# How can we engage more young people in arts and culture?

## A guide to what works for funders and arts organisations

Rachel Tait, Angela Kail, Jennifer Shea, Rosie McLeod, Nicola Pritchard, Fatima Asif

October 2019

# Contents

*'Aeschylus and Plato are remembered today long after the triumphs of Imperial Athens are gone. Dante outlived the ambitions of thirteenth century Florence. Goethe stands serenely above the politics of Germany, and I am certain that after the dust of centuries has passed over cities, we too will be remembered not for victories or defeats in battle or in politics, but for our contribution to the human spirit.'*

**John F. Kennedy**

# Introduction

Art has the power to change lives. In the moment, people enjoy having fun, being with other people, and expressing themselves creatively. Then there are the long-term impacts like shared memories, increased empathy and a broader worldview. People who participate in the arts are more likely to be in good health, go on to further education, volunteer, and donate to charity.

The arts are also the way we tell our stories as a society. They're how we talk about what is important to us, how we view the world, and how we make sense of complicated issues. A visit to the British Museum is enough to remind us that, long after our civilisation has passed, what survives of us is our art. The exclusion of groups of people from the arts is therefore not just a problem for us now, but a persistent and enduring injustice that will echo down the ages. What people know of us in centuries to come, will be dictated by who is telling our story now.

Unfortunately, these benefits of the arts are not enjoyed equally. People from poorer backgrounds continue to be less likely to engage with the arts, and the same is true for people of black, Asian or minority ethnic heritage (BAME). If you are disabled, come from a lower socioeconomic group, don't own your own home, or don't have higher level qualifications, you are less likely to have participated in the arts in the past 12 months.[1]

It's therefore right that young people should be a target audience for arts engagement efforts to encourage a lifelong love of the arts. These young people will be our future poets, sculptors, filmmakers and musicians. Yet, despite the great efforts of many arts organisations and their funders, trend data indicates that young people's participation in arts and culture is persistently flat, and in some cases declining across many forms. One in five people aged 16-24 does not attend or participate in arts activities.[2] That is likely to fall further once recent government funding cuts and reductions in provision mean even fewer children are exposed to the arts.

This leaves a gap for philanthropy to fill—to save young people from missing out on enjoying art, to ensure they enjoy the benefits of improved confidence and education, and to empower them to tell their stories for us all to hear. Philanthropists want to pass on their love of the arts to future generations. But so far, the work done by philanthropists and charities has not made a big difference to the number of people taking part. We believe funders and arts organisations can change this by following the best quality evidence about what works in engaging young people in the arts.

In this report, we examine why it can be difficult for young people to engage with the offer of arts organisations and propose a framework for overcoming these barriers. Our work is based on a literature review, workshops and interviews with arts organisations, and focus groups and interviews with young people (see Appendix 1: Methodology for more information). Central to our recommendations is the importance of having a commitment to young people, involving young people in decisions, providing a welcoming space, and forming partnerships with other youth organisations. Our framework of effective approaches mirrors our analysis of the barriers, making it easier to think about what approaches would work with specific challenges.

We've written this guide primarily for funders, but we think the advice contained is just as valuable for arts organisations themselves. We believe funders and arts organisations can overcome the barriers to engagement if they follow the evidence of what works, so that all young people are able to benefit from the arts.

# Definitions

## Arts and culture organisations

We have taken 'arts organisation' or 'culture organisation' to mean a formally constituted entity comprising of one or more people whose purpose is the production, performance or promotion of the arts and/or culture.

Within 'arts and culture' we include performing arts, visual arts, literature/creative writing, digital arts/media, crafts, multidisciplinary arts, buildings/monuments, community heritage, museums/galleries, and libraries/archives. We recognise that the boundary of what is art is forever contested, so we do not attempt to impose our own judgement onto specific works or activities.

For this report, we consider arts and culture organisations as distinct from organisations that use art but whose primary purpose is something other than arts and culture, such as rehabilitating young prisoners through art.

## Young people

We looked at research using a broad definition of young people to include ages 0 to 25—but our findings are focused on the 13-25 age range. Other researchers break this 0-25 into early years, children, and young people. We specify a smaller age bracket where relevant.

## Engagement

Our standpoint is that all young people should have the opportunity to engage with arts and culture. We came across a range of vocabulary in our literature review and in interviews with arts and culture organisations and young people, such as participation, outreach, learning, access, attendance, cultural consumption, experience, diversifying, audience development, education, and inclusion.

We've used 'engagement' to include a broad spectrum of ways in which young people encounter and experience arts and culture—from being exposed to some sort of art or culture, attending something, creating something, and/or pursuing a career in arts and culture. We believe all types of engagement have value and that people move back and forth along this spectrum throughout their lives.

## Intrinsic and instrumental outcomes

Intrinsic outcomes describe the value of art in and of itself, such as the change a person experiences when taking part. Intrinsic outcomes are often talked about in terms of enjoyable experiences, self-fulfilment and personal growth.

By contrast, instrumental outcomes are about additional benefits, such as using art to improve people's health, promote community development, or contribute to education. Instrumental outcomes are typically social, economic or educational outcomes.

# The context of arts organisations

Now is a tough time for arts organisations. Nevertheless, some are achieving great success thanks to their tested and innovative approaches.

In many ways, creativity among young people is thriving in the UK and beyond. The Arts Council England's current ten-year strategy includes a strategic goal focused on children and young people, and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) recently announced that the 'creative industries' contribute £101.5bn to the UK economy.[3] Societal and technological changes are transforming what it means to express oneself creatively. Young people are now able to access instruction and inspiration, produce their own content, and reach audiences in ways that were impossible before the advent of social media and affordable technology like Instagram and YouTube. Previously niche forms of art, such as spoken word, can now grow through digital means, bypassing traditional organisations.

And yet, a fifth of young people aged 16-24 do not attend or participate in the arts.[4] The picture is not improving. Trends from the *Taking Part* survey by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport show young people's engagement with arts and culture has been largely flat or decreasing over the past decade.[5] Furthermore, the *Taking Part* survey has consistently shown that engagement with the arts is lower for adults from less affluent socio-economic groups and from BAME backgrounds.[6]

At first glance, the 2017/18 *Taking Part* survey looks encouraging, with 95.9% of young people surveyed having engaged with the arts in the past year. However, this overall figure masks discrepancies by form.[7] When you look closer, the most common means of 'arts engagement' reported are reading and writing, both of which are naturally a part of the school curriculum anyway. Meanwhile other forms of art continue to slide.

So, while creativity may be flourishing, this doesn't translate into engagement in the traditional arts. Young people are changing what is defined as art, as generations before them have done. If arts organisations or philanthropists do not recognise this, then young people can find other outlets for their creativity. Arts organisations need to adapt to reflect that.

## The story of arts engagement efforts

Efforts to increase participation and engagement in the arts have existed for a long time. 125 years ago, Robert Newman wrote to the conductor Henry Wood to propose a series of 'Promenade Concerts', the purpose of which, he stated, was:

*'… to run nightly concerts and train the public by easy stages. Popular at first, gradually raising the standard until I have created a public for classical and modern music.'[8]*

These concerts, better known now as the BBC Proms, are perhaps one of the most prominent and enduring public examples of funders' attempts to broaden the appeal of the arts and develop new audiences.

Newman had two intentions. He wanted to build future audiences, and to raise the public's critical awareness of music. Since then, it has become more common to see projects where the art was for instrumental outcomes rather than the intrinsic ones Newman aspired to. The focus shifted after the Second World War to using art to improve people's health, promote community development, or contribute to education. As time went on, funders steadily became more interested in these instrumental outcomes, at the expense of intrinsic benefits. Arts

organisations needed to demonstrate the wider instrumental impact their art would make. It was no longer enough for people to simply participate and enjoy art for its own sake.

In the 1980s, the Arts Council of Great Britain began to see education as its number one priority. The arts sector successfully lobbied the government to include appreciation for and performance of art and music in the school curriculum. However, the 1988 Education Reform Act also led to an uneven distribution of arts in school; an unintended consequence of devolving some powers to individual schools over what to teach and how to teach it. Some schools cut arts programmes, and others began to charge for them as an extracurricular activity. At the same time, local arts organisations had to spend more resources on engaging and publicising their offer to individual schools. The impact of this is still felt by arts organisations today.

A shift in policy from the 1990s onwards saw the devolution of the Arts Council of Great Britain. The government prioritised 'creativity' in education and child development, rather than the arts in themselves, with a view to the importance of creativity for the future economy. Creative partnerships were established to connect creative professionals, teachers and students. This reinforced the importance of instrumental economic benefits over the belief that art already has intrinsic value.

Today, arts organisations in the UK engage in a wide variety of programming and services, often referred to as outreach, learning, or engagement. These activities have several interrelated goals:

- to grow their audiences and guarantee future audiences;
- to educate and inspire people;
- to preserve and develop specific art forms and bodies of work;
- to secure and sustain funding streams; and
- to develop both the artists and critical arts consumers of the future.

That said, the arts sector is incredibly broad, with a wide diversity of organisations and art forms. How these goals are expressed therefore differs depending on the nature of the organisation.

## The nature of arts organisations varies immensely

The arts and culture sector is a diverse arena, including both for-profit and non-profit organisations. Some are concerned with one specific art form, while others promote arts more generally. It is a sector in which small local organisations work alongside national and international brands; where historic buildings host some of the greatest works imaginable, and equally impressive spectacles operate out of repurposed spaces.

When people think of arts and culture, they might imagine large organisations like Historic Royal Palaces, who run the Tower of London. In reality, the largest charities make up only 3% of the culture charity sector.[9] Most raise money through ticket sales, an option unavailable to many non-arts charities, which means they have more choice over how to spend this money than non-arts charities would.

However, the arts and culture sector is heavily influenced by Arts Council England and equivalent public bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These public bodies (Arts Council England, Creative Scotland, Arts Council of Wales, Arts Council of Northern Ireland) are by far the largest funders and their strategies are therefore important to what arts and culture organisations decide to focus on. The Arts Council England, the sector's major public funder in England, has an emphasis on children and young people in its strategy. We would therefore expect organisations funded by the Arts Council England to be more likely to focus on children and young people.

## Different goals affect how arts organisations view engagement

Just as arts organisations vary in character, their goals differ too. Some might revolve around a particular art form, such as the Wedgwood Museum which, as its name suggests, focuses on Wedgwood Pottery. Others, like the Manchester International Festival, exist to give people opportunities to engage in many forms of art. Some, like the National Gallery, exhibit the major traditions of Western European painting. Meanwhile others, like Foxlowe Arts Centre in Staffordshire, are more interested in unleashing the artistic talents of their community. Some have social goals as well as artistic ones, such as Tees Valley Arts, which aims to create social change by giving communities a platform to tell their own stories.

The overarching goal will affect what arts organisations are trying to achieve with their outreach and participation offer. Common aims include:

- attracting young people on a one-off basis;

- encouraging young people to become regular 'consumers';

- inspiring potential creators;

- giving the public greater ownership and agency within public institutions;

- giving greater ownership of the arts, both established and new forms;

- helping young people develop skills and experience, sometimes with a view towards progressing potential careers in the arts, other times for broader social impact aims;

- broadening the appeal of arts to new audiences to counter declines in visitor/audience numbers; and

- understanding what young people want now and are likely to want in the future in terms of participation in the arts.

These aims often support other goals the organisation has, but they can be undermining. For instance, many arts organisations rely on ticket or product sales to raise revenue. Reducing prices to attract young people could affect short-term revenue, even if the long-term impact is positive.

# Understanding the barriers

There are many reasons why young people find it difficult to get involved or stay involved in arts and culture. The barriers young people face are significant and enduring—and range from things which are easy to see and address, to ones which are more deep-seated. There has been extensive research on these barriers, which our research with arts participation experts and young people both confirms and sheds new light on how we understand these barriers.[10]

We believe the barriers to engaging young people in the arts are best understood as three distinct types. We explore each of these in more detail in this section.

1. **Attitudinal barriers:** A feeling that the arts aren't for people like you. It doesn't matter what time the show is or how much the tickets cost. You just feel like you don't belong.
2. **Functional barriers:** Not being able to take part, regardless of how much you might want to, because the opportunity just isn't there.
3. **Practical barriers:** Not being able to come along, or not knowing that something was happening, because of an inconvenient time or location, prohibitive pricing or a lack of information.

We've found that an iceberg is the best way of conceptualising the types of barriers and the relationship between them. Figure 1 below shows how practical barriers are just the tip of the problem and easier to see. You have to dive deeper to uncover the functional and attitudinal barriers that are hidden beneath the surface.

**Figure 1: How practical, functional and attitudinal barriers interact**
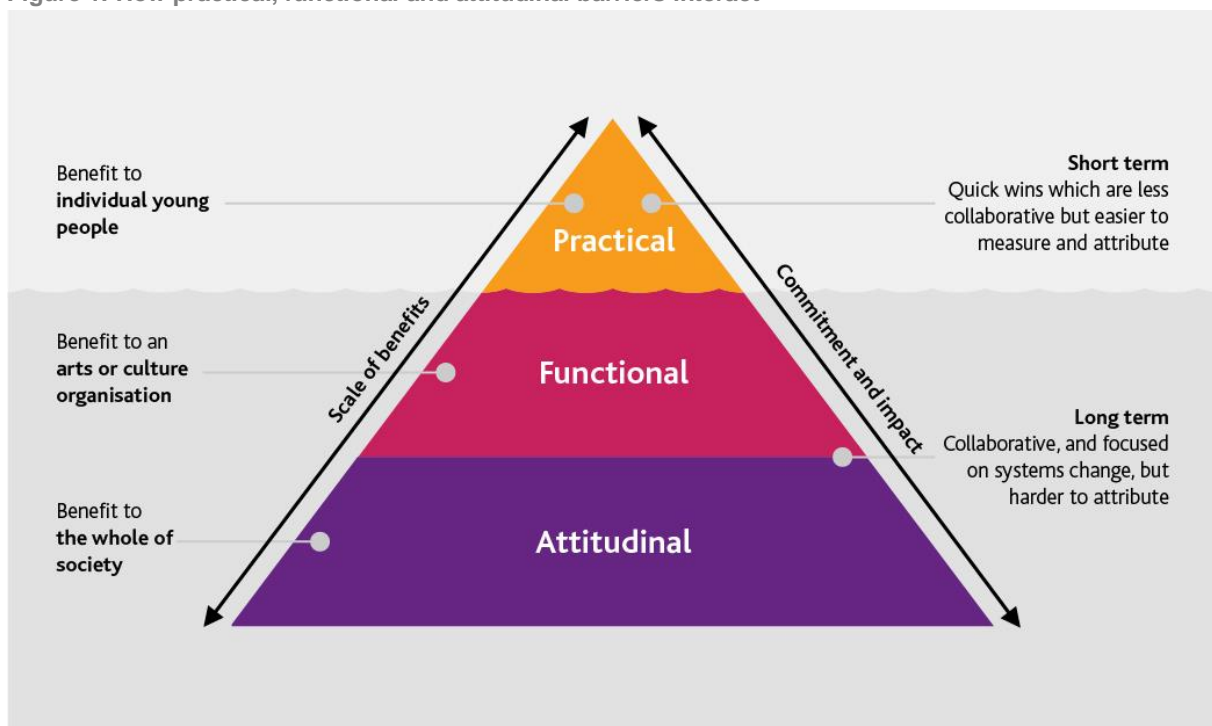
## 1. Attitudinal barriers

While practical barriers are often the first to come to mind, studies have concluded that attitudinal barriers pose the greatest challenge to young people's engagement in the arts. A New Direction's '*My Culture, My London*' ethnographic study produced the 'Iceberg Model', suggesting that 'below the water' identity issues are harder to identify and discuss openly than practical concerns, and present more fundamental challenges to engaging young people in the arts.[11]

Likewise, a study by the University of Middlesex acknowledged that practical barriers prevent some young people from participating in the arts, but concluded that psychological barriers are paramount. Geographic proximity matters, but a lack of familiarity and ownership can be just as important. Not believing spaces and activities to be 'for me' presents major hurdles for young people.[12]

These attitudinal barriers were familiar to almost every young person who took part in our research, whether they were talking about their own experiences, or reflecting on their friends and peers who do not participate in the arts. Most frequently, this was attributed to either a socio-economic factor or a lack of confidence in themselves as a possible creator. Perceptions that the arts are produced by and for the middle and upper classes endure, although this is more of an issue for some artforms than for others. Some people reflected on how they had overcome these barriers before taking part in arts programmes, while others admitted that many of their family and friends still perceive the arts as 'not for them'.

Both the literature and our research with young people show that many factors contribute to these feelings.[13] Chief among these are:

- perceptions of the **venues** in which the arts are experienced;
- **language** used by arts organisations;
- a lack of **family** involvement;
- a feeling that art is irrelevant and therefore not **interesting**; and
- a lack of recognition of the **diversity** of young people.

### Unfamiliar venues can be off-putting

For some young people, the choice of venue can be important. Young people told us in our interviews that if a place is unfamiliar, it can be difficult to feel you belong there—which can be a barrier to engagement:

*'There's a disconnect for young people coming from certain backgrounds to be able to see yourself in those spaces.'*

This is especially true for organisations which have historic buildings:

*'My cousin was involved in acting and drama … but I feel like maybe the building itself, it looks like this big old medieval institute and it just turns young people off and maybe doesn't look as welcoming…and then you have to go all the way in [inside the building] and to the back to get to Contact ... trying to get somebody to come in to the building, from behind the [perception] barrier is hard.'*

It may also just be that it's not somewhere they've ever been before, and therefore it feels like the event was intended for someone else:

*'I remember the first time I went to that big library in town, the Central Library, and I went to see Scrooge and it was like a whole different world, but everyone else's view is [mimics 'posh' voice] "oh, you go to the theatre" ...'*

**Attitudinal barriers**

### The language of excellence is unhelpful

There's nothing wrong with desiring 'arts excellence', but we did find that language like this can be inadvertently exclusive. Young people may think such language means they need to be 'good at art' before they're allowed to participate. This is especially true for creating art but can be the case for consumption as well.[14]

Barriers are also created when arts organisations and young people have a different understanding of words and phrases relating to arts and culture. For example, some organisations perpetuate narrow definitions of 'arts', but research tells us that young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, increasingly understand 'culture' in a very broad sense. Not only are they less likely to make distinctions between arts and culture, they are also less likely to draw distinctions between traditional arts forms and online activity, such as sharing images and videos.[15]

There is a growing split between what activities young people consider to be art, and what organisations and their funders consider to be art. Fifteen years ago, if you wanted an audience for your art you needed to engage with an organisation which had the capacity to showcase it. Now you can reach hundreds, thousands or even millions through a YouTube video or an image on Instagram.

While the young people we spoke to did not refer explicitly to the term 'arts excellence', they did express the impact of language more generally on how they viewed themselves as potential creators:

*'When I was younger, I just thought of 'music' as something you dance to [that was made by other people], not really like [as though] you [personally] can play an instrument.'*



**Attitudinal barriers**

**Family encouragement can make all the difference**

Young people are more likely to take part in arts activities, including gallery visits and playing a musical instrument, if it is encouraged or enjoyed by older generations in their family.[16] Young people, whose families and peers do not engage in art, face significant attitudinal barriers to engagement themselves.

A lack of exposure to arts or broader creative pursuits through family and peer circles, meant some of the young people we spoke to felt they had to go 'against the grain' to express or develop a nascent interest in the arts. Pursuing art meant facing up to family and peer attitudes ranging from perplexed, to uninterested, to hostile:

*'I try to explain to my family what it is that I'm actually doing and just "what is that?" —blank faces. Like, "I designed a typeface and I'm going to do an MA in typography" and they're like—[blank face] "how are you going to get money?"'*

Family support can also be critical to overcoming practical barriers:

*'It's really hard without having parents who are supportive, just in terms of transport, like getting places, and finding out about things … paying for days out and food and stuff, there are so many things where you need your parents' support.'*

**It's difficult for young people to be interested if they don't see the relevance**

Negative perceptions of the arts as 'boring' or 'irrelevant' to daily life are a major challenge to overcome. Believing that art is irrelevant reinforces the idea that the arts are for others. One of the young people in our research felt this despite having parents who were engaged in serious amateur music:

*'You know that stereotypical idea of classical music that it's all opera singing and all these instruments I didn't even know existed before, I just thought it was not interesting.'*

In an environment where young people face increasing pressure from school and they are concerned about their career prospects and the housing crisis, arts can be shelved as 'not useful' for addressing one's most urgent day to day concerns.[17]

**Young people have a wide diversity of attitudes and experiences**

We found that organisations sometimes lack a nuanced understanding of the diversity of young audiences. This is an attitudinal barrier which lies within organisations themselves. A recent study found that few museums knew the socio-economic profile of young visitors.[18]

Young people are far from a homogenous group. There are innumerable differences in attitudes, experiences, class and other factors between different young people. Treating everyone the same is therefore a significant barrier to engagement.

Some of the young people we met in our research felt that, at times, they had not been treated as an individual. They spoke in depth about the importance of being treated with respect, and most importantly as an individual capable of meaningful work, by the adults they encountered on the programmes they most enjoyed.

*'I feel like when you're being spoken to from someone who's an authority figure there's a kind of speaking down to you which makes you feel unable to be honest and speak up to that power.'*

**Attitudinal barriers**

## 2. Functional barriers

Situated between day to day practical difficulties and underlying attitudinal issues are a set of functional barriers. These tend to be project-related and are usually linked to a lack of provision. The most common reasons for this are the difficulties accessing schools and mistargeted marketing.

### Schools find it difficult to offer meaningful artistic experiences

Arts engagement policy has tended to focus on schools as the natural location for young people's engagement in the arts. In practice, declining school arts provision and curriculum changes have reinforced the practical and attitudinal barriers. Arts organisations are working in a challenging school environment where arts have been relegated behind more 'career-focussed' subjects. This is true in absolute terms, but also in relative terms, as the broader 'creativity' agenda gears more towards industry and workforce development.

Low levels of school arts provision is a significant barrier to potential audiences and creators alike. These patterns hold true even in more affluent areas.[19] As school provision decreases, the barriers presented to arts participation (especially creation) by demographic factors (class, socio-economic status, parental education levels, ethnicity) become magnified.[20] This reinforces attitudinal barriers. Research from King's College London concluded that not giving young people regular and high quality opportunities to engage with the arts, to explore their own creative potential, or to develop their critical appreciation for the arts, all contributed to reinforcing the perception that the arts are for the wealthy few, and not for all.[21]

Creating and sustaining relationships with schools can be difficult for arts organisations. Specific challenges include:

- timetable pressures, especially in secondary schools;
- difficulties in gaining access to schools, particularly for tightly resourced, smaller arts organisations;
- curriculum pressures, such as the English Baccalaureate emphasis on English, maths and science, which leaves relatively little opportunity for sustained engagement with the arts to develop critical perceptions; and
- fewer school trips to arts venues, in some cases trips are only for those seen as 'good' students.[22]

Many young people we spoke to in our research mentioned that they had had limited or patchy exposure to the arts through school. A few also observed that in their schools, the arts were limited unless it was going to help students achieve higher marks. One noted that visits to museums were seen as 'educational', rather than 'inspiring'.

### Mistargeted marketing can be counterproductive

Engagement can be undermined by marketing that misses the mark. Poor messaging or design may interact with existing attitudinal barriers, or the wrong channels might be used. Young people we spoke to in our research told us that more people they knew might have been interested if there had been better information and more attractive marketing. Attractive digital marketing was specifically mentioned as a factor that had raised their interest. Despite this, research by Arts Connect found that for some organisations, digital remains marginal rather than integral to engaging young people in the arts.[23]

## 3. Practical barriers

Practical barriers are the most obvious to identify and offer some quick wins for arts organisations. The most common are time, distance, cost and information, all of which can be magnified in rural locations.

### Money, time and distance make it difficult for young people to engage

Money is unsurprisingly an important factor for arts engagement. In addition to the cost of the entrance, ticket or programme itself, the hidden barrier might be the cost of expenses such as transport, supplies, and application fees.[24] There is also the opportunity cost of lost income for a young person choosing to take part in an arts programme rather than work part-time.[25]

Many of the young people we spoke to said that arts programmes being free, or low cost, was a big part of their ability to take part. This was particularly relevant for young people from lower income backgrounds, but not exclusively so. Students in further and higher education find low entry costs to be an enabling factor even if they are from more privileged backgrounds.

Time is another barrier facing young people. Conflicting pressures from school or work, as well as their families' own time pressures in a challenging economy, mean participating in the arts and the journey to get there may feel like a luxury they do not have time for.[26] Some of the young people in our research said they had to move in and out of respective arts programmes as school and exam pressures, the need to work, and the time required to get to and from the programme added extra pressure to their busy schedules.

It's not just school and work pressures that arts organisations are having to compete with. The Arts Council England found that young people spending more time on social media, watching TV or watching streaming services contributes to lower 'cultural participation', such as reading a book, playing a musical instrument or engaging in visual arts.[27]

Distance is a barrier which combines the pressures of time and money. Distance from the venue and access to transport play a significant role in a young person's ability to take part in arts programmes.[28]

*'The distance puts people off; mostly because people don't have a lot of money so paying for the bus or tube is a problem and then sitting on a bus for an hour.'*



**Practical barriers**

### Without the right information, young people cannot engage

We found that young people sometimes lack basic information about the opportunities open to them. It may be that they don't know about specific programmes, but it could also be a lack of awareness of art forms more broadly. We believe this is a significant barrier which, as mentioned earlier, may be due to poor marketing, a lack of exposure to arts through family and peer circles, or a dearth of opportunities through school.[29]

Some of the young people we spoke to said that they felt more people they knew might have chosen to get involved if the programmes had been better advertised, or better targeted.

### Rural locations multiply other barriers

We found practical barriers to be particularly salient for those outside of towns or cities. Rurality has a multiplying effect on other challenges, thereby making it a barrier in and of itself.

Young people in rural areas are more likely to say that they haven't had a chance to participate in the arts, that they did not know how to take part, or that it is too expensive.[30] While most of the young people we spoke to in our qualitative research were in urban areas, a few of them expressed this view as well.

**Practical barriers**
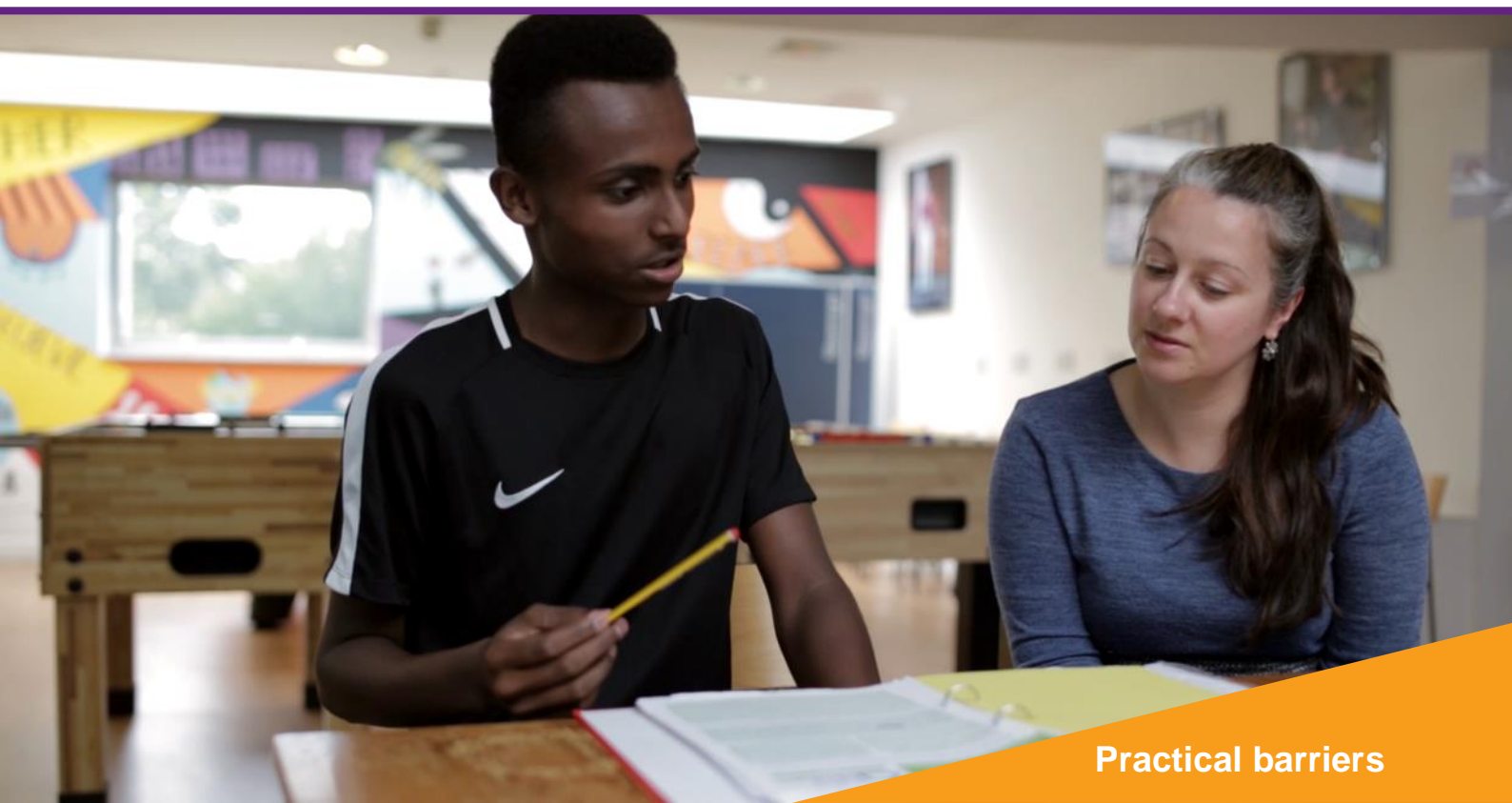
# Our framework for engaging young people

In the previous chapter, we explained how entrenched the barriers are to young people engaging in the arts. We believe though that these obstacles are surmountable. The young people and sector experts we spoke to in our research all highlighted some common themes of what works, whatever the art form, which is backed up by the existing literature as well.

In this chapter, we present a framework for engaging young people in arts and culture. For each aspect, we explain the factors you need to consider before you begin, drawing upon evidence from the literature and our interviews. We do not attempt to summarise every document or interview in full, but simply extract and comment on that which adds to our understanding of what works.

None of the approaches we put forward make sense in isolation. They must instead be woven together into a comprehensive youth engagement strategy. Many of the approaches depend upon or influence each other, so it is worth considering what combination will make sense for your aims. Figure 2 below explains how different types of approaches build upon each other.

**Figure 2: Framework for effective approaches**
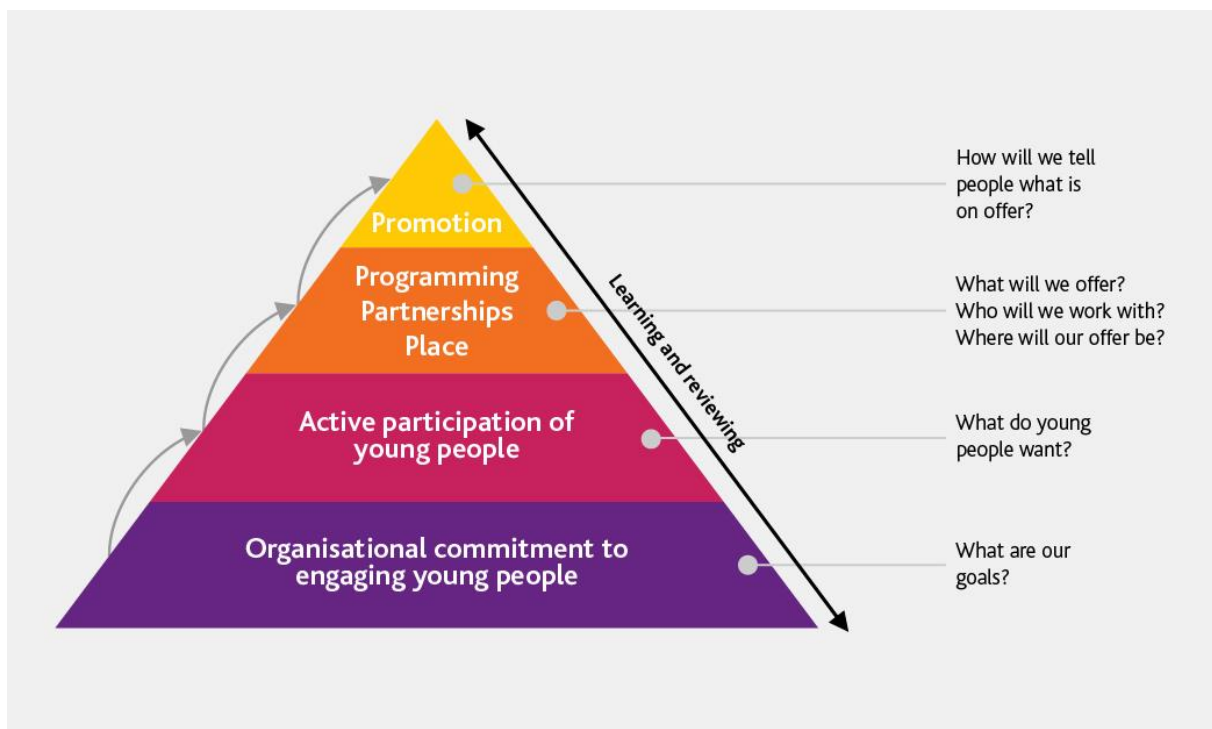


This framework mirrors and expands upon the barriers diagram presented earlier. As the diagram shows, the foundation for effective work with young people is organisational commitment, so we explore this challenge first. Next, we look at fostering active participation of young people in the organisation and its programmes. Both of these approaches aim to tackle attitudinal barriers. Then we turn to three types of decisions organisations need to make at around the same time to overcome functional barriers. These are programming, partnerships, and place. Finally, we investigate how organisations should be thinking about promoting their work to confront practical

barriers to attracting young people. Throughout all of this, organisations and their funders should be using data to learn from what is working and be willing to change what isn't.

When considering the approaches in this chapter, think carefully about what sort of organisation you are or are supporting. Consider your overall goals and how these relate to your ambitions for youth engagement. As we discussed in the previous chapter, arts and culture organisations vary considerably. There are many strategic questions that an organisation should be asking itself, such as:

- **Goals**: Why do you want to work with young people and which young people do you want to work with?

- **Geographic location**: How close are you to the young people you would like to work with? Do you have national or local reach? What sort of environment are you in? Urban or rural? What are the implications of this for transport?

- **Venue**: Do you have a specific building? Do you have other venues or spaces you can use as well?

- **Definition of art and culture**: Do you have a defined art form or collection that your work is based on? Or do you take a broad view of creativity across different types of art and culture?

- **Size**: What resources, employees, and assets do you have?

- **Brand**: How well do people know you?

- **Budget and sources of income**: How much can you invest in engaging young people? Are there any requirements that could help or hinder?

All these factors affect what an organisation can do. For example, if an organisation has a historic building that it feels is important to bring young people into, that constrains the approaches it can take. It will need to develop a way of bringing young people into the building, so it can't just rely on partnership work in the community. Similarly, if an organisation is interested in future talent development rather than audience development, then it needs programmes that support long-term engagement and progression rather than one-off events. Donors should be mindful of the type of organisation they are funding, and consider its assets and constraints, as that will affect the type of work that can be done. As far as possible, funders should be looking for organisations with similar goals to themselves.

## The quality of evidence

Despite extensive research into the barriers to young people engaging in arts and culture, we found little overall evidence of what works for overcoming them. The evidence that does exist is of variable quality. In 2010, an Arts Council England literature review concluded:

*'The high quality of much audience research does not appear to have generated a greater shared understanding of what works and what does not work in engaging people with the arts.[31]'*

We feel this is still largely true in the sector, so we encourage further research into what works in engaging young people so that everyone enjoys an equal opportunity to participate in arts and culture.

Much of the strongest evidence looks at a broader range of ages (including young people and adults), so we also took lessons from that literature. At the end of this report, there is a heatmap in Appendix 2 showing how successful each approach is for engaging young people.

## 1. Organisational commitment and willingness to change

Organisational commitment to working with young people and a willingness to change are foundational for successfully engaging young people in arts and culture. They are the starting points for all other categories of interventions and approaches described in this report.

The evidence in the literature for these approaches is strong. It was also the most salient topic in our interviews with people who are trying to improve young people's engagement with arts and culture. Activities under this umbrella include:

- having clear goals by clarifying your motivations for change, and understanding which young people you would like to work with and why;
- shifting your organisational mindset to take a young people centric approach, and including young people in all decision making;
- reviewing organisational structures and processes, and acting on organisational diversity; and
- supporting all your staff to feel comfortable working with young people.

### Having clear goals

It is important for organisations to be clear about who they are hoping to work with. 'Young people' has a broad definition, so organisations should consider whether they want their work with young people to be universal or targeted at a specific group of young people.

Some characteristics to consider are their age, level of education, socio-economic background, gender, ethnicity, whether they have a disability, and where they live. Other relevant points to consider might be whether you are working with specific groups like young offenders or children in care. It's also important to factor in existing levels of interest in the arts and what previous experience the young people you are working with may or may not have.

Several organisations, who are seeing more or better quality engagement from young people, spoke to us about the careful thought that goes into their work, including the following.

- Mapping engagement in places or with groups to understand gaps and what young people want and need.
- Using this mapping to target specific groups of young people, based on a range of factors, such as where they live; age; schools with low arts engagement; schools with a high proportion of pupils on free school meals; whether young people are in education, training or employment; young people in care; and young people in prisons.

Organisations with specific and transparent goals spoke about the positive effect this has on staff commitment to young people, their ability to build trusting relationships with community partners, and their ability to evaluate success. In interviews, several people highlighted the importance of having goals beyond the organisation's immediate interests. Suzie Henderson, Creative Producer at Contact, spoke about how she sees Contact's role in the wider system:

*'Often Contact's role in its relationships with young people is to act as a mentor. We inspire, empower and equip young professionals at the beginning of their careers, and we won't always see the full benefit of their potential and their progress within our organisation—but that's something we're OK with, because Contact's impact is felt in the wider creative economy, across Greater Manchester and nationally, as well as in film, TV and radio.'*

**Commitment**

The Royal Opera House has historically focused on opera and ballet. 18 months ago, it explored its values and priorities and decided it wanted to pay more attention to widening participation and deepening learning. This change came about because it believes opera and ballet have the power to change people's lives and shouldn't be the exclusive premise of people already 'in the know' or in London.

Within opera and ballet, it now has a clear goal for young people: *'Inspire creativity of the next generation by introducing opera and ballet into classrooms and non-formal settings to encourage young people to engage with the art forms.'*

This goal is clear that the Royal Opera House only does work relevant to opera, ballet and theatre craft. It focuses on three different types of engagement: discovering (for example, attending an afternoon workshop), exploring (for example, a series of lessons in a classroom setting), and engaging (for example , becoming a youth opera company member).

One of its recent pieces of work was a very popular school matinee production of Romeo and Juliet. Two thousand young people came to watch it and the feedback showed many young people could relate to the concepts of feuding gangs and knife crime. While the Royal Opera House feels there are many options for ballet work suitable for young people, it has found it harder to find opera work that might be relevant. In response, it has commissioned a new work aimed at families, based on Alice in Wonderland, to be performed on the main stage.

**Commitment to young people should be long-term and organisation-wide**

The literature is clear on the importance of an organisation-wide commitment to young people. It needs to be strong enough to create a profound change in the mindset of an organisation. Research into a range of engagement programmes and initiatives with young people suggests that organisational commitment and willingness to change determines the extent to which other interventions are effective. As important as it is to establish partnerships, new programmes, alternative venues, and ticket price reductions, none of these will be as effective as they could be without this mindset in place.

Many organisations take a collection centric approach, whereas research shows they should be taking an audience centric approach if they want to break down the notion of arts as stuffy and irrelevant. [32] We think the same applies to youth engagement, and that for this to happen it requires a commitment from the whole organisation. Tate is one of the best examples we found of being able to turn the potential downsides of their heritage into a strength. Maria Balshaw, Director of Tate, described the journey organisations needed to go on in an evaluation report:

*'We were formed as nineteenth century institutions. This means we have a lot of history and also some baggage to carry with us and many habits, feelings and ways of being that need to change because we now operate in a 21st century world. It's our ethical and social responsibility to be listening actively and be in conversation with people, especially young people, so that process of an uneven playing field of access to the arts begins to shift.'[33]*

19

This commitment to young people needs to be throughout the organisation. Culture needs strong champions at every level; commitment and vision are key to the success any project.[34] Artistic direction needs to work in tandem with programming, marketing and education, which means leadership plays a crucial role in activating, promoting and sustaining engagement.[35] At Tate, a new trustee has been recruited to focus on young people. Work with young people is an important part of Tate's strategy, thanks to its CEO's support.

The real test for the strength of organisational commitment comes when youth engagement runs up against commercial pressures. At The Old Vic, 70-80% of project participants have never been before. Hannah Fosker, Education and Outreach Director, acknowledged the tension between commercial interests and community interests. However, she stressed that just as important as world class shows is creating a space where everyone is welcome to have conversation, learn new things, debate and connect. The theatre's commercial and education teams therefore work together to pursue their mission that *'theatre needs to be supported, shared and upheld for as many people as possible'*. An example is The Old Vic's Schools Club forum, made up of six young people who review shows and interview actors, thereby achieving education and marketing aims simultaneously.

This kind of organisation-wide commitment requires a long-term view, which is difficult without long-term funding. Building traction, spreading reputation and fostering long-term engagement with communities become especially challenging. Staff engagement is made harder, which can compromise the integrity of the work itself when staff are busy thinking ahead to the next round of funding or the next short-term project. Long-term funding is therefore one of the best ways that philanthropists can help organisations achieve their goals. In our interviews with young people, it was surprising how much they had absorbed about the funding pressures organisations are under, and how this can impact their work. One young person said:

*'They're always thinking about the next bit of funding, … so it can stifle creativity because the [adult] facilitators are pressurised I think by the people they might be funded by, because they want the programme to continue … even though we had budget we tried to do everything to save budget for the future, so there's a few compromises in the process … we have all these big ideas and to have that stripped back mentality [is challenging].'*

## Case study: Roundhouse

### Putting young people at the heart of your organisation

Roundhouse in London have put young people at the heart of its organisational vision: 'To be a hub of outstanding creative performance that powers the talent of the future.'

One of the principle goals of its plan is to expand the engagement, inclusion and reach with young people. It pays careful attention to where that growth could be, because it doesn't just want generic growth. Roundhouse wants to create more opportunities for people without access to arts and creative opportunities.

Roundhouse is one of those organisations that has devolved leadership throughout the organisation. It has considered its departmental structure and responsibilities, to embed a focus on young people throughout the team.

Responsibility for planning and delivering youth programmes therefore sits within the music, performing arts, and broadcasting and digital production departments rather than in a separate team.

## Commitment

## Diversifying audiences should include action on organisational diversity

The lack of diversity in the arts and culture sector is well-known, yet there is little research to connect efforts to improve organisational diversity internally with more diverse young audiences and participants externally. Diversity is an emerging area for the arts. In our expert interviews, an organisational commitment to improve diversity with targeted resources was often highlighted as important if an organisation wanted to achieve long-term change in their work with young people.

Several interviewees noted the lack of performer/artist diversity and general lack of staff diversity in the arts and culture sector, and the negative effect this has on some young people's interest as consumers, creators or potential employees. A few people we spoke to highlighted specific examples where BAME young people felt inspired by and more interested in arts where the painter, dancer or singer looked like them:

*'There's a disconnect for young people coming from certain backgrounds to be able to see yourself in those spaces, I've seen projects that are more diverse in the big libraries or art galleries about African cultures or other cultures that haven't always been the main focus.'*

This applies just as much to socio-economic backgrounds. Another young person we spoke to said:

*'A lot of children where I come from are from disadvantaged backgrounds and I see that there's still a lack of representation of people of all types. Children grow up thinking I don't see myself that way, for most young people in my area that means people in power, they don't always listen to younger children ...'*

The message from our interviewees was clear: organisations need to look at their own commitment to staff diversity, from artists to operations staff, if they are serious about improving the diversity of the young people engaging in arts and culture.

### Case study: Sadler's Wells

### Young people are an investment for the future

Sadler's Wells in London sees its work with young people as an investment for the future: *'We prioritise subsidising this work, as we believe in its long-term value for artists, audiences, the community and the venue.'*

This sense of purpose goes back to a founding figure in their history. Lilian Baylis had been presenting drama and opera at The Old Vic at popular prices. Motivated by her belief that great art should belong to everybody, in 1925 she began fundraising to rebuild Sadler's Wells so the people of north London could enjoy the same opportunities as those in the south. The team at Sadler's Wells feel a sense of responsibility in that legacy and choose to invest in developing the community's understanding of dance and choreography, alongside their own. Alistair Spalding, CEO, says its work with communities, including young people, is ultimately about widening the opportunities for people to tell their stories and giving them a chance to do that with the best resources and support possible.

*'If we don't widen access, we'll only tell one story. People from disadvantaged places have important stories to tell, so we have to give them that chance.'*

The work with young people is carefully targeted in terms of geography, age range, and schools with low arts engagement and/or a high percentage of pupils on free school meals or who speak English as a second language.

**Commitment**
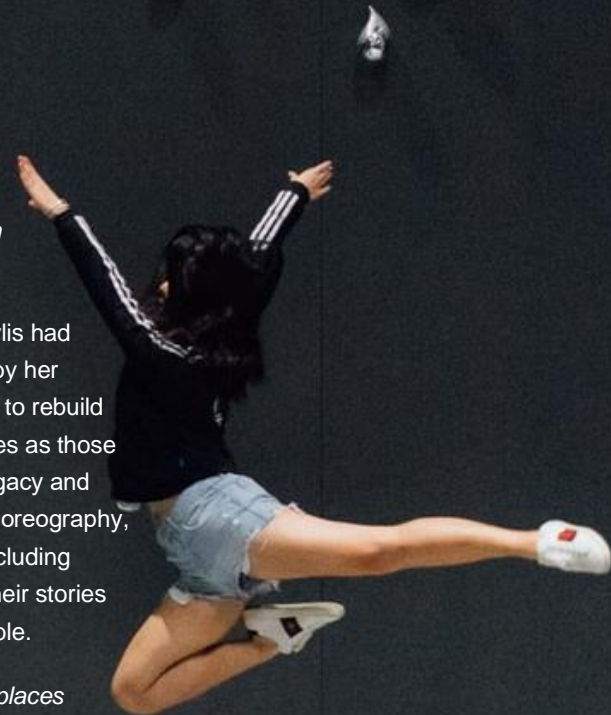
**Staff and volunteers need to feel confident in working with young people**

Building organisational capacity to involve and support young people can be done through staff training, development, and recruitment. The literature is relatively quiet here, yet it was a recurrent theme in our interviews. We also found it to be closely linked to an organisation's commitment to young people.

Young people we spoke to valued adults treating them with respect and as individuals. From their point of view, the ability to work effectively and empathetically with young people may be equally as important as experience or knowledge of the arts:

*'I feel like I'm taken seriously here, like even if I've spoken too much, they're still listening, and that's really important because I feel like I've been quieted not just by adults but by my peers for so long because I get really passionate about things ... it's like, have you ever thought why the person might be so passionate about something? You don't see that a lot, and I don't feel that way here [in the programme] so it's really nice.'*

This feeling of respect was expanded upon in greater detail by another young person, who told us:

*'All of the staff [on the successful programme] get it, all of them, they live by the same ethos and understanding, they know that young people are at the forefront of this …*

*I feel like so many aspirations are destroyed by the education system, [so that] when at the start of the project you're told to explore your desire, a lot of people don't know what they want, … a lot of education by the way currently reinforces this idea of machinery, box, a rigid structure, and spaces like [this arts programme] nurture this idea of open thinking, where you can step forward and challenge things … this is important for all fields, like STEM, or in your day to day life and how to solve problems that you're facing creatively.*

*I'm just upset that not enough people get the opportunity to do this because I feel like if they did, they would have a better life and a better understanding of the world around them and be more fulfilled because they'd know what they truly desire rather than waiting for people to tell you what to do, they'd take control of their life.'*

Several interviewees described their efforts to train staff at all levels and across every team in their organisation, including front of house, hospitality, programme teams, marketing, and senior management. The focus was on developing skills to work with young people, such as being approachable, encouraging creativity, being aware of opportunities available to young people, and safeguarding issues.

One evaluation found that sensitivity and patience are vital attributes for creative practitioners.[36] This was echoed by arts and culture practitioners in interviews, many of whom told us about work to upskill any of their staff who don't have experience of working with young people directly. From the CEO to the security staff, the confidence and ability to interact with young people is widely seen as a prerequisite to making them feel welcome and valued.

Interviewees also highlighted increasing pressure on arts and culture organisations to offer pastoral support to young people. There is a worry that cuts to youth services, insufficient mental health provision and a strain on schools is contributing to increased demand for pastoral support. Several organisations have taken on this responsibility themselves and are investing in additional training for all staff. Roundhouse has a core youth support team based in its studio space full-time. The youth team are embedded within each project to provide additional support and guidance to young people, and additional youth support workers can be assigned to key projects if necessary.

**Commitment**

## Case studies: Becoming more confident with young people

**Beatfreeks**, Birmingham, is proud of its work to engage with people who've never done creative projects before. It attributes success to a Head of Community who spends far more time out of the office than in it. Staff go to careers fairs, assemblies, a local homeless shelter, youth centres, and other events young people run.

**Sadler's Wells** has improved its marketing by running workshops with its marketing team, local partners and project participants to explore new ways of writing about dance and alternative media to use in promotion. For example, developing audience vlogs (video blogs) after performances. This has helped it understand what might appeal to young people.

**The Royal Opera House and Royal Ballet's** *Chance to Dance* programme is an example of systemic change. Local and national partners model best practice in ballet teaching and accessible training pathways. It offers professional development to dance teachers and is now working with schools in Essex.

**Heritage Lottery Fund** has given £10m to 12 heritage projects to engage a more diverse group of young people and to cater to their needs and interests. One of the lessons across the projects is the importance of upskilling front of house staff who might not feel as comfortable around young people and may not feel confident enough to work well with them.

**Tate's** *Circuit* programme improved access to the arts for 15-25 year-olds at ten galleries in England and Wales. Over four years the programme reached more than 175,000 people through events and projects. A key finding was the importance of the welcome in galleries; it matters to young people whether someone greets them and makes them feel they belong. Its evaluation recommended that museums and galleries create practical, continued professional development training for gallery staff, specific to youth sector partnership work and working with vulnerable young people.

**The Old Vic** attributes the success of its programmes with young people to its staff commitment to providing an excellent experience. When using freelance facilitators to run workshops with young people, they first spend two days training the team. A two hour workshop typically requires one week of preparation, and they often go through a process of piloting and testing ideas with feedback from young people, teachers and youth workers.

## 2. Active participation and co-production with young people

The second component to engaging young people is co-production. To be meaningful, co-production must build upon organisational commitment. Young people should be actively involved in the design and delivery of opportunities and given choices that reflect their individuality. Co-production should not be a one-off but sustained through ongoing dialogue.

Successful organisations embrace young people as co-creators, contributors and decision-makers, rather than simply as observers or consumers. Techniques can range from consultations to gather opinions, to co-producing work with young people, to embedded youth governance. It's good practice to appoint youth representatives to your board or to have a youth advisory board, and to involve young people in the recruitment of new staff. Involving young people in this way is much more effective for long-term engagement than simply treating them as someone being 'outreached to'.

Again, the approaches organisations choose to use here will depend upon the type of organisation they are. Organisations more focused around young people are more likely to embed these co-production strategies, like involving young people in their governance, than organisations that only have young people as one of many goals.

**Co-production**

### Actively involving young people in the design and/or delivery of opportunities

Building trust and dialogue is central to actively involving young people.[37] The importance of this comes across in literature from both the arts and culture sector and the youth sector.

Young people have a more positive experience, are more engaged and feel greater 'ownership' when they are actively involved.[38] They use services more and the services reflect their needs better.'[39] Several case studies also highlighted this. For example, the *Cultural Citizens* pilot in Barking and Dagenham found that being given the opportunity to shape content and choose which venues to visit increased young people's engagement.[40]

Involving young people means changing the way we see young people, from being 'receivers' of culture to designers of their own engagement. Research by Creative People and Places argued that engaging with different people can spark new ideas and is more effective than attempting to foster arts engagement through marketing a product to people.'[41]

As one CEO of an arts and culture organisation put it:

*'Historically the arts sector has said "we're providing this because it's good for you, and it's good for it because we say so." But now it's more important to listen to what young people want and need … We believe young people are best placed to know what's needed in their community, they've got the ideas to address the challenges.'*

Many of the young people we spoke to echoed the idea that they wanted to be involved in the design of the arts engagement programme. They wanted a level of control, rather than simply being viewed as target consumers of a product designed by adults. One of our research participants suggested that arts organisations may have much to learn from forward-thinking consumer brands who are heavily invested in user involvement approaches:

*'Sometimes the outreach can feel a bit like a bunch of not cool adults, that have nothing to do with that community, have come up with this programme and no one on the estate would be seen dead going to that thing, or that bus that turns up and has graffiti on the side and is trying to be a certain way, but doesn't have that authenticity … but if you can turn up and say to the young people "you can create this bus", it's going to look entirely different and won't have that graffiti and will have something that will attract people into it … maybe the model is not arts organisations but people like Nike that come up with advertising that is more inclusive and shaped by the people they're trying to sell to.'*

Perhaps because of how user centric some for-profit organisations now are, young people are expecting this more in their work with non-profit organisations. One young person we interviewed observed:

 *'A lot of the time, organisations will just come in and say "we've got this idea and we're here to help your community" and the community are like "hold on, one, we didn't ask you to come and two, we don't like your project, so take it to wherever."'*

For many of the young people we spoke to in our research, the ability to contribute meaningfully to the programme and to feel that the adults are taking them seriously was integral to their experiences being positive. In some cases, this involved allowing young people enough space, and support, to 'fail' as part of the creative process, regardless of the desired aims of the programme:

*'They also give you space for failure which sounds weird, with the Agency it's a different process than the more artistic programmes, literally your autonomy is too much, if you fail you do fail but they're prepared for that and they're there to pick you up.'*

Suzie Henderson, Creative Producer at Contact, shared the results it has seen from adapting its approach to involve young people. Seventy per cent of its audience are aged under 35, and almost 40% are of BAME heritage. Contact found that when young people got involved in shaping the organisation and its programme, other young people became more likely to engage. This snowball effect means Contact doesn't have to work as

**Co-production**

hard to encourage others to participate. It has also found itself doing things that it wouldn't do otherwise, which is exciting and energising for the team. A young person involved in Contact, told us:

*'I used to be with the Royal Exchange, and they would just give you a script and that's what you'd work with … with Contact, it's very youth led, you create the stimulus for it and make the show.'*

Active involvement of young people can be difficult for philanthropists, who may have preconceived ideas or outcomes that they want to pursue. When we interviewed young people, we found they were aware of the pressure the arts are under from their funders to demonstrate a lot of other social outcomes. Philanthropists should bear in mind that their ideas do get fed down to young people and can sometimes change what is offered in a way that young people don't appreciate.

One participant said:

*'Here's a point I wanted to make about this climate that we're in now, with the economy what it is, I feel like that the arts has a huge responsibility now to be social. I feel as though the government has taken a step back from social responsibility and has given it to the arts, like "right let's creatively clean this up," and that's ok but that creates even more pressure. Sometimes people need art and music just to express themselves in their own situation, or always save or rebuild everything.*

*Socio-economics is really interesting as a subject, but I just find it difficult to be the lynchpin to what's happening in society when people just need to express themselves.'*

### Giving choices that respect young people's individuality is critical

Young people have an aversion to being labelled as a homogeneous group. This is confirmed by the findings of a four year programme called *Circuit*, which aimed to improve youth engagement with galleries around the country. Each young person participating had shifting motivations and identities. Their individual changing circumstances and interests influenced whether they continued to participate or not. *Circuit* showed that to remain relevant, cultural projects should not make assumptions but be responsive to the needs and shifting interests of groups and individuals.[42] *Circuit* remained responsive to young people by working with them to produce relevant, multidisciplinary arts programmes. Through this it succeeded in growing the number and diversity of young people participating in gallery activities. The same lessons were echoed by the young people we interviewed. Many argued strongly that adults should make an effort to get to know them as individuals, and not as 'generic young people':

*'The teachers don't treat me like a child, obviously they have to put certain restrictions on us, they obviously promise to the parents that they'll keep the children safe and that, [yet] I feel like I have enough control to do what I want. They talk to me like a normal person.'*

Another young person talked about the importance of having respect from the whole organisation so they can contribute meaningfully.

*'Whenever I've spoken to anyone at a New Direction, up to the CEO and Directors, everyone has spoken to me as an equal and that's made me feel comfortable to be myself.'*

### Maintaining young people's involvement through ongoing dialogue

Sustained engagement in arts and culture has been linked to establishing ongoing dialogue with local people and working with a community to understand local interests.[43] This communication not only builds engagement in specific processes, but can also promote wider confidence in how you work.[44] This isn't easy. Many evaluations describe the difficulties in dedicating sufficient, long-term time to involve young people in planning and delivery, despite recognising its importance.[45] Multi-year funding is essential to enable this long-term work.

**Co-production**

Formal youth governance is one way to ensure young people's perspectives continue to be voiced when making strategic decisions. Contact are a good example of an organisation offering numerous opportunities for young people to make decisions alongside senior management. Every year, four young people join its programming team to decide what that year's programme will be. Four young trustees are full board members, and two of them chair subcommittees. Every member of staff is interviewed by a panel of young people, and that panel has an equal say in recruitment decisions to the staff panel.

## 3. Programming

Programming decisions are the choices made about the art form presented, its format, and how it is marketed. All of these contribute to the nature of a young person's arts and culture experience. Young people are more likely to engage with something recognisable, and organisations can use digital to complement their offer.

The choices an arts organisation can make here will be constrained by the type of organisation it is. If an organisation is primarily about one type of art form, that will naturally be what it chooses to display. If it has a historic building integral to its identity, it will need to make programming decisions that lead people into the building. This may require several interactions with people, to get them to a point where they feel the building is welcoming.

It's best to wait until the organisation understands the young people it intends to work with before committing to programming decisions. This could be through research and by involving young people in decision making.[46] This takes time. Engaging young people, or any under-represented group, is resource and time intensive. The need for enough lead time (often up to one year) for thoughtful and pragmatic programming decisions, is a common theme in evaluations about engaging new groups of people.[47] It was also echoed in our interviews. Several organisations spoke about building in enough time to develop a project or activity and testing it before rolling it out in full. Funding must therefore cover this lead in time, before a new programme of work can be implemented.

### Young people are more likely to engage with something recognisable

We found familiarity to be important both for initial attraction and for sustained engagement, both as consumers and creators. If an art form is recognisable, such as being based on a book or film that a young person is already familiar with, then this has a big influence on whether they will visit an arts and culture venue, event or project.[48] The familiarity of local venues is also important.[49] Putting on community-specific events is a good way of engaging people who could otherwise be left out, such as programming a Polish theatre performance with a Polish speaking community.[50]

A young person we spoke to revealed how their now well-developed interest in film, drama and arts management had strong roots in her childhood exposure to popular films in a local cinema kids' club:

*'I know I went to a kid's group at my local cinema, I remember going to films and the first time I watched an animated film, Coraline, [it] just got me hooked and I became obsessed and [it] opened me up to different genres.'*



**Programming**

One organisation we spoke to has a big music offer because music is a familiar art form. Their creative producer explained in our interviews how young people find music to be easier to understand and easier to imagine the potential progression routes of. The familiarity of music makes it particularly good at attracting people who haven't engaged in other arts and culture activities. This was backed up by other young people we spoke to in our research, who pinpointed music as an entry point into the arts that subsequently led to more intensive participation. A few participants explicitly mentioned their exposure to more familiar pop music in school choir settings as one of the initial catalysts for deeper engagement in the arts:

*'I remember being obsessed about being a pop star when I was seven and the school choir was the way to go.'*

Beyond the art form, the language used to describe it matters for promoting opportunities. Research by Arts Connect identified the disconnect between the definitions of arts and culture used by organisations and those used by young people, adding that hard definitions may prove problematic for an age range where there is a huge variety of activities that may not be seen to need categorisation.[51] Our interviewees stressed the importance of understanding what words, if any, young people use to describe activities they take part in, so that this can be reflected in language and programming choices.

We think this finding is essential for philanthropists giving to the arts. The categories funders use may be alienating to young people who have grown up in a more interdisciplinary world. For young people to engage in the arts, it is more important for language to be familiar to young people, not to the philanthropists. Philanthropists should be willing to have looser boundaries around the arts.

Familiarity is also important for sustaining engagement beyond first encounter. The *Circuit* programme, which aimed to improve youth engagement with museums and galleries, found that an interdisciplinary approach was one way of achieving this. In predominantly visual art galleries, incorporating performing art, music, illustration, graphic design, fashion design, debate and digital helped to connect the galleries to real life for young people.

As a staff member at Nottingham Contemporary, interviewed as part of the *Circuit* programme, pointed out:

*'It sounds simple to get young people into the gallery by holding, say, a huge party, but it isn't. Nottingham Contemporary can be a space which welcomes different youth subcultures to interact, from sport to gaming. It's not about forcing interaction with art. It's about showing that galleries are spaces that provide a platform for creativity to be appreciated. If they subsequently connect with works they encounter in the galleries, then all the better.'* [52]

This observation is echoed by the *Reimagine, Remake, Replay* project from Nerve Centre and National Museums Northern Ireland. A recent pilot trained young people to use technology to enhance existing museum collections. Participants explored virtual reality, 3D scanning, 3D printing, coding, green screen, laser and vinyl cutting and more, all while developing their own innovative content. Participants were able to get behind the scenes at the Ulster Museum to explore the collections and handle items from the archives. *Reimagine, Remake, Replay* was made more successful by young people being able to shape the project in a six month development phase of focus groups and taster sessions. As mentioned previously, working with young people is vital. Creating a familiar environment for young people to experience art is one of the many positive outcomes.

Terms like 'recognisable' or 'relevant' should not be conflated with 'simple' or 'basic'. An evaluation of rural touring found that people value being able to see something locally, provided it is high quality. Crucially, this is not the same as whether they like it or not. The evaluation found that audiences distinguish between whether something is intrinsically good, and whether they personally like it. There was no suggestion of 'dumbing down'.[53]

### Digital can offer standalone or supplementary experiences for audiences

Using digital technologies and approaches is an emerging theme in the literature and in our interviews.[54] Digitising arts and culture content can enable audiences to engage in different ways. Keep in mind though that the use of

**Programming**

digital to transform art can be overblown. There is little evidence that digitally distributed cultural events attract new audiences who would not participate in live performances.[55]

The internet and social media play a hugely important role in young people's lives. Many young people we spoke to shared how they take inspiration from Instagram, YouTube or other online media in the art they admire and, in some cases, create themselves. This shows that arts engagement professionals need to prioritise keeping a clear view of how young people themselves are engaging as consumers and producers of art outside of traditional formats. As argued earlier, one of the most effective ways to do this is by allowing young people themselves to help shape the programmes and content, including your digital engagement strategy.

Staff we spoke to at arts and culture organisations had mixed views about the role of digital experiences in improving engagement. A common conclusion was that digital experiences alone are probably not going to engage new audiences, but that supplementing face-to-face encounters with relevant digital experiences is sometimes effective.

Level in Derbyshire is one example of an organisation successfully using video conferencing to create a virtual collaboration space where people with learning disabilities, who are often isolated because of their disability, can come together to create and participate on a virtual stage.

## Case study: Watershed, Bristol

### Collaborating with other arts organisations to provide a joint offer for families

The Watershed family programme includes film, dance, storytelling, comic book making, animation and other fun things for families. It curates free or low-cost drop-in events to make it as easy as possible for families to join in.

Families gain first-hand experience, get familiar with different forms of art, learn practical skills and gain confidence in their ability and understanding. Most importantly, families start to feel like art is for 'people like me'.

Crucially, Watershed is part of the Bristol Family Arts Network, made up of over ten organisations in the city who work together to plan, market, deliver and evaluate a joint family offer for Bristol—inspired by research coming out of the Arts Council England's Family Arts Campaign. The network, led by Arnolfini, aims to ensure that as many children, young people and families in Bristol as possible have access to a good quality cultural and creative offer.

The network does this through the Bristol Family Arts Festival, an annual multi-venue celebration of kids' and adults' creativity which takes place in October. The same collaborative practice that has shaped the festival now extends to year-round joint activities, with burgeoning audiences at city centre events and those co-produced with libraries in inner city areas.

**Programming**
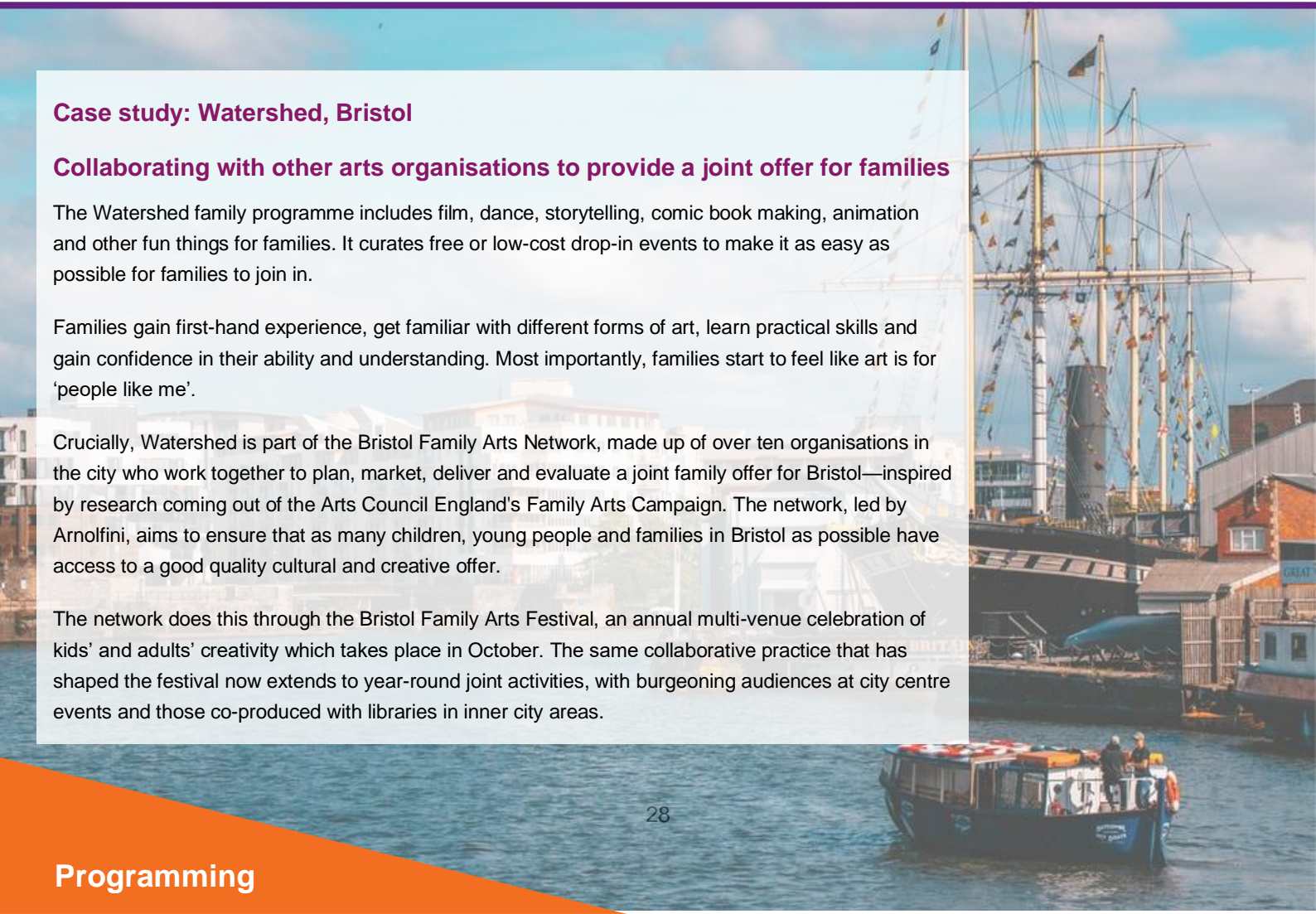
## 4. Partnerships

New audience can be reached through collaboration and partnerships. The most common are community groups and schools. There are different types of collaboration and partnerships that arts and culture organisations can pursue, including:

- local, regional or national;
- one-off or long-term; or
- within the sector or with different sectors.

Partnerships are about finding an individual or organisation with a shared goal who you can work with to achieve that aim. Parents, teachers, peers and community groups all influence young people's choices, so arts and culture organisations may pursue those sorts of partnerships to engage more young people.

We found the goals, structure, make-up, commitment and capacity of the partnerships to be critically important for engaging any underrepresented group in arts and culture.

### Working with community groups trusted by young people

Working with communities to embed arts and culture activity builds familiarity and trust, which can overcome some of the known barriers to participation.[56] Local partnerships are seen in the literature as essential to the effective delivery and impact of local projects and their sustainability.[57]

This was backed up by our stakeholder consultations. Staff at arts and culture organisations are keen to work with individuals or organisations who are trusted by the young people they are trying to engage. One arts practitioner told us:

### Case study: Sadler's Wells

### Partnership work in Islington

The *Get Into Dance* programme, run by Sadler's Wells, offers accessible routes into dance for people on low incomes, including young people, in Islington.

Beginning in 2015, *Get Into Dance* is now delivered in collaboration with twenty partner organisations from the local area, including local community groups, housing associations and community centres working to improve well-being and social inclusion in the borough.

Participants are referred by the partner organisations and get discounted tickets to performances. In 2017, partner organisations and attendees suggested that the programme expand to included participatory work, so that people could experience dance for themselves rather than simply watching it.

Now the programme includes an annual series of dance workshops, where people can try lots of dance styles such as flamenco and hip hop.

**Partnerships**

*'It's really sensible for institutions to use grassroots organisations to do their youth engagement work well and make it authentic.'*

This was echoed in the young people's perspectives. A few of the young people in our research told us emphatically that not engaging with their communities risked further stigmatising the arts as 'not for them'. Interviewees shared several examples of organisations employing staff specifically to build relationships with local communities, to understand what their interests are and to identify potential partnership opportunities with existing arts and culture or general community work. These members of staff invest a lot of time in places where young people spend their time, such as youth centres, school assemblies, careers fairs, shops, fast food restaurants, barbershops, or homeless shelters.

Interviewees also spoke of the importance of showing rather than telling in those spaces, for example running a mini activity if possible so that it's easier for the young person to understand what it would be like if they came to your venue or took part in your programme. One of the young people we interviewed got involved in circus activities because a group ran a circus workshop at his youth centre.

### Schools can broaden perceptions of arts and culture, but provision is inconsistent

Research into young people's cultural journeys in 2018 found that engagement through schools is essential. This is especially important for areas of higher deprivation, where there is evidence that young people attending schools with a high cultural offer are significantly more likely to consume a range of arts/cultural/creative activities, both through school and in their free time, compared with those attending schools with a low cultural offer.[58]

Unfortunately, the quality of arts and culture provision in schools varies dramatically. Our interviews with professionals and young people spoke of major discrepancies in resources, quality and frequency. Some therefore argued that it cannot be the job of schools alone to offer arts and culture opportunities to young people because of all the other demands on schools and the lack of emphasis on arts and culture in the school curriculum. One director of a national performing arts organisation told us:

*'This work [with young people] is so important at a time when arts are squeezed in schools. If arts organisations aren't doing this work, who is? We risk a whole generation coming through who haven't had a chance to be creative in school … an enormous loss to that generation.'*

Where schools have the resources and the capacity to work with arts and culture organisations, our interviews highlighted the importance of arts and culture staff building good relationships with school leadership and teachers to understand the context and needs of individual schools. One professional, who has worked in the sector for 20 years, told us:

*'I've never experienced this level of impossible dilemmas that schools are now facing. We need to be working with schools in the challenging context they're in and not have unrealistic expectations of them. There needs to be more respect for teachers.'*

Several national arts and culture organisations offer tailored professional development, networking and resources to make it easier for teachers to offer arts and culture. Free or discounted ticket schemes for school groups are common, although it was clear that ticket schemes in isolation aren't enough. Logistical barriers such as transport or cost often get in the way. One arts professional told us:

*'Cost is a massive barrier. It doesn't matter if we offer free tickets, because the school still has to find the money to book a coach.'*

Another told us that they'd carefully schedule matinee performances to be completely within school hours so that it didn't affect pick up times at the end of the day. This is important as many young people have little time for independe nt pursuits outside of school hours due to study, work or family commitments.

**Partnerships**

## Case studies: Using schools to increase engagement and excitement

**The Old Vic** theatre works with 40 schools across London every year to engage children in four shows. Its year-long school programme offers pre-show workshops to make shows more accessible, to support curriculum objectives, and to build communication and teamwork skills. Pre-show workshops take place at schools, as that is easier for the schools themselves.

Staff see a different level of engagement and excitement:

*'When [the children] first come in they're timid, they don't know what to do. By the end [of the programme] they feel like they own it.'*

The role of the teachers themselves is crucial:

*'Teachers do the work of getting a parent on board, so it's important that teachers believe in the work and are prepared to advocate for it.'*

The education team at The Old Vic provide resource packs for every show for teachers to use and share. These include a letter to the head teacher and parents to explain the project. They are conscious of the school's limited time and resources to engage in activities, so they streamline the programme as much as possible.

**The Royal Shakespeare Company** (RSC) worked with 1,591 schools last year, reaching 534,740 students. It has long-term partnerships with 250 of those schools and many regional theatres in 80 towns, cities and rural areas. They made a strategic decision to lay down roots in areas of the country with limited access to arts and culture. The CEO decided it wasn't good enough to just sit back and be happy with reaching whoever lived near the venues that they toured to. Instead, they looked at the data about low participation levels, low education levels and high levels of unemployment.

The RSC initially anticipated a three year partnership with schools, before realising that to really become embedded in a community and contribute to lasting change, it needed to commit for the long term.

*'We needed to work in partnership with schools and regional theatres, so that we weren't just landing in a place then leaving again.'*

Schools, teachers and young people wanted a leadership role, so over time the programme is more and more defined at the regional level. It is reaching diverse audiences and has expanded to develop talent. It works with schools and 11 regional partners to support young people with an aptitude for backstage work or acting. The RSC emphasises the importance of respecting and investing in schools and teachers. Local productions by the RSC are successful because invitations to parents, children and the local community come from the school, not the RSC.

*'If you have a teacher that says to other teachers that something works, they listen and they turn up. Schools start the chain reaction.'*

**Sadler's Wells** recognises that dance teachers put a lot into their work. The staff at the theatre know they have an increasingly important role because teaching dance in schools is getting harder with limited resources. They run teacher professional development sessions four times a year, linked to a show that features in the GCSE curriculum. It's a networking opportunity, a masterclass and a chance for teachers to see a show.

At **In Harmony**, the young people we spoke to told us they would have been unlikely to learn an instrument, particularly classical, had it not been for the schools programme. In Harmony is a well-established example of introducing young people to the arts by playing classical music at school. One of the young people we spoke to imagined that music will remain part of their life for a very long time now they had taken part:

*'I'll play it as long as I remember how to play it, even if say I don't do well in music, say at the end of high school I'll have 11 years of experience, I'd rather just play and do what I want not just lose the experience.'*

Image credit: Sam Allard © The Royal Shakespeare Company

## 5. Place and space

Place includes both the geographic location and the type of venue or environment where someone engages with arts and culture. Important considerations include:

- the familiarity of a venue in a community and its proximity;
- how welcoming and functional the space is; and
- the organisation's own geography, whether it is urban or rural, the transport links and the physical accessibility.

The extent to which a space feels familiar and welcoming is crucial. Common changes we found included making space for young people, families and school groups to socialise and to eat their own food; improving disability access; clear signage to explain what different spaces are for; and using modern materials such as glass to make a space more open and familiar.

Many organisations also look for unusual or unconventional places for artistic or cultural experiences, particularly places that young people may already spend a lot of time in, such as a park, a shopping centre or a housing estate. We think the best time for organisations to consider these factors is when making programming decisions.

### Taking activities out of the usual arts and culture venues and into communities

Taking art to people's local areas has the twin benefit of overcoming physical barriers to participation and making art more relevant by using familiar spaces. We found multiple examples of programmes successfully using community spaces to widen engagement across all ages.

Organisations with a track record of engaging new young people spoke about the importance of keeping activity as local as possible, in places that are familiar and easy to get to, so that turning up doesn't feel too scary or too big of a commitment. Community spaces such as libraries, shopping centres and housing estates were often mentioned.

Firstly, putting on events in community spaces is seen as a good way to spark interest and motivate people to get involved.[59] Research from the Scottish government found that taking culture out of cultural venues and into communities can help to widen access and engagement by removing the unwelcoming perception of elitism.[60] This applies to young people of all ages, from parents who may bring babies and children, to young people who may choose to attend something themselves.

Research into rural touring found that parents of young children felt it was much easier to introduce children to the arts locally than to take them to an arts venue. A village hall show is often their first experience of live theatre or music.[61] Village halls are frequently used as touring venues. They are seen by most people (though not necessarily all) as common spaces they are entitled to use, which is not necessarily the case for arts venues. The hall is familiar from parents and toddlers' group, charity drives, parties and many other activities, so people have little hesitation in going, even to see something unfamiliar or that they might avoid elsewhere. Audiences therefore tend to be open-minded, with few expectations of the show beyond a wish to be entertained, and are willing to judge it on its merits.[62] The friendliness of a village hall show also helps to break down barriers between 'artist' and 'audience'. One of our interviewees said:

*'Though lacking the excitement of a city trip ... village hall shows offer a chance to meet the performers, to walk on the set or even play with the props.'* [63]

**Place and space**
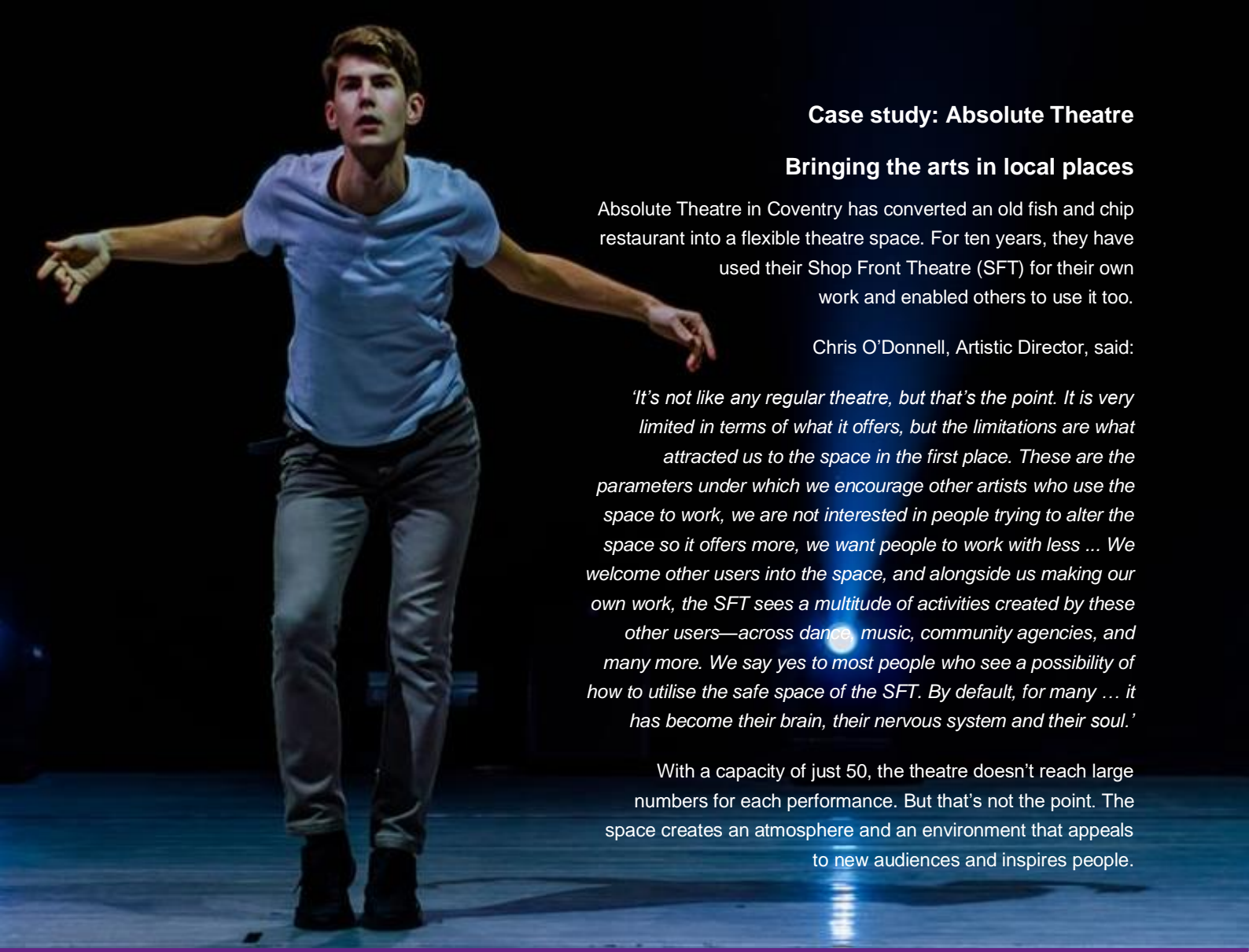
## Case study: Absolute Theatre

### Bringing the arts in local places

Absolute Theatre in Coventry has converted an old fish and chip restaurant into a flexible theatre space. For ten years, they have used their Shop Front Theatre (SFT) for their own work and enabled others to use it too.

Chris O'Donnell, Artistic Director, said:

*'It's not like any regular theatre, but that's the point. It is very limited in terms of what it offers, but the limitations are what attracted us to the space in the first place. These are the parameters under which we encourage other artists who use the space to work, we are not interested in people trying to alter the space so it offers more, we want people to work with less ... We welcome other users into the space, and alongside us making our own work, the SFT sees a multitude of activities created by these other users—across dance, music, community agencies, and many more. We say yes to most people who see a possibility of how to utilise the safe space of the SFT. By default, for many … it has become their brain, their nervous system and their soul.'*

With a capacity of just 50, the theatre doesn't reach large numbers for each performance. But that's not the point. The space creates an atmosphere and an environment that appeals to new audiences and inspires people.

Most organisations we spoke to highlighted the careful thought that goes into deciding where to host activities. We heard a range of perspectives. Some acknowledged that their main building might never appeal to some people, while others felt strongly that their building was integral to their artistic identity and therefore needed to be experienced.

Young people we spoke to felt spaces were particularly important, both to their own inclination to try an experience, and to link the arts organisations to their communities. A common theme was how a contemporary (non-monumental) gallery space can feel more inviting to some young people who have not spent much time in arts spaces:

*'Going into the house [at Kettle's Yard] feels like going into a house not a big marble building … it's not really a typical gallery, there's the house and then this part is very modern, like a learning centre.'*

This was particularly relevant for those whose families hadn't introduced them to art as children. As one young person told us:

*'[Prominent arts] institutions sometimes [feel like] there's a disconnect between what's happening in the community, it can be very clinical or artificial.'*

The importance of going to where young people already are was expressed by a young person involved in a theatre project, who said:

*'This is more open, it still is a youth centre, so there's more young people interacting with [Contact Theatre] that weren't before ...'*

Another young person told us how, for them, the venue is even more important in a programme where they are being asked to participate by creating or co-designing:

*'[The programme venue] it's much more informal whereas in an [arts venue] … you feel that pressure of an institution or power that might make you reticent to express yourself fully. It's a place I can be myself, if it took place in a place like McDonald's rather than the Tate—even if I wanted to influence the Tate.'*

## It matters to young people that they feel welcome in arts and culture venues

Every interview mentioned the importance of young people feeling welcome and like they belong. Several organisations spoke about setting up informal spaces in their buildings where young people can just hang out.

The Royal Opera House spoke about providing opportunities to engage with opera and ballet in more relaxed parts of the building rather than just in the main gallery or performance spaces. Its *Family Sundays* programme offers opportunities to have fun by singing or dancing alongside Royal Ballet dancers, young artists and musicians, and to participate in make-up or stage combat demonstrations, costume dressing up, and design activities led by professional set designers. These £8-10 events have boosted engagement from families.

It's important to involve young people in these efforts to design welcoming spaces. Contact interviewed young people to help shape the ongoing redesign of its building:

*'Young people wanted a feeling of home, a feeling of family, a feeling of belonging. They didn't even mention the performances. They talked about feeling a personal connection to staff. They said they wanted to come in and just be there, they didn't always want to come in and do stuff.'*

## Case study: Bristol Old Vic

### Gradually bringing people into an historic building

In 2018, Bristol Old Vic worked alongside St. Paul's Nursery to set up and run sessions with a variety of different families. Bristol Old Vic identified the St. Paul's area of Bristol as an area of low engagement with the theatre.

Well aware of the variety of barriers these families faced, the team at Bristol Old Vic worked to remove both the physical and perceived obstacles that were stopping access to the building. Working with arts practitioners and a lead at the nursery, their family workshops were able to reach beyond language and location, to engage with a huge proportion of the families who regularly use the nursery.

Many were refugees, newly arrived to Britain, or people for whom English was a second language. St. Paul's Nursery staff were incredibly helpful, providing Bristol Old Vic with access to its interpreters, community workers and facilities, to figure out how Bristol Old Vic could bring a little bit of the theatre to these families.

Bristol Old Vic began by crafting a series of workshops exploring what a theatre is, while teaching people about the context of the building and its history. Bristol Old Vic found it tricky to pitch that to very young children, and it also wanted to appeal to their parents/guardians and other family members that might be with them. By bringing an assortment of props and other items from the theatre, it was able to find something to interest everyone. After seven weeks at St. Paul's Nursery, the sessions concluded with the families coming into the theatre complex to actually see the building they'd been hearing about for the first time. Many had never stepped foot inside a theatre before, especially not one as old or as nationally significant as Bristol Old Vic.

**Place and space**

But when young people do want to do stuff, Contact knows they need to offer a high quality space for them to run projects themselves. To achieve this, Contact are building a professional recording studio so that young people have access to the best professional equipment. The importance of quality facilities had been demonstrated by Roundhouse, who have been running activities for young people in its purpose-built space for years. They notice the difference:

'*Young people feed off the energy that comes from exposure to the professional creative world, it adds expertise, inspiration and motivation.'*

Many of the organisations we interviewed told us about their recent or current building projects said that they had reached the limit of what they were able to do in their existing spaces and needed somewhere in line with their ambitions to engage more young people. Common aspirations were for more informal spaces for families, school groups and young people to hang out in, and for purpose-built creative spaces for workshops, creation, rehearsals and performances.

Clear signage, glass doors, and spaces people can hang out in are all seen as important, but these building features amount to nothing if a young person doesn't feel welcomed by the people they interact with. Even small differences can make a difference to some young people. One young person we spoke to recalled how simply providing refreshments made them feel more included:

*'I really feel that here they value us, even that they give us biscuits and stuff.'*

Interviewees often recounted the important role that front-of-house staff played in making them feel welcome. We learnt about a programme designed to increase young people's participation in museums and galleries which found that young people noticed whether or not there was someone in the building who greeted them and encouraged them to come in. This links to our earlier discussion about the importance of developing staff skills to work with young people.

Some of the young people in our research also highlighted the importance of language in making them feel welcome. This seemed especially important for lower level engagement programmes, where participants might be less likely to have previous experience in arts, either as consumers or producers. One participant in the *Circuit* Programme through Kettle's Yard and Wysing Arts in Cambridgeshire recalled:

*'I didn't have any background in art but [the flyer said] anyone can join, I thought maybe I wouldn't be able to [because I didn't have experience] … but the idea that everyone can come and have a try at art is quite interesting.'*

### Organisations should consider their own geography

Many of the examples in this report are from towns or cities. Organisations with a more rural location need to think very carefully about their offer, as St Ives in Cornwall and MOSTYN in Llandudno do. With hardly any travel infrastructure, they experimented with seasonal programming to offer one big event or exhibition per month to make it more feasible for young people to engage.

This was a very different offer to city-based galleries with the public transport infrastructure necessary for young people to pop in frequently. For example, Juice in Newcastle and Gateshead is a festival designed by young people. It is held in multiple centrally located venues which are chosen precisely because they are easy to get to on public transport.

The lesson here is that organisations need to consider how their own geography affects the way they use different places to engage with young people.

**Place and space**

## 6. Promotion

Arts and culture organisations need to promote their work so that young people know what is available and are inspired to take part. Many of the strategies already described are important here: being aware of the language young people use, going to where young people are, and creating content with young people. How organisations market their activities matters; working with youth ambassadors and parents is especially valuable. We've also included cost in this category—organisations might choose to offer specific discounts or bursaries. An organisation's brand and budget are two of the major factors that determine what sort of promotion it will do.

### It matters how and where organisations market their activities

Many of our interviewees spoke about how to make promotion more effective, despite there being relatively little in the literature on this. A common theme from our interviews was the importance of clear, accessible information on flyers, leaflets and posters. Interestingly there were mixed feelings on social media.

While many organisations are developing complex digital marketing strategies, arts and culture organisations working with under-represented young people have found that local advertising and word of mouth is superior. Several told us that their digital marketing was attracting more people, but that they were similar in profile to their existing audiences. Local connections and relationships seem to matter much more than social media strategies if you're trying to engage new groups of people who are different to your current audiences.

Many of the young people we spoke to affirmed these findings. Some spoke of events being advertised in particularly appropriate places, like their university freshers' fair. Roundhouse and Contact both shared how they employ young people who've participated in a project to join a street team to promote arts and culture projects in popular places in their local area, such as fast food restaurants or barbershops, and at times when young people are there, such as evenings and weekends. Sadler's Wells spoke about its efforts to tailor its marketing to the people it would like to work with. They run workshops with their marketing team, local partner organisations, and current participants to explore new ways of writing about dance and new communication formats, such as audience vlogs after performances.

Some projects may require applications. Several organisations we interviewed told us this can be a significant hurdle for some young people. The Old Vic are flexible in their application process, so young people can write a few short sentences, record a brief audio or video diary rather than filling in a form. It also commits to giving everyone who applies an interview, although this is increasingly difficult to sustain with increased demand. A participant of *Circuit* mentioned the importance of specific details, like whether they can start at any time:

*'My thinking was you had to join at the beginning, [it's helpful] if you can advertise that you can join at any point and that there are people coming and going so you don't feel like you are the only one who will be joining.'*

When it comes to careers in arts and culture, several interviewees told us there was a need for clearer information about career opportunities in the sector and the support available, such as funding/bursaries to help people pursue their interests. The quantity of information is not the issue here. Clarity is what matters. Roundhouse recently surveyed hundreds of young people who accessed its programmes, to understand what would have helped them to pursue a career in the arts. Many expressed concern that the business of being an artist was a tricky area. In response, Roundhouse now runs masterclasses about setting up your own company, self-employment and taxes.

Many organisations are working hard to provide clearer information to young people about what's on offer, not only at their organisation but also in a place or on a specific topic, such as arts careers. Routes In is a good example of a network of organisations working together on a careers fair and a series of a careers talks aimed at young people who are under-represented in the cultural sector.

**Promotion**

### Cost is an important factor, but discounts or free activities won't work on their own

While money is often an issue for young people, the attitudinal barrier of feeling like arts and culture is not for them is a much greater obstacle to engagement.[64] Cost should therefore be considered alongside other factors such as the content of the opportunity, marketing, or scheduling.

One of the young people in our research demonstrated underlying assumptions about cost when they told us:

*'I've been to like the V&A and galleries and stuff. They're nice. But … when you live in London and just don't go to them that much … the theatre is like £50 a ticket or something.'*

Data from a programme to provide free tickets to young adult audiences showed that free tickets were in much higher demand during university and school holiday periods. Unfortunately, this was also when the lowest number of free tickets were made available, as venues could be sure of full paying audiences at these times.[65]

Discussions about cost were a common theme in our stakeholder interviews. Many organisations recognise that free or discounted tickets are not enough and so are offering additional support with travel costs, careful scheduling and free food. Contact pays some young people's expenses to enable them to participate in programmes.

Longitudinal research carried out by Tate, with a diverse group of 21 young people pursuing careers in arts and culture, acknowledged that all young people experience some employment uncertainty, but that this is more pronounced for those from less privileged backgrounds. Tate's research argued that if young people had neither the family nor independent financial resources to work for no wages, they would find it difficult to develop experience and networks in the professional arts world. Even those with some family support found it impossible to balance the task of making and sustaining networks, remaining part of a community of artists, renting studio space, and producing work and portfolios with the requirement to earn enough to live. Any effort to help young people begin a career as an artist therefore needs to recognise the differences in young people's economic circumstances. Not everyone can afford to take advantage of an unpaid internship, mentorship or work placement scheme.[66]

### Ambassadors or advocates can help people try something new and stick with it

The role of universal influencers, such as celebrities, is thought to have decreased—so isn't being pursued as a way of engaging more young people. This is because young people have greater access and choice in media content, particularly online, than ever before. The literature about influencers therefore focuses primarily on local ambassadors or advocates, rather than celebrities.

For the young people we interviewed, the most important ambassadors or advocates are others in the local community whom they trust. For example, their parents, teachers, youth workers, peers, and community leaders. Organisations see these influencers as important for maintaining sustained engagement and enthusiasm, in addition to prompting initial involvement. Some of the young people we spoke to pinpointed the influence of individuals outside of their family and friend networks on their engagement in arts participation programmes. For a few of these young people, the important person was a particular teacher, which corroborates the importance of engagement through schools.

*'There was this teacher … I think he really liked me to be honest and because I was kind of good at it [instrumental music] as a beginner … I think he helped me to get better at it because he wanted me to get better at what I liked.'*

Another said:

*'I was really into poetry and remember my teachers being really supportive and putting me forward for some kind of prize.'*

**Promotion**

For others, the opportunity to meet working artists first-hand left a lasting impression on them. This suggests that engaging more professional artists, rather than just arts outreach professionals, can be key to capturing and holding young people's interest.

## Young people themselves can be effective ambassadors, but it's difficult to sustain

Young people are recognised as important by our interviewees for encouraging their peers to get involved in arts and culture and for keeping them engaged and motivated. They help break down the idea that the arts are 'not for people like me'. Many organisations we spoke to are exploring youth ambassador schemes because they can offer leadership opportunities to young people and because word of mouth is an important marketing method for them. Overall, these schemes have varying success, depending on location and the commitment required.

It can be difficult to get young people to act as promoters for others, even if they are good at it. Staff at arts and culture organisations acknowledge that young people typically have limited free time, especially if they're in education or employment. Young people can also be quite mobile and may move to a new place for education or employment, particularly if they grew up in a rural area. This can present challenges to working with young people as promoters or ambassadors for arts and culture activity.

In a few cases, the young people we spoke to talked about their friends acting in an informal ambassadorial capacity:

*'Nobody in my family was involved in arts or creative industry at all, but I think my friends more than anything would take me to things.'*

This shows that even where there is not a formal ambassadorial role, one young person's positive experience of engagement may well cascade into another's regardless.

**Promotion**

## Parents are important influencers, particularly for younger age groups

Parents' own experiences of arts and culture and their influence on their children has a significant effect on young people's engagement, particularly at primary school age.[67] While family may be only one of many voices in a young person's life, they are still hugely influential.[68] Young people are four times more likely to consume culture with family members than through school. Half of young people see family as their main inspiration to engage in cultural activities and this remains important as they grow up.[69]

Many of our interviewees raised the importance of parents and the increasing lengths organisations go to in order to engage them. It's unclear which interventions are most effective at engaging parents, but we do know that levels of parental engagement make a big difference to that of their children. There are many interventions and strategies for involving parents and families:

- putting on activities aimed at families such as 'relaxed' performances (where moving around, eating, and making noise are welcome);

- programming new work aimed at families;

- providing information via school teachers;

- promoting activities in places where families spend time, for example GP surgeries, supermarkets, local parks; and

- thinking carefully about the timing of activities to suit different age groups and schedules.

Many, but not all, of the young people we spoke to in our research had some degree of exposure to the arts through their parents or families when they were young children. Even where their families were not interested or engaged in the arts, some discussed the fact that their parents had been supportive of their interests:

*'Both my parents are really into music and my mum plays and is the worship leader at church, so that had some influence, but I was rebelling against all of that. Apart from that they weren't involved in the arts but were very supportive of my creative expression and bought me things for my birthday … that supported that.'*



**Promotion**

## 7. Using data to review and learn

Data is increasingly recognised as important to an organisation's understanding of who it currently works with, who it doesn't work with and why that might be, and the effectiveness of its engagement strategies. Many organisations could get better at analysing demographic data, using or conducting research into communities, and monitoring current audience/participant data about who they are, how they engage and what they think about the experience. Again, this needs to link back to the goals an organisation has around its engagement work, so that it can be sure it understands who is being reached and who isn't. Organisations must then be willing to learn from what the data tells them.

### Many arts and culture organisations could use data better than they currently do

Organisations who use data see a positive impact on people's engagement, and yet many arts and cultural organisations still do not use data to better understand their audiences through analysis and profiling.

Getting to know an audience and their preferences is foundational. For example, data from the *Creative People and Places Programme* found that people less likely to be engaged in the arts preferred free afternoon events, outside, with a small to medium number of participants, (20-299) with the inclusion of participation.[70] Each of these findings should make an organisation think about what it offers. A Nesta study found that organisations who use data to understand their audiences, report a positive impact in relation to audiences. This included reaching different audiences, reaching larger audiences and engaging more with current audiences.[71]

Many arts and culture organisations use tools from the Audience Agency to collect data about audiences and participants over the age of sixteen. Our interviews highlighted several examples of organisations bringing together data to understand demographics, existing provision, historic participation, and other community organisations or activities. People felt it led to better targeting, better programme design and less duplication in activities.

It is worth noting that there are limitations to how much data organisations can collect about children and young people. Many struggle to find a way to collect the information they need to offer great experiences and support to young people, without jeopardising young people's trust and safety.

### Willingness to listen and learn from data increases chances of success

A culture of willingness to listen is integral to successful youth engagement. One theatre we spoke to explained that young people told them that they want to 'feel listened to, feel like they have ownership, feel something has changed because of what they said.' Similarly, the evaluation of the *Cultural Citizens* pilot in Birmingham found that 'staff needed to be open to learning and reflecting on what their organisation could do to be "young person ready".'[72] We think data is an effective way of doing this.

Most stakeholders we spoke to acknowledged that the road to change can be long and hard. Case studies from the *Creative People and Places Programme* highlighted the importance of the management team taking a flexible approach to working with different audiences' needs and backgrounds.[73] Their evaluation suggests that these partnerships are generally setting aside more time for reflection, which has resulted in successful and transparent adaptations to local arts programming, improvements to monitoring and evaluation, and a growing evidence base of data that can better demonstrate the impact and outcomes of the programme.[74]

Sometimes organisations need to respond to external circumstance outside of their control. The Royal Shakespeare Company highlighted how its work with schools around the country is in a strong but not a safe position. Many schools have to make impossible budget choices, which means the Royal Shakespeare Company has radically changed its programme costs. It now prices its schools programme locally, so groups of schools decide the cost based on local needs and what they can invest. Monitoring data can help determine if this decision has been successful or not.
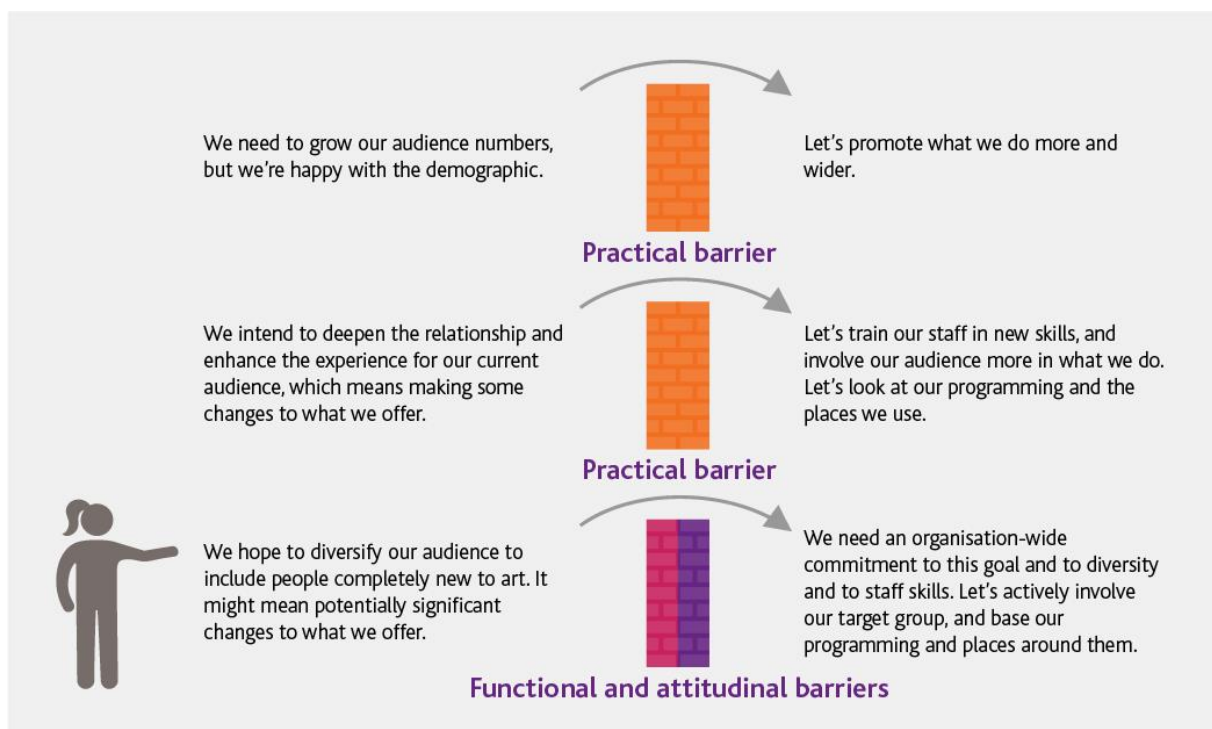
**Using data**

## Summary

As we have described above, there is no single template activity for arts organisations to roll out to bring in more young people. Instead, if we want to see significant growth in young people's engagement, then organisations need to be introspective in the changes they make. Arts organisations need to be clear about who they are trying to engage and what barriers they face, so that organisations can choose strategies appropriately. The framework presented in this report mirrors the barriers we described at the beginning for this reason.

Some of the strategies are more suited to specific goals. For example, if an organisation wants to diversify its audience and reach people completely new to its art, then this requires widescale organisational commitment to the goal. This will probably mean the organisation needs to look at its staff skills, think about how it can co-produce more with young people, and then consider its programming and place. Ultimately it may mean that the organisation and its output look very different, so a willingness to change is prerequisite.

Alternatively, if an organisation wants to deepen engagement with people it is already reaching, it probably already has some of those elements in place, so it should look at its programming and spaces to see how it can develop its relationships. Similarly, organisations who simply want to reach more of the young people they are currently reaching, should be looking at their promotion strategies.

Figure 3 below shows some of the ways that arts organisations can think about their barriers and therefore look at which strategies are more likely to be helpful to them:

**Figure 3: How barriers and strategies interlink**



We need to grow our audience numbers, but we're happy with the demographic. → **Practical barrier** → Let's promote what we do more and wider.

We intend to deepen the relationship and enhance the experience for our current audience, which means making some changes to what we offer. → **Practical barrier** → Let's train our staff in new skills, and involve our audience more in what we do. Let's look at our programming and the places we use.

We hope to diversify our audience to include people completely new to art. It might mean potentially significant changes to what we offer. → **Functional and attitudinal barriers** → We need an organisation-wide commitment to this goal and to diversity and to staff skills. Let's actively involve our target group, and base our programming and places around them.

# Recommendations for philanthropists and funders

The evidence base we have reviewed has revealed powerful examples of what works for engaging young people in arts and culture. We hope this framework will guide philanthropists to make a greater impact in the arts and in the lives of young people.

We recommend philanthropists use the framework in this report to think about whether the organisations they are considering funding are likely to be successful, but our research also tells us that funders need to revisit their strategies if the sector is to engage more young people in arts and culture.

Here are our recommendations for philanthropists and grant-makers:

## 1. Develop a strategy for engaging young people in the arts

### Understand the shifting landscape and engage with what works in the current context

Funders need to understand what works in the current context. This becomes ever more important as the context develops. Changes to school funding mean traditional engagement programmes that work through schools may need to reconfigure their services. Funders should ensure that arts charities are reflecting these changes. Technology is also changing how young people interact with the arts, with organisations and with funders. Charities and their funders need to ensure new programmes reflect this.

### Be clear about what matters most to you

Funders of arts engagement need to have the same clarity that the evidence shows arts organisations need; otherwise they risk confusing the focus of the arts charities. Philanthropists and grant-makers need to ask themselves similar questions to those that we suggested to the arts organisations. Is your end goal and great passion to enable everyone to experience art? Or are you concerned about specific art forms?

Philanthropists should also be aware that they are unlikely to get everything. For example, focusing on the most removed from the arts cannot be combined with large increases in numbers. The two goals are different and require different strategies.

The table below sets out some of the considerations funders need to think through, for the three main motivations for giving that we found in our research: art form, reach, and target groups.

Common motivations of philanthropists

| Motivation | Goals | Considerations |
|---|---|---|
| **Art form**: being motivated by love of a specific art form means that a donor is likely to be thinking about future audience or content creation for an art form. | Goals are likely to be around excellence of the art, long-term engagement and participation in specific art forms. | Donors who have goals around products often have more constraints. They will have to fund organisations working with that specific art form. This constraint can limit what co-design you are willing to allow. For example, if young people want to stray to another art form. If this is your primary goal, it may limit reaching those furthest away from engaging in the arts. |
| **Reach:** being motivated by increasing reach means that a donor is likely to be thinking about how more people can enjoy arts and culture. | Goals are likely to be around increasing numbers of people enjoying and participating in the arts. | This motivation has the fewest constraints on what an organisation or donor can do to get more young people involved in the arts. Donors will have to think about whether they are looking for depth or breadth within this goal, trying to do both has financial implications. When going for universal reach, you are likely to reach specific target groups as well, but donors should consider what their primary focus is. |
| **Target group**: being motivated by this means that donors are interested in certain groups of people being involved in the arts. For example, ethnic minority groups. | Goals are likely to be around getting people from specific groups involved in the arts. | Focusing on people who are furthest away from engaging in the arts may mean compromising on the number of people you work with. Focusing on this will be more youth led, meaning that funders may have to move away from their ideal artistic form. |

## Fund for the long term

Some of the most successful examples in our research come from organisations which have a long-term vision and commitment to engaging young people in the arts. Long-term commitment enables arts engagement programmes to grow and build their reputations organically. It also allows them to implement systems and processes for feedback and long-term improvement, through learning from experience, and for development and retention of experienced staff who can focus on creating and delivering engaging programmes in conjunction with young people.

One of the best ways for funders to make a real difference is to move from funding short-term programmes to making a long-term commitment to help arts and culture charities make fundamental changes to how they work. This includes being willing to fund programme development research as well as programmes.

## Focus on organisations as well as programmes or interventions

Much of the successful work we described in the previous chapter focuses on changes that organisations need to make to how they work. This requires funding for organisational development—for example work on staff skills or

diversity, which may seem tangential to funders looking to fund youth engagement work. However, without this, foundation programmes around youth engagement are unlikely to work.

### Enable young people to share the lead

Much of the direction of arts engagement comes from the priorities of funders, who are often a very different demographic from the young people they are targeting. The best engagement activity is led by young people and gives them more control of the programme.

Giving young people control may, at times, require funders to let go of some control over outcomes, programme design, communications and engagement strategies. While risk averse funders may find this challenging, the evidence of what works shows that it will reap significant benefits. Giving young people more choice, more say, and more control, should lead to more successful engagement with young people, who will take their experiences and develop them in new ways, as ambassadors, advocates, creators and critics.

### Focus on the arts as valuable in their own right, rather than as a means to an end

Recent years have seen more focus on instrumental outcomes from art, rather than intrinsic value. Educational and social outcomes have been promoted, especially for young people. The young people we spoke to though talked passionately about the intrinsic outcomes, their enjoyment and their personal growth, as being valuable for keeping them engaged in the arts.

Our research showed that young people often know they are being 'outreached to'. At times this dynamic can stifle their creativity. Funders of arts organisations need to see young people as creative people, not as the objects of social impact agendas, to ensure that there is long-term engagement in the arts.

## 2. Choose organisations likely to engage young people successfully

While there are no silver bullet interventions, this report argues that there are plenty of evidenced approaches that are more likely to be more successful. When doing due diligence, philanthropists should be assessing how well these strategies and approaches are embedded into the organisations.

This framework leads to some questions that funders can ask in order to find successful projects. Figure 4 below shows how philanthropists can use our framework to ask questions during the grant application process, to ensure charities are using successful strategies.

**Figure 4: Framework for philanthropists in choosing charities**
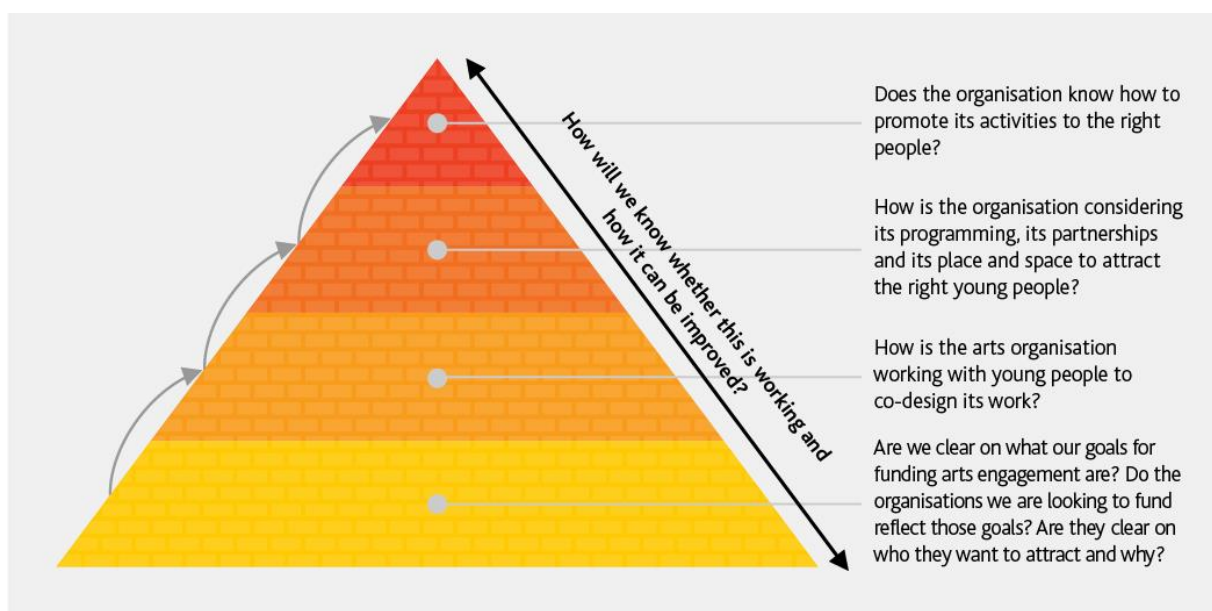
**The most important strategies are at the base of the triangle**. Organisations need to have commitment, clear goals, and the right staff team to deliver this work. Without these foundations, any change is likely to be short-lived. Philanthropists should be looking for organisations with responsibility for engagement with young people cascading throughout the organisation. Roundhouse is a good example to follow, in terms of how it has put engagement into the heart of its work.

Philanthropists should also be getting clear answers about what the organisation's goals are, such as Sadler's Wells' commitment to young people as an investment in the future. Organisations should also be able to demonstrate to philanthropists that they have the right staff to attract young people, and that they invest in them, such as The Old Vic's commitment to piloting, testing and training its team on facilitation with young people before each workshop.

**The second level up** is about how organisations are involving young people to co-design their work. Philanthropists should be asking questions about how involved young people are in the decision-making and design of the organisation. *Circuit*'s work is an example of how organisations shouldn't be making assumptions about young people but should work with them to produce relevant content, and even allowing young people to make relatively small choices can deepen engagement.

**The third level** of questions involve programming, place and partnerships. Here philanthropists should be looking to see how organisations are considering what they can do around programming to attract young people. This might involve crossing outside of one art form to one that is more recognisable to young people, as Contact does with its music offer.

Philanthropists should also be asking about what partnerships organisations are developing. The Watershed is an example of being part of a network that jointly plans events for families, to offer as many people as possible a good quality cultural offer. Lastly, philanthropists should be considering the places and spaces that the arts organisations are using. Are these places that are likely to be attractive and welcoming to a different audience? Philanthropists should be looking for organisations that are thinking carefully about where their new audience is likely to be and what they are likely to find welcoming, such as Absolute Theatre's use of a former chip shop.

**At the top of the triangle** comes promotion, which the evidence suggests is only worth doing if the stages underneath are already in place. Philanthropists should be asking about how organisations plan to reach target groups. Organisations that use young people, like Roundhouse, are likely to be more successful in this. Cost is one element that is important, but organisations should be thinking about what other support they can put in place as well as reduced or free tickets. Contact for example offers young people money for travel.

**The last questions** are about how the organisation will use data to learn and improve. What does it already know about its target groups and how does that information shape its plans? How does it use data to improve what it is doing?

Further detailed questions that philanthropists can use in their due diligence are in Appendix 3.

# Conclusion

After years of strategies aimed at increasing engagement in the arts, we still see wide groups of young people excluded. These are young people who won't get to see the gallery piece that challenges the status quo, or the theatre piece that helps them reflect on who they are and where they stand in society. They won't be adding their voice to the choir, writing their novel, or taking photographs that surprise and challenge us. As a society we owe both them and us the opportunity for all young people to take part in the arts, so that we can understand their perspectives. Sadly, austerity measures mean libraries are being closed down and schools are deprioritising the arts. After years of standstill, we risk going backwards unless more effective strategies are adopted with the money we do have.

This research has conducted a thorough literature review, interviews with arts organisations and with young people. It has argued that there are no quick fixes in this area. The barriers to young people engaging with the arts are often deep rooted. They take time and genuine changes in organisations to overcome. Often too much attention has focused on overcoming practical barriers, such as cost, while ignoring underlying attitudinal barriers. Instead, organisations need to have a genuine commitment to young people, cascading from the leadership through to the door staff, to make sure young people feel welcome and included in arts organisations. This commitment leads to co-developing more work with young people, thinking about programming, collaboration, place and space, promotion, and ensuring data is used to review and learn.

These are the strategies that the literature, experienced professionals and young people all say leads to long-term engagement in the arts. These strategies can't be attempted without supportive funding. They do not lend themselves to short-term, quick fix funding, but instead require an approach that has young people in mind for the long term. We need funders to focus on what they are really trying to achieve in their engagement work, paying attention to the changing context and the trade-offs they are willing to make. This means funders should be willing to fund the organisational change that is needed, rather than focusing on programmes. We need funders to give up some of their control over what is done in arts organisations, so that young people can take on some of the decision-making and design programmes that work for them. We need longer-term funding that reflects the long-term change that funders want to make.  And funders need to choose organisations that are likely to have considered what will work in their situation, taking into account all of the evidence about what works.

Funders who support the arts feel passionate about the enjoyment that comes from arts and culture. Passing this love onto the next generation is the main focus of arts philanthropy. This goal must remain central, so that arts organisations can focus on what young people want from art, to attract more people in. This can happen if funders and arts organisations adopt the strategies in this report, which will benefit not just them and the young people engaged, but all of society.

# Appendix 1: Methodology

## Research aims

This research aims to address three questions:

- What works in engaging young people in arts and culture?

- What interventions and approaches can be used by arts and culture organisations to give more young people the opportunity to engage with arts and culture?

- What can funders do to enable more young people to engage in arts and culture?

## Research principles

The research started from a few working principles:

- The focus should be on what works in engaging young people in arts and culture, without focusing too much on the barriers themselves, as these have been well-documented elsewhere.

- The findings should be supported by a review of the evidence. It is important to address the relative scale, impact and appropriateness of interventions with different groups.

- The review should not be overly narrow: where lessons can be learned from other sectors and for other age groups, these should be included.

- There are bound to be gaps in the evidence. These should be acknowledged, but also tackled: important conclusions should not be overlooked simply because they have been less well documented. Our qualitative interviews with a wide range of arts and culture professionals and young people suggest a number of ideas which are not adequately provided for in the literature and which need further testing.

## Methodology—data collection and analysis

Our methodology included four strands of data collection and analysis: expert roundtables, a literature review, stakeholder interviews and focus groups with young people.

### 1. Expert roundtables

We started by convening a range of professionals from the arts and culture sector. NPC conducted four roundtables over a period of two weeks, all face-to-face, in London, Birmingham and Manchester. The objectives for the roundtables were:

- to build a picture of the different goals and types of outreach;

- to explore the sector's definitions of outreach and adapt the scope of this research;

- to gauge opinions on the current evidence, and whether there is a need for better evidence;

- to pool findings on outreach (literature) and practice (who's doing good work); and

- to understand what practitioners and those involved in outreach need from this research in order to benefit and further their work.

Attendees were from the following organisations, and in some cases multiple attendees came from the same organisation:

- A New Direction
- Arts and Society
- Arts Council England
- Birmingham Contemporary Music Group
- Birmingham Royal Ballet
- Bluecoat Arts Centre Limited
- Bradford Literature Festival
- Buckinghamshire Music Trust
- Concordia Foundation
- Curious Minds
- Entelechy Arts
- Headlong Theatre
- Ikon Birmingham
- Independent Theatre Council
- John Lyon's Charity
- Manchester Art Gallery
- Manchester International Festival
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- National Youth Theatre

- Newhampton Arts Centre
- Norden Farm Centre Trust Limited
- Opera North Limited
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Pedestrian
- Rich Mix Cultural Foundation
- Royal Exchange Theatre Company Limited
- Royal Opera House
- Soft Touch Arts
- South London Fine Art Gallery and Library
- Spirit of 2012 Trust
- Streetwise Opera
- The Irene Taylor Trust
- The Old Vic
- The Reading Agency
- The Renewal Trust
- Wac Arts
- Z Arts

We collected information at the roundtables via facilitator notes, worksheets and surveys. Following the roundtables, we coded the data and used the themes to inform our search terms for the literature review. Attendees also recommended sources which we included in our literature reviews and they recommended other organisations that we should interview.

**2. Literature review**

We conducted a rapid evidence assessment. We also received sources from roundtables/stakeholders.

We identified 240 sources through online searches and recommendations. We sifted and filtered these sources based on whether they appeared to contain information relevant to our research questions. We selected 100 sources for analysis. We coded them based on a series of research questions. The sources included academic papers, audience studies, cultural think tank and consultancy reports, strategic reports, and programme evaluations. A full bibliography is appended at the end of this report.

We assessed the quality of evidence for each source. For research quality, we scored qualitative research out of five, based on the extent to which the author had reliable and flexible reporting. We considered the context, took a structured approach, included beneficiary voice and considered sample composition. We scored quantitative research out of five based on response rate, sample size, statistical awareness and sample composition. For evaluations, we scored each source out of five depending on whether it was descriptive, single method, comparative, randomised comparative, or mixed methods.

**3. Stakeholder interviews**

NPC conducted 23 interviews with a range of professionals from the arts and culture sector. These were conducted over a period of three months, either by telephone or face-to-face. They were designed to provide

insight on sectoral perceptions of what works in engaging young people, examples of best practice, key lessons and recommendations, and to validate emerging hypotheses.

Interviewees were identified from recommendations from stakeholder interviews, people or organisations we already had in mind, and people or organisations that had been mentioned in the literature. The interviews also contributed to a snowballing approach over the course of the research; in many cases respondents were also able to provide access to reports not available in the public domain, including evaluation reports and other unpublished evidence.

Interview participants worked for the following organisations, and in some cases multiple interviews were conducted per organisation:

- 64 Million Artists
- Aesop
- Arts Council England
- Arts Council Wales
- Audience Agency
- Beatfreeks
- Book Trust
- Contact Theatre
- Fun Palaces
- Heart of Glass

- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Roundhouse
- Royal Opera House
- Royal Shakespeare Company
- Sadler's Wells
- Sarah Boiling Associates
- Tate
- The Old Vic
- Thinking Practice
- University of Leeds

Interview notes and transcriptions were coded based on research questions and emerging themes.

**4. Focus groups with young people**

NPC conducted 5 focus groups and 2 paired depth interviews with a total sample of 23 young people. The aims of these focus groups were:

- to explore children and young people's definitions of outreach and participation;
- to gauge opinions on current programmes and what is effective in engaging children and young people; and
- to build a picture of the different goals young people want to achieve by participating in the arts.

We identified young people for the focus groups via organisations who had taken part in either the roundtables or the expert interviews. The sample was chosen based on achieving a balance of young people of different ages (ranging from 13-25 years-old), representing a range of different art forms, levels of engagement, and geographical spread in England. The young people ranged in frequency and depth of engagement from those on a short-term, drop-in, low engagement programme to those on a long-term, pre-professional track. Arts organisations represented included some with a committed focus to a particular art form, as well as some with broader, multi-form programming.

We spoke to young people engaged through the following organisations:

- Wysing Arts/Kettle's Yard (Cambridgeshire)
- Birmingham Royal Ballet (Birmingham)
- A New Direction (London)
- Contact Theatre (Manchester)

- Manchester Art Gallery
- Playing Up
- In Harmony/Opera North (Leeds)

The limitations of this sample were that despite efforts to the contrary, we were unable to recruit young people under 13 years-old or their parents within the timescales of this project. We were also unable to speak to young

people at the very low engagement end of the spectrum, for example those who had had a single, one-off encounter with an outreach programme.  Although the sample is skewed towards urban locations, we tried to ensure that most of these were outside of London. Throughout the discussions with young people, we were aware of these limitations. As a consequence, wherever possible, alongside their own experiences, we asked young people to reflect on their understanding of their peers who are less engaged in arts outreach to gain further insight (by proxy) into some lower engagement groups.

Interview notes and transcripts were entered into a framework document (spreadsheet format) organised by key research questions, with additional capacity for further themes that emerged over the course of the research. The evidence in the framework was then analysed for emerging themes, with key word-for-word quotes extracted to illustrate the emerging themes wherever possible.

## Methodology—cross-cutting analysis

We then did cross-cutting analysis on the four strands of data analysis. There were several underlying factors that guided the focus of our analysis:

- Recurring themes in the literature.
- Scope of studies, for example, sizes of samples and reference lists.
- Cross-checking with stakeholders and young people.
- Relevance to funders.

We triangulated different sources and used that to consider salience of different themes and the key points from the evidence. We then used workshops to storyboard and discuss our findings.

# Appendix 2: Strength of evidence

The heatmap below describes the strength of the evidence for different approaches, by comparing the quality of evidence with how often the approach was mentioned.

We've given each a score for the quality of evidence associated with each approach and a score for salience across all sources (how frequently that approach was mentioned as important).

| Quality of evidence (out of 5) | Intervention | Salience in literature and expert interviews (out of 5) |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | Involvement of young people | 4 |
| 3.5 | Organisational commitment to young people | 3.5 |
| 3.5 | Suitable geography and venue | 3 |
| 3.5 | Capacity and expertise with young people | 2 |
| 3.5 | Reduction or elimination of costs | 1.5 |
| 3 | A relevant programme | 4 |
| 3 | Work with schools | 1.5 |
| 2.5 | Partnerships with community organisations in planning, marketing and delivery | 4 |
| 2.5 | Use of young people's influencers: parents, peers, other role models | 4 |
| 2.5 | Use of digital | 1 |

# Appendix 3: Questions philanthropists can ask

| Approach | Principles | Examples of good practice | Questions philanthropists should ask |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Organisational commitment to young people** | • Organisations should have clear goals.<br><br>• Commitment to young people should be long-term and organisation-wide.<br><br>• Efforts to increase the diversity of audiences should be reflected in staff diversity.<br><br>• Staff should have the skills to work with young people. | Sadler's Wells is committed to young people as an investment in the audiences and creators of the future. It subsidises its youth work, which it sees as allowing it to tell the stories of a wider group of people. It thinks very carefully about the group it is targeting and how best to reach them, which means considering which organisations it partners with. It invests in training for its staff to explore new ways of writing about dance that appeal to different groups, which has allowed it to reach a large number of the people. | • Is the organisation clear on its goals for engagement?<br><br>• Is this commitment seen throughout the organisation?<br><br>• How well does the organisation reflect the people it is trying to reach? If they are not representative, what efforts are in place to improve diversity?<br><br>• Does it have the right staff skills to work with its target group? |
| **Active participation and co-production with young people** | • Involving young people in the design or delivery of programmes increases engagement.<br><br>• Respect for young people's individuality is critical.<br><br>• Maintaining involvement is important. | The Cultural Citizens programme worked with the young people to design key features of the programme. This included being able to choose key elements such as content and venues, which was shown to increase the engagement of young people. | • How is the arts organisation working with young people to co-design its work?<br><br>• How is the organisation gathering information about what young people want and using that in their programme design?<br><br>• How are organisations thinking ahead to how young people can stay involved? |

| Approach | Principles | Examples of good practice | Questions philanthropists should ask |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Programming** | • Engagement is more likely when something is recognisable.<br><br>• Digital can be a standalone or a supplement to experiences. | Nerve Centre and National Museums in Northern Ireland works with young people to use 3D printing, virtual reality and coding to enhance the museum's collection and explore new content. Young people's curiosity in the techniques helps them to engage with the content. | • How is the organisation considering its programming to attract its target group?<br><br>• How does the organisation use new technologies to bring in more people? |
| **Partnerships and Collaboration** | • Working with trusted community groups can improve participation.<br><br>• Schools can broaden perceptions of arts. | The Watershed's partnership with Bristol Family Arts Network jointly plans events for families to experience a good quality cultural offer. The collaborative practice provides a year round offer to families and has seen growing audiences. | • How do partnerships extend the reach of the organisation into target groups?<br><br>• How does the charity use schools and teachers? |
| **Place and Space** | • Taking the arts out of the usual places can widen participation.<br><br>• It matters to young people that they feel welcome in arts and culture venues.<br><br>• Arts organisations own geography needs to be considered. | MOSTYN in Wales puts on one big event a month to encourage young people to come in on that day, rather than having lots of smaller events, where the lack of travel infrastructure would make it difficult for people to get to. It works hard to make sure its award-winning gallery space is welcoming and accessible to young people. | • How is the organisation making its own space feel more welcoming?<br><br>• How is the organisation using other welcoming and accessible spaces?<br><br>• How is the organisation considering people's journey to the venue? |
| **Promotion** | • It matters how and where you market your activities.<br><br>• Cost is an important factor.<br><br>• Ambassadors can help people try something new. | Roundhouse uses the young people themselves as ambassadors for the work they do. It employs them to promote the arts in popular places in local areas, such as fast food restaurants or barbershops. | • How well are the activities promoted to target groups?<br><br>• What support other than free/reduced tickets do they offer young people?<br><br>• Who does the organisation involve to promote its work? |
| **Data** | • Organisations should be willing to listen and learn. | The Royal Shakespeare Company changed its costing model to reflect the needs of schools in different areas. | • What are the organisation's mechanisms for finding out about what is working? |

# Appendix 4: References

[1] Office of National Statistics. (2016) Taking Part Survey 2015/16

[2] Office of National Statistics. (2016) Taking Part Survey 2015/16

[3] DCMS. (2018) Britain's creative industries break the £100 billion barrier

[4] Office of National Statistics. (2016) Taking Part Survey 2015/16

[5] DCMS. (2018) Taking Part Survey: England Child Report 2017/18 2.

[6] Arts Connect. (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys.

[7] DCMS (2018) Taking Part Survey: England Child Report 2017/18 2.

[8] Henry J. Wood. (1946) My Life of Music (Victor Gollancz, London, First edition 1938, cheap edition 1946). 68

[9] NCVO. (2019) Civil Society Almanac

[10] Key sources for this discussion of barriers include: Arts Council England (2018) Next ten-year strategy: Evidence Review. esp. 107-117; Arts Connect (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys. esp 108-116; Whitaker, S. (2015) Hurdles to Participation of Children, Young People and Families in Museums: A Literature Review. Kids in Museums. esp 7-15; also more broadly about barriers to participation in arts and creative activities (not just young people) Brook, O., O'Brien, D. and Taylor, M. (2018) Panic! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries. Create London; Evans, G. (2016) Participation and provision in arts and culture – bridging the divide. University of Middlesex esp 5-7; Kawashima, N. (2000) Beyond the Division of Attenders vs Non Attenders. University of Warwick.

[11] A New Direction. (2013) My Culture My London; Arts Connect (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys. 112.

[12] Evans, G. (2016) Participation and provision in arts and culture – bridging the divide. University of Middlesex. 6

[13] Evans, G. (2016) Participation and provision in arts and culture – bridging the divide. University of Middlesex. 5

[14] Arts Connect. (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys

[15] Arts Council England. (2018) Next ten-year strategy: Evidence Review 111 citing Bunting 2013, EW Group 2016, Flow Associates 2011 and Manchester and Pett 2015.

[16] Arts Council England. (2018) Next ten-year strategy: Evidence Review 114 citing various studies.

[17] Evans, G. (2016) Participation and provision in arts and culture – bridging the divide. University of Middlesex. 5

[18] NCVO. (2019) Civil Society Almanac

[19] Arts Connect. (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys

[20] Arts Council England. (2018) Next ten-year strategy: Evidence Review 114; Arts Connect. (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys

[21] Kings College London. Towards Cultural Democracy

[22] Whitaker, S. (2015) Hurdles to Participation of Children, Young People and Families in Museums: A Literature Review. Kids in Museums. 12.

[23] Arts Connect. (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys

[24] Arts Council England. (2018) Next ten-year strategy: Evidence Review 115-116; Arts Connect (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys. 108.

[25] Arts Connect. (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys

[26] Arts Connect. (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys

[27] Arts Council England. (2018) Next ten-year strategy: Evidence Review citing 108 NatCen 2017

[28] Evans, G. (2016) Participation and provision in arts and culture – bridging the divide. University of Middlesex. 6; Arts Connect. (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys 108.

[29] Arts Connect. (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys

[30] Arts Connect. (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys

[31] Arts Council England. (2010) Achieving great art for everyone: A review of research and literature to inform the Art Council's 10 year strategic framework

[32] Freshminds. (2007) Culture on Demand: Ways to engage a broader audience.

[33] Miller, M., Moilliet, R. and Daly, E. (2019) Circuit: Test, Risk, Change. Tate and Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

[34] Culture, External Affairs and Tourism Directorate of The Scottish Government. (2009) Lessons Learned from the Evaluation of the Culture Pathfinder Programme in Scotland.

[35] Bollo, A., Da Milano, C., Gariboldi, A., Torch, C. (2017) Study on Audience Development - How to place audiences at the centre of cultural organisations. European Commission.

[36] Scottish Government Social Research. (2009) Evaluation of the Cultural Pathfinder Programme in Scotland.

[37] Freshminds. (2007) Culture on Demand: Ways to engage a broader audience.

[38] Freshminds. (2007) Culture on Demand: Ways to engage a broader audience.

[39] Freshminds. (2007) Culture on Demand: Ways to engage a broader audience.

[40] Arts Council England. (2017) Evaluation of the Cultural Citizens Programme pilot: Site reports.

[41] Creative People and Places. (2017) Impact, outcomes and the future at the end of year 3.

[42] Circuit Programme National Team. (2017) Test, Risk, Change: Young people, youth organisations and galleries: Working as allies to spark change. Tate and Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

[43] Creative People and Places. (2017) Impact, outcomes and the future at the end of year 3.

[44] Scottish Government Social Research. (2009) Evaluation of the Cultural Pathfinder Programme in Scotland.

[45] Creative People and Places (2017) Impact, outcomes and the future at the end of year 3.; Scottish Government Social Research (2009) Evaluation of the Cultural Pathfinder Programme in Scotland.; Circuit Programme National Team (2019) Test, Risk, Change: Young people, youth organisations and galleries working together. Tate and Paul Hamlyn Foundation.; Arts Council England (2018) Next ten-year strategy: Evidence Review.; Arts Connect (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys.

[46] Bamford, A. (2011) Main Trends in Policies for Widening Access to Culture. European Commission.

[47] Creative People and Places. (2017) Impact, outcomes and the future at the end of year 3

[48] Renaisi. (2017) Evaluation of the Cultural Citizens Programme pilot: Overall report. Arts Council England.

[49] Creative People and Places. (2017) Impact, outcomes and the future at the end of year 3

[50] Creative People and Places. (2017) Impact, outcomes and the future at the end of year 3

[51] Arts Connect. (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys

[52] Miller, M., Moilliet, R. and Daly, E. (2019) Circuit: Test, Risk, Change. Tate and Paul Hamlyn Foundation. 116.

[53] Matarasso, F. (2004) Only Connect: Arts Touring and Rural Communities

[54] Nesta and Arts Council England. (2017) Digital Culture 2017

[55] Arts Council England. (2018) Next ten-year strategy: Evidence Review

[56] Scottish Government Social Research. (2009) Evaluation of the Cultural Pathfinder Programme in Scotland

[57] Creative People and Places. (2017) Impact, outcomes and the future at the end of year 3

[58] Arts Connect. (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys

[59] Creative People and Places. (2017) Impact, outcomes and the future at the end of year 3

[60] Scottish Government Social Research. (2009) Evaluation of the Cultural Pathfinder Programme in Scotland

[61] Matarasso, F. (2004) Only Connect: Arts Touring and Rural Communities.

[62] Matarasso, F. (2004) Only Connect: Arts Touring and Rural Communities.

[63] Matarasso, F. (2004) Only Connect: Arts Touring and Rural Communities.

[64] Arts Council England. (2004) New Audiences for the Arts: The New Audiences Programme 1998-2003

[65] Bamford, A. (2011) Main Trends in Policies for Widening Access to Culture. European Commission.

[66] Miller, M., Moilliet, R. and Daly, E. (2019) Circuit: Test, Risk, Change. Tate and Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

[67] Oskala, A., Keaney, E., Chan, T. and Bunting, C. (2009) Encourage children today to build audiences for tomorrow; EW Group (2016) Every child: equality and diversity in arts and culture with, by and for children and

young people; Arts Connect (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys; A New Direction (2018) Caring for Cultural Freedom.

[68] Arts Connect. (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys

[69] Arts Connect. (2018) Young People's Cultural Journeys

[70] Cowley, D. and Wooldridge, L. Creative People and Places: Profiling and Mapping: 2014-2016 National Report. The Audience Agency.

[71] Nesta and Arts Council England. (2017) Digital Culture 2017

[72] Arts Council England. (2017) Evaluation of the Cultural Citizens Programme pilot: Site reports

[73] Creative People and Places. (2017) Impact, outcomes and the future at the end of year 3

[74] Creative People and Places. (2017) Impact, outcomes and the future at the end of year 3

# Bibliography

64 Million Artists (2016) Everyday Creativity.

Andrew Lloyd Weber Foundation (2016) Centre Stage: The Pipeline of BAME Talent.

Arts and Humanities Research Council (2016) Understanding the value of arts & culture: The AHRC Cultural Value Project.

Arts Council England (2010) Achieving great art for everyone: A review of research and literature to inform the Art Council's 10 year strategic framework.

Arts Council England (2017) Arts & Communities Programme - Report 2017.

Arts Council England (2009) Encourage children today to build audiences for tomorrow: Evidence from the Taking Part survey on how childhood involvement in the arts affects engagement in adulthood.

Arts Council England (2003) Focus on cultural diversity: the arts in England: attendance, participation and attitudes.

Bluegrass Research (2017) Derby Museums Non Visitors Research 2016.

Boiling, S. and Thurman, C. (2017) Mapping and analysis of engagement approaches.

Burns, S. and Hallam, S. (2017) Research into support for musical progression for young people from In Harmony programmes and other disadvantaged communities. Opera North.

Burns, S. and Hallam, S. (2017) Progression in instrumental music making for learners from disadvantaged communities. Opera North.

Creative People and Places (2016) Building relationships with people new to the arts: Some tips and approaches.

Digital R&D Fund for the Arts (2012) Digital culture 2014: How arts and cultural organisations in England use technology.

Froggett, L., Manley, J. Roy, A. and Wainwright, J. (2018) Developing Collaborative & Social Arts Practice: The Heart of Glass Research Partnership 2014—2017. University of Central Lancashire.

Interarts (2009) Access of young people to culture. European Union Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.

Jensen, E. (2013) Reconsidering the Love of Art: Evaluating the Potential of Art Museum Outreach. University of Warwick.

Kings College London (2016) My primary school is at the museum: Inspiring schools and museums across the UK to build museum-school partnerships.

Kings College London (2018) The civic role of arts organisations: A literature review for the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

Kings College London (2017) Towards Cultural Democracy: Promoting cultural capabilities for everyone.

Little B. and Public Perspectives Limited (2015) Disadvantage and cultural engagement - a study into the lives of young Londoners: Provocations and insight from academic and policy literature. A New Direction.

Manchester, H. (2015) Teenage Kicks: Cultural policy and practice needs to reflect the views, lives and ideas of young people, Policy Briefing. University of Bristol.

National Children's Bureau (2003) Building a culture of participation: Research Report.

Nesta (2010) Beyond Live: How can the creative industries innovate using digital technology, and what opportunities does such innovation hold?

New Music: New Audiences (2015) Marketing to Young People.

New Music: New Audiences (2015) New Aud Evaluation Report.

New Music: New Audiences (2014) What Makes a Good Venue?

Robinson, M. (2016) Faster but Slower, Slower but Faster. Creative People and Places.

Robinson, M. (2016) People, Place, Power: Increase arts engagement: Conference Report.

Roundhouse (2018) Guided by Young Voices.

Royal Shakespeare Company (2016) The Learning and Performance Network: Final Impact Evaluation Report 2016.

Royal Shakespeare Company, Tate and University of Nottingham (2018) Time to Listen: to what young people and teachers say about the power and importance of arts and cultural education.

Scottish Executive (2004) A Literature Review of the Evidence Base for Culture, The Arts and Sport Policy.

The Wallace Foundation (2008) Arts for All: Connecting to New Audiences.

# TRANSFORMING THE SOCIAL SECTOR

NPC is a charity, think tank, and consultancy to the social sector. Over the past 15 years we have worked with charities, funders, philanthropists and others, supporting them to deliver the greatest possible impact for the causes and people they exist to serve.

NPC occupies a unique position at the nexus between charities and funders. We are driven by the values and mission of the social sector, to which we bring the rigour, clarity and analysis needed to better achieve the outcomes we all seek. We also share the motivations and passion of funders, to which we bring our expertise, experience and track record of success.

**Increasing the impact of charities:** We exist to make charities and social enterprises more successful in achieving their missions. Through rigorous analysis, practical advice and innovative thinking, we make charities' money and energy go further, and help them to achieve the greatest impact for people.

**Increasing the impact of funders:** NPC's role is to make funders more successful too. We share the passion funders have for helping charities and changing people's lives. We understand their motivations and their objectives, and we know that giving is more rewarding if it achieves the greatest impact it can.

**Strengthening the partnership between charities and funders:** Our mission is also to bring the two sides of the funding equation together, improving understanding and enhancing their combined impact. We can help funders and those they fund to connect and transform the way they work together to achieve for people.