

CULTURAL FREEDOM:

KEY THEMES THAT HELP OR HINDER YOUNG PEOPLE'S CAPACITY TO THRIVE THROUGH DEVELOPING THEIR CREATIVE POTENTIAL.

A NEW DIRECTION

We create opportunity

Fairness

Highlights the big gap between rich and poor in London and the impact on an individual's capacity to develop their creative potential

The high cost of living in London pushes people into poverty which in turn impacts on people's capacity to engage. Inequality not only relates to access and participation in existing opportunities. Research shows that cultural agency and the freedom to make culture are heavily influenced by environment including family & wealth, geographical location and the impact on perception and psychology (i.e. Sense of safety, psycho-geography), and access to information (Wilson & Gross, 2017).

One indicator of engagement comes from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) Taking Part Survey which shows that engagement with the arts is significantly higher for the upper socio-economic group (84.4% in 2016/17) than the lower socio-economic group (67.4% in 2016/17) (DCMS, 2017).

"For many people, going to the theatre or to see an exhibition is a natural part of family life with few barriers to overcome. However, for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, these opportunities are not readily available" (DCMS, 2016).

It is still the case that those most actively involved in Arts Council England's (ACE) defined 'arts and culture' tend to be from the most privileged parts of society, with engagement still heavily influenced by levels of education, socio-economic background and where people live (ACE, 2016).

Disparity in opportunity is evident across the creative and cultural industries workforce. The arts & culture industry has grown by 10% in the last year (ACE, 2016). At the same time, unemployment in London remains above the national average with the unemployment rate for 16- to 24-year-olds in London being 2.6 times higher than for adults aged 25 to 64. Almost double the proportion of working-age disabled adults in London are workless, compared to non-disabled adults. British Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) Londoners have higher rates of unemployment and economic inactivity than other ethnic groups. Yet, only 22.4% of London's creative industries workforce are BAME.

27% of Londoners live in poverty after housing costs are taken into account, compared with 20% in the rest of England: high housing costs increase stress for people on low incomes. (Trust for London, London's Poverty Profile).

Young Londoners from poorer communities have been affected more deeply by benefit cuts than anywhere else in the country (The London Fairness Commission, 2016).

Furthermore, despite improved academic attainment young people from poorer backgrounds do not go on to achieve the same outcomes as their middle-class peers in terms of employment, health or security of housing (The London Fairness Commission, 2016).

Empowering youth voice around cultural learning is key. Research shows that in order to understand and co-manage young people's cultural learning ecologies effectively, a sustainable process of co-producing knowledge about that ecosystem must be in place, with many voices heard, on an ongoing basis (Wilson & Gross, 2017).



www.anewdirection.org.uk/challenge

References

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