



# Acknowledgements

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Figure 1: Challenge London themes

# Introduction

## I.1 Challenge London

Launched in March 2018, Challenge London was a four-year partnership investment programme, managed by A New Direction with funds from Arts Council England. The programme's vision was for 'a London where all children and young people can thrive through developing their creativity'. A New Direction defined the challenge:

*'London's cultural, heritage, artistic and creative opportunities are rich and varied. However, London is also a city with challenges around inequality, and we know that not everyone feels empowered to shape culture and be involved with the breadth of opportunities available.'*<sup>1</sup>

Through research, A New Direction identified six key themes that help or hinder young people's capacity to shape culture and be creative. Challenge London set out to address these themes:

- **Fairness** – highlighting the gap between rich and poor in London and how this impacts an individual's capacity to develop their creative potential.
- **Wellbeing** – championing a happy and healthy London that provides emotional security for young people.
- **Influence and power** – amplifying hidden voices.
- **New London** – looking at the changing physical landscape of London and new opportunities to build-in ideas for developing creativity.
- **Preparing for work** – arguing for relevant skills and open entry to employment in the creative sector in the capital.
- **Pressures on institutions** – developing a strong, sustainable ecology of cultural and creative learning.<sup>2</sup>

The aims of the Challenge London programme between 2018 and 2022 were:

- **Partnerships:** constructing sustainable, innovative partnerships to support young people's creativity and cultural engagement.
- **Outcomes:** enabling strong cultural and creative outcomes for young people (aged 0-25) in London.
- **Investment:** generating new investment for culture and creativity.

1 From Challenge London Theory of Change.

2 The evidence base that informed these themes can be found at: <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/asset/3743>

## I.2 Background and context for Challenge London

Challenge London built on the learning accrued through A New Direction's earlier partnership programme, the London Cultural Education Challenge, 2015-18. The three aims were broadly similar but the key themes for Challenge London were amended to include factors such as health and wellbeing to reflect the evolving context for young people in London. Learning about areas such as cross-sector working, timescales and the need for flexibility within the investment programme informed the design of Challenge London. As stated in the Partnership Investment Plan, 2018-22<sup>3</sup>

*'We have particularly consolidated the local, needs-led focus of the London Cultural Education Challenge, and across 2018-2022 aim to co-invest with strategic partners whose ambitions overlap with our own.'*

### Changing context 2018-2022

It is almost inevitable that over a four-year period, a programme will need to evolve and adapt to shifts in local, regional and national context and priorities; a global pandemic, however, was an unimagined and unique challenge. The impact of Covid-19 on young people has been significant: for their social lives, wellbeing, education and work<sup>4</sup>. Covid-19 exacerbated existing inequalities such as the digital divide (affecting young people's access to education and culture)<sup>5</sup> and a widening of the attainment gap between children from the richest and poorest families<sup>6</sup>. Young people were also more likely than older workers to lose their jobs<sup>7</sup> and the precarity of work in the cultural sector was highlighted in an industry where a large proportion of the workforce is self-employed. The work of Challenge partnerships connected sectors highly affected by Covid-19: education, local authorities and the cultural sector and their responses are explored in Section 8.3 under the theme of New London.

A second event that had a global impact was the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020. A resurgence of action spearheaded by the Black Lives Matter movement has had a considerable impact for organisations and communities, including school communities. Important questions about equity, diversity and inclusion have been re-emphasised in both the education and cultural sectors.

3 <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/asset/4400>

4 A blog by the Challenge London evaluator considered how the pandemic added new dimensions to the Challenge London six themes. <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/blog/covid-19-young-london-how-challenge-london-is-responding>

5 <https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/covid-19-and-social-mobility-impact-brief/>

6 [https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/EEF\\_\(2020\)\\_-Impact\\_of\\_School\\_Closures\\_on\\_the\\_Attainment\\_Gap.pdf](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/EEF_(2020)_-Impact_of_School_Closures_on_the_Attainment_Gap.pdf)

7 <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/jobs-jobs-jobs/>

Other policies and initiatives of significance to Challenge London included:

**The London Recovery Programme (2020)**<sup>8</sup> Designed by the Greater London Authority (GLA) and London Councils as a response to the pandemic, the London Recovery Programme identified ‘a grand challenge to restore confidence in the city, minimise the impact on communities and build back better the city’s economy and society’. Nine Recovery Missions frame the response, and of particular relevance to Challenge London are those relating to a new deal for young people, high streets for all, building strong communities and mental health and wellbeing.

**Listening Projects**<sup>9</sup> In January 2021, A New Direction commissioned five research projects to explore ‘the ongoing impact of COVID-19 and the events of 2020 on our partners, young Londoners, and the cultural landscape.’ Research by the Aweo Group into The Experience of Young People found ‘five key stand out events, themes and realisations of 2020 for young Londoners. These were: the effects of COVID, the resurfacing of the Black Lives Matter movement, the decline of mental health, the realities of climate change and the new gap in education.’ One recommendation concerned the creation of youth-led safe spaces where young people can explore, develop and express their creativity. This was echoed in the research by New Local into Enabling Creative Communities, which also highlighted the importance of young people being able to influence decisions that affect them. Young people stressed that this needed to go beyond youth panels and advisors, and engage hidden voices.

**A New Direction: Place Strategy 2022**<sup>10</sup> Drawing on contextual information about London and relevant policies, learning from previous place-based work (including early findings from Challenge London), and seven guiding principles, this strategy sets out the organisation’s thinking and plans for future place-based work. ‘Place’ is defined as ‘a location with a geographical boundary that has familiarity, meaning or definition.’

**Place-based Approaches: Characteristics and Learning**<sup>11</sup> A New Direction commissioned research to explore learning for cultural programmes from eight worldwide place-based initiatives. The research identified three ‘points of departure’ for place-based work: a big-picture view of the issue that aims to address structural causes of the challenge, place as a starting point that works towards systems change, and people as a starting point, operating at a community level. The majority of Challenge partnerships had place as a starting point.

**Challenge London Legacy Funds**<sup>12</sup> During the final year of Challenge London, A New Direction announced the provision of two transitional funding programmes to help secure the legacy of the initial partnership investments. Whilst these did not shape Challenge London per se, knowledge of the possibility of continuation funding affected how A New Direction and the partnerships approached the end of the original programme. Through the Transition Fund, 11 partnerships each received up to £15,000 to help consolidate high-quality partnership working. Working with a researcher, four partnerships received £10,000 to design, deliver and document an action research project as part of the Powerful Partnerships Research Project (May 2022-March 2023).

**Let’s Create**<sup>13</sup> Arts Council England’s 10-year strategy (2020-2030), shares a vision for a country where everyone’s creativity is given the chance to flourish, and everyone has access to high quality culture. There is a strong focus on children and young people:

*‘Over the next 10 years, we will focus a large part of our development role on ensuring that children and young people are able to fulfil their creative potential, and access the highest-quality cultural experiences where they live, where they go to school and where they spend their free time.’*

The strategy sets out four Investment Principles: Inclusivity and Relevance, Ambition and Quality, Environmental Responsibility, and Dynamism. These Principles link with place-based partnership working, for example, Inclusivity and Relevance highlights the need to build connections with under-served communities; and Ambition and Quality stresses the importance of local consultation and evidence-based decisions about activities.

**Levelling Up**<sup>14</sup> **White Paper** Published in February 2022, this Paper sets out how the government will spread opportunity more equally across the UK. The White Paper states that ‘great cultural institutions [will] play their part in spreading access to excellence’ and commits to ‘significantly increase cultural spending outside the capital [with] 100% of the Arts Council England funding uplift [...] directed outside London.’ In practice, the Arts Council reduced the spend on National Portfolio Organisations in London by £50million per year for the 2023-26 settlement.

8 [https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/recovery\\_programme\\_overview.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/recovery_programme_overview.pdf)

9 <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/research/listening-projects>

10 <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/research/place-strategy-2022>

11 Davies, S (2019). Place-Based Approaches: Characteristics and Learning. A New Direction <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/research/place-strategy-2022>

12 <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/programmes/challenge-london/challenge-london-legacy-funding>

13 <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create>

14 Articulated as a political policy in the 2019 Conservative Party Manifesto. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>

### 1.3 About this report

This summative evaluation of Challenge London draws on a wide range of rich data. The evidence was analysed within the framework provided by the programme's Theory of Change and Evaluation Framework which were themselves informed by Challenge London's three aims and six themes. The evaluation aims to identify the extent to which the programme's aims and objectives were achieved and, more broadly, what went well, what was challenging, what difference was made, what has been learnt and what could be improved upon. The programme's objectives form sub-section headings or appear below section headings. Supporting evidence has been selected that best illuminates a theme or finding whilst also attempting to include data from all the partnerships. For every quote or example included, there are as many that have been left out.

The following section provides a brief outline of the Challenge London investments and Section 3 describes the evaluation study. The remainder of the report is structured around the three Challenge aims with findings about Partnerships presented in Sections 4, 5, and 6 (relating to getting started; delivery; and making a difference, respectively). Section 7 summarises the key enablers and inhibitors of partnership development, delivery and sustainability. Outcomes for young people are discussed in Section 8 whilst Section 9 examines workforce development and its relationship to Outcomes for young people. Section 10 reviews the achievement of objectives linked to Investment, and Section 11 explores A New Direction's role and learning. Finally, Section 12 briefly summarises the conclusions of the evaluation.

Challenge London supported a range of partnerships with varied partners and operating models. To avoid confusion, generic terms are used in this report: personnel employed through Challenge investment are referred to as 'Coordinators', representatives of arts and cultural organisations and creative practitioners are referred to as 'cultural partners'. The majority of Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs) had a name; these are used in the vignettes but the partnerships are often referred to simply as LCEPs in the main body of the report.



# 2

## Outline of Challenge London

## 2.1 The investments

Challenge London operated across three rounds of applications (although originally only two rounds were planned), with all applicants required to respond to the three Challenge aims and the six themes.

### Strand 1: Decisions in July 2018

Invited applications from existing Local Cultural Education Partnerships and other existing strategic working groups. Applicants committed to supporting an increase in schools working towards achieving Artsmark.

### Strand 2: Decisions in March 2019

Invested in newly formed consortia looking to develop a Local Cultural Education Partnership, alongside innovative, cross-sector initiatives. A longer timeframe from launch to full applications allowed partnerships to consolidate governance and vision to reduce risk within programme timelines.

### Strand 3: Decisions in May and September 2020

Applications were solicited by A New Direction with a view to supporting emerging or newly established LCEPs; and to provide additional support to LCEPs whose Challenge investment finished before December 2020.

Investments were made in 17 cross-sector partnership programmes across 14 boroughs, and one pan-London programme (see Figure 2). These ranged in value from £20,000 to £150,000 with durations of 12 months to 3.5 years. In total, £1,127,846 was invested through Challenge London across the four years, matched by £1,292,042 from sources including local authorities, trusts and foundations, developers, cultural organisations and youth foundations (see Section 10.1 for further details of match funding).

In line with Arts Council expectations, Challenge London investment prioritised the development of LCEPs, supporting their strategic role rather than programme delivery. Fourteen Challenge London investments supported place-based partnerships within a borough, 12 of which were LCEPs. Three investments supported cross-sector partnerships that either piloted or embedded new ways of working that supported young people's creativity and cultural opportunity. These partnerships were aiming to test and refine a transferable model.



<b>Barking and Dagenham</b> Barking and Dagenham: Inspiring Futures	<b>Camden</b> Camden Spark	<b>Islington</b> 11 by 11 Culture Bank
<b>Barnet</b> Barnet and Culture for Youth	<b>Pan London</b> Cities of Learning: Design Competition London	<b>Lambeth</b> ELEVATE Education (Lambeth's Local Cultural Education Partnership)
<b>Bexley</b> Creative Bexley	<b>Croydon</b> Croydon Rising	<b>Southwark</b> Making Sense 2020
<b>Brent &amp; Ealing</b> Talking Planning	<b>Ealing</b> Youth Culture Revolution Ealing	<b>Waltham Forest</b> Working together: a new Cultural Education Partnership for Waltham Forest
<b>Brent</b> Brent Local Cultural Education Partnership	<b>Hammersmith and Fulham</b> Hammersmith and Fulham Local Cultural Education Partnership	<b>Wandsworth</b> Creative Wandsworth
<b>Southwark</b> Creating Justice	<b>Haringey</b> Haringey Creates	

Figure 2 - Challenge London Investment Borough Map

## 2.2 The Challenge Group and Young Challenge Group

Panels of industry experts and young people offered programme advice and guidance to A New Direction. The Challenge Group included representatives of strategic bodies (such as the Greater London Authority), funding organisations (including Arts Council England), creative practitioners and individuals with expertise in architecture, planning and communications. The Young Challenge Group (YCG) was formed of 15 young Londoners aged 16-25, all of whom had an interest in creativity and London's cultural sector. Both groups reviewed the applications to Challenge London and advised on the best initiatives to support, based on the eligibility criteria.

## 2.3 A New Direction's support package for Challenge London

Alongside the investment of funds, A New Direction provided a comprehensive support package for the Challenge partnerships. The Place team held frequent update meetings with lead partners and were available to provide information, advice and support as required. Other elements of support included the following:

- Brokering relationships between partnerships and with cultural organisations and other potential partners.
- Providing regional, national and international intelligence through blogs, briefings, research, evaluation and one-to-one meetings.
- Online resources, including the Powerful Partnerships Resource Library<sup>15</sup> which presents a curated collection of practical tools, inspiration and research for developing partnerships.
- Opportunities for peer learning and capacity building via facilitated groups. The frequency, focus and make-up of these 'meet-ups' changed across the four years and often included representatives of place-based partnerships in London beyond those supported through Challenge.
- Support for Artsmark, including briefings and workshops for schools within a borough.
- Specialist support on youth voice, evaluation and partnership development.

(Reflections on this support package can be found in Section 11).

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/resources/powerful-partnerships-resource-library>

## 2.4 Challenge London in numbers

**In total, the 17 Challenge London partnerships worked with:**

- **Over 16,000 children and young people aged 0-19 years**
- **451 young people aged 20+ years**
- **978 schools**
- **107 youth centres and other non-school settings**
- **705 creative and cultural organisations**
- **3,500 education and youth professionals engaged in CPD**
- **629 creative practitioners directly engaged in programme delivery**

Quarterly monitoring asked partnerships to report engagement figures but it became apparent that 'engagement' was being defined differently across the partnerships. The wording was changed to ask for 'direct engagement' and further clarification was provided by the evaluator in summer 2021. However, final figures submitted indicated significant variance in how partnerships interpreted engagement and also, with respect to the numbers of young people engaged, significant variance in the extent to which partnerships were able to separate Challenge-funded engagement from wider, lead partner activity<sup>16</sup>. This resulted in three LCEPs reporting a combined total of 64,379 young people engaged in their activities. The remaining 14 partnerships worked with a total of 16,431 (ranging from 0 to 7,029) and, given the difficulty of unpicking the figures from the three high-engagement LCEPs, this is the number used for the headline figure above.

<sup>16</sup> Including London Borough of Culture and Music Education Hubs.

The nature of the partnership and the duration of Challenge investment resulted in wide variation in engagement figures. Two of the thematic partnerships, for example, did not work with schools, and one did not work directly with young people.

There is therefore, no 'typical' Challenge partnership in terms of reach, but it may be useful to share the figures from one of the investments.

In the final evaluation report, Inspiring Futures, the LCEP in Barking and Dagenham, provided their engagement figures in relation to baselines at the start of the investment period.

In the future, it would be advisable to provide definitions for quantitative data collection, for example, separating out passive engagement of schools/teachers (signing up for a newsletter) and active engagement (taking part in a project). However, collating figures from partnerships operating in different ways may always be challenging. Camden Spark, for example, developed a system to track partners across eight levels of engagement. This gave the LCEP invaluable insights but the number and definitions of these levels may not suit all partnerships.

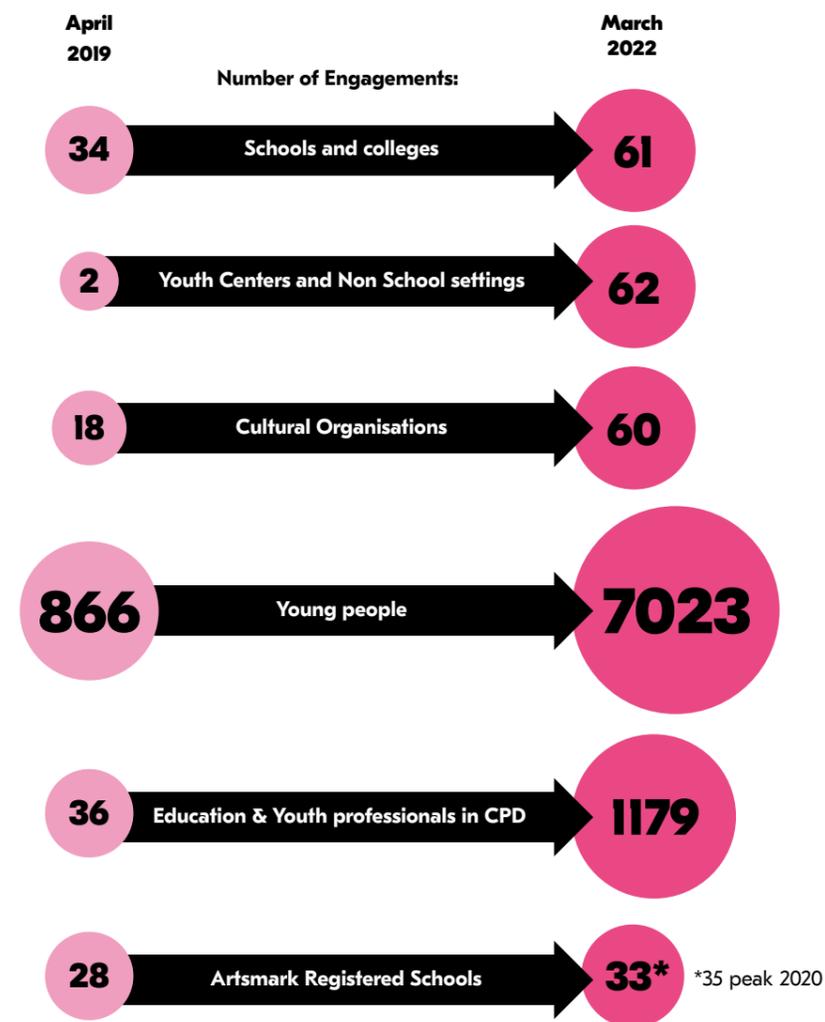


Figure 3: Barking & Dagenham



# 3

## The Evaluation

## 3.1 Scope and approach

The evaluator was appointed in late summer 2018, shortly after decisions had been made on the first round of investments. The purpose of the evaluation was set out in the brief.

Purpose of the programme-level evaluation of Challenge London:

- Accountability for the investments to Arts Council England and A New Direction's Board.
- Internal learning for A New Direction around programme development, delivery and support.
- Understanding the successes, challenges, outcomes and impacts of Challenge London.
- Learning for A New Direction, Challenge partners and wider sector including:
  - Practicalities, impact and value of cross-sector partnership working (with a focus on CEPs)
  - Future opportunities including where the ambitions of Challenge overlap with other sectors, organisations or professional institutions.

The brief also outlined the three programme aims and a series of evaluation questions linked to these aims. These questions informed the development of the programme-level Theory of Change and Evaluation Framework and are addressed in this report. The partnerships varied in scale, duration, approach and focus, and therefore a top-down approach for the evaluation was not appropriate; it was also not desirable as that would have been counter to one of the key principles of the programme which was for partnerships to co-create with young people and respond to local needs. Rather than adopt standardised measures, therefore, the evaluator devised standard evaluation questions as a framework for evaluation reporting by the lead partners.

The evaluation used a mixed method approach and was responsive to the programme and the evolving needs that arose. There was a formative element to the evaluation, and the evaluator shared learning at various stages to inform plans at A New Direction and support partnerships' development. The evaluator's role included:

- Supporting the development of Theories of Change: all Challenge partnerships were required to develop a Theory of Change (ToC), and the evaluator offered to support this process by facilitating ToC workshops and reviewing draft ToCs and evaluation frameworks. (A second Challenge consultant also supported works on ToCs).

- The evaluator was tasked with developing a programme-level Theory of Change and decided to delay this until spring 2019 so that it could be informed by the issues and outcomes highlighted by partnerships in their ToCs. A simplified version of the programme-level ToC (without the assumptions and evaluation questions arising) was designed and shared on A New Direction's website (see Figure 4 below). An Evaluation Framework was developed from the ToC and agreed with A New Direction; this set out indicators of success and sources of data, alongside the objectives.
- Attending decision-making meetings of the Challenge Group and Young Challenge Group.
- Identifying five representative partnerships across strands 1 and 2 for 'deep-dives', where the evaluator would have a higher level of contact with lead partners and partnership activities. This work commenced in spring 2019 but the evaluator changed approach in 2020 in response to changing circumstances: a third round of investments (not originally planned) was introduced in 2020 which added an additional five partnerships to the programme, and Covid-19 caused major disruption to partnerships including the furlough of the Coordinator in one of the deep-dive LCEPs meaning the Challenge programme stalled. The evaluator therefore became more responsive and explored interesting practice where it emerged.
- Presenting the evaluation at introductory partners' meetings for strand 1 and 2.
- Drawing on the programme-level ToC and Evaluation Framework, designing guidance for partnerships' interim and final evaluation reports, structured around key questions linked to the three programme aims.
- Providing support and advice on evaluation to Challenge lead partners as required. This included an Evaluation Q&A at a lead partners' meeting and circulation of additional guidance notes on data collection and analysis in August 2021.
- Writing an interim evaluation report in February 2020 to share learning and emerging findings with A New Direction and partnerships; and make recommendations to inform the third strand of Challenge investments.
- Acting as a critical friend to the programme, for A New Direction and lead partners.
- Sharing ad hoc insights including: a blog that considered the issues faced by young people in the wake of the pandemic through the lens of the six Challenge London themes; and a report (co-authored with the Senior Partnerships Manager) for Arts Council England on LCEPs' responses to the pandemic.



Figure 4: Challenge London Theory of Change, 2019

## 3.2 Data collection and sources

This report is based on analysis of data gathered by the evaluator, Challenge lead partners and their partners, and A New Direction's Place team. The main sources of data included:

- Interim and final evaluation reports submitted by each Challenge partnership.
- Quarterly Monitoring reports completed by Challenge partnerships that gathered statistical data alongside reflections on progress, challenges, learning, and support from A New Direction.
- Semi-structured interviews undertaken by the evaluator throughout the four years. Initially these focussed on the five 'deep-dive' partnerships but broadened out to explore areas of interesting practice.
- An online 'partnership health-check' survey, circulated by nine of the 12 partnerships in November 2019 to members of their steering groups. A total of 25 responses were received.
- Final evaluation interviews with nine partnership leads in June 2022.
- Observation at a range of peer-learning events convened by A New Direction over the course of the four years.
- Attendance (in-person and online) and observation at a small number of events and activities staged by Challenge Partnerships.
- Periodic reflection meetings with members of A New Direction's Place team.
- Consultation with members of the Young Challenge Group (YCG) about the impact of Covid-19 on their lives.
- A focus group with assigned Challenge Lead Officers at A New Direction in December 2019.

### 3.3 Limitations

This report is in part a meta-analysis of data and reports produced by a wide range of people (including Challenge lead partners who were themselves reliant on their delivery partners to gather data on their behalf) and is therefore reliant on the skills, confidence and experience of those individuals in relation to evaluation.

A four-year programme is, by its nature, a potential challenge as circumstances, strategies and personnel change. For example, the evaluator worked with three different Senior Partnerships Managers (two as maternity cover) and two different Partnerships Managers at A New Direction. The evaluator worked in a responsive way but, inevitably, some changes had an impact on planned data collection, such as the introduction of a third strand of investments and the loss of the Challenge Lead Officers at A New Direction.

Covid-19 had a major impact on all aspects of the programme and its evaluation (the impact on partnerships is discussed further in the report). In common with all stakeholders, the evaluation activity moved online. One of the deep-dive partnerships stalled when the lead partner closed for 15 months and a proposed meeting of local authority senior leaders, to explore their motivations for supporting LCEPs, was shelved. In addition, between June 2020 and June 2021, A New Direction paused the requirement for partnerships to report engagement figures in Quarterly Monitoring reports.

The evaluator had planned to involve members of the Young Challenge Group in the evaluation process; there were two young people in the original group who were particularly interested in evaluation. However, the YCG had limited space in their agendas and the opportunity to work with them did not arise.



# 4

## Partnerships: getting started

To improve partners'/partnerships' effectiveness as advocates for young people's engagement in culture and creativity.

To build confidence and skills of partners, improving the quality of planning, delivery and evaluation of activities.

## 4.1 Leadership, coordination and governance

Of the 17 investments, 12 were working through an LCEP. The source of impetus for the LCEP varied and included local authorities, schools, cultural organisations and/or a range of interested partners. In the majority of cases, these initiators became the lead partner for the Challenge London proposal. In some boroughs, however, the choice of lead partner was a strategic decision, informed, in part, by the experience of established LCEPs about the pros and cons of different models. In practice, seven of the LCEPs were led by the local authority, two by cultural organisations, one by a not-for-profit school improvement Education Partnership, one by an academy trust and one LCEP has independent charitable status. Within local authorities, leadership most often resided in Education or Culture, but also spanned other departments such as Economy, Skills and/or Employment.

Of the two other place-based partnerships, one was led by the local authority and the second by a cultural organisation and higher education institute (HEI). The final three partnerships were addressing the Challenge through targeted thematic approaches and focussed respectively on the youth justice system, planning policy and accreditation of learning through digital badges.

Governance models (leadership, partners, structure and accountability) varied to suit local circumstances and priorities. In all cases, a lead organisation applied for Challenge London investment and held the funds for the partnership. The two most common governance models reported were: one partner holding funds and leadership responsibilities for a partnership group, or a partnership group to govern and steer with a wider network for practice-sharing. One LCEP was hosted within a pre-existing partnership group which the LCEP co-chaired. One Coordinator of a relatively new LCEP described the challenge of chairing steering group meetings whilst also reporting to the group, recognising also how this could compromise accountability. The appointment of a chair provides an opportunity to add status to the partnership. In Croydon, for example, the Directors of Culture and Education were both on the steering group, with one or other acting as the chair. In Barnet, a retired headteacher took up the role, adding legitimacy for schools in the LCEP that was led by an arts organisation.

All the Challenge partnerships had some form of steering group (although the name and responsibilities of this group varied) with some having additional groups for advice or networking. Arts Council England's report, *Research into Local Cultural Education Partnerships*<sup>17</sup>, found that 'Working and task-focused 'sub-groups' are very effective at activating strategies, (i.e., no need to wait for full group consensus).' Barnet LCEP adopted this approach at the outset, also aiming to increase capacity and ownership through distributed leadership with a member of the steering group chairing each of the three working groups. In final evaluations, several partnerships proposed a move towards utilising time-limited 'Task and Finish'<sup>18</sup> groups to increase efficiency, capacity and shared leadership.

Whilst all steering groups were cross-sector and commonly included representatives of both the education and cultural sectors (with additional expertise, such as health, in line with aims) the balance varied and often reflected the genesis of the partnership, the remit of the lead partner and the age of the partnership. Whatever the make-up of the steering group, it was vital for members to be clear about their role and responsibilities, particularly in relation to governance and accountability. In the example below, the LCEP Coordinator for Barking and Dagenham outlined the remit of the steering group.

### Vignette 1 - Remit of the Steering Group - Inspiring Futures

Inspiring Futures reports to and is governed by a Steering Group comprised of members that reflect a balanced spread of knowledge and expertise of formal education, arts and culture, and youth engagement. The purpose of the Inspiring Futures Steering Group is to provide a level of governance that maintains processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of the Cultural Education Partnership. Supporting the ongoing work and activity by enabling:

- Objective, evidence-based decisions – so that the CEP can report, explain and be responsible for the consequences of its decisions.
- Strong insight – that will maximise the CEP's effectiveness in stakeholder engagement.
- Impartiality – ensuring the limited resources of the CEP are maximised and accessible for all stakeholders.
- Reflectivity and responsiveness – to the relevant needs of CEP stakeholders.
- Robust and transparent quality assurance processes – so that its processes are easy to identify and understand.
- Participation – so that relevant people can be involved in decision making processes.

<sup>17</sup> July 2019 report by BOP Consulting. [https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/BOP\\_LCEP\\_Research\\_190717\\_0.pdf](https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/BOP_LCEP_Research_190717_0.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> A Task and Finish group is a time-limited group, set up as an action sub-group of a larger committee or meeting, with the aim of a delivering a specified objective or project.

Several partnerships introduced terms of reference for members of the steering group which clarified generic roles, but a minority of Coordinators still reported the challenge of navigating competing agendas of various stakeholders whilst also attempting to maintain the LCEP's agenda. In the partners' survey undertaken for the interim evaluation, respondents were asked about their motivation for joining the partnership. Responses demonstrated a continuum of motivations from: a duty to represent a sector at one end; through opportunities to meet organisational objectives; and an alignment of LCEP and organisational objectives; to more strategic and 'bigger picture' rationales at the other end. Whilst assembling a group where everyone has altruistic motivations is unrealistic, a group populated by individuals in the first two groups mentioned above might limit impact. Having a range of motivations and being transparent about these motivations is perhaps the most effective and realisable model. Feedback suggests that developing a Theory of Change was an effective way of revealing individual motivations and interests (see 4.4 below for further discussion on Theory of Change).

In the longer-running LCEPs, sustaining commitment to steering groups was raised as an issue. Competing demands, staff changes and loss of focus resulted in reduced attendance and/or a group dominated by one sector. In Wandsworth, the LCEP took the opportunity, as part of the evaluation conducted at the end of year 2, to review and restructure the membership of the steering group to improve the geographic spread and range of expertise represented. Similarly, wider network groups were often reformed. In Lambeth, for example, the Coordinator reported that LCEP meetings had higher attendance from cultural organisations, which meant they were only sharing their opportunities to a small number of schools. A decision was made to retain the Cultural Connections Live events (a cultural venue tour with refreshments for teachers) for networking but to hold separate briefings for schools and cultural organisations. This enabled a more explicit link to the needs and interests of each sector. Croydon, a well-established LCEP, also decided to switch from cross-sector to separate network meetings, establishing a Schools Board and a Youth Arts network.

## 4.2 Who is at the table?

All lead partners agreed on the need to have the 'right' people on the steering group. In practice this meant assembling partners with relevant knowledge, skills, authority and influence. In the partners' survey, approximately 90% of respondents agreed that the 'right' people had been assembled to meet the partnership's goals and there was clarity around what each partner brought to the table. Lead partners were asked about factors that helped them secure appropriate representation and one identified the importance of, 'showing the potential value the [programme] has to offer to existing initiatives.' Implicit within this finding is the need to engage with people beyond the cultural learning field and thereby bring different perspectives to the table and gain access to new networks and funding sources. Interestingly, as reported above, several LCEPs felt the need to review the steering group membership after two or more years of operation to ensure it was still a vibrant group with representatives relevant to the partnership's (potentially shifting) priorities.

For LCEPs, the active engagement of the local authority Education Department (or equivalent service that links with and supports schools) appeared to be a critical factor for success: ensuring activities met schools' needs; providing a gateway for communication with schools both digitally and in person at, for example, headteacher and subject specialists' meetings; and bestowing legitimacy, particularly to LCEPs led by the cultural sector. In the final evaluation report, one LCEP Coordinator reflected on the value of partnering with the borough's Learning Partnership:

*'Having a vehicle to connect with 95% of [borough] schools is absolute gold dust and the team have been very generous with inviting me to cluster meetings, and headteacher meetings to share information with almost 70 headteachers – numbers I would never have reached, this soon, alone.'*

During the initial 12-18 months of operation, many partnerships talked about the value of officer and departmental directors' support within local authorities. In the final evaluation, there were increasing references to support from councillors. Coordinators of 11 by 11 in Islington, for example, identified the importance of buy-in from senior council leadership, with the previous and current arts portfolio holders chairing partnership meetings and holding 'senior level, relationship-building meetings with cultural organisations and council stakeholders.'

## Vignette 2 - Political Support – ELEVATE Education: Lambeth's LCEP

In Lambeth, the convening power and influence of councillors was highlighted. Following local elections in May 2022, the new Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Leisure and Sport, endorsed and offered support to the LCEP. In September, for example, he requested an update on Black History Month and ELEVATE's Cultural Education Manager was able to provide details of the planned move towards a year-round programme of activity that had been shared with teachers at a briefing, Beyond Black History Month, jointly hosted by ELEVATE and the Brixton Project. The Councillor replied the same day, brokering a meeting between ELEVATE and the Windrush Foundation to support the programme. He also acts as an advocate for the LCEP within the Council (for example, supporting the expansion of the ELEVATE team), and provides recognition and status via his social media.

## 4.3 Staffing

All Challenge partnerships used part of the funding to support staffing; either appointing new staff or contributing to the cost of existing staff. In the LCEPs, the Challenge funding was invariably used to lever match funding from the local authority for these posts. These roles ranged from two-days per week to full-time; feedback suggested that LCEP Coordinators struggled to manage strategic partnership development, communications and delivery in two-days per week (particularly in the early stages of development). In theory, this could be alleviated by distributing the workload across the partnership but, in practice, once a paid post was created, the tendency appeared to be for partners to look to this individual to take on all coordination and delivery tasks. In many cases, the place-based partnership developed as a result of the dedication of a small number of individuals. The external evaluators<sup>19</sup> of Haringey Creates noted 'the role of unpaid labour, so often pivotal in setting up arts activities and initiatives, and their reliance on one or two motivated and determined individuals'. It is perhaps unsurprising that once funding is secured for a post, this 'unpaid labour' is happy to hand over responsibility and focus on their paid role.

## 4.4 Theory of Change

All Challenge partnerships were required to develop a Theory of Change in the early stages of the initiative. Comments from the partners' survey and quarterly monitoring highlighted the value of working collectively on a Theory of Change as a way of developing a shared understanding of the vision and the changes required to reach that vision. The process also served to: surface differences in organisational objectives, approach, language and assumptions around the table; and help partnerships prioritise their work.

There was considerable overlap between the outcomes in the ToCs suggesting that common challenges, barriers, gaps and objectives had been identified across Challenge partnerships. It is evident that having a ToC helped partners coalesce around a shared vision which supports communication, fundraising, advocacy and evaluation.

It may seem axiomatic, but it is important to stress that a ToC outlines the changes (outcomes) required to reach the desired goal and also sets out the partners' theory as to how the planned activities will bring about those outcomes. Most often, this is articulated as 'mechanisms of change' and/or 'assumptions.' These mechanisms can be based on experience and evidence of prior work; relevant research and evaluation findings from others; or an informed hypothesis. As with all aspects of the ToC, it is important to use evaluation data to assess the efficacy of these mechanisms. Several partnerships reviewed their ToC during the lifetime of their Challenge programme, to reflect learning and changing circumstances.

<sup>19</sup> Chrissie Tiller and Sara Clifford

## Vignette 3 - Reviewing a Theory of Change – Waltham Forest CEP

Waltham Forest CEP was initially funded for two years through Challenge London but successfully applied for a third year of investment. To help clarify the objectives for the third year, the CEP reviewed and revised the ToC with support from a member of the Challenge London team. This enabled the CEP to amend and augment the ToC to reflect what had been achieved and learnt in the first two years. For example, new actions and outputs, such as a 'dedicated website and fortnightly updates', that had not been envisaged at the outset, were added. As reported in the CEP's end of year 3 report, another significant change was:

*'Overall, a deeper focus was given to sustainability. This is clear in the changes to the overall vision which looks more at the futures of young people in Waltham Forest, considering how the borough's arts offering will help to build cultural capital and improve their well-being and life chances.'*

Together with an eye on sustainability, this shift marks a change of circumstance in the borough as the first ToC was developed during the Waltham Forest London Borough of Culture, when funding was available for arts programmes and the emphasis was on extending opportunities and engagement of young people in cultural activities. The shift also reflects a change in national discourse as Ofsted's emphasis on cultural capital has filtered through and Covid-19 has highlighted the need to support young people's wellbeing.

A ToC can also be used as a way of gathering and depicting learning from a programme. The external evaluators<sup>20</sup> of Making Sense<sup>21</sup>, for example, concluded:

*'There is a need now to state more clearly what Making Sense is intended to achieve in practical terms, and what measures could be used to show with transparency whether those goals have been achieved, how, and for whom - in other words, a Theory of Change and evaluative framework.'*

The evaluators offered an 'emerging Theory of Change' and 'possible measures of success' relating to scale, perceptions and behaviour, and educational outcomes. This highlights an area that wasn't always fully developed by partnerships. Once a ToC has been developed, it is necessary to prioritise the proposed activity and translate this into a costed action plan with an accompanying evaluation framework containing indicators of success.

## 4.5 Timeframe

Drawing on experiences from the first iteration of Challenge and other related work, A New Direction advised applicants to allow sufficient time to establish the partnership. Even so, the majority of partnerships needed to extend their set-up time and delay some of their milestones. In many cases, delays were attributable to the time taken to appoint staff, with local authority systems sometimes slowing down recruitment processes. Evidence suggests that the initial phase of partnership negotiation and development generally takes longer than anticipated but that investing time at this stage can reap dividends later. As a consequence, for the third round of investments, A New Direction embedded a two-month set-up period into funding agreements.

Lockdowns, school closures and staff furlough arising from Covid-19 disrupted planned activities and timeframes, and A New Direction responded by extending the end-date of investments, as required.

## 4.6 Key learning and recommendations about partnership development

- Invest time in the preparatory phases of negotiating and establishing the partnership; initial partnership set-up and development will generally take longer than imagined.
- Ensure the 'right' people are around the table to deliver the current priorities including local authority representatives and people with sufficient authority to make change happen. The 'right' partners will change over time.
- Adopt a partnership agreement that clarifies roles and responsibilities.
- Agree and articulate a shared vision, co-created through developing a Theory of Change (or similar) by cross-sector partners. Set out the desired change (based on evidence) and how this change will be brought about. Review the ToC periodically in response to changing local and national circumstances.
- Develop a costed strategic plan that reflects the ToC and maps priorities over 3-5 years.
- Be realistic about what can be achieved within the timescale and personnel capacity.
- Base decisions – about priorities, objectives, activities etc. – on evidence, including consultation with young people.
- Consider establishing Task and Finish groups to distribute leadership and increase efficiency.
- Articulate clear benefits for the partners, including how creativity and cultural learning can support the aims of sectors, organisations and council departments outside culture and education, such as health, regeneration and employment.
- Build in time to reflect for staff, steering groups and delivery partners.

<sup>20</sup> Shared Intelligence

<sup>21</sup> Making Sense, led by South London Gallery and Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts was a proof-of-concept programme involving three secondary schools in Southwark with a mission to support and encourage teachers and students to use cultural education to explore issues of racism, decolonisation and other structural inequalities.

# 5

## Partnerships: delivering

To deliver a variety of needs-based provision, diversifying and increasing engagement of young people



### 5.1 Quality assurance: Artsmark and Arts Award

The majority of Challenge partnerships referred to 'high quality cultural experiences' but few outlined how 'high quality' was judged. Promoting and increasing schools' engagement with Artsmark was an original requirement for Challenge LCEPs and was used as an indicator of high quality for school-based provision. (Increases in Artsmark registrations and Arts Awards were also listed as indicators of success in the programme-level evaluation plan). Prior to Covid-19, as noted in the Challenge London interim evaluation, there was some ambivalence in schools about Artsmark; principal barriers included the time commitment required, the cost and the perceived benefits of the Award. For example, one partnership reported a teacher explaining:

*'The school engages often with outside agencies for workshops, gallery visits, CPD, partnerships etc. and it has been felt that Artsmark, although a valuable award, would not create more than we already do, but involve extra logistics/paperwork which would limit the amount of time that could be spent on the extra opportunities already in place.'*

It should be stressed that many schools did find Artsmark a valuable vehicle for increasing and embedding cultural learning and uptake has increased in some Challenge boroughs. However, during the pandemic, schools had other priorities, and, in recognition, A New Direction stepped back from Artsmark targets for Challenge partnerships. In effect, this meant it was only the strand 1 partnerships that had sufficient time prior to Covid to adequately promote Artsmark with schools.

To help promote Artsmark, Waltham Forest CEP offered a £500 grant to schools. However, following Covid-19, the CEP Coordinator reported that despite this grant and support with the application process, some schools that had started an application were unable to continue as they needed to prioritise core subjects. Even so, there was a significant increase in the number of active Artsmark schools in the borough across the investment period indicating the success of the strategy adopted. Barking and Dagenham and Wandsworth also made concerted efforts to promote and support Artsmark and also saw uplifts in the number of active schools. (See Figure 5).

Challenge partnerships were also asked to 'consider opportunities to support accreditation for young people through Arts Award' and there were a number of Arts Award initiatives developed. Waltham Forest CEP, for example, offered Arts Award Discover and Bronze programmes in summer 2019 as part of London Borough of Culture 2019. Training was offered to schools and cultural organisations and the Discover at Home programme was promoted to parents through the School Holiday scheme. A total of 56 young people achieved Arts Award. Feedback from the young people and parents was positive although some parents requested more guidance. One suggested 'a central point for advice and include a work-flow of all courses i.e. a pathway: bronze-silver-gold.' A further 69 young people achieved Arts Award in summer 2020, including a small cohort who progressed to Explore and Silver from 2019. It was in Barking and Dagenham, however, that significant numbers of children in the borough achieved an Arts Award through the Transition Programme described in Vignette 8.

Strand	Challenge London Borough	Active Artsmark Schools Sept 2019	Active Artsmark schools Nov 2022	Change in active schools 2019-2022	Total awarded schools Sept 2019	Total awarded schools Nov 2022
1	Barking and Dagenham	30	36	+6	11	4
	Camden	29	30	+1	6	6
	Croydon	23	24	+1	10	2
	Waltham Forest	22	33	+11	3	4
	Wandsworth	22	27	+5	7	5
	Hammersmith & Fulham	11	11	-	3	1
2	Barnet	17	19	+2	11	2
	Islington	17	17	-	4	1
	Lambeth	26	20	-6	9	3
3	Haringey	17	19	+2	9	2
	Bexley	16	13	-3	7	2
	Brent	16	26	+10	7	3
	Ealing	17	16	-1	4	5
	Southwark	32	29	-3	7	7

Figure 5: Challenge London Borough

Other mechanisms of assuring quality cited by partnerships included: drawing on the expertise of partnership/partner staff; observation at events; 'open and honest reflection amongst partners about strengths and weaknesses of projects'; evaluation feedback from participants including surveys, mood and comment boards.

## 5.2 Young people at the heart of the work

To ensure activities responded to needs, partnerships adopted a range of mechanisms to listen to and work with young people. These fell into two models: youth consultation, and youth panels. Examples included:

- Bexley LCEP commissioned Sound Connections to undertake a youth consultation which gathered 1,002 responses. The survey explored the role of culture in young people's lives, barriers to engagement and what they wanted to see in the future. The findings fed into the CEP's ToC, strategy and delivery plan.
- Haringey LCEP's Big Creative Conversation engaged 188 young people across 10 settings including schools, alternative provision and SEND provision.
- Working across all three strands of ELEVATE (including the LCEP), the ELEVATORS, a youth advisory board, helped shape programmes, advised on grants and ensured provision best served Lambeth's young people.
- Brent LCEP had a strong youth-led focus from the outset and the Coordinator established a Youth Advisory Board within the first few months of operation.

(See Section 8.3 for further discussion of youth-led initiatives.)

### Challenges

Despite stated commitments to youth voice and leadership, challenges remained for the majority of partnerships including:

- Several partnerships worked with youth panels but as one Coordinator reported, they, 'struggled with meaningful engagement of young people in the steering group'.
- Ensuring diverse representation of youth voices. To overcome this, Wandsworth LCEP, for example, worked with Children's Services to develop support mechanisms for looked after young people, including money for travel and expenses, and youth worker support.
- Lack of capacity or funds to act on young people's ideas.
- Ensuring young people in a youth panel remained representative of young people in the area. To overcome this and provide a progression route for young people, Croydon LCEP is developing a new Young Ambassadors group, linked to secondary schools, which will feed their views into the established Young Leaders.
- In final evaluations, a small number of partnerships recognised that although they had a stated commitment to youth voice, in reality, young people were invited to feed back on what was offered rather than to inform provision.

- Gathering young people's views when the partnership did not have direct contact with young people. For example, ELEVATE in Lambeth commissioned a Culture Check<sup>22</sup> survey to address a gap in their intelligence as the LCEP Coordinator explained:

*'The main challenge for our LCEP [in relation to youth voice] for young people under 18 is that we don't often work with them directly. As a council-led LCEP, we are more dependent on cultural partners and educators to capture the feedback of this age range, many of whom may not have the processes in place or are lacking the capacity to do so. This indirect sourcing of information means that we have often not had a significant range of youth perspectives about our programmes.'*

### 5.3 Diversifying and increasing engagement: a move from equality to equity

Several Challenge partnerships identified the need for targeted work from the outset. For some this was linked to geographic areas of low arts engagement and/or high deprivation such as Wandsworth LCEP; for others, the focus was particular cohorts of under-served young people such as London Bubble's programme with young people linked to the criminal justice system.

During the four years of Challenge London, there was a noticeable shift in policy and strategy from equality to equity, and, in some cases, social justice. For example, in the final evaluation report, Barking and Dagenham LCEP, stated, 'Those settings and young people who need the support the most will be the focus and the priority for the next 5-year strategy.' Through cross-departmental relationships within the local authority, the LCEP identified 'cohorts of young people that need targeted intervention: SEND young people, young people at risk of exclusion, young people severely affected by wellbeing needs and the continuing race and social justice agenda.' In many ways this shift mirrors that in national discourse in education and society more generally, sparked by the inequalities highlighted through the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter and Me Too movements.

Several partnerships combined elements of a universal offer to schools with targeted work such as Islington's 11 by 11 school-wide enrichment programme that is augmented, through Challenge London investment, with specific work with Children in Need and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

### Challenges

Local Cultural Education Partnerships were conceived around a primary engagement with statutory education and working with schools was seen by Challenge LCEPs as a mechanism to reach the majority of young people in a borough. One challenge reported by the majority of LCEPs was that despite success in engaging the majority of schools, there remained a stubborn minority of disengaged schools, thus thwarting ambitions for entitlement for young people. Coordinators in two long-standing LCEPs estimated this to be 20% of schools. In the final interview, the Coordinator of a third LCEP expanded on this issue and the steps being taken to address this. At the end of the Challenge London funding period, ELEVATE in Lambeth was engaging approximately two-thirds of schools (with higher rates of engagement amongst primary schools). The LCEP was planning to use the findings from the Culture Check survey to understand the barriers for schools and what might encourage their engagement. LCEP staff noted that the first schools' briefing (Beyond Black History Month) had drawn in teachers from new schools and alternative 'routes in' were planned through, for example, a focus on STEAM. The LCEP also planned to provide cultural partners with the list of unengaged schools, together with the findings from Culture Check, to enlist their support in extending engagement.

School engagement was the most common challenge raised in the July 2022 Challenge London reflection session. In response, A New Direction planned the November Challenge meet-up around this theme with partnerships identifying the challenges in engaging their local schools, reflecting on the impacts of low engagement and working collectively to identify strategies to overcome the challenges presented. A New Direction's Artsmark lead also presented the framework as a tool for consistent high quality schools' engagement. Whilst progress has been made, school engagement continues to be a challenge for equitable partnership development with two of the four Powerful Partnerships Research Projects choosing to focus on this area. A New Direction will share their action research findings in spring 2023.

This focus on schools was in itself seen as an issue by some of the Challenge partnerships, which recognised that many disadvantaged, vulnerable and/or under-served young people are outside the formal school system. As outlined above, targeted work often prioritised such groups, be that home educated young people, those excluded from school or those not in education, employment or training. In many cases, the youth sector has closer links with marginalised young people and would be a valuable partner for targeted work. Partnerships have variously built links with Children's Services, Youth Offending Services, health providers or youth employment programmes as appropriate but more could be done to engage partners beyond formal education.

<sup>22</sup> Commissioned by the LCEP from We Rise Brixton in partnership with IPSOS and undertaken by 15 Year 12 students, the survey was completed by 100 young people, 68 parents, 21 schools and 28 cultural organisations.

## 5.4 Evaluation, reflection and review

There is strong evidence that partnerships reflected on infrastructure, modes of operation and communication and made adjustments to increase relevance and effectiveness. Across the four years, partnerships also improved their evaluation practices, for example introducing digital tools such as Mentimeter<sup>23</sup> as a response to moving activities online during the pandemic; and sharing evaluation insights with partners. The utility of evaluation methods and tools has also improved. One LCEP, for example, initially gathered feedback from participants at CPD about the quality of the session. In later years, simply by adding a question about other training needs, the LCEP was able to build a responsive CPD programme. However, the following quote from an LCEP typifies the position of the majority of partnerships, 'There are gaps in our evaluation methodology, which does mean that we don't have the fullest picture of our impact.' Challenges for LCEPs in particular included:

- The difficulty of measuring the impact of strategic work such as advice and brokering as the LCEP may not get to hear about the outcomes.
- Capacity within the LCEP to undertake evaluation, especially longitudinal work to explore the impact of interventions such as CPD.
- Being reliant on delivery partners to gather, collate and potentially analyse evaluation data on outcomes for young people; these partners may not have the capacity or skills to undertake this work.

Various interventions were made by A New Direction and the Challenge evaluator to address expressed needs and observed gaps in evaluation. This included practice sharing in Challenge meet-ups and one-to-one support meetings. Having reviewed the quarterly monitoring and interim evaluation reports in summer 2021, the evaluator circulated Notes on Evaluation 'to share a few pointers about how we can gather useful data and make the most of the data we have.' This highlighted the need for: evaluation plans with objectives and indicators of success linked to the ToC; follow-up from CPD to establish if participants had taken action as a result of the CPD and if not, why not; and baselines to measure change against. There was also guidance about analysing data and reporting findings.

## 5.5 Learning and recommendations on partnership delivery

- Adopt an asset-based approach; listen and learn about what already exists and how to build on this.
- Young people are not a homogeneous group. Listen to the views and ideas of a diverse range of young people, especially hidden voices; work with young people on how to take their ideas forward.
- Young people and schools/teachers need to be positioned as co-creators rather than consumers.
- Ensure the cultural learning offer is responding to what young people need and can't currently access rather than being framed by what is available from existing partners.
- Capitalise on local cultural organisations and practitioners. They may be more able to respond to schools' needs and build lasting relationships.
- The majority of schools want lasting partnerships rather than one-off projects.
- Discuss what success looks like for different stakeholders.
- Research provision in neighbouring areas and signpost rather than duplicate if appropriate.
- Ensure activity programmes with young people and the adults who work with them have clear objectives that link to the ToC.
- Discuss and embed evaluation from the outset. Keep evaluation plans realistic for the available capacity. Ensure that evaluation evidences what outcomes have been achieved and also how and why these outcomes have been achieved, or not.
- Impact accrues over time; consider how to gather evidence of impact, remembering that this can be both positive and negative.
- The current Ofsted Framework provides a rationale and legitimacy for cultural learning, including the development of cultural capital.

<sup>23</sup> A cloud-based evaluation tool that allows the user to engage with participants in real time.



# 6

## Partnerships: making a difference

To establish effective and sustainable cultural education partnership infrastructure across London supporting young peoples' creative freedom

### 6.1 New infrastructure

All Challenge London investments supported the establishment of new partnership infrastructure including the creation of new LCEPs in Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Lambeth and Waltham Forest. All the partnerships brought together a range of cross-sector partners in steering groups and also established additional networks and sub-groups for professional development, peer support, advocacy and communication. Barnet LCEP for example, brought together 14 partners on the steering group, had a membership of over 100 education and cultural professionals who received information and attended events, had over 500 followers on Twitter, and a group of 14 Young Advocates. Examples of other networks included:

- A network of Ealing Arts Leads (NEAL) comprising 60 primary and secondary teachers from 39 schools.
- Roundtable meetings in Islington, regularly attended by approximately 50-60 of the 89 cultural partners signed up for the 11 by 11 enrichment programme.

### Vignette 4 - Teacher networks – Creative Wandsworth

In Wandsworth, primary subject leader networks existed for English, science, maths and SEND but not for the arts. The LCEP therefore partnered with the School Improvement Team to establish a Primary Creative Subject Leaders Network in 2021. Meetings are held half-termly, online and provide opportunities for networking and inputs from local arts organisations. Feedback from one teacher explained the value of such new infrastructure for teachers' professional development and support, and also for the school and its pupils.

*'It can be very isolating being the creative lead without resources or guidance, so it is great to be able to connect with others in the same position and share ideas, especially locally. I've found the meetings really informative and have discovered some wonderful opportunities for my school.'*

Reflections from Lambeth demonstrate that it is not only the creation of new infrastructure that is important but also, the nature of that infrastructure and how it is perceived. As the Coordinator reported, 'in conversations, ELEVATE is being seen as strategic and long-term rather than a time-limited funder[...] relationships are less transactional and more communal.'

It is not always necessary or beneficial to create new infrastructure but rather to connect with and between existing infrastructure. The newly created Bexley LCEP, for example, initially set up a steering group but recognised an element of duplication with the existing Bexley Culture Board so opted to co-chair the Board with the LCEP being a conduit for the partners' work with young people. Several council-led LCEPs embedded the cultural learning agenda across departments, aligning with local priorities and gathering intelligence to inform LCEP priorities. In Barking and Dagenham, for example, the LCEP was represented on the following internal groups:

- Year 6-7 Transition Working Group
- Healthy Schools Working Group
- Holiday Activities and Food programme Steering Group
- Social Emotional and Mental Health Working Group
- Film Skills Steering Group
- Obesity Action Plan Group
- North East London Mental Health in Schools Steering Group

Infrastructure was not always limited by geographic boundaries. RSA's Cities of Learning, for example, supported the development of new connections within the boroughs engaged in the competition process but also between those boroughs, and between those boroughs and the Cities of Learning national pilots. Digital infrastructure was also created with the interactive Making Sense digital platform (hosted by South London Gallery)<sup>24</sup>, for example, situating the work of participating schools, youth-led collectives and artists within wider and evolving discussions around inclusion and anti-racism (see Figure 6 below).

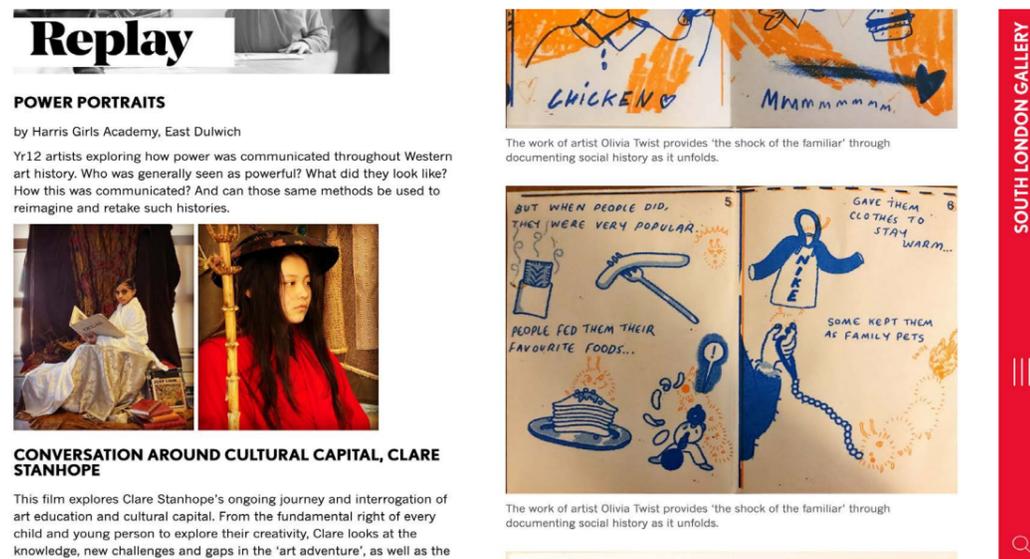


Figure 6 - Making Sense digital platform

Tech-enabled infrastructure was also evident. One LCEP Coordinator, for example described:

*'The change I've seen in Waltham Forest is teachers from different schools talking to each other and asking for advice and sharing their best practice. They now have a WhatsApp group and they quite often say, 'oh it's Book Day, what are we going to do?' and other people will send their ideas and it's just so nice to see that the networking has paid off and has worked.'*

It is worth noting that evidence suggested that digital infrastructure is effective at sustaining relationships but less effective at initiating new relationships.

Infrastructure does not have to be unwieldy or permanent, indeed, as discussed in 4.1, networks can become moribund if not renewed or given a clear purpose. Much of the infrastructure has been built in response to need. Camden Spark's Buddying & Creative Conversations, for example, was a response to the isolation being reported by teachers and artists (see Vignette 16). One of the LCEP's Coordinators described how they 'receive consistent feedback that the programme provides a space that doesn't otherwise exist. It's not school, it's not a cultural venue, it's not transactional and it is open-ended in where you can take it.'

## 6.2 Benefits of partnership working

*'This idea that everything is slightly more possible when people come together.'* (LCEP external evaluator).

In the partners' survey (see Figure 7), respondents unanimously agreed that the benefits of partnership working outweighed the cost (such as time). There was also a strong sense that the partnership created joint and added value, with 88% agreeing that they were achieving outcomes together that couldn't be achieved by any one single organisation. A similar proportion also agreed that their own organisation was benefiting from new connections, conversations and practices, through being part of the partnership.

24 <https://www.southlondongallery.org/digital-platform-making-sense/>

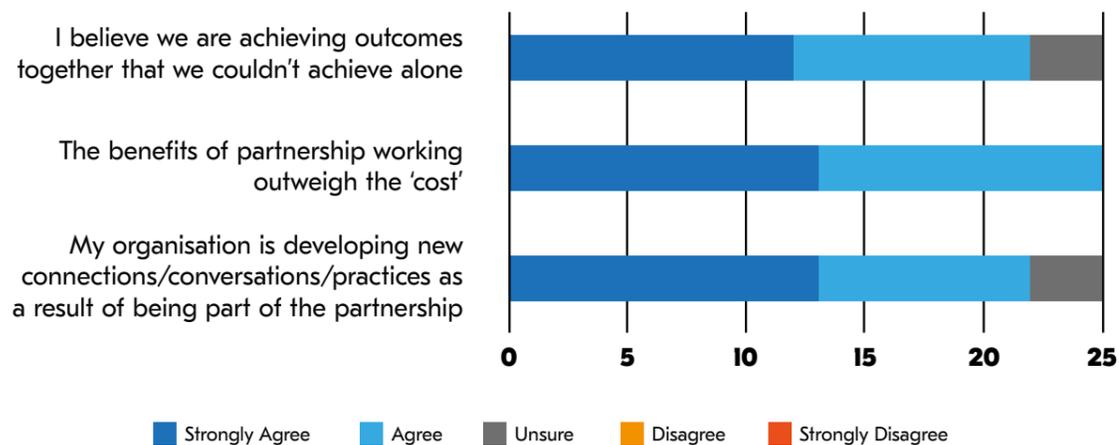


Figure 7: Partnership outcomes (25 responses)

Outcomes identified by Challenge London lead partners and their stakeholders fell into the following categories:

- **Mutual benefits through collaboration.** In Creative Voices (one of the three strands in the Creating Justice programme), for example, Peer Navigators from Youth Ink worked alongside London Bubble facilitators and brought lived experience of engaging with the Youth Offending Service (YOS), modelled positive social interaction and provided a reminder to participating young people that they have choices.<sup>25</sup> In return, the Peer Navigators gained experience of working with young people. Although the project was short-term, the partnership nature of it meant that London Bubble could pass information on to those working longer-term with individual young people. The evaluation also found that young people who engaged in Creating Justice programmes were more likely to engage in other activity on offer from YOS.
- **Success breeding success.** In Lambeth, for example, the LCEP used evidence of existing, beneficial partnership working to make a strong case for accessing funding through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund<sup>26</sup>.
- **Increasing the relevance of the cultural sector's provision for, and partnerships with, schools.**

*'It helped me to better understand what schools need from partners, and where we can be useful in supplementing teaching work rather than duplicating.'* (LCEP cultural partner)

<sup>25</sup> Mendez Sayer, E and Reid, S (2021) The Creating Justice programme: final evaluation report. <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/research/challenge-london-end-of-programme-reports>

<sup>26</sup> The Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) provides funding to local authorities in England to help reduce the spread of coronavirus and support local public health.

- **Streamlining the cultural sector's offer to schools, creating benefits for cultural organisations, schools and young people.**

*'I think in some ways seeing the focus of other organisations has enabled us to firm up on our offer and see the gaps in provision, so it doesn't conflict with the offer of other organisations locally.'* (LCEP cultural partner)

- **A unified voice for advocacy.** For example, in Barnet, LCEP partner Middlesex University took the lead in drafting a five-year Cultural Education Strategy but consulted widely with stakeholders across the LCEP, thus giving greater weight to the case made in the strategy for support from the local authority and others.

- **A coordinated approach to funding.**

*'I really think the value of Haringey Creates is the sign posting, networking, creating understanding between sectors, best practice sharing and skills development – as well, of course, as bringing more funding into the borough.'* (Cultural partner)

- **Sharing resources.** For example, teachers shared best practice and resources via virtual and face-to-face networks, and schools provided space for cultural organisations.

- **Strength in numbers; increasing confidence and ambition.**

*'We've just put in a big bid to the Youth Endowment Fund to look at how cultural learning can be used to support violence reduction. I don't know how far we'll get with that but it's a wonderful ambition to have.'* (LCEP, lead partner)

- **Working collaboratively to effect change.**

*'One of the biggest changes has been [...] teachers, cultural institutions and students collectively coming to the recognition that you can challenge prevailing ways of diversifying the curriculum. You need to do it together – it's a rich, untapped seam in so many ways, and that kind of joint working is like we're waking up collectively together.'* (Lead partner)

- **New collaborations that extend beyond initial programmes or brokering.**

*'A change that I've seen is a real cross-collaboration across the borough and how people are working with different organisations, and schools are connecting with different artists.'* (LCEP Coordinator)

## 6.3 Change in stakeholder organisations

Several of the benefits outlined above have contributed to change in stakeholder organisations. There is extensive evidence of cultural organisations and individual practitioners modifying the way they work with schools: in some cases, a move towards co-creation, and in others, ensuring the offer responds to what schools need. In part this has occurred organically as networks bring cultural partners and educational professionals together but has also resulted from structured briefings and CPD, and one-to-one advice from LCEP personnel around shaping offers to meet schools' needs.

In some cases, Challenge partnerships have used their influence to effect change at scale. In Islington, for example, a safeguarding policy was introduced for 11 by 11 delivery. Adoption of the policy was a pre-requisite for the 89 cultural delivery partners and the council offered free training and certification, thus providing reassurance to schools. Benefits spread beyond 11 by 11 activity as several cultural partners also used this to develop their own organisational safeguarding policy.

An indicator of success in a number of the local authority based LCEPs has been the partnership and its work being embedded in new council strategies, marking a change for the local authority that secures the future of the LCEP. For example, Camden's Education Strategy until 2030 was published in January 2022 and contains references to culture and creativity throughout, with Camden Spark included as a case study under Music and the arts in Camden Schools. In addition, the aim of place-based collaboration features strongly<sup>27</sup>.

Figure 8: WAF Young Reviewers 2021. Link to 2022 Young Reviewers:

<https://www.wandsworthfringe.com/news-and-opportunities/WAF-Young-Reviewers-2022>

27 <https://camdeneducationstrategy.commonplace.is/overview>

Similarly, in Ealing, the Council Plan 2022-26 refers to the LCEP, with the 2022-2023 delivery plan outlining commitments to the three youth collectives, an 'Arts Charter', a creative careers toolkit and a creative CPD programme for teachers.<sup>28</sup>

A fairer start - 4 year commitments	22/23 deliverables
<p>FS1: Launch "Ealing: It Takes a Town", bringing the entire borough together and build up towards ensuring every child from whatever background, by the time they have left education has had the opportunity to expand their horizons and experience new social, cultural, and learning opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a 'Family Hub model' of delivery aimed at providing a central access point for integrated services, ensuring that families know where to get help, and that staff and volunteers are trained to respond sensitively and effectively to families' needs. As part of this we will pilot a one-stop shop approach in one of the children's centres in year 1</li> <li>Connect children and their families to empowering and enriching opportunities led by the community and volunteers. We will work with residents to coproduce a community led plan in year 1</li> <li>Provide collaborative, diverse and inclusive music making opportunities for all children and young people through Ealing Music Service to get more children involved in Ealing Music Festival and improve the demographics of participation, especially children with disabilities and underserved groups</li> <li>Provide opportunities for primary age pupils in Northolt to experience a wide range of cultural, sporting, arts and careers activities through the Children's University, aiming to develop their skills and grow their aspirations for the future</li> <li>Establish Youth Collectives in three towns of Ealing (Greenford, Northolt and Acton) to increase opportunities for young people to lead on developing and shaping arts and culture provision in their local area.</li> <li>Develop a 'Careers in the Arts' toolkit to raise awareness of the arts as a viable career option, increase the visibility of career pathways and work towards creating a diverse workforce reflective of the local demographic</li> <li>Create an 'Arts Charter', developed by the Cultural Education Partnership, to show a commitment from Ealing schools to the creative experiences for every child.</li> <li>Create an enrichment programme for teachers to increase confidence in delivery and opportunities for students to experience a broad range of creative activities early in life to cultivate a life-long love for the arts</li> </ul>

Figure 9: Ealing Council Plan: 2022-23 Delivery Plan

There were also examples of the broader adoption of creative and collaborative practices in stakeholders as a result of Challenge partnerships. London Bubble, for example, reported an increase in creative working with Southwark Early Help Service and commissions from the council to deliver creative training and lead creative consultations with communities on policy and social issues. And in Haringey, an LCEP partner from the Creative Enterprise Zone reflected on shifting perceptions about how best to work with schools:

*'It's often easy to think that schools have enough on their plate and can't handle any more but I am learning that they are excited by new things and want the best for their students in terms of access to experiences and opportunities. I have also learned that they are brilliant at ideas and generating content. Things should not be given to them but created in collaboration from the outset.'*

28 [https://www.ealing.gov.uk/downloads/download/233/council\\_plan](https://www.ealing.gov.uk/downloads/download/233/council_plan)

## 6.4 Sustainability

An aim of Challenge London was to establish sustainable cultural education partnership infrastructure. (It is important to note that the Challenge London Legacy Funding outlined in 1.2 is being utilised by several LCEPs to secure a sustainable future). As outlined in 6.1 above, the infrastructure ranged from pan-London partnership meet-ups facilitated by A New Direction, to cross-sector borough partnerships, teacher networks and digital platforms. Through the four years of the programme, notions of sustainability shifted. Perhaps influenced by Covid-19, the move to working online and the reassessment of priorities this triggered, partners were increasingly open to debating what needed to be sustained to continue to bring about positive change for young people. The majority of lead partners still believed that a paid post was essential to facilitate and maintain the health and benefits of the infrastructure and many have been successful in securing this. The time commitment of future roles varies, however and in several cases, LCEP coordination is combined with other responsibilities, often related to programmes initiated by the LCEP. It will be interesting to see what level of staffing is required to maintain the momentum, commitment and infrastructure that has been developed through Challenge London.

Infrastructure is part of the legacy of Challenge partnerships but they have also been mindful of focusing on interventions that have sustainable outcomes for young people and settings, such as CPD, resources on creative careers and advocacy with school governors and senior leaders. For the strand 2 thematic Challenge programmes, the investment aimed to support transferable models as the legacy. The publication of the external evaluation of Creating Justice fulfilled this aim by sharing findings and recommendations with the sector.

Not all the Challenge partnerships have resulted in sustainable infrastructure or outcomes. Two of the LCEPs foundered at the end of Challenge funding, as did one of the thematic programmes. Covid-19 definitely had a negative impact on these partnerships although that was true across the entire Challenge programme. Both the LCEPs were perhaps over-reliant on an individual person or organisation and struggled to spread ownership and leadership more widely. It is interesting to note that such concerns were raised during decision meetings with the Challenge London Group but the programmes had strategic and geographic value for A New Direction and were supported. This highlights the multiple variables under consideration when decisions were (and are) made.

## 6.5 Key learning and recommendations on partnership sustainability

- Partnerships are not static, they evolve in response to changing circumstances, priorities and personnel. Review, renew and amend ToCs, strategies, steering groups, priorities and partners accordingly.
- It may not be possible or necessary to maintain 'business as usual' for a partnership. Prioritise the roles and activities that meet a current need and where the partnership is offering a unique, local response.
- Prioritise activity that has sustainable outcomes.
- Consider the legacy of the partnership's work (legacy takes time as it often involves changes in systems). What has been achieved together that could not have been achieved by one partner alone?

# 7



## Enablers and inhibitors of partnership development, delivery and sustainability

### 7.1 Enablers

Lead partners and staff at A New Direction identified the key factors that helped or hindered partnership development, delivery and sustainability. These are summarised in Figure 10.

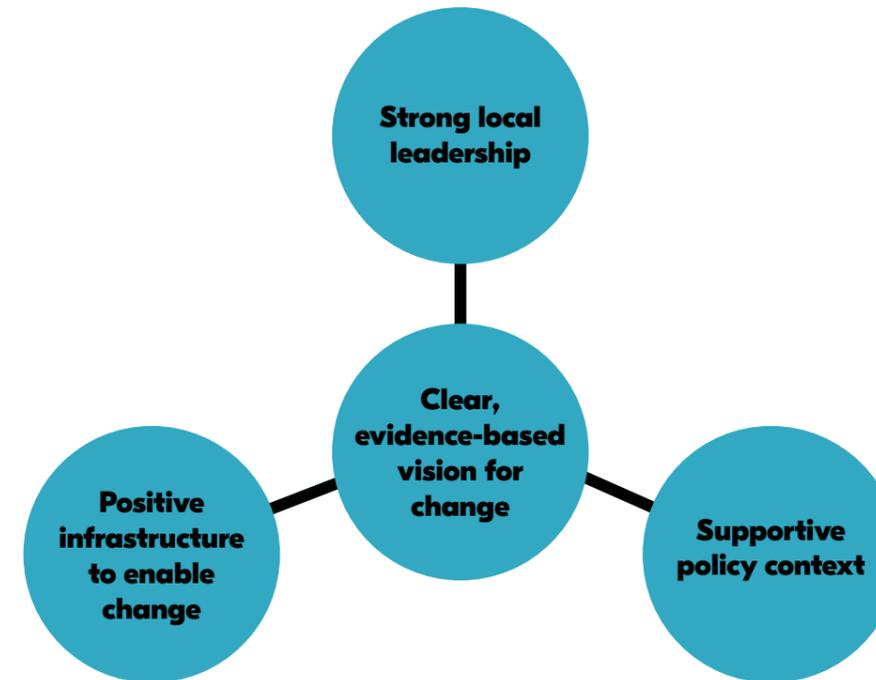


Figure 10: Place-based partnership enablers

- Strong and supported local leadership.
- An initial passion and drive that is harnessed and articulated as a vision that people can coalesce around.
- A partnership convening meetings and brokering relationships.
- Linking to local authority and other key stakeholder strategic aims.
- Ongoing commitment of the local authority including investment in coordination.
- Building strategic partnerships across the local authority through shared priorities; thus, embedding creativity and cultural learning; and accessing additional funding streams.
- Meeting a need. For example, facilitating conversation and partnership work in an area where provision has formerly been fragmented.
- Bravery.

## 7.2 Inhibitors

In some cases, LCEPs reported becoming the victim of their own success: their effectiveness as matchmakers resulted in partners increasingly turning to the LCEP for this service rather than making their own approaches. This reduced the LCEPs' capacity for other work and could inhibit sustainability. Another issue reported and observed was pressure (either self-imposed or externally applied) to 'get it right'. This resulted in delays and inaction, with the caution particularly apparent in youth voice work. As one LCEP Coordinator reflected:

*'I got in my own way by trying to plan how to get the 'perfect' group together, representing the borough in all aspects before taking action. Eventually I released just getting people in a space to talk was the most important thing.'*

Other inhibitors included:

- Staff turnover and absence, especially during the pandemic when furlough and role changes in both cultural organisations and schools made it difficult to keep contacts up-to-date.
- Timeframes and complex recruitment and contracting procedures in local authorities impeding agile working.
- Local authority protocols restricting ability to have own social media and other communication channels.
- The need to navigate competing agendas of stakeholders.
- The need to 'chase funding' that diverts attention from core strategic and brokerage roles.
- Getting 'pulled into delivery' via project funds, with the need to evidence outputs and outcomes, rather than focus on organisational strategic aims.
- A minority of hard-to-engage schools.
- Over-reliance on an individual or single organisations.
- Uncertainty over future funding - for example, the end of Bridge funding from Arts Council England stalled progress in LCEPs with an insecure future.
- Isolation of some LCEP Coordinators.
- Over-ambition.



# 8

**Strong cultural  
and creative  
outcomes for  
young people**

## 8.1 Increasing the number and diversity of children and young people taking part in cultural and creative activities

It is impossible to calculate absolute figures for increases in the number and diversity of young people taking part in cultural activities through the Challenge London investments. Partnerships were not asked to monitor and report on the demographics of young participants, but the increasing move towards work designed to engage young people with least access has ensured that a greater diversity of young people have participated in cultural activities. (See Section 5.3 for further details). This work tended to focus on depth rather than breadth and the numbers involved were therefore more limited.

In terms of overall numbers, it is likely that some of the projects brokered by LCEPs would have happened anyway. However, very often, the LCEP brokerage served to spread provision more equitably across a borough, thus engaging young people beyond the 'usual suspect' schools. Partnerships did also generate new activities through Challenge London investment such as Barnet LCEP, which offered 10 micro-grants of £500 per year that engaged 300 young people annually. Other LCEPs combined universal offers (of new provision) with small-scale targeted work. In Lambeth, for example, ELEVATE organised a flash mob in summer 2021 which, at the request of schools, was repeated in 2022 and engaged 3,200 young people across the two events.



Figure 11: Flash Mob – Lambeth ELEVATE <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCYpDu91Qil>

Another approach to increasing opportunities for young people was through an entitlement agenda, often linked to promoting Artsmark or a locally-designed precursor. For example, Hammersmith and Fulham LCEP introduced a Schools Arts Charter which included a commitment to produce a Pupil Experience Guarantee. Seventeen of the borough's 38 primary schools signed up for the Charter, with one headteacher noting, 'this [charter] is a really good example of how schools can develop pupils' cultural capital which is HUGE in the [Ofsted] framework – and you are offering schools a mechanism to demonstrate this.' Having discovered that 90% of schools in the borough had no arts policy, the Coordinator for Ealing LCEP determined to introduce an Arts Charter, based on the Hammersmith and Fulham model.

## 8.2 Outcomes for young people

**To develop young people's knowledge of arts, culture and the creative industries.**

**For young people to develop new skills and capabilities.**

**To increase the number and diversity of children and young people that feel their voice is heard, their opinions valued, and their ideas represented in their local areas.**

Those partnerships that worked directly with young people or successfully gathered evaluation undertaken by delivery partners, reported wide-ranging outcomes, commensurate with the target group and objectives of the programme. Immediate outcomes reported across a number of partnerships and programmes included:

- Self-confidence
- Self-awareness and sense of identity
- Wellbeing
- Enjoyment and wider engagement in learning
- Connecting to others: relationships and teamwork
- Communication skills
- Self-expression
- Creativity
- Resilience
- Problem solving
- Knowledge about pathways into creative careers

Several of these outcomes have the potential for impact in the medium to long-term such as improved problem-solving, resilience and communication skills. In addition, there was evidence that in some instances, young people became more open to trying new things, which could have a longer-term impact, and also of young people being inspired or supported into further education, training or employment in the cultural sector.

### 8.3 Challenge London themes

Challenge partnerships aimed to address the six themes. Examples of approaches taken and the resulting outcomes are presented below.

#### Fairness

All partnerships had outcomes linked to fairness, with the vast majority of visions in Theories of Change linked to equality of access and opportunity. In the original research for Challenge London, this theme focussed primarily on the gap between rich and poor. Whilst this is still a key determinant in young people's opportunities to develop their creative potential, through the duration of the programme, the Challenge partnerships identified and addressed a range of additional factors. Some, such as disability and exclusion from school, were common across partnerships, but others, such as localities or faith groups, were specific for an individual partnership. Through targeted work, partnerships moved closer to their vision and that of the Challenge Programme, of a London where all young people can thrive through developing their creativity.

A further shift in work addressing this theme concerned the use of creativity and cultural learning to address systemic injustices. A focus on anti-racist strategies and decolonising the curriculum gained prominence following the murder of George Floyd in 2020, and informed the aims of Making Sense, a strand 3 Challenge London investment.

## Vignette 5 - Challenging Inequalities: embedded in local authority policies - Islington

In Islington, the council's Fair Futures report led to the initial investment in 11 by 11 as a universal cultural enrichment programme for the borough's schools. In March 2021, the council launched its Challenging Inequalities Strategy that consolidated its position in taking a proactive stance on inequality. The partnership Coordinator explained how this key priority of challenging inequality, racism and injustice, 'is a strong driver and unifier of the partnership as cultural organisations affirm this shared objective.' Islington's new five-year Education Plan sets out plans to address Equality, Diversity and Inclusion priorities, with enrichment a key pillar for addressing the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of young people. The targeted work undertaken with these groups through Challenge London investment has tested and established models of partnership practice (involving 11 by 11, Children in Need teams and cultural partners) that will now be supported with core council funding from the DfE.



## Vignette 6 - Equity, Inclusion and Creativity CPD – Camden Spark

Camden Spark's all-partner event in spring 2021 focused on Equity, Inclusion and Creativity. Contributors included The Black Curriculum<sup>29</sup>; Camden Learning's Anti-Racist Hub talking about their work across Camden Schools, two secondary school teachers describing how this was working in practice in their schools, plus local cultural partner, the Donmar Warehouse, talking about Monuments, a recent youth-led film project exploring everyday racism.<sup>30</sup> The online session had over 60 attendees, the highest recorded number for an all-partner event.

Camden Spark commissioned The Black Curriculum to run five follow-up CPD sessions for a core group of partners looking to develop and embed this work. The sessions were framed around the themes that had emerged from the original event: radical care, creative equity and deep change. One cultural partner reflected on the impact for their organisation and the resulting offer for schools and young people:

*'I have particularly enjoyed the chance to take a deep CPD dive into diversifying the curriculum and supporting Black British History and this course, which I attended through Camden Spark, has had a direct impact on my work and what we offer at the Museum.'*

Moving forward, Camden Spark will co-design a creative project with a group of partner organisations around the three themes, putting these discussions into practice with young people.

## Wellbeing

The role of arts and creativity in supporting wellbeing is widely accepted. A small number of Challenge London proposals included references to supporting wellbeing but this was often implicit rather than explicit. Barnet LCEP identified wellbeing as one of its priority areas from the outset and accordingly established a wellbeing working group.

The pandemic escalated the importance of wellbeing with both physical and mental health adversely affected, particularly for young people. For example, research indicates that one in six children aged five to 16 was identified as having a probable mental health problem in July 2021, a large increase from one in nine in 2017.<sup>31</sup> And 83% of young people with mental health needs agreed that the coronavirus pandemic had made their mental health worse.<sup>32</sup> Several partnerships responded, with Lambeth's LCEP, for example, coordinating a Summer of Wellbeing in 2021, and several LCEPs distributing arts packs to families during lockdowns.



29 The Black Curriculum is a social enterprise founded in 2019 by Lavinya Stennett to address the lack of Black British history in the national curriculum.

30 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dml14Pltbps>

31 <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2021-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey>

32 <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/media/355gyqcd/coronavirus-report-summer-2020-final.pdf>

## Vignette 7 – The Summer of Wellbeing – ELEVATE, Lambeth

In response to needs expressed by school leads in the borough, ELEVATE Education supported The Summer of Wellbeing in 2021. The series of programmes for young people across Lambeth demonstrated the benefits of arts and creativity to support wellbeing and included:

- The Boury Academy Flash Mob, a synchronised dance routine performed by primary and secondary pupils across the borough celebrating dance and wellbeing.
- Poetry Workshops for secondary school pupils led by Abstract Benna, ELEVATOR alumnus and performance poet, culminating in a final sharing event, and a poetry competition for KS2 students on the theme of 'hope'.
- Sharing a Smile, a creative challenge for Wellbeing Ambassadors at primary schools, and nursery pupils, creating boxes of 'smiles', jokes, and 'things to make others feel better'.

Reported outcomes for young people included: access to inspiring arts practitioners, a first for many participants; support for children transitioning from nursery to reception; the chance to meet young people at other schools (online), to share ideas for wellbeing and keeping happy, and to connect with a wider community through the sharing of the 'scroll of smiles' between schools; affirmation and praise from peers, which benefited both the affirmation giver and the affirmation receiver. The programme also brought joy in an otherwise difficult year. In feedback, several young people shared that it 'made me happy', which, as one education partner acknowledged, was particularly important while life was difficult and disconnected.

As a result of the programme, several schools embedded additional long-term mental health support, with mental health leads recognising 'the effectiveness of creativity to support wellbeing.' There was an appetite from young people, schools and cultural partners to repeat the programme. In reviewing the programme, ELEVATE recognised the lack of involvement from SEND schools and determined to have a greater 'focus on CYP with additional challenges to engagement in order to be truly inclusive and collaborative' in the future.

## Vignette 8 - Arts Award Transition Programme – Inspiring Futures

Barking and Dagenham's LCEP, Inspiring Futures, was invited to join the local authority Transition Working Group in 2020. Young people's schooling and social life were severely disrupted as schools closed in national lockdowns. For those in Year 6, this meant a loss of the usual markers and milestones of finishing primary school and preparing for secondary school. Schools were noting increased levels of stress amongst students<sup>33</sup> which the council was keen to address. In response, the LCEP designed a transition project, commissioning local arts organisation Green Shoes Arts to deliver an Arts Award project to support wellbeing during transition to secondary schools. A total of 1,244 Year 7 students across 6 schools gained a Discover Arts Award through the initiative.

The evaluation was overwhelmingly positive, with student feedback in one school indicating that 100% had enjoyed the project and 90% said it made them enjoy coming to school more. It also increased students' confidence and as it involved teamwork, it helped integrate students from different primary schools. The Arts Award accreditation boosted students' sense of achievement and helped to get headteachers on board. In response to demand, the programme was repeated in 2021, expanding to eight schools and involving over 1,600 students, approximately half the Year 7 students in the borough.

Whilst several partnerships engaged with local authority-based health programmes (Healthy Schools, for example, or public health teams in relation to the pandemic), building partnerships with the NHS through CAMHS or social prescribing has been extremely limited through Challenge investment and is an area for development. It is therefore fitting that one of the four research projects supported through the Challenge London Legacy Funding<sup>34</sup> addressed the question: how can co-created arts activities address young people's health and wellbeing?

<sup>33</sup> Between March and June 2020, a period when schools were closed to most pupils, symptoms of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were found to have significantly increased in children and young people aged between 7.5 and 12 years old compared to immediately before the pandemic. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-surveillance-report/7-children-and-young-people#references>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/programmes/challenge-london/challenge-london-legacy-funding>

## Influence and Power

Putting young people at the heart of the work was a pre-requisite for Challenge partnerships and mechanisms used to listen to young people and involve them in partnership development have been discussed in Section 5.2. There was also an objective linked to outcomes for young people, concerning their agency to effect change in an area. Not all partnerships addressed this objective, with one LCEP, for example, explaining that as they had no programming budget, they had to be opportunistic when it came to project funding. They were therefore reluctant to begin a process of co-creation with young people if there was no budget to respond to their ideas. It would be possible however, to include fundraising as part of the work with young people and indeed there are funding opportunities that are only open to young people.

There were, however, several examples of youth-led projects with positive outcomes for young people: Young Leaders running takeover events and a summer showcase at Fairfield Halls in Croydon, for example; and the young people participating in Create London's programme, Talking Planning, who formed a consultancy collective and used their newly acquired knowledge and understanding of the planning system to comment on Design Review Panels funded by private companies. Three examples of initiatives responding to the theme of Influence and power are outlined below.



## Vignette 9 - Embedding youth voice in the borough's cultural organisations – Creative Wandsworth

A key strand of Creative Wandsworth's work was to explore how best to develop youth voice in the arts and cultural sector in the borough. In 2020, the LCEP sent a youth voice survey to cultural organisations and practitioners in the borough and commissioned a Youth Voice consultant to work with the LCEP on a support programme. The survey received 21 responses from 17 organisations. The majority of respondents expressed an interest in further training on how to embed youth voice strategically, youth voice principles, practice and projects, and working with youth boards. In 2021, a pilot project was run with Wandsworth Music which received mentoring and other support to recruit a new Youth Council. This group live-streamed a concert series and subsequently received support to apply to Sound Connections to run a live event. A Creative Youth Summit at the annual Wandsworth Art Fringe is also planned.

Following the evaluation of the pilot, support was provided to a further three organisations and open workshops on youth voice were offered to others in the cultural sector.

## Vignette 10 - Youth Collectives – Ealing Youth Revolution

The LCEP Coordinator in Ealing established a small Youth Advisory Group to advise on a framework for youth voice, and the result was a Youth Collectives pilot project focussing on hyper-local youth-led provision. Initially, Youth Collectives have been established in three of the seven 'towns' in the borough with funding to produce an event, performance or installation, for the community to see itself reflected in this production. The young people will receive workshops in project management and AQA accredited training in Peer Consultation to enable them to consult local young people about the final piece.

The LCEP Coordinator worked with the council's regeneration teams who provided advice and financial support, with additional funding coming from the Employment and Skills team via Section 106 for the facilitation of the project. A local youth centre, Bollo Brook, has been commissioned to facilitate the Collectives.

## Vignette 11 - Young Advocates – Barnet & Culture for Youth

In Barnet, 14 Young Advocates conceived, hosted and chaired Creative Catalyst, an in-person panel discussion, advocating for greater diversity in curricular reading lists. They invited speakers from Belarus Free Theatre, Chicken Shed Theatre and Art Against Knives, alongside teachers and educationalists. The event was fully booked, with guests including the Mayor of Barnet. Following this event, the Young Advocates produced a zine to disseminate their findings.<sup>35</sup>



Reflections from one 17-year-old Young Advocate highlight young people's agency, advocacy and influence and increased self-confidence.

*'I wasn't exactly sure what I was signing up to when I decided to take part in the B&CY Advocates and I soon realised that was the whole point. This was a project to bring young people together to do whatever we wanted and give us an amazing platform to use our voice. I'm so glad I decided to take part in this project, personally it has done so much for my confidence, giving me the ability to speak in front of a large group of people with adults. And I think being an Advocate is so much more than that, it feels like we are actually making an impact on people's opinions who we are able to talk to and with the Mayor of Barnet coming to our Creative Catalyst event, what we are saying is heard by those who have the power to make change.'*

## Preparing for Work

The lack of information about career opportunities and pathways in the cultural sector was raised by young people in consultations across multiple Challenge partnerships. An allied issue was young people's and families' perceptions that the cultural sector does not offer stable careers. Partnerships have addressed this in two ways: by sharing examples of local people who are working successfully in the arts, and by emphasising the transferable skills developed through arts and creativity and how these match employers' needs. Virtually all partnerships responded to this theme in initiatives that included the following:

- In Croydon, the LCEP lead partner, Croydon Music and Arts, is working with Badge Nation and cultural partners to develop digital badges for young people aged 13+ to demonstrate transferable skills that employers value and which are not recognised through formal qualifications.
- Barnet LCEP provided work experience and placements for 10 young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Ealing LCEP produced a toolkit of arts careers advice including interviews with local creative practitioners.
- Working in partnership with Keepsake Videos, the LCEP in Wandsworth produced a series of 15 10-minute films to 'inspire the next generation of creatives.' Aimed at 14-21 year-olds, Wandsworth Creatives<sup>36</sup> profiles people working in creative careers in the borough and explores their role, how they got there and what skills are needed to succeed.
- In partnership with Camden STEAM and in response to Covid restrictions, Camden Spark provided a week-long virtual work experience for nine Year 12 students from three secondary schools. Together with inputs from the Director of Camden Learning, Camden Spark trustees and a range of cultural sector partners, the young people were also invited to talk about what cultural provision they would like to see in the borough.



## Vignette 12 - Creative Careers – Waltham Forest CEP

In Waltham Forest, findings from the Youth Conversation assemblies indicated that young people felt there was a lack of information on career options and pathways in the cultural industries. The Creative Careers programme in 2021 was designed in response and comprised three strands:

National Careers Week – live-streamed interviews with three creative practitioners from Waltham Forest and a two-part tutorial broadcast on YouTube. The tutorials had information on potential creative careers and pathways into these; shared local success stories; and celebrated the cultural developments in the borough.

Primary Creative Careers Applied Learning Programme – a toolkit and cross-phase programme designed with Chingford Academies Trust. Key Stage 3 and 4 Student Leaders were trained to deliver three sessions in a primary school. These leaders received an RSA Cities of Learning digital badge outlining their achievements on completion of the programme. The activities were linked to the Career Development Institute Framework (CDI, 2020) and the Gatsby benchmarks of Good Career Guidance (Gatsby, 2014). One Year 9 student reported learning, 'That these [creative skills] are skills we need to succeed in life, education and work.' A Year 5 participant stated, 'It was fun and made me understand what good personalities most companies would want.'

Moving forward, plans have been put in place to roll out the toolkit to schools and colleges across the borough.

Digital and Creative Careers Cluster – for students with higher levels of need at seven secondary schools (including two special schools), a pupil referral unit and three further education colleges, working with employers and higher education institutes. The funding from the Mayor's European Social Fund Programme was secured by Waltham Forest's Employment Business and Skills team working in partnership with the CEP and supports activity from April 2021 to July 2023. The programme includes career advice, employer enrichment activities with 1000 students taking part in pilot activities and access to over 500 work experience placements.

36 <https://wandsworthart.com/tag/wandsworth-creatives/>

As the examples above illustrate, Challenge partnerships responded to young people's expressed interests and needs but also took advantage of local opportunities such as working with Creative Enterprise Zones and Business and Skills teams. In Barking and Dagenham, for example, the LCEP has become the strategic partner for Film Barking and Dagenham (Make it Here), delivering activities for the pre-16 age group, and an endowment linked to the new Eastbrook Film Studio will partly cover the salary of the LCEP Coordinator for two years. This funding will see the LCEP having a greater focus on the film industry (and related supply chain industries), equipping young people with the necessary skills for newly created jobs in their locality.

## New London

This theme referred to the London Plan<sup>37</sup> and focussed on the changing physical landscape of London and new opportunities to build in ideas for developing creativity. Create London's programme, Talking Planning, focussed specifically on the design and planning process, aiming to empower young people to interrogate the planning system and influence positive change by introducing a youth perspective to the process. The programme worked with the design team at Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation, one of the UK's largest regeneration projects, architecture practice DK-CM and the Young Brent Foundation. Nonetheless, this theme was less central to partnerships' work than others although LCEPs did connect with Creative Enterprise Zones and regeneration teams where appropriate.

However, the pandemic shifted perceptions and priorities of need: school closures, home schooling and home working positioned families as education hubs; lockdowns led to isolation for some and a new focus on the hyper-local; restrictions on socialising, disrupted schooling and loss of employment all had a toll on young people's wellbeing. 'New London' was cast anew in this context and Challenge partnerships stepped up to this new challenge, reflecting the commitment in the London Recovery Programme to 'build back better'. Some of the initiatives such as the Arts Award Transition Project (Vignette 8, addressing wellbeing) and Buddying & Creative Conversations (Vignettes 15 and 16, addressing isolation) are mentioned elsewhere in the report. Other responses of note included:

**As a connector.** Barking and Dagenham's LCEP established a Microsoft Teams channel for local teachers in the early stages of the first lockdown. Informed by an initial consultation with 30 teachers, the team hosted a series of six webinars with cultural industry professionals that supported teachers to develop creative approaches to the (then) new digital delivery in schools. More than 80 teachers and senior school leaders across the borough were involved in the webinars. The team also curated lists of cultural and creative digital resources specific to local schools' needs.

**In delivery.** Creative Wandsworth worked alongside local creative organisations and the council to deliver Wandsworth's Create and Learn Playkits. The project delivered 4,000 packs of creative materials to families most in need (identified by schools) and built links with a range of community response groups such as food banks and libraries. The project won a Hearts for the Arts Award for Best Arts Project<sup>38</sup>. Several other LCEPs initiated and supported the distribution of art packs.

**In delivery.** Several LCEPs found new ways of bringing creative practitioners into the classroom when schools were no longer able to welcome visitors or make visits to cultural venues; for example, careers events were live-streamed for schools.

**In strategy and research.** In Lambeth, the LCEP has also undertaken research to understand and disseminate information on the impact of the pandemic on creative careers to ensure future programmes reflect a realistic and current context.



37 The 2016 Plan referenced was updated in 2021. <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/planning/london-plan>

38 Hearts for the Arts are the annual awards ran by the National Campaign for the Arts recognising the UK's unsung Local Authority arts heroes. <https://forthearts.org.uk/best-arts-project-winner-create-learn-playkits/>

## Pressures on Institutions

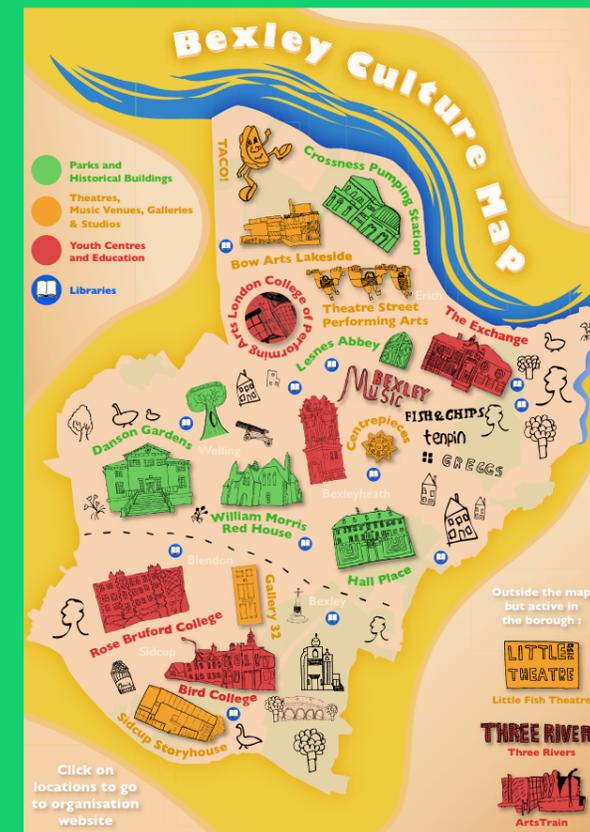
This theme asked how a strong and sustainable ecology could be created to enable cultural and creative learning. Evidence presented in Section 6.1 illustrated how partnership working built new infrastructure and how LCEPs in particular proved successful in developing sustainable infrastructure. As cited in Section 1.2, a key finding from the Listening Projects was young people's desire for youth-led, safe spaces where they can explore, develop and express their creativity. With continuing cuts to youth services across London, cultural organisations could provide such spaces and in the best practice developed through the Challenge, partnerships with the youth sector have ensured the expertise of youth workers have helped shape such spaces. However, these youth-led initiatives tend to be time-limited projects rather than flexible spaces that are accessible and supportive of young people working in a range of art forms; more could be achieved in this area.

Creating infrastructure is the first step, the second is to ensure young people are aware of opportunities for them within this ecology. (See the following section for further discussion on signposting of opportunities).



## Vignette 13 - Mapping provision – Creative Bexley

In 2021, Creative Bexley commissioned Sound Connections to undertake a youth consultation. 72% of the 1,002 respondents said arts, culture and creativity were important to them, however, 64% reported being unaware of any arts, culture and creative activities or venues in Bexley.



Creative Bexley partner Bow Arts worked with 594 Year 6 and 7 students in two primary and two secondary schools on the Drawing our Community project. This fulfilled a need identified by the schools for input into regular art lessons on drawing skills, and also encouraged students to research, visit and draw local cultural sites. The students' images were collated and one of the artists designed a Culture Map using some of the images. Printed maps were given to each student and distributed to all schools across the borough.

*'I've learnt a lot about how much culture there is in Bexley. Like how diverse it is. My place I've always lived has so much more stuff than I thought it had.'* (Year 6 student)

## 8.4 Improving the coherence, relevance and signposting of creative and cultural opportunities

Virtually all Challenge partnerships improved the coherence and relevance of creative and cultural opportunities by consulting young people about their interests and needs, and by collating and sharing information across organisations and sectors within a locality. All the LCEPs developed some form of e-newsletter or included creative opportunities in existing schools' mailings. Barnet LCEP's newsletter, for example, had an open rate of 50% which compared favourably with that of the lead partner, which is closer to the sector norm at 20%. Creative Wandsworth's half-termly e-bulletin promotes creative opportunities to those working with young people (including schools) and is integrated into the Arts Service communications. The Coordinator of Lambeth's LCEP started work just as the country went into the first Covid lockdown. Developing a website was part of the action plan for the first year but in response to the school closures, home learning and isolation of lockdown, the Coordinator fast-tracked the development of a platform to share resources.<sup>39</sup> Camden Spark also has a website which includes opportunities for schools, families and young people, details of forthcoming events and CPD, extensive learning resources from cultural partners, a searchable database of cultural learning partners and details of small grants for creative learning projects.

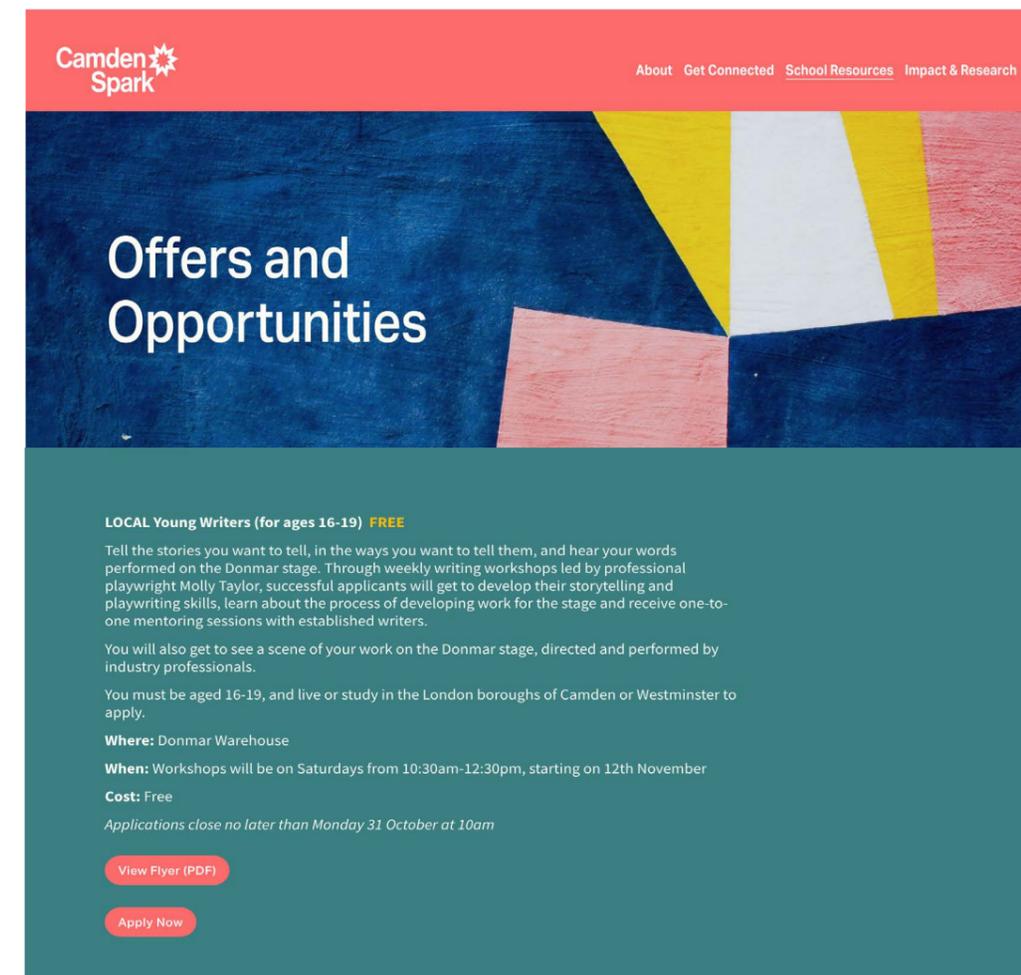


Figure 12: Camden Spark website

The primary audience for communications is the adults who work with young people. In the majority of cases, communication with children and young people existed at a programmatic level only, with a minority of partnerships developing channels of direct communication with young people.

<sup>39</sup> <https://elevatelambeth.london/resources>

## Vignette 14 - Rethinking communication channels – Brent LCEP

In Brent, the newly formed LCEP built on the momentum and relationships developed during the 2020 Borough of Culture. The Coordinator took up her role in June 2021 and had just over a year in post through Challenge London funding. She quickly instituted a monthly newsletter that had a mailing list of 300 contacts in schools, family centres and the voluntary sector. However, being a youth-focused LCEP and with some 100,000 young people in the borough, the Coordinator questioned if the newsletter was the best communication tool to link with young people. Following a brief consultation with young people, she identified three new opportunities for local communication routes:

- Working with two local radio stations, Brent Youth Parliament, a local PRU and the Black Community Action Plan; a proposal for a monthly youth voice feature to promote local activity and encourage topical debate.
- Local press - Kilburn and Brent Times (weekly) and the Brent Magazine (quarterly) to host articles from young people interested in journalism and photography.
- An app to host and promote local opportunities for young people via a local app designer.

## 8.5 Barriers faced by young people

Youth consultations undertaken by Challenge partnerships revealed the following barriers for young people:

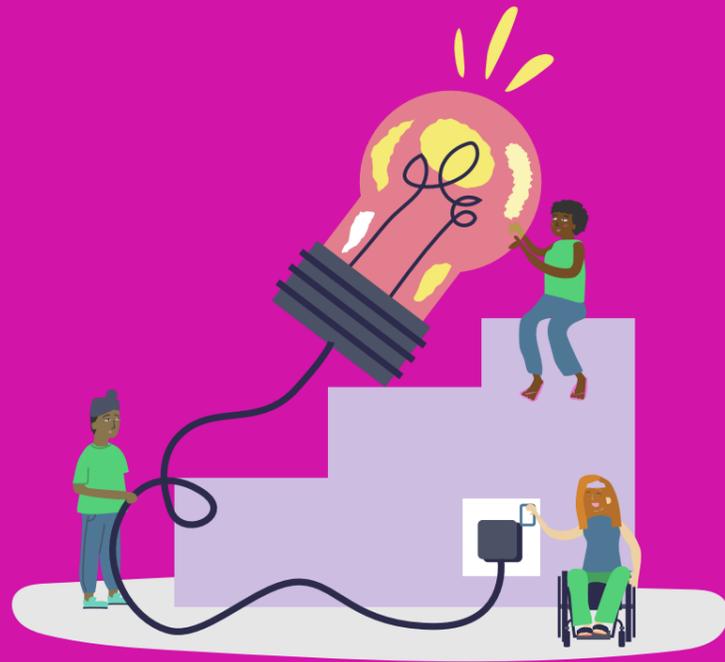
- Time – especially for young people with exams.
- Competition with non-arts offers, for example, sports.
- Knowledge about what's on offer – if communication is only through schools, many young people will be missed.
- Cost and perception of cost – prohibitive costs; and lack of awareness about free opportunities.
- Perception that the arts and cultural activities and careers are 'not for them'.
- Off-putting language used in communications.
- Lack of family support for careers in the cultural sector.
- Reluctance to try something new.
- Lack of diversity in the cultural sector workforce; lack of appropriate role models.
- Dearth of places where young people can go to be creative without taking part in structured, adult-led activity.
- Reduced opportunities to study arts subjects at school.

## 8.6 Learning and recommendations on outcomes for young people

- A focus on equity means diversifying the young people engaging in cultural learning not just increasing the numbers.
- Youth leadership and agency: consider which young people are accessing opportunities to engage and work to diversify this by putting measures in place to overcome barriers. Be clear about the purpose of youth fora and youth-led activity, ensure this is communicated to the young people involved and that there are clear benefits for participants.
- There is a demand for programmes on creative careers. Given the drop-off in arts choices at KS4, inputs are needed well before GCSE choices are made in Year 9.
- Projects with tangible outcomes, such as Arts Award and digital badges, are popular with participating young people, schools and families.

# 9

## Workforce development



### 9.1 Outcomes for the adults who work with and support young people

All Challenge partnerships invested in workforce development to a greater or lesser extent. In some cases, this was specific to the focus of the programme, such as London Bubble's training on trauma-informed practice and communication for partners involved in Creating Justice. The external evaluators reported:

*'Practitioners who took part in the training sessions came from a range of different settings including the Southwark YOS, schools, police and the arts sector. This mix was seen as a great strength of the training as it allowed practitioners to hear different perspectives and strategies, share knowledge and expertise and think about how to work together more effectively to improve experiences and outcomes for young people.'*

*'The main impact of the training [...] was improving their confidence in using different approaches with young people [...] a greater understanding of the range of different techniques that could be used in communicating with a young person or the ways they could adapt their practice to take individual young people's needs into consideration [...] Some practitioners had already taken elements of what they learnt in the training into their work with young people, and shared their learning with other colleagues.'*<sup>40</sup>

In other cases, professional development comprised one-off sessions, thematic series and networks which were open to all education and/or cultural practitioners in the borough. In Islington, for example, the Challenge investment specifically supported Culture Bank, resources and CPD for teachers. In the second phase of investment (March 2021 - July 2022), 11 CPD sessions, focussing on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) were held, engaging a total of 142 teachers. Evaluation indicated:

- 94% had more confidence in planning and delivering creative/cultural activities.
- 97% would share learning with colleagues.
- 87% reported increased awareness of EDI issues within their setting.<sup>41</sup>

Typical feedback on outcomes from other partnerships included:

*'I came away with some excellent nature-inspired and climate focussed ideas. I enjoyed the mix of explanation, instruction and participation... [the artist] comes highly recommended; I most certainly will be inviting her in to lead whole staff INSET.'* (Teacher at Creative Climate Festival CPD, Wandsworth LCEP).

*'This helped me find new ways to facilitate student voice in creative arts decision making.'* (Teacher, Hammersmith and Fulham LCEP)

<sup>40</sup> Mendez Sayer, E and Reid, S (2021) The Creating Justice programme: final evaluation report. <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/research/challenge-london-end-of-programme-reports>

<sup>41</sup> This lower figure reflected high baseline levels of awareness for some participants.

## Vignette 15 - Buddying & Creative Conversations – Camden Spark

In response to education and cultural professionals reporting a sense of isolation in the first lockdown, Camden Spark piloted Buddying & Creative Conversations, 'a programme designed to provide local school and cultural sector partners with peer support and connection at an unsettling time'.

The programme comprised a series of four sessions across a term, facilitated on Zoom by Camden Spark Coordinators, that brought the pairings together to explore their own creativity, think about where their interests aligned and share ideas. In between these sessions, each pairing met separately for mutual support and to share ideas.

There was no pressure to work towards an outcome, but feedback indicated that, together with support, conversations provided inspiration for tangible projects and future collaborations. As a consequence, Camden Spark introduced small grants of £500 that were available to support projects arising from buddying partnerships.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive:

*'It has helped me to more clearly understand and articulate how I would like to develop our programmes to help schools respond to recent events - specifically lockdown and Black Lives Matter - and the role literature can and should play in helping children to make sense of these.'* Cultural partner

*'It gave me an opportunity to reflect on how creativity can contribute to any situation - giving me an opportunity to be creative about creativity. Actually making me allocate time for freedom of discussion without strict outcomes.'* Secondary Head of Drama

The programme was repeated three more times in 2021 and 2022. Across the four programmes:

- 25 teachers were matched with 25 local cultural partners,
- There was a 100% recommendation rate,
- 90% intended to take an idea forward together,
- 90% were matched with a new connection, and
- 100% intended to continue the relationship.

## 9.2 How workforce development leads to outcomes for young people

Challenge London aimed to improve outcomes for children and young people, but the majority of partnerships were strategic in nature and direct contact with young people was limited. Partnerships' Theories of Change included workforce development; supporting the adults who work with young people with the implicit assumption that this would result in positive outcomes for the participants and ultimately for young people themselves. The link between workforce development and outcomes for young people was not always articulated by partnerships so it is useful to look at the evidence for this link - firstly from research, and secondly from Challenge programmes.

Recent research by the Education Policy Institute found that:

*'High-quality CPD for teachers has a significant effect on pupils' learning outcomes [...] has a greater effect on pupil attainment than other interventions schools may consider [...] generally produces positive responses from teachers, in contrast to other interventions...[and] improves teacher retention.'*<sup>42</sup>

Making Sense, a proof-of-concept programme in Southwark that responded to 'multiple global and societal crises of the past two years' had a Theory of Change to support their approach of working with teachers. External evaluators summarised this as:

*'By supporting teachers to make sense of issues around racism and decolonisation and feel more empowered to effect change through their education practice, they in turn would be better able to support their students in making sense of those same issues.'* (Shared Intelligence)

The lead partner for Making Sense shared an example of how this theory worked in practice. Staff from the three participating schools attended CPD on racism and unconscious bias. This changed the understanding and confidence of a White counsellor from one of the schools to raise this with students, 97% of whom were Black or Latin American. The counsellor reported that this was empowering for both herself and the students who now felt able to talk about their experiences of racism with the counsellor.

Feedback from teachers below (which is typical of that gathered by several LCEPs), illustrates how they are using their learning back at school for the benefit of students.

*'I liked all the activities discussed today and will definitely use them in circle time.'*

*'I am looking at our wider curriculum and embedding dance within a variety of subjects so it is really valuable to be part of the network.'*

<sup>42</sup> Fletcher-Wood, H & Zuccollo, J. (2020). The effects of high-quality professional development on teachers and students. Education Policy Institute <https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/effects-high-quality-professional-development/>

## Vignette 16 - Linking Buddying & Creative Conversations to pupil outcomes - Haringey Creates

Haringey LCEP recognised similar challenges for teachers as those experienced in Camden during lockdowns and successfully adopted the Buddying & Creative Conversations programme. As with Camden, although this wasn't a pre-requisite, projects began to emerge, with funding supplied by the school, cultural partner or Haringey Creates.

One of the 13 buddying pairs in Haringey brought together a primary teacher and dance practitioner. Feedback from the teacher demonstrates how the CPD resulted in positive outcomes for the school and pupils.

*'It was after our first conversations regarding dance, creativity, fairness, and inclusiveness that we decided to link creative dance with narrative [...] This was both a challenge and an aspiration for us, as most students in the school have English as an additional language and dance is not one of the taught subjects in their curriculum. Therefore, we decided to run an eight-week creative project which aimed to introduce dance as a school subject and through it, to explore creative ways to learn, embody, and communicate stories derived from other curriculum modules, such as history and geography [...] The aim of the weekly tasks is to create a final choreography through which the Year 4 and Year 5 students will communicate their stories to the other Year groups via an internal school performance. Year 4's choreography is inspired by the Roman Empire, and Year 5's by the Brazilian favelas. The weekly growth of their understanding, engagement and excitement for the project and dance in general is noteworthy!'*

The positive experiences and evaluation of the programme helped Haringey Creates secure £145,000 from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to expand its programme of workforce development.

### 9.3 Challenges in workforce development

The principal challenge with workforce development was gathering evidence of how, or if, CPD resulted in changes in teacher practice or school policy and ultimately benefited young people. Feedback often included an indication of intent (for example, to share with colleagues) but follow-up was required to find out if action had been taken and if not, why not. Other challenges concerned attendance.

- In some places, sign-up rates for teacher CPD and networking were high but attendance much lower - in some cases, less than half - indicating enthusiasm for the events but multiple pressures on teachers' time. In Waltham Forest, attempts at mitigation were made by sending all individuals who had signed up resources, photos of the event and links to relevant content.
- Initial enthusiasm for online delivery during the pandemic (enabling contact when in-person events were not possible and increasing accessibility as no travel was involved) gave way to screen-fatigue and a desire for in-person encounters.
- Drop off in numbers as teachers were fatigued after coping with Covid restrictions, and needing to prioritise recovery and core subjects.

Partnerships experimented with hybrid models of delivery, the frequency of events and the focus of sessions to try to ensure the offer responded to need and the availability of practitioners.

### 9.4 Learning and recommendations on workforce development

- A blended offer (virtual and face-to-face) for networks and CPD events creates greater access for teachers, artists and cultural sector representatives. Online is good for maintaining existing relationships but less good for developing new relationships (except for curated 1:1 pairings).
- Teachers and artists welcome programmes that bring them together to learn from each other and create and plan together.
- Consider the impact of investing in workforce development. Over time, how have staff used new skills, resources, knowledge or confidence? How have young people benefited? Have these staff been retained in the area or moved on?

# 10

## Investment



### 10.1 Match funding

**To lever investment into cultural education and creativity from new and diverse sources.**

As stated earlier, £1,127,846 was invested through Challenge London across the four years, matched by £1,292,042, which equated to approximately 115% match, indicating that the investment from A New Direction was a highly effective lever for match funding.

The sources of this funding are illustrated in Figure 13.

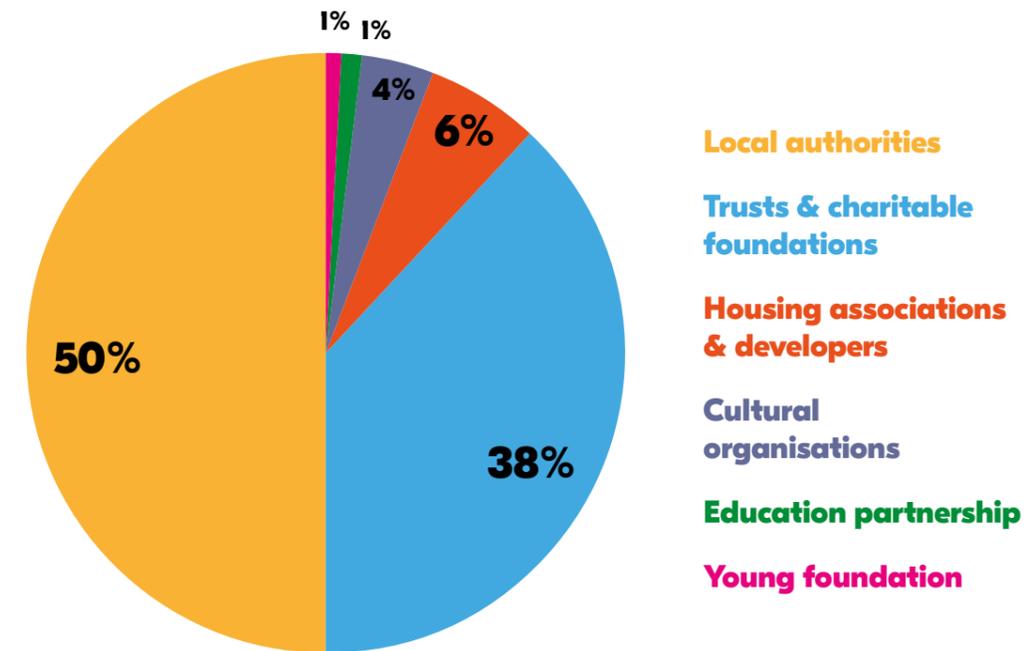


Figure 13 - Sources of match funding

Almost 90% of the match funding came from local authorities and trusts and foundations. The sources were less varied than those for Challenge London's predecessor, where there was a more even spread across trusts and foundations, local authorities, cultural partners, schools, housing associations and developers. However, it is important to note that although the two programmes shared the same three objectives, the approaches were different, with partnerships in the first iteration more focussed on delivery with young people and more likely to be led by a cultural organisation, whilst Challenge London had a strategic focus and an emphasis on LCEPs. Within the local authority funding for Challenge London, sources were diverse, suggesting considerable success in leveraging in investment from areas such as employment, skills and economic development where priorities around youth employment and regeneration through culture, aligned with those of LCEPs. (See Figure 14).

For example, Ealing Employment and Skills team provided £50,000 from Section 106 to match Challenge London funding. The team's interest is in careers education and work skills, and arts and leisure are viewed as early intervention and prevention to avoid young people becoming part of the team's priority groups (which include: long-term unemployed; homeless or at risk of homelessness; ex-offenders; a young person in a gang; an offender serving a community sentence).

## 10.2 Ongoing investment and sustainability

**For cross-sector partners to make a strong and improved evidence-based case for investment.**

**To develop more sustainable business models for cross-sector partnership activity.**

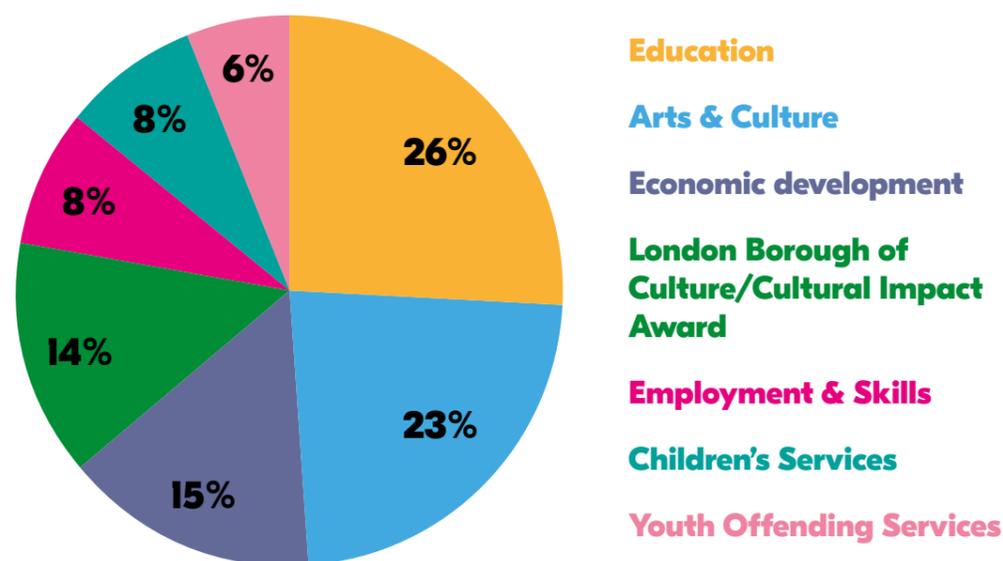


Figure 14 - Local authority match funding

Virtually all partnerships raised additional funding during the period of the Challenge investments, to support strategic initiatives, new projects and extend existing projects. Examples included:

- London Bubble secured funding from United Saint Saviours Charity to enable Playing Safe (one strand of the Challenge Programme, Creating Justice) to run for a further two years in North Southwark primary schools, accompanied by research into the project's methods and impacts. Southwark YJS are continuing to fund the other two programmes, Way into Work and Creative Voices on an annual basis and London Bubble has also secured further commissioned projects across Children and Families Services within Southwark Council.

- Croydon's LCEP was successful in securing substantial Arts Council funding through YPP<sup>43</sup>. The lead partner believed that the work undertaken to establish the LCEP and more specifically, the focus on putting young people at the heart of the work, had contributed to the success of their bid.
- In Barking and Dagenham, the LCEP highlighted their increasing success in securing additional investment and postulated the reasons for this.

*'Initially, in year 1, it began with applying for the Youth Performance Partnership and Paul Hamlyn Foundation, with both applications being unsuccessful. Through year 2 we levered in delivery investment through diverse funding streams totalling £25,500 and maintained this into year 3, increasing that leverage to £207,000 with a successful application to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Teacher Development Fund. On reflection, this increase in investment comes from robust evidence collection, a demonstration of impact, and a clear and defined rationale for the work we do.'*

Lead partners identified the factors they believed contributed to their success in securing funding: providing evidence of need and of outcomes from previous work, a youth-led approach, establishing the organisation/partnership as trustworthy, connected and creative, aligning with investors' priorities, and providing a credible vehicle to deliver against those priorities.

Sustainability was discussed in Sections 6.3 and 6.4, with examples cited of LCEP work and staffing being embedded in local authority plans for the next three to ten years. This was true for six of the 12 LCEPs. Others had funding beyond the end of Challenge investment but that was due to cease within a year. In the majority of these instances, staff within the lead organisations had plans in place to sustain the partnership. The Coordinator for Brent LCEP, for example, had funding until the end of 2022 and was working on plans to move the LCEP from the council into an appropriate local host organisation.

The evidence above suggests that the majority of partnerships are continuing beyond Challenge investment which is a testament to the business planning and fundraising of the Coordinators, lead organisations and, in some cases, specialists employed to support this work. A variety of business models have been developed, but to what extent are these 'more sustainable business models'? Camden Spark, for example, established itself as an independent organisation (a Charitable Incorporated Organisation) in 2017, giving it access to a wider range of funding streams. The LCEP investigated the possibility of a subscription business model (to increase sustainability) but this was beyond the means of schools four years ago and schools' financial situation has deteriorated since then. Central to the success of the partnerships has been paid coordination and (for all but the third round of investments) secure funding for two or more years that provides a 'spine of continuity' and enables the organisation to forward plan and work with the lead-in time required by schools. This staffing is dependent on funding, it cannot be self-generated – to what extent is this a 'sustainable business model'?

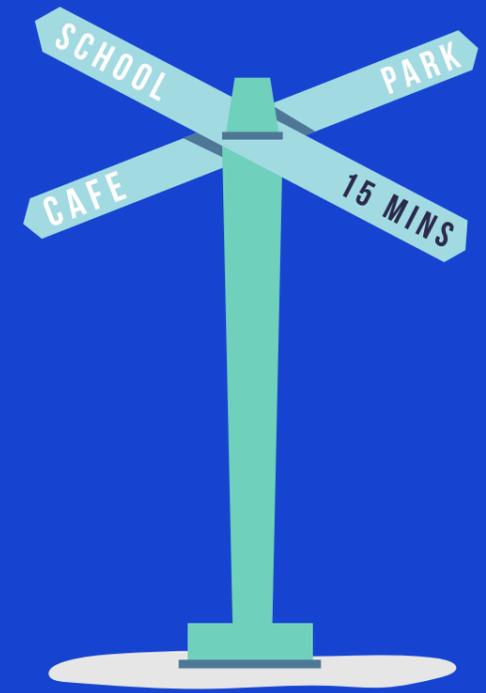
<sup>43</sup> One of five successful bids in England to receive Arts Council funding from the Youth Performance Partnership (YPP) initiative - securing £1million over three years for the borough.

A number of characteristics emerge from the Challenge partnerships that contribute to their sustainability. The partnerships:

- Create value for all stakeholders, thus building a wide and unified voice for the continuing need for the partnership,
- Reach out, listen to and engage young people and the adults who work with them, to inform operations and programmes,
- Invite feedback, review and renew their operation and programmes to ensure they retain quality and relevance and can succeed in the future as well as in the present,
- Pilot programmes and ways of working, evaluate and have evidence of outcomes and impact and how they have adapted in response to evaluation and changing circumstances which supports successful funding applications,
- Pilot programme which are adopted, embedded and funded by stakeholders, including local authorities, thus sustaining the benefits for young people,
- Share learning with other partnerships, regionally and nationally; borrowing and adapting ideas to innovate and improve,
- Are dynamic, responding quickly to changing circumstances as they did during the pandemic and capitalising on opportunities such as regeneration or new cultural sector developments;
- Align with the priorities and values of other sectors, such as employment, health and regeneration, thus drawing in funding from diverse sources, and
- Invest in the next generation of young creatives, working to diversify the workforce through targeted work with under-served groups and recognising and removing barriers to engagement.

### 10.3 Learning and recommendations about investment

- Funding from A New Direction has been a highly effective lever for match funding from a range of local authority departments, trusts and charitable foundations.
- It is possible to access funding in local authorities through, for example, Climate Change (school projects); Employment, Business and Skills (careers programmes and support for artists) etc.
- CPD on fundraising for school staff increases capacity and spreads the burden of fundraising.



# 11

## Outcomes for A New Direction

## 11.1 Effectively combining the role of funder and development partner

In relation to the application process, feedback from applicants (including those who were unsuccessful) confirmed satisfaction with this and the decision-making process. Relevant expertise in the Challenge Group ensured informed debate about the respective merits of proposals and A New Direction staff were given clear and relevant questions and points of clarification to peruse with applicants. Appropriate induction and facilitation ensured members of the Young Challenge Group were empowered to work effectively as advisers in the short-listing process. Their comments were insightful, valued by the Challenge Group and were observed to influence decision-making.

Having been formed as an investment advisory panel, the Young Challenge Group was retained by the Place team at A New Direction as a youth voice initiative to advise on the development of the organisation's new Place Strategy. Recruitment for this third cohort was in the summer of 2021 and, for the first time, young people (who had previously had their expenses covered) were remunerated for attending six meetings across the year. During this year, members of the YCG met with each of the partnerships that are receiving Challenge London Legacy Funding, providing feedback to the partnerships and gaining a 'behind the scenes' perspective on partnership working. In August 2022, recruitment for a fourth cohort took place, with the group evolving again and this time focussing on youth governance. Exploring perceptions and experiences of governance, leadership and youth voice, the group presented their findings to A New Direction's Board in April 2023. As cited in Section 5.2, several partnerships 'struggled with meaningful engagement of young people in the steering group' and recommendations from the YCG could usefully be shared more broadly. At present, the YCG is linked to the Place team, but A New Direction has a commitment to develop a considered and robust approach to youth governance across the organisation.

A New Direction took a rigorous approach to inviting and responding to feedback about their role and approach and how it could be improved. Quarterly Monitoring reports included questions about support; lead partners were invited to give feedback on the application process shortly after decisions were made; and the evaluator gathered views in the final evaluation interviews with nine of the partnerships. The quote below is typical and demonstrates success in combining the roles of funder and development partner:

*'I've not a bad word to say about them; very approachable. I feel they're peers, colleagues rather than there being a hierarchy. They've always got time to support, advise, affirm. For example, initially I was confused about strategic planning and their patience and support were incredible. They've always got a suggestion about who to talk to or connect with at each milestone.'* (Lead partner)

Factors highlighted and appreciated in the organisation's approach to managing the Challenge London programme and working with lead partners included:

- An efficient and supportive team.
- A flexible and responsive approach to individual needs and changing circumstances. 'Thank you for being sensitive and responsive to our needs as we have adapted and found our feet during Covid-19. Your support and flexibility have been exceptional and greatly appreciated. Thank you for enabling us to reflect and learn during this time, and encouraging us to act, by sharing and pooling resources and keeping us all connected.'
- Provision of additional, specialist support on areas such as youth voice, evaluation and strategic planning.
- Brokering new relationships: between new and established partnerships; and with prospective project partners, workshop leaders and speakers.
- Advocacy, validity and kudos; providing a regional and national context at partnership events and positioning A New Direction as a partner rather than a remote funder.

## 11.2 Providing capacity-building support to partnerships

A New Direction's support in peer-learning and capacity building was universally praised. The format and nomenclature of peer-learning varied across the four years but there was always an opportunity for Challenge lead partners to come together to share practice. Aspects of support highlighted by lead partners included:

- Providing a space for reflection and development: 'It always feels as if A New Direction are there to support, and to ask the right questions which help us to reflect on our work.'
- Networking with peers through Connected meet-ups: 'Connected Meet Ups were particularly helpful to have time for reflection and to hear what partners are doing and how they are approaching specific problems.'
- Specialist inputs and training at Connected meet-ups.
- Providing information on relevant research, policy and practice that can bolster partnerships' advocacy and ability to make the case for cultural learning, youth leadership and LCEPs: 'The infrastructure online is strong and the use of blogs, video, and the Powerful Partnerships resource library most definitely helps as a go-to support mechanism'.

## 11.3 Suggested improvements to AND support

With the end of Bridge Organisations, A New Direction will have a different role in relation to place-based partnerships. However, the suggested improvements to the support package could still be relevant in the future. It is important to stress that the majority of respondents had no suggestions for improvement, being very happy with the support they received. Ongoing opportunities for peer-learning would be greatly appreciated as would access to research and other intelligence. Suggested improvements included:

- A differentiated offer that recognises the varied needs of emerging and established partnerships. This reflects a recommendation from the evaluation of the National Peer Learning Network of LCEPs.<sup>44</sup>
- Targeted Task and Finish groups to compliment discussions and catch-ups.
- Further support on areas of shared need including evaluation and youth voice.
- National and international perspectives that could inform practice in London.

<sup>44</sup> Thurman, C and Wilmot, H. (2022) National Leadership and Peer Learning Programme for Local Cultural Education Partnerships: Final evaluation report. People Make it Work. <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/search?query=LCEP>

## 11.4 Learning and recommendations from Challenge London for A New Direction

- A responsive, flexible and supportive approach to working with partners, that also provides access to specialist advice, intelligence and resources, is highly valued.
- Investing in peer learning for local leaders supports professional development and wellbeing, the sharing of good practice and, ultimately, strong and sustainable partnership infrastructure.
- The organisation's unique ability to build connections across London is recognised and appreciated.
- Think about different levels of place; the pandemic has heightened awareness of the hyper-local, and young people do not necessarily exist within or identify with, a borough.
- Think in advance how programme learning can be embedded in the organisation; and shared and celebrated through a range of channels.<sup>45</sup> (For long-running programmes, sharing could take place at various points across the programme).
- Measuring outcomes and impact across varied programmes is challenging. It is not always possible or desirable to impose standard evaluation tools but it is useful to clarify definitions for monitoring data to ensure consistency in reporting.
- Disseminate the YCG's findings and recommendations on youth governance to support others working on similar developments.

### Future opportunities

- Arts Council England Priority Places will be a focus for cultural learning development.
- The cost-of-living crisis could increase perceptions of the arts and cultural learning as 'nice-to-have' luxuries. Challenge London has highlighted how cultural learning is valued for its instrumental value in a range of sectors and this could usefully be promoted further.
- The climate crisis is rising in importance and is often high on young people's agenda.
- Partnerships have engaged with senior officers and councillors in local authorities. A New Direction has the opportunity to bring these individuals together to work collectively on initiatives and advocacy. Likewise, more could be done to capitalise on opportunities to work in partnership with areas such as health.
- Parents and carers have considerable influence on the opportunities afforded young people; the pandemic did little to boost families' confidence in the security of careers in the creative and cultural sector. How might this be counteracted?

<sup>45</sup> It is recognised that plans for live events, facilitated by A New Direction, were restricted after March 2020 owing to the pandemic.



# 12

## Conclusions

Challenge London has spanned a unique time; in 2018, the 'challenge' was framed, and strand 1 and 2 investments commenced, in a pre-Covid-19 world; strand 3 partnerships straddled the divide, developing proposals pre-pandemic but embarking on their Challenge journey just as the first lockdown (March-June 2020) ended. 'Stay at home' edicts and Covid deaths heralded an extraordinary and frightening time, with central London abandoned as people took their designated daily walk in their local area. The rapid development of vaccinations meant restrictions could be eased and a 'new normal' emerged. It is important to recognise in this evaluation that partnerships applied to address one challenge but found themselves faced with another, unimagined challenge of a global pandemic.

Evidence demonstrates that Challenge London investment has supported the development of sustainable partnerships to support young people's creativity and cultural engagement. Partners identified clear mutual benefits from partnership working and also recognised that they have achieved outcomes together that they could not achieve alone. Partnerships have proved to be effective advocates for cultural learning as evidenced by their success in securing funding for projects and the continuation of the partnerships, from diverse sources. The majority have also worked successfully to improve the relevance, coherence and signposting of cultural opportunities for young people, with evidence that networking and CPD increased the cultural sector's awareness of schools' needs. Newsletters, digital platforms and briefings have been used effectively to inform the cultural learning workforce about opportunities, but more could be done to communicate directly with young people and families.

Partnerships take more time than often imagined to set up and become established. Confidence and skills of Coordinators and partners develop over this time and the shorter, 12–18-month, duration of investments in new LCEPs in strand 3 supported initial development but little beyond. However, in boroughs with strong council support, financial backing was secured to sustain the partnership. There has been a visible shift over the four years from a deficit to an asset-based model of provision and partnerships have increased their use of youth consultation and evaluation evidence to inform their plans. Evaluation practice has improved but is still an area where lack of capacity, expertise and confidence impede consistent and rigorous evaluation. LCEPs also face difficulties measuring the outcomes of their strategic work and medium to long-term impact measurement remains an area of development for all.

Partnerships evolve, and evidence suggests that the majority of Challenge partnerships were dynamic, adapting rapidly to the pandemic, for example, and recognising the need to review and renew ToCs, priorities, steering groups and delivery partners. The evaluation identified enablers and inhibitors of partnership development, delivery and sustainability with indicative 'mechanisms of change' suggested as: a clear, evidence-based vision for change; strong local leadership; a positive infrastructure to enable change; and a supportive policy context.

Different interpretations of engagement mean it is impossible to have a definitive number of young people involved through Challenge London investment. The 82,000+ reported by partnerships is almost certainly an over-estimate of those involved in direct delivery, with 20,000 probably a more realistic figure. The objectives of the programme were to increase the number of young people engaged but also to increase the diversity. Whilst partnerships were not asked to gather demographic data on participants, the increasing focus on targeted work with underserved and/or marginalised young people suggests this objective has been met. This is another factor in the overall numbers engaged as this targeted work tends to be longer-term, meaning smaller numbers are involved but the work is likely to be more impactful. This echoes the finding from several Challenge partnerships that schools are increasingly looking for lasting cultural partnerships rather than one-off projects (although this does not diminish enthusiasm for large-scale universal events such as festivals that bring a number of schools together across a borough).

It is over five years since the research was undertaken to identify the six Challenge themes and, although they all remain relevant, new dimensions have been added, particularly through the pandemic and Black Lives Matter. There is evidence that outcomes have been achieved for all six themes, with Fairness, Influence and Power, and Preparing for Work the themes most often addressed. New London was not as high a priority and partnerships with developers and regeneration seemed more challenging to secure. The post-Covid 'build back better' agenda could open new possibilities under this theme for A New Direction, including initiatives linked to climate change which has risen up the agenda in the last five years. Wellbeing has also become an increasingly urgent issue and, again, this is an area where A New Direction could explore new ways of engaging with relevant young people's health services. There was strong evidence that the final theme of Pressures on Institutions was successfully addressed through the establishment of LCEPs and the infrastructure this supported. More could be done to add youth-led cultural spaces to this ecosystem and build stronger relationships with the youth sector.

The third Challenge aim was to generate new investment for culture and creativity with an indicator of success being that 'new investors in cultural learning support Challenge partnerships.' The target of 100% match funding for Challenge investment was exceeded and analysis of the local authority funding, in particular, revealed the success of some partnerships in leveraging in new investment from diverse local authority departments, demonstrating alignment with agendas on climate change, youth employment, health and regeneration.

Of the 17 investments, 14 have secured (or are in the process of securing) funding to sustain the partnership beyond Challenge investment. The business models are still reliant on external funding and are, therefore, potentially vulnerable, particularly in the current economic climate. This evaluation has identified characteristics of sustainable partnerships exhibited across the Challenge programme which could help secure future operation.

Learning and recommendations for partnerships and A New Direction have been identified throughout this report. In terms of their management of Challenge London, their role as development partner and funder, and the capacity-building support offered, the Place team at A New Direction were universally praised and established a model the organisation can be proud of and follow in the future.

A New Direction is an award-winning non-profit organisation working to enhance the capacity and agency of children and young people in London to own their creativity, shape culture, and achieve their creative potential.

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