup> National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, (2008) *Mental wellbeing and older people*, <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH16>

<sup>11</sup> Social Exclusion Unit, (2004) *Mental Health and Social Exclusion: Social Exclusion Unit Report*, <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/mentalhealth>

<sup>12</sup> Macnaughton, J., White, M., & Stacey, R. (2005). Researching the benefits of arts in health. *Health Education*, 105(5), 332–339.

<sup>13</sup> Greaves C. J. & Farbus L. (2006) Effects of creative and social activity on the health and well-being of socially isolated older people: outcomes from a multi-method observational study. *The Journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health*, 126 (3): 134–142.

<sup>14</sup> Belardinelli, R., Lacalaprice, F., & Ventrella, C., et al. (2008). Waltz dancing in patients with chronic heart failure: new form of exercise training. *Circulation. Heart Failure*. 1, 2, 107-114.

<sup>15</sup> Howells, V. & Zelnik, T (2009) Making art: a qualitative study of personal and group transformation in a community arts studio, *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 32 (3) : 215 – 222.

<sup>16</sup> Hampshire, K. R., & Matthijsse, M. (2010) Can arts projects improve young people's wellbeing? A social capital approach. *Social science medicine*, 71, (4): 708-716

<sup>17</sup> Skingley, A. & Vella-Burrows, T. (2010) Therapeutic effects of music and singing for older people. *Nursing Standard*, 24 (19) : 35-41.

<sup>18</sup> Stacey, G. & Stickley, T. (2010) The meaning of art to people who use mental health services. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 130 (2) : 70 – 77

<sup>19</sup> Dickens, A. P., Richards, S. H., Greaves, C. J. & Campbell, J. L. (2011) Interventions targeting social isolation in older people: a systematic review *BMC Public Health* 11: 647

of Culture and Sport (Fujiwara, Kudrna & Dolan, 2014<sup>20</sup>) a formula demonstrating the equivalent monetary value assigned to attending sports and cultural events was employed. Attending the cinema at least once a week was valued at £100 per visit in terms of the impact this activity had on the wellbeing of the individual.

The experience of communing with others to attend an accessible and familiar art form has a positive impact on wellbeing. No specific skills or traits are required to engage with film and the action of attending a screening in a cinema setting is passive; no interaction is required, yet, in a community setting, the shared experience allows and encourages interaction and discussion with other audience members, who, once the film is watched together, have a shared experience.

In a recent study by Miller, Mangano and Park et al., (2015<sup>21</sup>) the physiological evidence of watching films for participant wellbeing was measured. Healthy males and females viewed excerpts from films that were used to measure a response from mental stress to laughter. Alterations in brachial flow mediated vasodilation (FMD) - an indicator of cardiovascular health (Shechter et al. 2014<sup>22</sup>) - was measured. After watching the film excerpts, the FMD was affected by up to 50% across participants, indicating that the increased vascular flow from laughter was indicative of a healthier endothelial system, which in turn results in increases in the health of the viewers, if only for the time of the film.

In another study, Khoo and Graham-Engeland (2014<sup>23</sup>) asked 48 student participants to either watch a drama-themed film clip, read a dramatic script, or do nothing (baseline). Upon analysis of the reflective writing of the participants on their experience, it was found that the participants exposed to dramatic media experiences showed lowered anxiety and depressed mood measures, along with increased self-reflection and self-regulation, (which can serve to improve general health and general psychological health).

Studies such as these reveal some of the benefits of different genres of films, notwithstanding any other effects outside of the direct viewing of the film. Building on the aforementioned research and literature, this project sought to explore the influence of cinema with a diverse range of (socially isolated) older adults and young families. Phoenix conceptualised the project over a nine-month period, prior to which a pilot study was conducted, supported by Leicester City Council's Health and Wellbeing fund. This pilot demonstrated an appetite amongst Leicester city communities for a daytime scheme of subsidized film screenings in community venues.

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<sup>20</sup> Fujiwara, D., Kudrna, L. & Dolan, P. (2014) Quantifying and Valuing the Wellbeing Impacts of Culture and Sport. Department for Culture, Media and Sport, [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/304899/Quantifying\\_and\\_valuing\\_the\\_wellbeing\\_impacts\\_of\\_sport\\_and\\_culture.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/304899/Quantifying_and_valuing_the_wellbeing_impacts_of_sport_and_culture.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Miller, M., Mangano, C., Park, Y., Goel, R., Plotnick, G. T. and Vogel, R. A. (2005) 'Impact of cinematic viewing on endothelial function' *Heart*, 92(2)

<sup>22</sup> Schechter, M., Schechter, A., Koren-Morag, N., Feinberg, M. S. and Hirsch, L. (2014) 'Usefulness of Brachial Artery Flow-Mediated Dilation to Predict Long-Term Cardiovascular Events in Subjects Without Heart Disease'. *The American Journal of Cardiology*, 113 (1) 162-167

<sup>23</sup> Khoo, G. S. and Graham-Engeland, J. E. (2014) 'The benefits of contemplating tragic drama on self-regulation and health' *Health Promotion International*

## Films to Make You Feel Good: Leicester City Pilot

Between January and March 2015 Leicester City Council's Arts Manager supported a wellbeing budget to pilot a wellbeing focused programme of film screenings, based on Phoenix Community Cinema's model, to be held in city community centres identified by Neighbourhood Managers as targeted areas. The project manager worked with the Leicester City Council Arts Manager, the Neighbourhood Managers team and the Phoenix Community Cinema Coordinator to develop a programme of specially selected films aimed to improve the mental wellbeing of targeted audiences: older people at risk of isolation and loneliness, carers and pre-school aged children and carers and their primary aged children. The pilot was designed to ascertain whether matinee screenings of 'Films to Make You Feel Good' could complement the existing Phoenix Community Cinema programme in Leicestershire and Rutland to develop an additional audience of targeted groups of people.

Films to Make You Feel Good builds on the positive findings of the pilot screenings<sup>24</sup>, (see Appendix 1 for the key findings from the pilot study) with the ambition of rolling out the programme to a larger number of community venues, and continuing to target afternoon screenings as its focus.

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<sup>24</sup> Varnam, S. (2015) Pilot study report\_[link](#))

## Films to Make You Feel Good: Formal Project Delivery

The programme was coordinated through a project group consisting of the project manager, Phoenix Community Cinema's Leicestershire coordinator, the arts manager from Leicester City Council and members of the City Council Neighbourhood Management team. Meetings were held in tandem with Public Health Managers for Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council to ensure the outcomes of the programme and any subsequent development of a longer term programme would align with Public Health objectives.

### Aims of the programme

- To create new partnerships between Phoenix and Leicester City Neighbourhood Management teams
- To develop a dialogue between Arts Management, Phoenix and Public Health in both Leicester City and Leicestershire County councils
- To engage groups of people in key neighbourhoods with high quality films selected specifically for their ability to lift the spirits, promote social interaction and improved mental wellbeing
- To bring people together in venues at times when other provision was sparse
- To enable people at risk of loneliness or isolation to meet members of their community
- To test how matinee screenings work in conjunction with the wider offer of the community venues
- To enable Phoenix to promote the wellbeing benefits of engaging with film to its wider audience and stakeholders

The project team requested Researchers in the Disruptive Media Learning Lab (DMLL), Coventry University to evaluate the project.

### Promotion

Promotion of the current project occurred using a wide range of media including advertisements in local shops, cafe's, doctors' surgeries, and in a range of community venues using specially designed posters (see Figure 1).

Similar to the pilot, the programme of screenings were promoted through Phoenix's main website, and through press releases sent through Phoenix's marketing team.  
<http://www.phoenix.org.uk/whats-on/community-cinema/>

All community promoters received a regular newsletter about the scheme and Phoenix's other community cinema programmes. Public Health Leicestershire supported the programme by including details about the events in its magazine, distributed to 10,000 people each quarter. The programme featured as a double page spread in the Leicester Mercury which can be accessed here <http://bit.ly/1pqOqie>

### Setting up Community Cinema Venues

Community Venues were selected by the coordination team who sought to ensure a good geographical spread of provision across the sub-region whilst working with Public Health to ascertain particular areas of need in terms of targeted audience. The Phoenix Community Cinema team also assessed existing groups of volunteers for their experience and/or capability at delivering additional events. It was important that the venue was central and walkable to, or served by public transport.

Whilst not able to replicate the purpose-built-cinema-experience, each venue offered refreshments to enhance the cinema-going experience and to establish an income stream to support the venues' costs for the programme (for example, room hire). Ticket prices were nominal, £2 each or £6 for a family, to ensure accessibility for all target audiences.

As part of the Films to Make You Feel Good scheme, Yellow Books<sup>25</sup> and other relevant health and wellbeing related pamphlets, were provided by health organisations from across the city to disseminate at screening events, for information, and to signpost people to community services.

### Example of promotional leaflets



Volunteer groups received full subsidy for the events, and all box office was returned to Phoenix Community Cinema. Volunteers held raffles and sold refreshments to cover their own costs for room hire and publicity printing.

Several of the participating venues had cinema exhibition equipment installed through Phoenix Community Cinema's existing scheme; other venues had a mobile kit set up by the projectionists.

<sup>25</sup> The Yellow Book contains details for the promotion of physical and mental wellbeing including personal stories, poems and art works.



## Methodology and methods

### Evaluation question

The evaluation question was:

*“How might the screening of afternoon films attract new audiences to community cinema screenings, including people who are lonely or marginalized, to help enhance wellbeing, to uplift and inspire?”*

### Evaluation framework

An evaluation framework was developed by the research team in consultation with the Project Manager and Phoenix. A multi-methods approach to evaluation was negotiated framed within arts-related research (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2014). Arts-related research has gained increasing attention from qualitative scholars and the spectrum of arts-based approaches offer spaces to both interrupt and create space for discussions about dominant discourses in research and practice across a variety of disciplines. Arts-informed inquiry was selected here as a means of representing the findings from the study and as a means of representing the response of participants towards the health issues and situations being targeted. As researchers engaged as participants and observers within the inquiry process, a conscious decision was made to follow guiding principles underpinning this approach which are:

- The research is guided by moral commitment
- Knowledge is generated through the work
- There is a strong focus on reflexivity
- Accessibility is a strong focal point
- Diverse forms of quality are celebrated together
- There is a sense of authenticity (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013<sup>26</sup>)

The evaluation process involved the researchers using a range of creative methods to capture and examine participants' responses from the project. The evaluation took place across the project lifetime with the aim of making study findings accessible to multiple audiences.

### Working with Students as Research Assistants

As the lead researcher works in the DMLL, and due to the scale of the evaluation and number of screenings being held across community venues, second year Media and Communication students were recruited to support data collection and gain hands-on experience of supporting the community arts project. A Job Specification form was designed, (see Appendix 2). In 140 characters, students had to share something about why they should be chosen for the project placement accompanied with a two-minute video via smartphone, or webcam. Students were interviewed by a panel including the Principal Research Lead, The Module Tutor and the Project Officer from the Office of Learning and Teaching. As research project assistants, students would be able to use their experience as part of module learning and as a specific aspect of their assessed student project work.

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<sup>26</sup> Savin-Baden & C. Major, (2013) *Qualitative Research: the essential guide to theory and practice*. London: Routledge

Eight students were recruited to the project. In addition to their support in capturing data from audience members at the various screenings, the students were invited to provide their ideas for data collection tools, and their perspectives were also sought about being involved in the project.

The following **evaluation aims** were addressed:

1. To understand the benefits of being involved in the Films to Make You Feel Good project from the community participants involved, in particular individuals' response to the film screenings and their ability to uplift and inspire and impact wellbeing.
2. To examine how the use of film can present a useful way of connecting people with other members of their local community including offering signposting to (clinical) services that people may find helpful to access.
3. To understand best practice guidelines when designing/curating and delivering community arts programmes which can address the needs of new, harder to reach audiences
4. To explore Higher Education undergraduate students' perspectives about how experience of volunteering on live arts and health projects can be used in the design of pedagogy for effective learning gains.

### **Ethical Approval: Gathering data from people and groups involved in the programme**

Ethical approval to gather data from people and groups involved in the project was granted from Coventry University Research Ethics on 10.09.15 (Project Ref / P36337). (See Appendices 3 & 4 for example Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form.)

### **Data Collection Methods**

- **Audience survey** – used at the screenings to capture audience member's attitudes and responses towards the film, as well as their views on how the film was able to uplift and inspire and impact wellbeing (See Appendix 5 for copy of survey). The survey design was inspired by the WEMWBS, the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well Being Scale<sup>27</sup> - a health outcomes framework tool, recommended by the NHS Confederation, 2011 and approved by Public Health Leicester and Leicestershire.
- **Participant and Stakeholder interviews** – short interviews were conducted with volunteer participants attending the film screenings to gain an understanding of their hopes, expectations and responses to the screenings. Phoenix projectionists, volunteer venue staff members, and media communication student volunteers were also interviewed at interim stages during the project and on project completion. (See Appendix 6 for example interview prompts)
- **Video shorts** – of participant perspectives at various stages of the project to be used as both part data collection and part dissemination
- **Music and song** – taking the theme of sunshine from the 'Little Miss Sunshine' film being screened, a musical session was used to engage with audience members and gauge responses to the film and the coming together of

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<sup>27</sup> <http://hqlo.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1477-7525-5-63>.

residents. (See Appendix 7 & 8 for example of sunshine music quiz and words from Sunshine song)

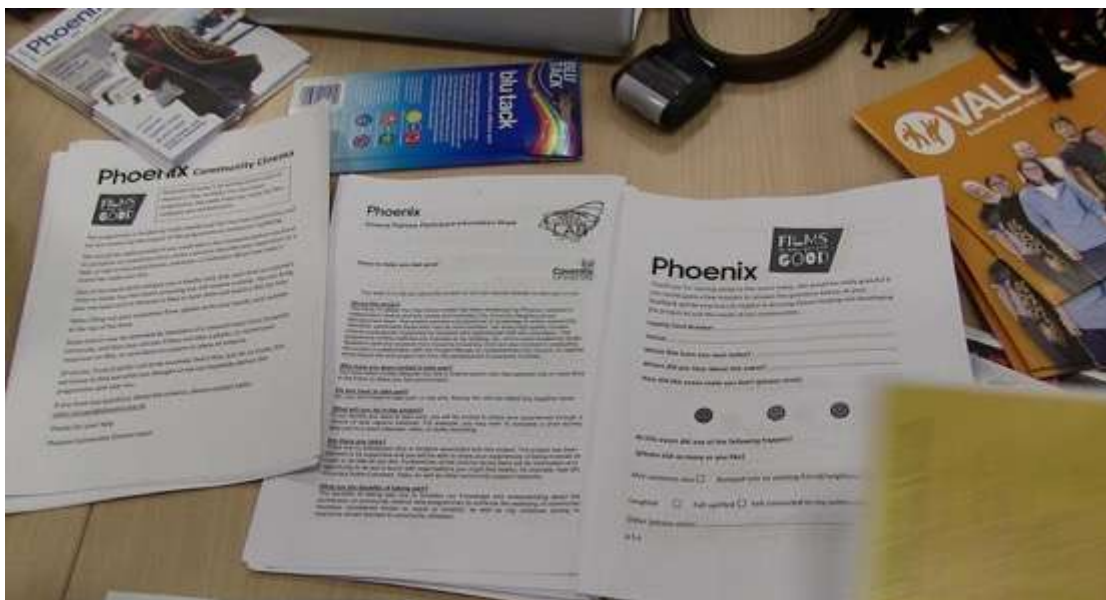
- **Art icons** – an interactive use of icons (designed with cinema themes) were used to capture short answer responses from audience members to the films. The icons were shared in interactive exhibitions across the venues as both part data collection and part dissemination. (See Appendix 9 for example icons)



Images of how interactive icons were used to share participant feedback at screenings



The survey, consent forms and participant information sheets ready to capture audience responses



In addition, bespoke tools were designed by the project manager to capture audience feedback, for example, film quizzes and sheets used for drawing and colouring were developed to capture younger audience members views about the film.

## Children's responses to screening of Inside Out at St Matthew's Community Centre on 4<sup>th</sup> June



### Data Analysis

Parametric and non-parametric methods were used for analysis of the quantitative data. Documentary and thematic analysis were used for the qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006<sup>28</sup>) including drawing on arts-informed analysis and interpretation methods (Wimpenny & Gouzouasis, 2016<sup>29</sup>) in order that the research findings could be made accessible as outputs for dissemination to diverse audiences.

### Findings

The findings from analysis of the data have been presented here in relation to six themes addressing the key aims of the programme in understanding the benefits of the Films to Make You Feel Good project from the community participants involved.

1. **Community Venues: use of space**
2. **The Feel Good Experience and Community Engagement**
3. **Impact on sense of self**
4. **Accessing the 'hard to reach' members of the community**
5. **The influence of others**
6. **Student gains**

Each theme is discussed in turn.

<sup>28</sup> Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. 3 (2), 77–101.

<sup>29</sup> Wimpenny, K., & Gouzouasis, P. (2016). *Analysis, interpretation & representation using arts-related research*, American Education Research Association (AERA) Congress, Washington D.C., US. Washington D.C., US. April 8 – 12, 2016.

## Community Venues and (new) use of space

The screenings were held at 13 venues, selected for particularly targeted audiences: older people at risk of isolation, parents/carers and young children.

- Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre LE4 6LF
- Beaumont Leys Library LE4 1DS
- The Rothley Centre LE7 7PR
- Melton Museum LE13 1DR
- Rutland Museum LE15 6HW
- Church Court LE1 2GR
- St Matthews Community Centre LE1 2PD
- Newbold Verdon Library LE9 9NP
- Kegworth Village Hall DE74 2EH

The venues were made accessible and inviting by volunteer promoters with seating and a large projection screen, provided by Phoenix which in some venues, for example, the libraries, offered new possibilities for use of space.

### Newbold Verdon Library



Other venues, such as the Rutland Museum, already had a fully functioning space to host the screenings.



## Rutland Museum



Certain venues made an effort to welcome younger audiences, such as the Melton Carnegie Museum.

## Melton Carnegie



The community venues, for example library and museum spaces, provided audience members with chance not only to watch the film but to see what else was on offer from choosing library books, to wandering round the museum attractions.

#### **Rutland County Museum, Oakham**



Village halls also offered adequate space and functioned well as venues, prompting the venue promoters to consider other ideas for community events such as racing nights and Ceilidh Dances.

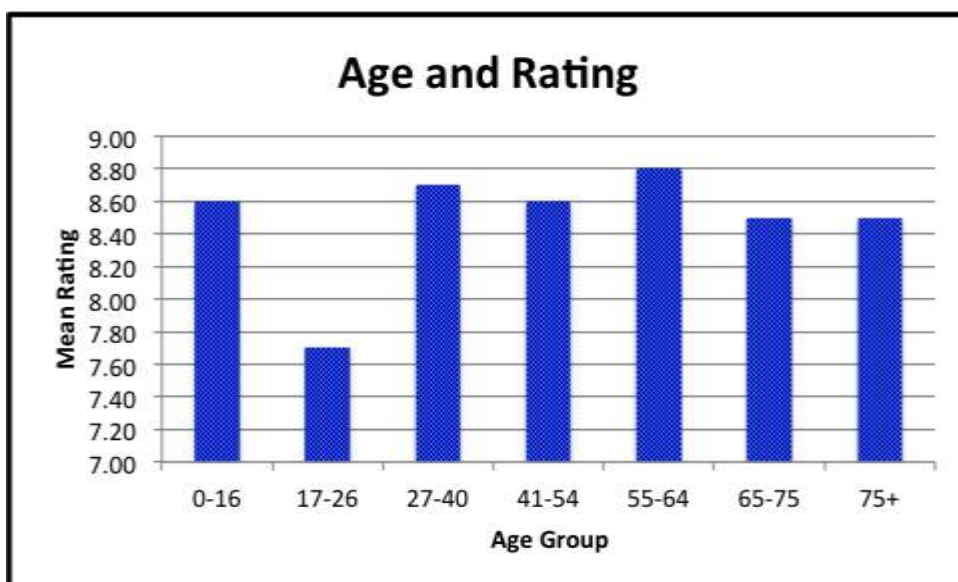
#### **The Rothley Centre**



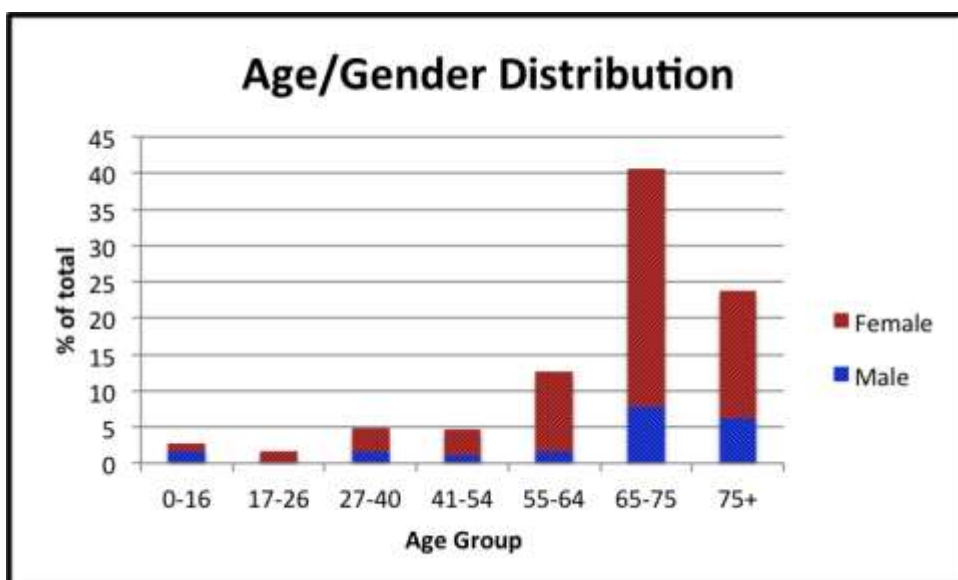
## The Feel Good Experience and Community Engagement

In total 52 screenings were held with an average attendance of 14 people per screening, with 733 people in total attending the events. Those audience members aged between 65 – 75 were the most frequent to attend with the percentage of women attending to men 26% male to 71% female (3% didn't specify).

### Attendees by age group



### Attendees by age distribution and gender



It is important to note the numbers of attendees aged 75+ as the second highest percentage age group, highlighting the need for matinee screenings to continue alongside evening events – people surveyed in this age group do not generally attend the evening events as they prefer to leave the house during the daytime.

### **Attendance percentages of people attending the different venues**

*The first number is the total of surveys completed, the second number (after the slash) is the total attendees at the showing, and the percentage is the percentage of attendees who completed a questionnaire.*

- Newbold Verdon Library: 32/119 (26.8%)
- Melton Carnegie Museum: 8/21 (38.1%)
- Rutland Museum: 42/63 (66.6%)
- Kegworth Village Hall: 21/91 (23%)
- The Rothley Centre: 50/234 (21.3%)
- Beaumont Leys Library: 7/18 (38.8%)
- Church Court, St. Matthews 7/21 (33.3%)
- St. Matthews Community Centre: 20/57 (35%)
- Pork Pie Library and Community Centre: 3/3 (100%)
- Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre: 1/57 (1.75%)
- Tudor Centre: 1/7 (14.3%)
- East West Community Centre: 0/37 (0%)
- Fosse Neighbourhood Centre: 2/2 (100%)

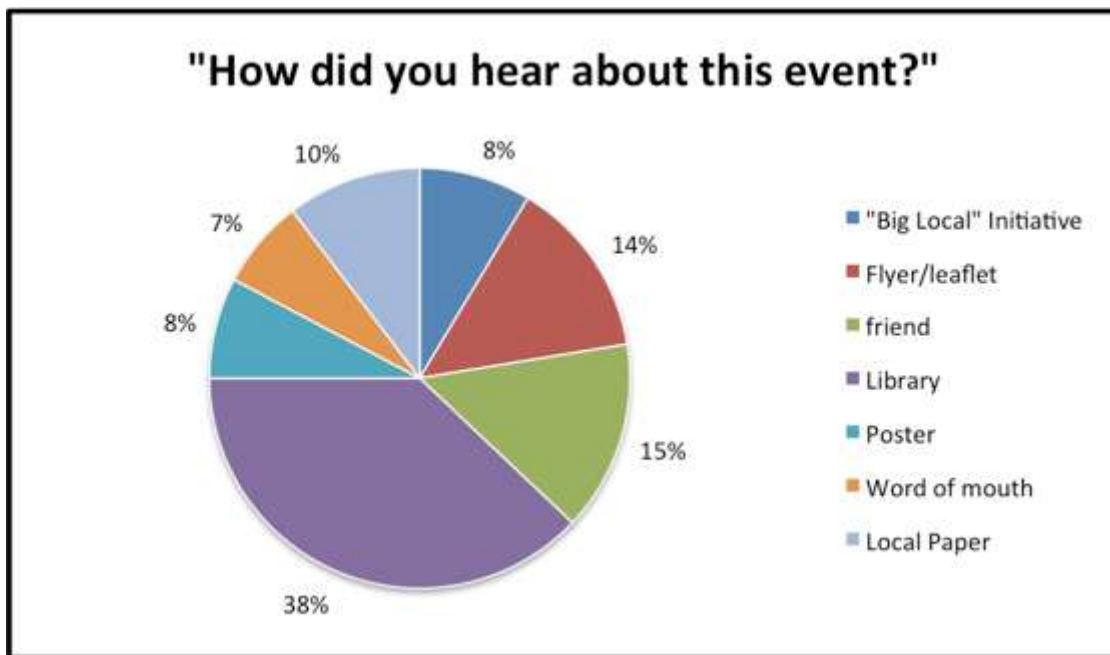
A total of 194 surveys were completed, or 26.4% of audience participants.

Success in terms of attracting audiences to the different screenings varied widely across the venues and also varied at venues. The highest audience averages were at The Rothley Centre (35 – 40 people regularly attending), Newbold Verdon Library and Kegworth Village Hall, although even at the best attended venues audience's figures could range from 8 – 40 on certain days. The highest audience attendance was at St Matthew's Community Centre on 4 June.

It was interesting to see if the weather impacted people's attendance, although it was stated by certain venues that the project seemed to work better over the winter months, it was acknowledged how fine, warm days might prompt people to enjoy the outdoors – and not sit inside, and that wet and cold weather would also serve to prevent people from stepping out of the front door.

### **Promoting the screenings – which methods worked best?**

From speaking to venue promoters, word of mouth seemed to work best in promoting the screenings. As the graph below illustrates from the surveys, finding out about the films through visiting their library was also a key method. It is also suggested people saw the adverts in the local newspapers and those on the radio and passed this information on.



#### Screenings where held for large and smaller audiences



Regardless of numbers of people attending venues, overwhelmingly, 97% of audience members stated the experience had been positive.



## How participants rated the event



## What attendees stated had occurred at the various screenings:

- 30.5% said they met someone new
- 54.2% said they bumped into a friend
- 81% said they laughed
- 66.8% said they felt uplifted
- 44.2% said they felt connected with the community

## Audience members taking their seats at Newbold Verdon Library



It was evident that watching the films provided forms of social encounters that were valued by group participants:

“Being retired it’s good to chat with local people and enjoy an entertaining afternoon”

It was evident some people “arranged to come along with a friend”, whilst others came on their own. Participants came not only to watch the film but “to meet new people in a new community”.

Audience members spoke of how important it was to have such facilities and activities going on in the village and how they encouraged such ventures acknowledging what “a shame there weren’t more people there to enjoy the event”.

“Supporting the community which I believe is very worthy”,  
“I wanted to support the library”,  
“I want to support the continuation of films in the community.”

And,

“I’ve never seen Up! before and so I wanted to experience it with a community of lovely people!”

Refreshments provided at an interval during the film, or following the screening, was another opportunity to encourage audience members to interact and socialise and was well received by those in attendance.

**Refreshments are served at an interval to encourage communication and interaction**





In addition, certain venues piloted other social interactions for audience members. For example, during the film 'Little Miss Sunshine' at Church Court, a musical interlude with singing and music quiz was well received bringing together the venue volunteers, the cinema projectionist, and a visiting professor with researchers at Coventry University. The singing and quiz were all centered around the theme of 'sunshine' (see Appendices 7 & 8)



### Church Court Residents sing along to guitar accompaniment



Aud [REDACTED] aged, or been encouraged by other people they knew to come along:

"I brought my mother-in-law for a day out"

"My daughter-in-law made me come today to get out amongst people!"

The atmosphere and mood of people at the venues was relaxed and informal. People spoke of feeling comfortable; audiences didn't appear to be rushing out of the door.

**Audience members stay on to watch the closing credits at The Rothley Centre**



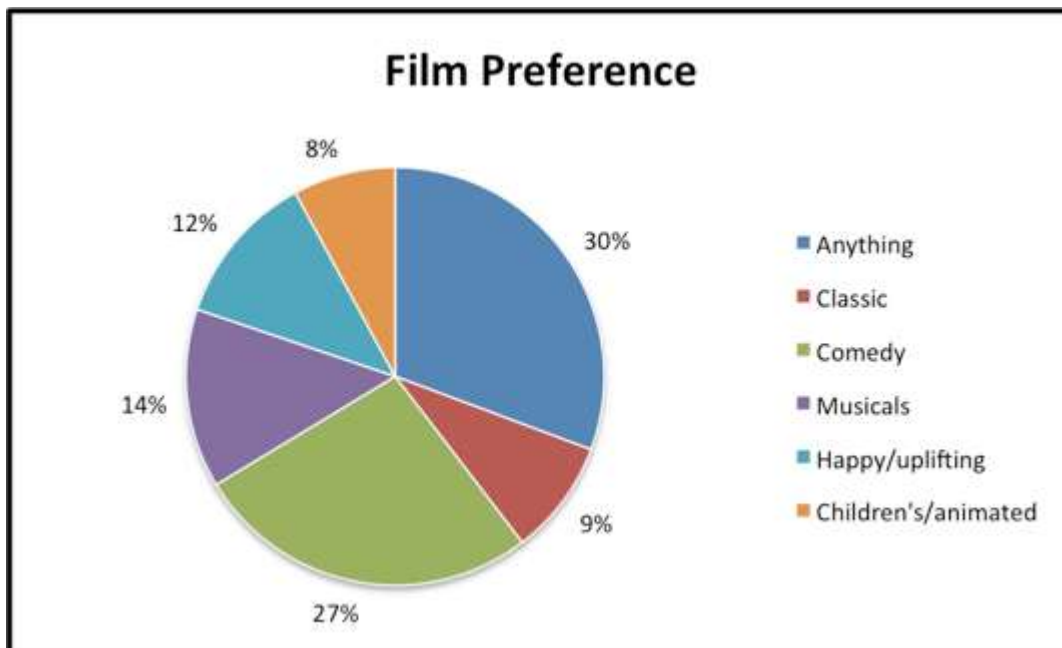
The selection of films was carefully considered by Phoenix Community Cinema's coordinator taking into account a number of factors. Films had not only been chosen in

terms of having to make audiences laugh, but also how watching a great film could serve to uplift and make audiences 'feel good'. The programme was chosen from mainly older titles, to differentiate from the evening scheme, and to offer titles which were less likely to be available elsewhere. All films had an under 12 certificate (avoiding excessive language, sex and violence). The project manager also consulted a study, 'Positive Psychology at the Movies: Using Films to Build Virtues and Character Strengths'<sup>30</sup>, to inform the programme of film titles. The study identifies films which relate to and/or encourage reflection on specific positive character traits.



Audiences were asked to share their responses to film choices:

**Film preferences attendees stated they would like to see:**



**The classics were well received**

<sup>30</sup> Neimiec, R.M., & Wedding, D. (2008) *Positive Psychology at the Movies: Using films to build virtues and character strengths*, Cambridge, MA: Hogrefe & Huber Publishers



The film projectionists were keen to gauge audience responses too, taking note of how the audience would clap, laugh and retort. It was felt the film selection “generally hit the mark” although on a couple of occasions both the venue volunteers and projectionists commented that film choices had been questionable, particularly some of the Ealing Comedies (e.g. *Titfield Thunderbolt*) which were viewed as being “a bit twee.”

It was also evident that the cinema projectionists gained from the experience and enjoyed being able to play films for audiences, sharing the sense of pleasure it gave them in,

“being able to give people a boost outside of their typical daily routines – it’s great to see people having a good time through watching these films”.

Personal gains such as this are considered more fully in the following theme.

### Impact on sense of self

Watching the film fueled audience members’ imaginations, as reflected in their responses:

“The escapism of it, as one ages wouldn’t we all like to just up sticks and have a ridiculous adventure?!”

“It made me think what tremendous adventures you can have despite old age?”

And,

“Made me laugh! Wish I could go on such an adventure!”

“Watching the film got me wishing I could fly away”,

“Follow your dreams”

“It got me thinking of all those classic Betty Davies films and the outfits and tailoring and how I loved that look”

Participants spoke of how much they had, “enjoyed the feel good experience,” that they were, “bursting with joy”, “it has been great!” and how they felt “happy and content from good entertainment!”.

Other audience members reflected on how the films inspired them “to persevere” and to “not lose heart”, and how important it was “to have a good laugh” and that “old age isn’t the end.”

Further, participants expressed that getting out of the house and watching the films in local community venues provided an opportunity to address and influence a range of physical and psychosocial issues, for example, reducing loneliness, “feeling relaxed”, and enabling participation despite disability, or loss of a loved one.

“When the old man had to rock to get out of his chair! I’m struggling with my knees too – it made me laugh”

“I’ve lost my husband and it made me relate to the film and that you have to carry on. It was such a lovely film”.

“I’ve felt entertained for a change”

“I haven’t seen this old film for about 40 years so I’m keen to enjoy it again. It’s freezing cold outside and if I hadn’t been coming here I’d have stayed indoors all day. This is far more sociable!”

For audience members in employment, coming to watch a film was seen as providing a means of feeling more energised:

“Feeling tired after work and wanting a lift”

Whilst audience wellbeing gains were evident from an immediate perspective from those people attending the screenings, due to the short time frame of the evaluation it is not possible to give clear indications of possible medium and longer term benefits. In addition, it is less easy to judge how social interactions amongst participants extended beyond the film screening and influenced the roles, relationships and routines of participants’ everyday lives. However, audience members commented on how they had enjoyed meeting with family, friends and neighbours whilst at the screening events. Further, audience members returned, stating they would see films again, suggesting that the project has served to get people out of the house and shift previous routines.

“I’ve been coming along to every one from the start, its very local, very inexpensive and an enjoyable afternoon out!”

And,

"I came again today due to previous experience of having enjoyed watching Oliver last time with a friend"

### A Wordle depicting key words expressed by audience members



### A case study example:

One promoter at Newbold Verdon talked about a man who attended every Film to Make You Feel Good at Newbold Verdon Library. It was the only time he engaged with the community at all and scarcely left his house for the rest of the month. He was welcomed each time with a free ice cream, and had another at the interval, and volunteers took the time to chat with him at each event. He also interacted with other audience members and had the opportunity to hear about other forthcoming events happening in the village.



**A Poem created from the words and phrases on the icons:**



*It was very nice,  
Lovely, great laugh, made me smile,  
Warming, enjoyable, fun.  
Happy, not sad,  
A feel-good movie,  
I was really pleased to have come.*

*It got me out of house,  
The films were emotional too,  
As well as funny, some were sad,  
Yet happy tears shed – not blue.*

*Coming back out into the daylight,  
Watching those films I have missed,  
Enjoying the feel good experience,  
And looking at what's next on the list!*

Participants shared how the films had been “a great story”, “exciting”, “engaging” “quirky whilst funny”, “made me sad but uplifted”. Watching a good comedy was another common response. Further it was evident that audience members appreciated the venue volunteers themselves, who were seen as being, “very helpful and thoughtful”, as the next theme goes on to explore.

### **The influence of others**

Encouraging people to attend the community film screenings was a labour intensive task for the venue volunteers who, despite use of a range of marketing strategies, viewed attendance at the screenings as generally disappointing. However, some were encouraged by the gradual building of audience numbers, and are keen to continue with the programme following the term of this funded scheme. The value of supporting elderly and isolated members of the community through the scheme was acknowledged by promoters, a number of whom reported that their audiences for the daytime screenings of this project differed from their evening screening audiences.

The skill set of the venue promoters in the most well attended venues was viewed as the key to the success of those venue screenings. It was evident that the commitment, energy, generosity, and encouraging nature of these philanthropic volunteers in promoting the events, and ensuring all those who attended were made to feel welcome, enabled the events to thrive. Examples of engaging with the audience to host other community events, seeking feedback on audience's ideas and future film suggestions, putting on art activities for younger audience members, and offering to drive the less mobile to screening events, all contributed to developing positive audience engagement.

The venues which were not supported by groups of volunteer promoters tended not to attract significant audiences, even in those instances when the local authority officer worked hard to promote the events and offer additionally in the form of refreshments and activities (Melton Carnegie Museum). The exception was St Matthew's Community Centre, which hosted one event, attracting the largest audience for the project (57 people attended the screening of 'Inside Out' on 4 June) St Matthew's is supported by a Big Lottery funded Big Local project and as such enjoys support from a project manager and network of community support agencies.

It was felt the £2 cost of attending screenings was viewed as being "about right" Although at this rate it is impossible to meet the costs of the screenings, which were fully subsidized through the funding secured for the scheme. All ticket money was returned to the scheme, and volunteers in some venues ran raffles and sold refreshments to meet the cost of room hire, where applicable. Looking at 'hits' from the website and working hard to find other creative means of reaching out to new people was a constant focus for those venues with the most committed volunteers.

A loyalty card scheme was set up to encourage repeat attendance at events and enable the research team to track impact on individuals without revealing identity. Unfortunately the scheme didn't impact on the programme as it wasn't employed consistently across the venues.

### **Venue volunteers share their views**





The relationships between the project manager, the cinema projectionists and the venue volunteers were also important for the success of the project. The project manager developed a rapport with a number of the venues and this was considered positive in the development of the scheme and its future prospects at these venues. At certain locations the relationships between the venue volunteers and projectionist was very positive and as mentioned earlier, leading to the projectionist experiencing a positive sense of job fulfillment.

### **The cinema projectionist introduces the film**



At other venues there were concerns about the projectionist not turning up, or turning up late, resulting in delays in the start and finish times, and creating stress for the venue organisers. Films did not arrive, leaving the venue promoters having to arrange for alternative films to be screened (from personal collections).

In terms of supporting the scheme's objectives to enable vulnerable audiences to access support services, the Project Manager requested that the projectionists take health and wellbeing pamphlets, provided by local support services, to the screenings, so they could be made available to vulnerable audiences. It was evident that this was not viewed as an integral part of their role, and so opportunities for health organisations to disseminate their information was not properly utilised.

Some concerns were raised about the compatibility of this scheme with Phoenix Community Cinema's established scheme of (mainly) evening events. The disparity of ticket prices caused some consternation amongst venues not participating in Films to Make You Feel Good and projectionists felt more could have been done to ameliorate this situation.

The ticket price for Films to Make You Feel Good was set deliberately low to ensure the targeted audience of elderly, isolated and/or vulnerable people could access the scheme. The menu of film choices for the programme was developed to offer access to older films so as to offer distinction between the two schemes. The 'regular' Phoenix Community Cinema ticket price is set at at least £4.50 and screens more recent titles.

### Accessing the hard to reach members of the community

Accessing the target audience of older adults considered lonely and marginalized was the most challenging task for the community venue volunteers and local authority managed venues and despite the overwhelming positive response of audience members, the numbers of people who attended the screenings was disappointing, and the task of engaging those people in communities considered 'hard to reach' was viewed as the most significant challenge by venue volunteers.

The programme faced significant challenges with the city based venues as Leicester City Council's restructure of its Library and Community services department resulted in many of the people involved in delivering the events being made redundant. Without this on the ground support, attracting audiences and delivering events at the numerous venues made it challenging, and several venues included in the original programme plan had to be removed from the programme from January 2016.

This included Coleman Neighbourhood Centre, Fosse Neighbourhood Centre, Tudor Centre, Pork Pie Library & Community Centre and the East West Community Centre.

Despite such challenges, the project manager approached the St Matthews Big Local partnership and a number of screenings in both a residential centre for older people and the local community centre occurred. This partnership resulted in the programme's highest audience numbers (57 at St Matthews Community Centre on 4 June) at a family screening attended by newly arrived families.



The project has allowed us to directly compare venues supported by groups of volunteer promoters with those overseen by local authority staff and it is clear that the success of such a scheme relies heavily on the dedication and enthusiasm of volunteers within local communities. Developing ownership of the programme by the venue volunteers whilst retaining the overarching branding of Films to Make You Feel Good has been critical in the success of the events.

Venues where the programme did not take hold were, in the main, those venues managed by City Council staff, who did not have capacity to deliver the 'on the ground' marketing and advocacy required for the programme's success. Many of the target audience needed personal encouragement to attend the events, and in some cases, support with getting to the venues. Some volunteers assisted elderly audience members to access their events, but this is an issue that would need to be addressed for future planning of similar projects, perhaps through provision of community transport or support for taxi journeys.

### Student learning gains

The added dimension to the project was in making the project experience available to second year undergraduate students at Coventry University studying on the 'Media and Communication' degree programme. Students applied for, and were recruited to the project, offering them experience in having to complete applications for project work and in interviewing skills. The successful students then met with the Project Lead at Phoenix, and had opportunity to go behind the scenes at Phonies to meet with the projectionists, and become acquainted with the cinema's community outreach work.

The students task was to assist the lead researcher in their role as research assistants. In DMLL t-shirts the students were identifiable to audience members and helped with data capture across the different screenings. The students also added an intergenerational feel to the project, and their presence appeared to be appreciated with the venue volunteers and audience members. The students' perspectives were also important to understand so that their experience of being involved on a live arts and health project could be explored.



**Charlie Legge interacting with audience members and gathering responses to the survey**



**Students meeting and greeting audience members and capturing audience feedback**

The project experience was embedded as part of the students' second-year, university based studies, and involved them sharing their learning in a public Career's Fair, held in the Student Hub at Coventry University. At this all day event, students showcased their work on the project to peers and wider public audiences.

The link below provides highlights of the Careers Fair, and showcases a film produced by Malachi Cummings-Hall, which shows the students in action at the cinema screenings, and their interaction to capture data for this project with audience members.

<https://otlcu.wordpress.com/2016/02/29/ftmyfg-lights-camera-research/>

## Images from the Student Career Fair



Pablo and Andrew help prepare their exhibition space

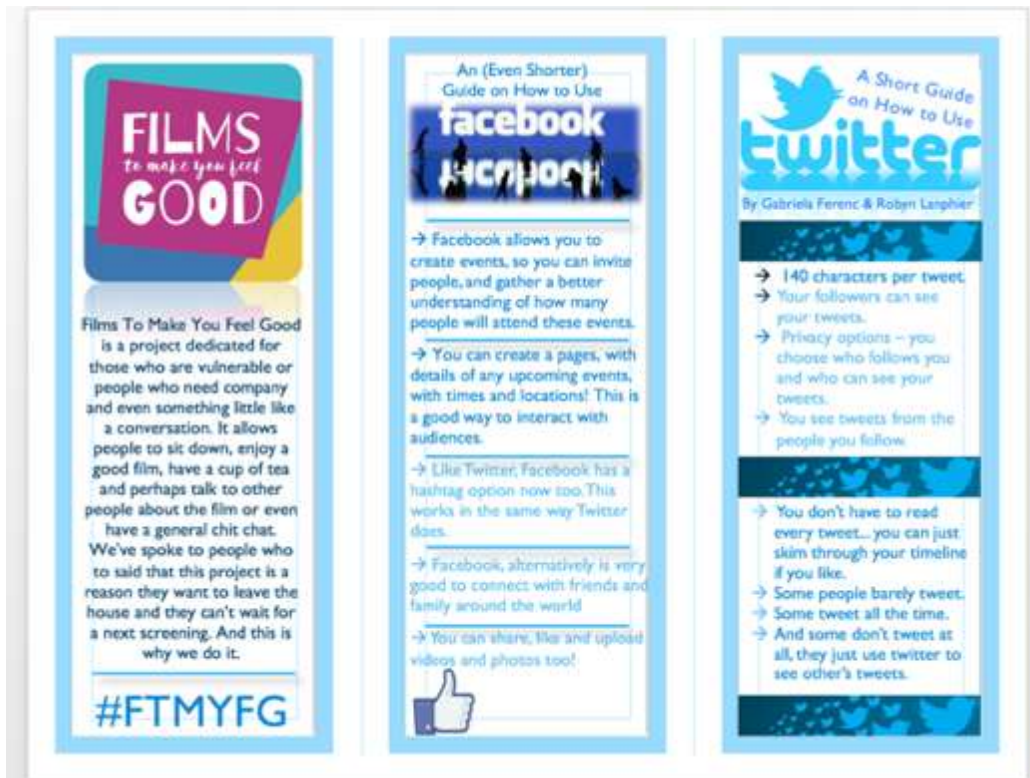


Students talk about their involvement in the project with visitors to the fair

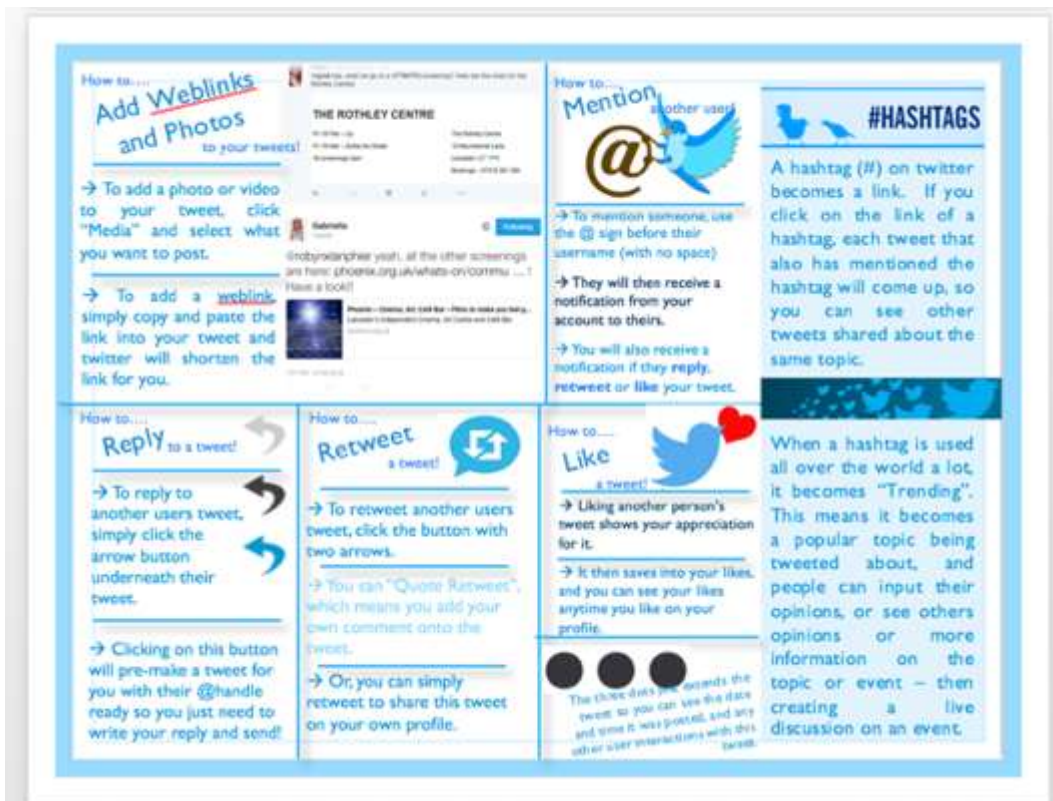


## Social Media leaflet

The students were tasked with thinking of ways to help the venue volunteers promote the screenings. Two students, Gabriela Ferenc and Robyn Lanphier (pictured in the photograph above) designed a social media leaflet.







As part of their module work, the students were also tasked with developing a portfolio of evidence of their learning on the project.

### Examples of student portfolios

<http://miumiu-deng.squarespace.com/index1/>

<http://huanglan25.wix.com/greenh>

The students shared the ways in which their learning evoked emotional responses, and student reflections capture this sense of a heightened learning experience

### Film excerpt of student and researcher feedback regarding the project experience

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B\\_ETTNkivRIeZ1pQNXN1VmxsYU0](https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B_ETTNkivRIeZ1pQNXN1VmxsYU0)

As the students resided in Coventry and were not car drivers, they had to sort out their own travel arrangements to attend the various screenings, many of which were held in rural areas around Leicester. Whilst the Project Lead and Research Lead were able to support with travel on occasions, students had to use public transport (for which they were refunded). They also had to book out filming equipment from the Media Loan Shop, attend skills workshops for data collection, photography and film, and have all the appropriate data collection tools with them to attend the various screenings. As shared in their focus group, it was evident the students appreciated the scope and depth of learning they had experienced from the project. They also appreciated the commitment and effort involved in ensuring the project and research tasks were managed effectively. The students recognised the importance of team work, and

having effective communication and interaction skills with community participants. The students recognized the importance of delegating out tasks amongst one another. They valued meeting the Project Managers at Phoenix and working with dmll research staff. They had a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges of conducting high quality community projects.

As English was not the first language for several of the students those individuals felt their confidence grew from having to speak with community members. It was also evident students enjoyed the experience of working off campus.

Clear networks of communication and monitoring and support are required, not only on campus, but in negotiation with the external partners to manage expectations and ensure smooth running of programme delivery. Community research practice is labour intensive for the staff involved to adequately support students learning, and mentoring schemes, including better links with the student union, and other campus-based centres connected with student placements, need to collaborate to ensure available student resources are utilized to their maximum effect.

## **Summarized Project Findings**

The key findings appear to indicate a number of important features:

1. Watching the films provided forms of social encounters that were valued by group participants.
2. Participants expressed that getting out of the house and watching the films in local community venues provided an opportunity to address and influence a range of physical and psychosocial issues, for example, reducing loneliness, and enabling participation despite disability.
3. Participants' wellbeing was enhanced through sharing of enjoyment of the films. Attending the films was viewed as positive and rewarding.
4. Participant wellbeing gains were evident from an immediate perspective from those people attending the screenings; however, due to the short time frame of the evaluation it is not possible to give clear indications of possible medium and longer term benefits.
5. It was less easy to judge how social interactions amongst participants extended beyond the film screening and influenced the roles, relationships and routines of participants' everyday lives. However, audience members commented on how they had enjoyed meeting with family, friends and neighbours whilst at the screening events.
6. Accessing the target audience of older adults considered lonely and marginalized was the most challenging task for the community venue volunteers. The Project Manager worked with Public Health partners to support venues in attracting the project's target audience and this intervention was more successful at some venues than others

7. Encouraging people to attend the community film screenings was a labour intensive task for the venue volunteers who, despite use of a range of marketing strategies, viewed attendance at the screenings as generally disappointing.
8. The skill set of the venue promoters in the most well attended venues was viewed as the key to the success of those venue screenings. It was evident that the commitment, energy, generosity and encouraging nature of these philanthropic volunteers in promoting the events, and ensuring all those who attended were made to feel welcome, enabled the events to thrive. Examples of engaging with the audience to host other community events, seeking feedback on audience's ideas and future film suggestions, putting on art activities for younger audience members, and offering to drive the less mobile to screening events, all contributed to developing positive audience engagement.
9. The relationships between the project manager, the cinema projectionists and the venue volunteers were important for the overall success of the project. At certain locations the relationships between the venue volunteers and projectionist was very positive and led to the projectionist experiencing a positive sense of job fulfillment. At other venues there were concerns about the projectionist not turning up, or turning up late, resulting in delays in the start and finish times, and creating stress for the venue organisers. Films did not arrive, leaving the venue promoters having to arrange for alternative films to be screened (from personal collections).
10. The film projectionists' were requested to take pamphlets / leaflets about health and wellbeing out with them to the community screenings. It was evident this task was not viewed by the projectionists as an integral part of their role and so opportunities for health organisations to disseminate their information was not properly utilised.
11. The relationships between the project manager, Phoenix, Leicester City Council and the neighbourhood management team provided a strategic interface between the project and its aims. The Leicester city events were initially coordinated through regular meetings of the Neighbourhood Management team, the scheme coordinator/ lead projectionist and the project manager. Volunteer promoters liaised directly with the project manager; most of whom had already been involved in promoting community cinema events in partnership with Phoenix.

## **Recommendations and next steps**

- Substantial subsidy needs to be in place to enable projects such as Films to Make You Feel Good to take place. This is in part due to the need to offer low price tickets to enable access to all members of the community, and also to support the essential partnerships that underpin the success of the

programme.

- Participant wellbeing gains were evident from an immediate perspective from those people attending the screenings; however, due to the short time frame of the evaluation it is not possible to give clear indications of possible medium and longer term benefits. Further research needs to take place following a longitudinal study of the impact of regular attendance at community cinema events and how this impacts on health and social care provision. For example, follow up evaluation at six and 12 months.
- The findings suggest that there is a need to examine how venues who were unsuccessful but had potential to engage communities could be supported in promoting their venues and vision so that they too could be successful community cinema venues. Future project work should examine more closely how learning can be shared from successful venues to assist with development and sustainability for all venue and local community groups. This could be facilitated, for example, through peer mentoring through online forums or development sessions to disseminate good practice and share learning amongst volunteers.
- Volunteer support and development is crucial in ensuring such projects are successful. It would be useful to compare the venues' volunteers, for example, in the form of visionaries/per mentors /leaders, and how the skills and expertise of such people can be recognised for sharing with other groups / communities who are interested in development and delivery of community arts programmes.
- Relationships between venues and the hosting cinema are vital in terms of offering reliable access to films. Development of collaborative approaches between the hosting cinema and promoters are required in order to achieve project aims, promote dual ownership of the programme, and to improve relationships.
- A robust project steering group which meets throughout the duration of the project is essential for supporting and delivering the health related outcomes of the programme and providing advocacy across sectors.
- There is an opportunity for universities to be involved in community projects, both as subjects of research and as providers of experience for students to take part in live community projects. Developing relationships with universities has been seen to effectively contribute to community partnerships and has enabled students to gain invaluable situated learning experiences.
- Students require ongoing support once recruited, to enable them to gain the best learning experiences from live project work. Effective communication, planning, preparation and monitoring, amongst project staff, university staff and students is required to enable students to be able to fulfil their roles while maintaining effective delivery of the programme.

## Beneficiaries and future project potential

This project and its evaluation have a wide range of beneficiaries, both current and potential.

- All audiences viewing the films had opportunity to see and reflect afresh at first hand perspectives about how film can serve to inspire and uplift and make people laugh. These testimonies offer opportunity to connect people, places and events, and to explore ways forward to build community cohesion.
- Local government bodies have the opportunity to see the impact of a specifically curated film programme on targeted audiences of vulnerable community members, with potential to work more closely with local authorities to track these impacts in conjunction with strategic objectives.
- Public Health bodies have the opportunity to utilize such programmes to focus directed support, developing community venue based events as hubs for vulnerable people to access support.
- Opportunities exist to engage with GPs surgeries to develop referral schemes to community led programmes for targeted audiences.
- Development of partnerships with Local Area Coordinators' work to ensure increased take up of events amongst target audiences.
- The contribution of the arts to both education and wellbeing offers potential for future artistic work, for example the participants' stories have potential to be developed into written scripts and performed by community youth theatre groups.
- The students involved in working with Phoenix and with community participants, benefited from gaining first-hand knowledge, understanding and experience of how arts and health projects impact people and communities.
- The learning gained from recruiting and supporting media students to engage in volunteer work experience placements on community arts and health projects has informed the development of frameworks of good practice for experience-based learning.

## Appendix 1

### Key findings and outcomes of the Films to Make You Feel Good Pilot

- 68% of respondents to the questionnaire rated the events at 8 out of 10 or above
- 86% said that they laughed, 52% met a friend or made a new one
- The events attracted the targeted audience at each event. This was due to a number of factors, including the deliberate timing of the events, the choice of films and the dedicated work by the Neighbourhood Managers and their teams to promote the events to specific groups.
- Some communities were difficult to engage and this was attributed to work and social patterns. For example, it was suggested that the reason the Fosse Community Centre event wasn't well attended was because people in the targeted Polish community may prefer to socialise with their children and the screening was scheduled for an evening. Many recent arrivals to the community may also be working shift patterns which complicate childcare arrangements. An after school/Saturday screening aimed at family audiences was suggested.
- Venue staff reported about interaction of fathers with their children at the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre Saturday morning screening. It was suggested that the event provided an opportunity for fathers to spend quality time with their children, when they might otherwise have not.
- The Police and Youth Service emerged as potential partners in the development of a further programme, both bodies engaged with the Pilot and offered support to further activity engaging young people during school holidays.
- The majority of respondents suggested that tickets should be priced between £2 and £3, which would ensure the programme is accessible to audiences. Based on average audience numbers, this means that each event requires subsidy of approximately £250.

## Appendix 2: Advert used to recruitment student volunteers

### **The Company:**

**Phoenix Independent Cinema and Arts Centre and Leicester City Council in conjunction with Coventry University Disruptive Media Learning Lab (DMLL)**

### **Type of placement:**

**Work Experience** (*In particular, for Media / Film and Health Students*)

The roles specified below will be volunteer positions and there will be some flexibility regarding hours of work.

**Project Website:** [www.phoenix.org.uk/news/films-to-make-you-feel-good/](http://www.phoenix.org.uk/news/films-to-make-you-feel-good/)

**PLACEMENT JOB TITLE: Project Assistant – Films to Make You Feel Good project**

**POSITIONS AVAILABLE: 15**

### **ABOUT**

This exciting project provides the opportunity to work with Phoenix, Leicester's independent cinema and arts centre and Leicester City Council's Neighbourhood Management team. You will get hands on experience to support a programme of screenings as part of the Films to Make You Feel Good project in which community members, particularly those who may be more isolated or vulnerable, can enjoy high quality curated cinema experiences, supported by sensitive and experienced staff and volunteers. The programme of films will be specifically selected for their ability to uplift and inspire and hopefully make audiences laugh. The project aims to connect people with other members of the local community, as well as offering signposting to community services that people may find helpful to access. You will also support the project evaluation, which is seeking to capture what impact this arts project has on peoples' wellbeing. It is anticipated that project assistants will be able to use their experience as part of module learning and / or as part of specific student project work.

### **LOCATIONS:**

The project will take place in seven venues in Leicester. Travel costs will be reimbursed. Further, research supervision will be offered through the DMLL, Coventry University, led by Dr Katherine Wimpenny.

### **JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Project Assistants will work alongside Phoenix, Leicester City Council project team members, and the research team to:**

- Curate film programming of films that will uplift the spirits and improve mental wellbeing, supported by Phoenix's expert team
- Support the delivery of screenings in the Films to Make You Feel Good project between September 2015 and March 2016
- Support event management in terms of PR and marketing through social media, advocacy and dissemination of marketing materials
- Receive training in supporting vulnerable people – delivered by Age UK, Action Deafness, Vista and Voluntary Action Leicester
- Assist the research team to devise evaluation materials
- Gather and support analysis of primary data
- Work with an experienced creative team using artistic methodologies

### **SKILLS REQUIRED**

**The ideal candidate for this position will be able to demonstrate:**

- Interest and / or experience of working with an arts organization
- Interest and / or experience of health and wellbeing related research

- Experience of working within a community setting
- An interest in, and ideally some knowledge of, community work
- Commitment to clear and open communication and the promotion of equal opportunities
- Awareness of disability access issues
- Enjoyment of film
- A sound knowledge of social media
- An interest in arts-informed ethnographic research methods

**Personal qualities**

Confident, friendly, team player, self-motivated, approachable manner, committed to promoting diversity and inclusion, able and willing to work occasionally in the evenings and weekends, able and willing to travel to meetings and events across Leicestershire

For more information about the placement experience please contact Sallie Varnam, Project Manager [sallie.varnam@phoenix.org.uk](mailto:sallie.varnam@phoenix.org.uk) or Katherine Wimpenny, DMLL [k.wimpenny@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:k.wimpenny@coventry.ac.uk)

**HOW TO APPLY:**

Email the following two components:

- (1) In 140 characters tell us something about yourself
- (2) Send a short video captured via smartphone or webcam of yourself telling us why we should choose you for this placement. **(Video to be no longer than 1 minute)**

Send to: **Esme Spurling**, Project Officer, Office of Teaching and Learning, DMLL, email: **ab5021@coventry.ac.uk**

**CLOSING DATE:** October 16th, 2015 (some screenings may have taken place by then, so as soon as possible for recruiting)

**PROVISIONAL INTERVIEW DATE:**

October 23rd, 2015



## Appendix 3: Cinema Patrons Participant Information Sheet

# Phoenix



### Films to make you feel good



This letter is to tell you about the project so you can decide whether to take part or not.

#### **About this project**

The Films to Make You Feel Good project has been developed by Phoenix, Leicester's independent cinema and arts centre and Leicester City Council's Neighbourhood Management team. The project involves a programme of screenings in which community members, particularly those who may be more isolated, can enjoy high quality curated cinema experiences, supported by sensitive and experienced staff and volunteers. The programme of films selected are intended to be uplifting, fun, and to make audiences laugh. Research staff and students from Coventry University (CU) are also involved in evaluating the project in collaboration with the Project Manager at Leicestershire City Council, to capture what impact this arts project has from the perspectives of everyone involved.

#### **Why have you been invited to take part?**

You have been invited because you are a cinema patron who has watched one or more films in the Films to Make you feel good project.

#### **Do you have to take part?**

No, you don't have to take part, or say why. Saying 'No' will not reflect any negative views.

#### **What will you do in the project?**

If you decide you want to take part, you will be invited to share your experiences through a choice of data capture methods. For example, you may wish to complete a short survey, take part in a short interview, video, or audio recording.

#### **Are there any risks?**

There are no anticipated risks or dangers associated with this project. The project has been planned to be supportive and you will be able to share your experiences of being involved as much or as little as you like. Furthermore, at the cinema venue there will be information and opportunity to be put in touch with organisations you might find helpful, for example, Age UK, Voluntary Action Leicester, Vista, as well as other community support networks.

#### **What are the benefits of taking part?**

The benefits of taking part are to broaden our knowledge and understanding about the contribution of community cinema /arts programmes to enhance the wellbeing of

community members considered harder to reach or isolated, as well as city initiatives aiming to overcome known barriers to community cohesion.

**Can you stop at any point?**

Yes, you can. If you decide that you don't want to be a part of this project, then just let one of the project team members know. Anything you have shared will also be removed from the information collected anytime during the project lifetime [insert start and end dates].

**What will happen to the things you share?**

We will use the information that you share with us to explore the impact the arts project has on peoples' wellbeing. In addition, we will develop a framework of best practice to inform future community arts programmes of this nature.

**Who do you complain to if you're not happy with the project?**

If you are unhappy with the project in any way, please let one of the project team members know. The lead researcher's contact details at CU are provided at the end of this letter.

**What will happen after this study?**

The findings will be shared using a range of outputs, for example film, report, academic paper and presentations – which will not identify you, unless you have given your permission. The information you share will be stored in a secure place at the university, in the research office, which only the research team have access to. The information shared from the study will be kept for no longer than 5 years.

**Who has approved this study?**

Coventry University Ethics Committee has approved this project

**Contact details**

Dr Katherine Wimpenny  
Co-Lead Research  
Disruptive Media Learning Lab (DMLL)  
<http://dml.org.uk/>  
Frederick Lanchester Building  
Coventry University  
Coventry  
CV1 5DD, UK

Email: [k.wimpenny@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:k.wimpenny@coventry.ac.uk)

Thank you for reading this.

## Appendix 4: Example consent form



# Phoenix



### Participant Consent Form

Name : ..... Date: .....

1. I have read the participant information sheet about the project **Films to make you feel good**

☐

2. I understand what the project is about.

3. I am happy to take part in data collection for this project

☐

a) I am happy to share written / photographed / videoed reflections

b) I am happy to be interviewed at intervals during the project (no more than 2).

*(Please circle your agreement to the above)*

4. I understand that the Interview will be recorded and I know this will only be listened to by the researchers

☐

5. I understand that I can change my mind about taking part at any point during the project.

☐

Participant Signature ..... Date .....

Name of Researcher ..... Date: .....

Researcher Signature:.....

## Appendix 5: Short Survey used with cinema audiences



# Phoenix

Thank you for coming along to this event today. We would be really grateful if you could spare a few minutes to answer the questions below, as your feedback will be enormously helpful in securing future funding and developing the project to suit the needs of our communities.

**Loyalty Card Number**.....

**Venue**.....

**Which film have you seen today?**.....

**Where did you hear about this event?**.....

**How did this event make you feel? (please circle)**



**At this event did any of the following happen? (please tick as many as you like)**

Met someone new ☐ Bumped into an existing friend/neighbour ☐

Laughed ☐ Felt uplifted ☐ Felt connected to my community ☐

Other (please state).....

**How would you rate this event as a way to help you feel good?**

(Please circle: 1 lowest, 10 highest)

Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 high

**Would you come to another similar event?** Yes ☐ No ☐

**If not, why not?**.....

**What sort of films would you like to see?** .....

**Have you been to any other community cinema events?**.....

**Which ones?**.....

**Would you recommend this event to someone else?** Yes ☐ No ☐

**Gender:**.....

**Age:** 0 – 16 ☐ 17 – 26 ☐ 27 – 40 ☐ 41– 54 ☐ 55 – 64 ☐ 65 –75 ☐ 75+☐

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. It will really help us to ensure the programme can continue.



## Appendix 6: Example interview prompts



### Question areas for cinema patrons

- How did the film make you feel?
- What made you come here today?
- What did the film make you think about?
- Would you come along to another screening?
- Any thing you would like to change about the event today
- Would you want to recommend the screenings to a neighbour / friend?

### Question areas for venue volunteers

- To what extent do you think the project has achieved its aim?
- What have been the main challenges running the screenings at your venue?
- What has worked well?
- What did you hope would occur through the project?
- What did you not expect / or any surprises about being involved in the project?
- What would you do differently if anything?
- Do you feel there could be any wider implications for the project?

### Question prompts to cinema projectionists

- To what extent do you think the screening of afternoon films achieved its aims in attracting new audiences, including people who are lonely or marginalized, to help enhance wellbeing, uplift and inspire?
- What do you think have been the most important factors about the venues selected that helped make screenings a success?
- How did you go about selecting the choice of films which were screened?
- Did any of the films get a reaction you didn't expect?
- What would you do differently, if anything, if doing this project again?

### Question prompts to students

- What is your name and what module have you being studying?
- What was good about being involved in this project?
- What were the challenges, the surprises?
- What advice would you give to staff who were doing a similar project with students next year?
- If you had your time again on the project would you do anything differently?

## **Appendix 7: Sunshine Song Contest**

### **Quiz used at the screening of 'Little Miss Sunshine'**

List as many songs as you know with the word "sunshine" in the title

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_
- 9 \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11 \_\_\_\_\_
- 12 \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 8: 'You are My Sunshine'**

### **Sung to guitar accompaniment at the screening of 'Little Miss Sunshine'**

You are my sunshine, my only sunshine  
You make me happy when skies are grey  
You'll never know dear; how much I love you  
Please don't take my sunshine away

The other night dear, as I lay sleepin'  
I dreamed, I held you in my arms  
When I awoke dear, I was mistaken  
So I hung my head and I cry

You are my sunshine, my only sunshine  
You make me happy when skies are grey  
You'll never know dear, how much I love you  
Please don't take my sunshine away

You told me once dear, you really loved me  
And no one else could come between us  
But now you've left me and you love another  
And you have shattered all my dreams

You are my sunshine, my only sunshine  
You make me happy when skies are grey  
You'll never know dear, how much I love you  
Please don't take my sunshine away

I'll always love you and make you happy  
If you will only say the same  
But if you leave me to love another  
But you'll regret it all some day

You are my sunshine, my only sunshine  
You make me happy when skies are grey  
You'll never know dear, how much I love you  
Please don't take my sunshine away  
Please don't take my sunshine away

## Appendix 9: Films to Make You Feel Good Icons

