A New Direction

National Portfolio Organisations Survey

These are the results of an online survey of National Portfolio Organisations in London, designed to explore the work those organisations do with children and young people. The survey was open during February and March 2012. In total, 75 organisations filled out the survey. This means that around half of the possible NPO "market" of around 150 organisations – defined as the NPOs with an explicit 'Goal five' remit according to Arts Council England – gave their views and their data. Most respondents answered most questions, and where there was some occasional misreporting of numbers it is identified in the analysis.

Section 1: Summary of Findings

What do organisations do with young people?

The organisations surveyed offer a wide and varied range of ways of engaging young people. Three quarters of organisations describe their work with children and young people as a 'core' part of their offer. Activity includes work inside and outside of schools with various groups of young people. Almost half offer free and discounted tickets to young people (for some this may not apply, clearly), and an encouraging 70% offer apprenticeships or some form of work based learning for young people.

Where do they deliver services and programmes?

The biggest proportion – 83% - offer services in non-school settings in London, though almost as many surveyed organisations work inside schools too. A significant amount of work is done outside of London, with around 40% working both inside and outside schools beyond the capital. Within London 40% provide services to young people drawn from all London Boroughs. Where organisations are limited to particular boroughs, inner London boroughs have more provision than outer London. In any individual borough an organisation will generally work with 5 schools or less, though those working across all boroughs work with around 100 schools in total on average.

With which young people do they work?

All age groups of young people are catered for. The biggest proportion of organisations – over 80% - do work targeted at 14-19 year olds, though over two thirds work with 5-11s and 11-14s. Around 40% work with pre-school children and more than half with over-19s. Many organisations offer some provision to disabled children, and to those from black and other minority ethnic groups.

Challenges for NPOs

The key challenges that organisations said they faced were around sustaining services, communicating with schools and evidencing their outcomes. The surveyed organisations also offered a wide range of other challenges in the three areas of resources, communication and evaluation.

Priorities for the Bridge Organisation

The priorities for the bridge were varied, but the most commonly proposed were around campaigning and providing a voice for organisations, facilitating knowledge sharing and promoting and supporting quality improvement.

There was a strong appetite to be part of a network for sharing good practice, and while the organisations mentioned many networks they were already part of, there appear to be no existing networks of which more than around 6 NPOs are already members.

Section 2: Question by Question summaries of responses

Where percentages have been used, they have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole numbers.

Q1 Working with young people

Almost three quarters of respondents (75%) said that "children and young people are a core audience or user (group) of their services". Almost all organisations deliver some kind of provision, with only 4 out of 75 respondents skipping this question. The most common activity, delivered by 83%, was "delivering activities in non-school settings in London", while 76% delivered activities within the capital's schools. Over 40% of organisations said they delivered services outside of London, both in school and in non-school settings. 70% offer apprenticeships or some form of work based training, and almost half (49%) offer discounted or free tickets to young people.

Some respondents offered other ways in which they engaged with young people, including through youth advisory or representative boards, young ambassadors and other formal or semi formal involvement. Some organisations said they actively involved young people as judges, performers or collaborators and others used them as peer mentors.

Q2 How would you assess your work with young people?

Most respondents were confident about most aspects of their work. The only area where there was not a majority saying they were either "confident" or felt that they "excel" was in the area of "youth engagement", where just over half the respondents (35 out of 68 responding to the question) felt they were either only just starting with this (13, or 19%) or that they did some things well but needed to keep improving (22 or 32%)

Organisations were most satisfied that their programming and activities responded to the needs of young people, with 50 out of 70 (71%) saying they were either "confident" (30, or 43%) or that they excelled (20 respondents or 29%).

Q3 What ways do you evaluate your work with young people?

Only very few organisations (6%) said that they didn't have ways of evaluating. The largest number (85%) said that they had their own evaluation methodology. Three quarters would evaluate in

response to conditions set by funders, and over half (56%) sometimes use external bodies to help them with evaluation. Only a small number (17%) use an external evaluation framework, and of those mentioned, Youth Music and the New Economics Foundation's *5 ways to wellbeing* were two of the specific examples.

Q4 What are the most significant challenges you face in terms of resources?

Organisations did not make a huge distinction between the different resource challenges they faced. By a small amount, the biggest number of respondents felt that "sustaining..programmes while maintaining quality of engagement" was their largest challenge, with 24 of 66 respondents (36%) saying it was the most significant, and 18 the second most (27%). 23 (35%) felt "finding resources" in the first place was the most significant (16, or 24% said this was the second most significant) and while 14 (21%) felt that "persuading funders to recognise the value" of their work with young people was most significant, 27 (41%) felt it was the second most significant.

Of the other challenges respondents suggested, a number stood out, including the need to balance the demands of the funder with the needs of young people, the fact that schools did not have money to commission services, the challenge of managing funder expectations and the bureaucracy and "new language" of funding.

Q5 What are the most significant challenges you face in terms of communications and engagement?

In contrast to the previous question about resources, one communications issue clearly stood out as the most significant challenge for organisations, and that was "communicating effectively with schools", which 58 of 68 respondents (85%) ranked as the most (29) or the second most (29 also) significant challenge.

"Communicating with and engaging young people" and "communicating with partners" were felt to be less significant challenges.

A few other challenges were noted, including using young people as peers, ensuring "equality of status" between young people and older participants or service users, and balancing the demands of the curriculum with the need for creative expression.

Q6 What are the most significant challenges you face around evaluation and impact?

"Evidencing the value of the work done" was the most or second most significant challenge for 63 out of 68 (93%), so almost all the respondents felt it was significant. "Engaging young people in evaluation" was the next highest scoring, with 44 (65%) putting it either most (15, or 22%) or second most (29 or 43%) significant.

Some of the other challenges mentioned were around measuring the intrinsic value of art (rather than the social policy consequences), and the time, capacity and resource needed to do evaluation well, particularly over the long term.

Q7 Are any of your services limited to or targeted at particular groups?

All of the groups mentioned were targeted by some organisations. The group for which the largest number of organisations said they offered something specific was 14-19 year olds, with 82% of respondents saying they did something for this age group. Around two thirds of respondents provided services or programmes for both the 5-11 group and the 11-14 year old cohort.

Oustside of school aged children, 43% deliver to early years children and 57% to over 19s.

43% offer services or programmes aimed at children or young people with learning disabilities, with around 30% (in each case) providing services targeted at BESD children, physically disabled or "children from particular black or minority ethnic backgrounds".

Of the "other" groups mentioned by respondents, a number suggested refugees, young people "Not in education, employment or training" (NEETs), young people in the criminal justice system, and some had a particular focus on young women or young men.

Q8 How many young people do you work with in each of these categories.

NB there was one particular very surprising number provided with one organisation claiming to provide for 676,400 young people in the 5-11 age group. This was assumed to be an error (see below table). However, because of the possibility of a very large outlying number skewing the analysis, "medians" have been used to determine the average numbers in each age group. This seems to give a fairer reflection of the scale of provision, and given that 49 out of 75 organisations filled in some data for this question, there is a reasonable sample on which to base the analysis.

The table below sets out the median number of children worked with in the most recent available 12 month period in each category.

The table also gives the highest number any respondent submitted, which shows that a few organisations are reaching many thousands of young people even though the majority are working in hundreds rather than thousands.

Category	Median number of children served by organisation	Highest number of children any organisation said they worked with
Early years	130	38000
5-11	859	67640*
11-14	200	30400
14-19	223	14000

Above 19	150	3000
Children with learning disabilities	40	6003
BESD	15	2544
Physical disabilities	20	401
Children or young people from specific BME groups	100	15269
Other	21	87

* The original entry read 676,400. However, it is suspected that this is an inputting error. 67,640 is much more likely to be correct given this respondent's numbers in other categories so this assumption has been made.

Q9 How do you choose the schools you work with?

Nearly three quarters (73%) said they had a long term relationship with the schools they worked with and 69% said they worked with schools in their local community. Around 40% said the schools chosen were due to funding or grant relationships. There were a number of other sources of schools partnerships mentioned, including recommendations from partners or local authorities, response to needs of schools and the importance of prioritising local schools.

Q10 In which boroughs do your young people focused activities take place?

Between them the respondents delivered activities which in total covered every borough. The boroughs within which the highest number of respondents said they offered services (out of 62 respondents in total) were Tower Hamlets (30 of 62 organisations, or 48%) Camden, Islington and Southwark (28 or 45%), Hackney (25, or 40%) and Westminster (24, or 39%).

Bexley (8, or 13%) and Sutton (9 or 15%) had the fewest number of organisations providing services.

Q11 Which boroughs do the children and young people come from?

Over 40% of the 63 respondents said that they drew children from "all boroughs". Of the individual boroughs specified, the biggest proportion of children seemed to come from Hackney (mentioned specifically by 18 organisations, or 29%) and Southwark and Tower Hamlets (by 14 or 22%). The inner London boroughs scored more highly than outer London as places from which young people were drawn.

Q12 How many children in the last available year in each borough?

Again, as for question 8, because of some large numbers the median rather than the mean is used to get a fairer picture of what is happening.

Of those organisations that said they worked in "all boroughs", the median number of children they estimated working with was 2000.

In individual boroughs the median numbers tended to be less than 100 per borough, with the exceptions of Brent (330), Greenwich (170), Haringey (150), Lambeth (140), Lewisham (108) and Hackney (100). The lowest numbers were in Bromley (30) and Hillingdon (21).

Q13 How many schools do you work with?

NB one organisation said they worked with 405 organisations in the City of London and one that they worked with 100 in Westminster. These were felt to probably be errors, and it was more likely that these were total numbers of schools for all boroughs. So the analysis makes that assumption.

Because the numbers respondents provided are within a narrower range than those for numbers of children the mean has been used to calculate the average for this question.

For organisations saying they worked across all London Boroughs, the average number of schools they worked with was 103. For individual boroughs the numbers were all under 10 schools, with only Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith & Fulham, Islington, Lambeth, Newham, Southwark and Camden having organisations working with an average of more than 5 schools.

Q14 Are you familiar with Artsmark?

Of 58 organisations answering the question, 16% said they were not, and 36% that they were, but did not think it was of relevance to the schools they worked with. 31% knew of it and had written letters of support for schools, and 6 organisations (10%) worked with a majority of schools who were accredited with arts mark.

Some of the other responses were that organisations were looking into it and seeing if there were opportunities to use it in their work.

Q15 Do you want to find out more about Artsmark?

73% said yes they did.

Q16 Are you familiar with the Arts award?

Almost half responding organisations either build it into their programmes (36%) or are an arts award centre (11%). 11 organisations (18%) were unfamiliar with it.

Q17 If you don't use arts award please tell us why.

Of the 22 who said they didn't use only 4 said it was because they weren't familiar enough with it, with 17 (77%) saying it was for other reasons, which were largely around capacity, how close a fit it was with their existing work, and whether there was a demand for it amongst schools they worked with.

Q18 Do you want to know more about Arts award?

69% said they wanted to find out more.

Q19 What are the priorities for the Bridge organisation?

The three choices which the largest number of respondents said should be a high priority were: campaigning (51 of 59, or 86% saying it was a high priority), knowledge exchange (48 of 58, or 83%) and support for quality systems (39 of 58, or 67%).

The arts mark and arts award had the highest number of respondents saying they were not a priority (9 of 58 and 7 of 56 – or 16% and 13%) and the fewest number saying they were high priority (12 and 15 respondents respectively or 21% and 27%).

Of some of the other things suggested, ideas included facilitating contact with schools, and debates and discussions with teachers, improving opportunities for minority arts and defining the Bridge role in relation to youth music and others.

Q20 What is the single biggest priority?

The top three were the same as for Q19: campaigning (30%),knowledge exchange (26%) and support for quality systems (19%). Support for evaluation, and work on arts mark and arts awards did not get any votes from respondents.

Q21 Does your organisation belong to any other networks?

70% of organisations said they did.

If yes, can you tell us the name of the network?

Network	Number of NPOs specifying
LONSAS	6

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Engage	5
Sound Connections	4
ABO	3
Cultural Learning Alliance	3
dance educators group	3
Southbank Cultural Quarter	3
Theatre Educators Network	3
Action for Children's Arts	2
Creative Islington	2
ENYAN	2
Hackney Theatre Partnership;	2
ITC	2
LEAN	2
learning exchange	2
Literature Education Network in London.	2
Youth Music	2
ACA	1
Barbican/Guildhall and City of London	1
Barking and Dagenham Dance Teachers Network	1
CAT (Centre for Advanced Training);	1
Conservatoire for Dance and Drama.	1
Create Network	1
Education Managers Forum	1
Informal Head of Young People's Strategy Network	1
London Drama.	1

Network	Number of NPOs specifying
MU	1
Music Education Council	1
Music Leader	1
national association of writers in Education	1
nationwide jazz education network	1
NAYT.	1
Newham Dance and Drama Network (Primary and Secondary),	1
NSEAD,	1
other informal networks	1
Outer London Boroughs	1
Sound Sense	1
STEPSouthwark	1
THAMES Music Hub	1
The Schools Network	1
Theatre for Children Programmers,	1
theatres education partnership	1
TMA,	1
Tower Hamlets Dance Consortium	1
TYA-UK	1
TYP	1
UK Youth Circus Network	1
VAGA	1
voluntary arts	1
Westminster Culture Network	1
Writers in Schools National Network.	1

Q22 Do you want to be part of the Bridge network?

97% said yes

Q23 What would you want from the network?

The most popular responses were for peer to peer support and information (36 of 56, or 64%), the opportunity to meet and discuss issues (37 of 55 or 67%) and information on national and regional policy (33 of 57 or 58%).

Q24 What could you bring to the network?

81% said they could provide case studies, and over 40% each said they could assist with three of the other other options – venues, training and information. Only "technical and web capability to disseminate information" had few volunteers with just 14% saying they could provide this kind of input.

In terms of the other specialist input that organisations could provide, some of the suggestions were around minority / specialist art forms (including jazz music), volunteering, early years activity, engaging women and separately engaging young men.

Q25 Do you have any other comments on the Bridge?
There were one or two comments about this survey ("hasn't the Mayor already asked for this information?") but mostly they were thoughtful comments including:

- Work out your relationship to music hubs and the Henley agenda

- Remember one size doesn't fit all when working with young people

- Be there for all sizes, types and sectors of organisation

- Avoid duplication – do what others aren't doing

- Clarify your role

Survey compiled using Survey Monkey analysis by DHA communications