



‘People doing amazing things’

ELEVATE: Lambeth’s LCEP

About ELEVATE Education

ELEVATE Education is Lambeth’s Local Cultural Education Partnership. Committed to improving Lambeth’s cultural offer for all children and young people (CYP) of school age, in order to enrich their lives and give them tools to succeed. The programme is managed by Council Officers (the ELEVATE team), with guidance from the Elevators (our youth advisory group).

The aims of ELEVATE Education:

- Drive strategic change: long-term sustainability and borough wide strategy for culture and education.
- Build cultural capital: empower agency, ‘place attachment and civic pride’ for Lambeth, ‘a locally relevant creative curriculum’.
- Address barriers to engagement and progression particularly for those facing barriers - addressing the attainment gap.
- Awareness and pathways to employment: demonstrate the value of the creative industries to the local economy and other sectors in the borough, and make the case to parents, carers, teachers and CYP about the benefits of a career in the creative industries.

Partnerships

1. What were the success factors and challenges in securing appropriate representation and buy in for your partnership? Who were the critical people to have at the table?

The buy-in from Lambeth Council has been an undoubted aid to growing support for the LCEP. The engagement from education colleagues there has been instrumental in fostering appetite from both school settings and arts organisations, seeking guidance on strategic educational priorities. The result has been engagement strategies within organisations that incorporate the needs of schools. The additional interest from Councillors has meant that the status of the LCEP has garnered local publicity and widened awareness. As one partner shared, 'the project has definitely made me feel much more connected to the council's wish to support creativity and culture in schools.'

Partnership managers (a part-time role paid for by a grouping of schools to support collaborative working between schools and external organisations) have been formidable agitators for securing school engagement. In one instance, three partnership managers were responsible for 50% of schools' engagement. Organisations have themselves reported that the buy-in of head teachers - perceived to be the decision makers - has been essential in growing participation.

From a cultural partners perspective, the LCEP has seen benefits for a spectrum of organisations. Large, world-renowned organisations have added clout to the success of the partnership, while the nimbleness of the LCEP's smaller partners have meant that the LCEP has been responsive to specific school needs during project delivery. The breadth of art forms represented in the group also has fostered meaningful collaboration and skills sharing: 'I always leave come away with a nugget' as one partner shared, while another commented 'It's not a talking shop... we're seeing things happen'.

ELEVATE's team have been tireless in matchmaking opportunities and resources to capitalise on the partners within the group, creating a network infinitely greater than the sum of its parts. Thinking about the longevity of the LCEP, one partner shared: '[this group] hasn't even scratched the surface of its potential, and what it could achieve'

2. What factors helped or hindered effective partnership development, consolidation, delivery, advocacy and sustainability?

We've seen huge value in spending time matchmaking suitable collaborators, which has created meaningful partnership development and better supported the success of the LCEP itself. The range of organisations in the network means we've been able to impact at every level, from the sharing of physical resources (such as music

stands) to recruiting CYP for programmes and even creating joint bids for fundraising.

The involvement of a programme manager and coordinator has facilitated much of this partnership development; these two roles have been responsible for convening meetings, introducing partners to one another, and keeping a firm eye on the strategic aims of the LCEP. The existing knowledge of the programme manager of Lambeth's cultural institutions was a huge benefit to partnership delivery, where personal contacts were in some instances used to broker relationships, as was their understanding of LCEPs prior to joining ELEVATE.

Bringing partners together has been invaluable, be it in-person, or online. Partners have repeatedly shared with us the value of this approach, with regular commentary about being inspired by the network and the support for creative education in Lambeth. Our move to in-person events this year, where training and workshops were provided to partners alongside venue tours and networking, consolidated advocacy within the network for ELEVATE and its impact.

Like other LCEPs, ELEVATE was affected by the Coronavirus pandemic, with less in-person events for the network than expected. However, we were heartened by the strength of the online relationships developed, and the value of creating an online space for partners to share challenges. The difficult context of the pandemic meant that our spaces were collaborative and compassionate from the off, with partners supporting one-another with resources and information. Several partners reported that the online meetings had meant they felt less isolated and alone.

Staff turnover was also a challenge for our LCEP, with a mixture of staff absences owing to illness, furlough, and role changes. This was true as much at schools as at cultural organisations, with it being sometimes difficult to understand the best contacts, and other colleagues feeling over-emailed. Templates or systems for managing these relationships would be well received for future iterations of similar programmes. Sporadic attendance by partners made consistency of relationship development challenging in some places; a light touch agreement in future will be useful to manage expectations for partners and convenors.

Partners were sometimes unclear on what ELEVATE was or who their relationship was with, owing to multiple strands and the number of people within the team. Another challenge we saw was the result of the efficiency of the partnership; ELEVATE's efficiency and expertise in matchmaking meant that at times the partnership was sometimes over-relied upon. Partners often used ELEVATE to broker introductions rather than making approaches directly, which affected the internal capacity of the ELEVATE team.

The breadth of cultural organisations in Lambeth (which has one of the highest levels in the country) additionally posed two unforeseen challenges. The ratio of schools to cultural organisations meant that there were sometimes not enough participants for

LCEP led projects as a result of oversaturation, and parts of ELEVATE competing with itself for attention. We also found that the proportion of arts organisations to schools meant that networking sessions themselves were also dominated by organisations pitching their opportunities to a small number of schools and settings. This was most apparent in 2022, when return to in-person activities were hampered by overstretched teachers and staff absences.

3. How did the Coronavirus Pandemic impact on your partnership operation, plans, priorities and provision? How did you respond and adapt?

Staff sickness affected schools and therefore ELEVATE activity, as mentioned above. In addition, we saw smaller event turnout that we might have expected at in-person partner events owing to Covid hesitancy, and competing commitments. Having started the network as a shared online space, we experienced some teething problems moving to in-person events; attendees were not consistent which has meant we've needed to reconsider who the events were for and what attendees needed in order to join us. Understanding that the audiences are different has since allowed us to change our approach, and we have now optimised both formats.

The pandemic meant however that it was essential to create an online hub for young people to connect with opportunities which has been a beneficial consequence. The creation of our website was accelerated by the pandemic and has received good engagement.

4. What mechanisms did you utilise to listen to young people and put their views and needs at the heart of the work? What worked well? What was challenging?

We built in the voices and needs of CYP into the LCEP at every stage. From our group of ELEVATORS, an advisory group who supported and shaped the development of programmes, to incorporating feedback from project participants into later activity. CYP particularly enjoyed visits to cultural institutions; we observed a sense of ownership to these spaces, with one CYP reporting on a trip to a new site 'this is lit'. An organisation reported 'we've seen young people dreaming'. This directly informed the strategy for careers programmes. We supported ELEVATE project group leads to collect qualitative feedback from young people and built reflective practice into activities we ran with them.

100 young people took part in our Culture Check survey, a questionnaire we commissioned through our project group leads to better understand attitudes to culture and barriers to participation.

We have engaged with a broad mix of age groups and educational settings; however it is worth noting that we would like to continue to develop our offer for SEND young people, YOS, NEETs and the Portuguese speaking community.

We sometimes found that participation in digital activity was impeded by screen fatigue, while at a broader level, future iterations of our LCEP will address the need to compensate CYP for participation in strategy development. We have been able to pay CYPs for their contributions, however, to widen their involvement we will need to increase funds available.

The main challenge for our LCEP has been an arm's length relationship with CYP. As a council-led LCEP, we are dependent on cultural partners and educators to capture the feedback of young people, many of whom are not used to engaging CYP this way or are lacking the capacity to do so. This second-hand filtering of information means that we have often been lacking reliable perspectives from young people about our programmes. The Culture Check survey was established to counter this, and we look forward to incorporating its findings.

5. How did you assure and assess the quality of your delivery programme?

We have worked with Pudding to collect qualitative evidence about the impacts of our programmes and their value to young people as well as cultural and educational partners through a playful post-event forum and online report. Project group leads were supported to capture feedback from CYP themselves on their activity plans, which was then fed back to ELEVATE, which developed confidence around monitoring and elevation, providing useful professional development. We've included a Pudding report from one of our sessions with our report, alongside Pudding's report on activity in 2019-21.

The expertise of staff also ensured quality programme delivery; the programme manager has over twenty years' experience in creative education settings so was able to shape suitable activities for partners. One of the most impressive things about our LCEP however has been the investment of its partners in the LCEP; the spirit of openness and the clear communication pathways have meant that partners repeatedly shared where things are and are not working for them. Space for comment and reflection from partners is built into every meeting, ensuring we have always been led by the experience and the needs of the group.

6. What has been the 'added value' to working in partnership? What have you achieved together that partners could not achieve alone? What is the evidence for this?

New relationships have been formed by the LCEP which has created collaborations that extend far beyond the remit of the programme and allowed us to create a network far greater than the sum of its parts. Partners themselves have commented as much during Pudding sessions ('it's not a talking shop'). Partners have evidenced

the sharing of physical resources, such as spaces and equipment in correspondence with us, thanking us ('ELEVATE is great') when we've been able to matchmake successfully, which has been just as useful to participants as the sharing of expertise. The partnership model has also reduced doubling up of activity; the Culture Check surveys conducted this year are a prime example of this where one co-commission has created a report that all partners can use. Partners have been able to pool resources to amplify impact, this was particularly apparent in our Windrush and Summer of Wellbeing campaigns in 2020-21 and at the Brockwell Bounce in 2022 where partners worked collaboratively to widen access to borough-wide programmes.

With almost 100 contacts from cultural partners and with the participation of two thirds of schools in the borough, working in partnership has made the work of the partners more visible, facilitating in turn a clearer case for supporting creative education opportunities. This has caught the attention of internal stakeholders such as councillors who are incorporating our work into their manifestos. The LCEP has given us direct contact with young people, ensuring that council and organisational activity is created with them in mind.

These findings have been evidenced through feedback from partners, in meetings, correspondence, with both the ELEVATE team and Pudding directly.

7. What new partnership infrastructure has been established? What are the benefits of this infrastructure? Is it sustainable?

Alongside the meaningful long-term relationships between arts organisations and educational settings, which will continue beyond the LCEP, we've increased provisions for schools through connections with organisations ('a whole new array of provision' as one called it, another, 'a monumental change to our ability to reach schools'). Networking is now happening more frequently without the intervention of the LCEP, and we hope that the project group leads will be able to act as convenors for other partners as the partnership progresses.

It will be necessary for us to consider the resource behind the network meetings; as we've alluded to above, a clearer lens on the different events now means a more specific programme for networking, which we will evaluate before supporting further. We expect the development of a CRM for ELEVATE (completion expected Autumn 2022) will solidify the infrastructure of the partnership.

8. What difference has your programme made to partners? Is there any evidence of change in e.g. policy, practices or investment? Have you seen evidence of wider change in policy or practice within your locality?

We can demonstrate significant financial gains for partners as a result of the LCEP. One cultural partner has increased its activity by around one fifth as a result of relationships established through the LCEP. Our advocacy contributed to this

organisation receiving a permanent space for the first time. One organisation has been able to make its founder full-time as a result of the financial security afforded by the partnership. Larger organisations within the LCEP have commented on the value of the LCEP in their fundraising applications. Cultural partners have reported working with more school settings as a result of the LCEP and having a clearer understanding of priorities for educational organisations, which is informing their own strategies. One partner described the network as ‘a living local newspaper’ for opportunities.

Participation in the LCEP has increased the profile of associated organisations locally and been useful in securing support from the board (particularly concerning Artsmark accreditation).

The partnership has also connected partners to wider colleagues in the council to facilitate targeted provision such as PRUs and NEETs, which again has been useful to cultural partners for shaping their inclusion policies. Several are now working with these groups for the first time.

Outcomes for children and young people

9. What evidence do you have that your programme has increased the number and diversity of young people engaging with creative and cultural opportunities?

Part of our activity has been to track and link creative opportunities across Lambeth for children and young people. While there is no data available about the number of these opportunities before our inception, we have clear correlative evidence that engagement has risen during our existence. In the first eighteen months of the LCEP, the partnership grew by 14%. Since September 2021 we have grown by an additional 80%, with a total of 163 partners now in the network. Two thirds of schools in the borough have engaged with ELEVATE activity directly, demonstrating a clear provision of creative and cultural opportunities for Lambeth’s CYP. We know from cultural partners that their ability to reach CYP has been transformed by the LCEP, ‘a whole new array of provision’. Several cultural partners have reported increased demand for their work from schools in the borough, in some instances adding new classes specifically for particular areas. In our reflective sessions, the most repeated next step for partners across cultural and educational settings was making connections with those they met, again demonstrating that the LCEP has facilitated opportunities for CYP. School partners commented on ‘the amazing people in the community doing things for others’.

With the benefits of the programme obvious to all, there is immense appetite from CYP, schools, and cultural partners to continue activities, such as the Summer of Wellbeing programme in 2021, our Creative Careers programme and the Flashmob. Teachers shared that they would ‘definitely do this again’, while children were ‘clearly

excited about the prospect of planning activity next year as a way of keeping others happy’.

We also saw high engagement in our pandemic and antiracism activity. 3,200 CYP engaged in the Flashmob in both 2021 and 2022, and while the numbers of participants was consistent we saw an increase in schools participating, from 14 to 16. Our Windrush resources were downloaded 167 times by teachers in 2021 suggesting engagement with a much larger group of CYP.

Workshops we ran this year for teachers have already impacted 533 CYP across early years and primary schools with teachers using this learnt practice in their classrooms.

The survey we commissioned engaged with 90% of school settings in the borough. 30% of the young people who responded receive school meals, correlating to groups with lowest access to cultural opportunities. Placing their voices at the heart of our report means that we have created a strategy with inclusion at its core.

10. What outcomes (skills, confidence, knowledge etc) have been seen for young people? What has helped or hindered the achievement of these outcomes? How do these outcomes link with the six Challenge London themes?

We’ve seen a particularly strong impact on wellbeing as a result of our programmes. As a direct consequence of participation in the Summer of Wellbeing, several schools in Lambeth are now embedding additional long-term mental health support for pupils. One described this programme as ‘a way in’ to support Pupil Wellbeing Ambassadors which will be further developed with support from partnership managers. The link between creativity and wellbeing in the activities also legitimated the importance of the arts. Mental health leads at schools have realised the ‘effectiveness of creativity to support wellbeing’. Both attest to what Gerald Jones (Director of Community Learning at Morley College) calls ‘art’s ability to hit many of the outcomes for education’.

Confidence in CYP has also risen, no more so than in our poetry workshops with secondary school pupils last year. Teachers described the ‘buzz’ the workshops created for students, while partnership managers observed the clear benefits of poetry, with ambitions to further embed this into their provisions for future years. One school will now run termly poetry competitions, while others commented on the importance of giving their students access to exceptional local talent. One student described feeling better equipped to combat their nerves as a result of the workshop, while another felt better able to ‘show my emotions’. The impact was seismic for the facilitating poet too, one of our Elevators. Initial unenthusiastic responses from students to poetry required them to reframe poetry as a vehicle for self-expression;

by the end of the workshops students were hounding him to take up a full-time role at their school.

Our Creative Careers pilot with Brixton House raised ambitions about job opportunities in the sector. Informed by the Gatsby Benchmark, the programme is committed to 'not being knee-jerk' in its approach to change, and is committed to long term, sustainable development. The practices for capturing this have been reflective, and the programme itself was developed in response to the specific needs of the local Lambeth community. Engaging whole communities; parents, carers, teachers and support workers in the process to see the variety, value, and financial security available in careers in the creative industries. Inspired by their involvement in the Southbank University symposium, the hope for this first phase of the programme was to 'plant the seeds' for young people to see that there was a career for them in the arts.

The programme has so far engaged 69 Lambeth participants, 62 of them aged 18 or under, and 7 adults between 35-54 in its site visits of Brixton House. Two schools were able to visit, with three others postponing until the autumn, none of whom had existing relationships with the organisation. Particularly moving was the confidence encouraged between staff and students to share experiences as part of the visit, with staff members sharing their involvement in the sector already, which excited and inspired students. Our partners reported that this 'shifted mindsets and stretched aspirations'

Our main challenge to achieving these outcomes is the clear reporting from our partners. As a partnership programme, it is our partners who are working directly with CYP rather than ELEVATE directly. This means we are dependent on partners to collate (and to an extent analyse) evaluation and impact. Currently, ELEVATE is consolidating its evaluation strategy to produce key evaluation tools across the whole programme so there is consistent collection of data and a network wide understanding of what we mean by engagement. This strategy will incorporate communications, linking related opportunities, depth of opportunity and length of impact.

11. To what extent do young people involved feel they had agency in decisions about provision, funding etc?

Across the ELEVATE programme Elevators feel highly involved, valued and listened to, with paid opportunities for their involvement, such as feeding into funding applications, where their opinions on provision have also been incorporated. At least three of our ELEVATORS have received paid employment as a result of the programme. CYP have been involved in designing programmes such as our Sharing

a Smile and Summer of Wellbeing programmes in 2021, where school children decided the activity provided. Partnership managers reported: ‘teachers are keen to take forward children’s creative ideas’,

It has, however, been difficult to foster agency universally across programmes, given that much of the LCEP’s remit is with school settings rather than CYP themselves, meaning our relationship is sometimes indirect. Some partners have also reported a nervousness about speaking on behalf of the CYP they work with around their feelings about agency in decision-making, which they have been unable to capture more concretely owing to the limitations of the pandemic.

12. What outcomes have been seen for the workforce/organisations involved (e.g. teachers, schools, creative practitioners)? How will these outcomes lead to positive change for young people? What has helped or hindered the achievement of these outcomes? How do these outcomes link with the six Challenge London themes?

Our LCEP has again seen value around wellbeing, confidence and creative careers which speak to three of Challenge London’s key themes.

The LCEP has inspired cultural organisational confidence alongside CYP confidence. For one partner, change to their own company ‘knowing LCEP is there, [change] feels a lot more possible’. Staff reported feeling supported, inspired and connected, and much more clued up about the educational landscape, meaning that programmes are being tailored to better support CYP needs.

The impact on teachers has been equally meaningful. The creative sessions we ran for teachers have been just as valuable for skills development. Here are some of the teachers’ reflections: ‘I felt supported. I learned a lot and I was given the space to experiment and to learn. Thank you!’, ‘it’s a gift to be able to observe someone else, a professional in this field, lead the session. You pick up so much’, ‘it has re-energised my practice and has been an opportunity to share ideas developed by other teachers.’

The findings from our Culture Check survey have been shared with partners who have incorporated this into their strategies for education programmes, again meaning that we are speaking to the needs of CYP at every turn.

The increased financial uplift to organisations as a result of the ELEVATE LCEP also means that we have been able to extend provision in the borough and ensure sustainable growth for local business. One partner has recruited 15 new CYP for their summer activity. This growth will allow more opportunities to be provided locally.

As alluded to elsewhere, the challenge remains teacher capacity for facilitating these opportunities, and a rigorous approach for capturing impacts.

Investment

13. Which organisations/sectors co-funded your Challenge programme and what were their motivations for doing so? Where do their interests align with Challenge London? Are any of these new investors in cultural learning?

Lambeth Council (via Brixton CEZ and COMF). The wider ELEVATE programme also receives S106 & NCIL funds. Adjacent activity has been funded by Arts Council England, which has required in-kind contributions from delivery partners.

14. What plans and funding are in place to sustain the partnership and/or work initiated through the partnership? What might hinder these plans?

Currently, ELEVATE is not funded beyond March 2023. The team is pursuing trust and foundations funding and will also build an internal case for core LBL funding.

Working out whether the LCEP framing is still valuable will be a consideration in framing the partnership's activity. ACE's aims and support for LCEPs moving forward is unclear and the ELEVATE brand is much more relevant and recognised on a local level.

Learning and next steps

15. What have you learnt from your Challenge London programme (with particular reference to partnership working, investment, and delivering better outcomes for children and young people) and how will this inform how you/your partnership work in the future?

We know that in a council things take time due to the internal processes associated with spending public funds; we will build longer lead-in times to future activity plans. Due to the nature of LCEPs and their funding, it is very difficult for us to avoid falling into the role of project delivery partner to the council, which can lessen the potential impact of the partnership convener role. Our LCEP is strongest when it has its own remit and is working across delivery areas, as is not subsumed by other council departments. The relationships we have established with partners are in addition to existing agreements organisations may have with the council, and our advocacy role here has been successful in reframing the activity of the council more broadly.

Regarding the impact on young people, rather than the activities created for their engagement, this is a notoriously slippery metric, particularly when focussing on a short timeframe. Through the Challenge London programme, we now better understand how to collect this information from CYP and are developing strategies

for more longitudinal reporting in future programmes. The need for partners to collect this information, and for their confidence around the value of monitoring and evaluation has been illuminated by our participation in this programme.

Management of the Challenge London programme

16. What did you find most beneficial about being part of the Challenge London programme? (The funding, A New Direction insight, Artsmark support, networking etc.)

It has been totally transformational to receive funding to support the development of this partnership. ELEVATE Education would not be as developed as we are without this financial support. We've relished the insights and peer support, alongside the support from the AND on specific areas of development, like governance and youth voice. The promotion of the LCEPs has been great for wider awareness about Lambeth's work and has in turn fostered positive sentiment towards the council.

While there was initially a vast appetite for Artsmark from partners, we have found a big difference between this and the number of partners who pursued this accreditation, suggesting this was less valuable to our partners than they had initially conceived. There are other areas of alignment between schools and cultural partners that have received much more traction, e.g. racial justice champions engaging with our work to diversify and decolonise the cultural curriculum.

17. Are there ways that A New Direction could improve its support for strategic partnerships?

We would have benefited from more targeted Task and Finish groups to compliment discussions and catch-ups. We would also be glad to see Slack used in future iterations in order to facilitate networking, resource sharing and collaborations – its use didn't quite take off.

The key area of support required now is in understanding the discontinuation of the Bridge/Sector support organisations and how Arts Council England aims to compliment the recognition of LCEPs values with financial support to enable us to continue to grow and provide the important strategic role we fulfil.