

Barbican Creative Learning's National Development Programme: A Bespoke Approach to Place-based Partnerships

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barbican

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Executive summary

This report brings together the learning from the **National Development Programme (NDP)**; **a three-year, cross-regional partnership project**, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and involving Barbican Creative Learning (BCL), based at the Barbican Centre in London, Harlow Playhouse, HOME in Manchester and PEACH West Norfolk (via Creative Arts East). Barbican Creative Learning led the project and worked with the three partner organisations to deliver arts and cultural learning work across the partnership regions outside London.

The intention of the partnerships was to co-deliver projects which would strengthen relationships between arts organisations and schools in their localities, enhance access to arts and cultural learning for young people and develop and deliver CPD which could innovate classroom practice. Through doing this, the Barbican aimed to develop understanding of the differences and commonalities between rural and urban contexts when it comes to delivering cultural learning work and the types of project and partnership models which can be most fruitful in supporting increased access and knowledge exchange.

During the early part of year two of the three-year programme, in March 2020, the global Covid-19 pandemic brought much of the work with schools to an abrupt halt, and delivery remained limited in its scope until April 2021. The impact of Covid-19 on the capacity of arts organisations and schools made project delivery and evaluation very challenging, and presented difficulties to the planned-for iterative structure of the partnerships, whereby delivering together would result in learning together, which could then inform the next round of delivery.

Despite this, this report was able to draw on evaluation and observation of the Barbican Box project, delivered across the three partnership regions between 2019 and 2021, as well as in depth interviews with project partners, Arts Council England Bridge Organisation representatives, teachers, artists and other stakeholders. Through analysis of this data, key themes and ideas have emerged which can inform the development of current and future cross-regional arts partnerships, and partnership working across the sector more broadly.

Findings at a Glance

Strengthening Connections and Raising Aspirations

This research found that the NDP, through the delivery of Barbican Box, was able to **address barriers to participation** across the different regions, **increase aspiration and interest** in the arts, and **strengthen connections between schools, artists and partner organisations**. There was an average fourfold increase in connection from schools to the Barbican and a threefold increase in connection to their local arts organisation.

Teachers stated that Barbican Box addressed barriers their students typically face in accessing and engaging in cultural provision locally. They stated that the partnership and delivery of Barbican Box regionally met a need in their area. Students commented that as a result of Barbican Box they were more interested in visiting or taking part in arts and cultural activities in their local area.

The research shows that there were, however, some challenges to the NDP's intention to strengthen relationships between schools, young people and the partner venues and organisations. This was in part due to the delivery model being a Barbican conceived and branded project and also related to a lack of funded partner time which impacted capacity to drive communications with schools at key moments during delivery. However, it was also exacerbated by Covid-19 since schools and young people were unable to connect with their regional partner through on-site visits to watch shows, visit schools and live performances of showcases. In some regions the Covid-19 furlough scheme also further impacted partners' capacity to connect with local schools and drive project communications.

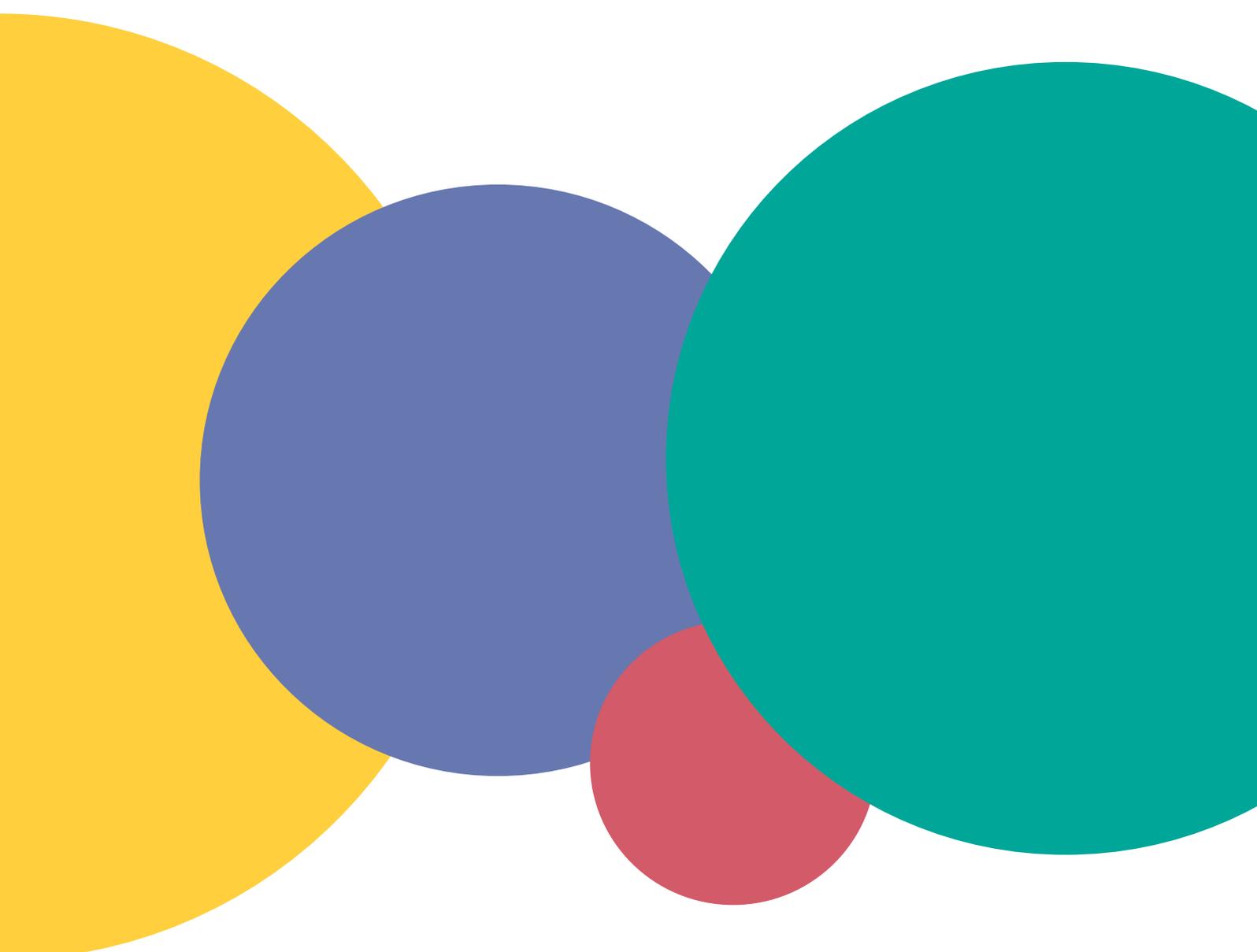
CPD Models: Innovating Classroom Practice

Three common themes emerged from research into the ways in which teacher and artist CPD can be designed to innovate classroom practice. These were:

- 1.** CPD can only effect innovation in classroom practice if teachers are supported to apply their project learning to their own teaching practice after the project completes, something which teachers stated they often found challenging.
- 2.** Teachers and artists highly value collaboration and two-way learning, and CPD which provided a space for teachers and artists to learn from their mutual skill sets was considered to be 'innovative'.
- 3.** Teachers described how CPD should have a legacy and that in order to develop innovative practice (and advocate for the arts), learning should be embedded across the wider school. CPD which incorporated mechanisms for sharing and embedding learning across the wider school was deemed to be innovative.

The NDP's Response to Covid

The NDP responded to the challenges presented by Covid-19 in a thoughtful, nuanced and timely way. Partners identified that the ways in which the NDP responded to meet the needs presented by Covid-19 was one of the things they felt most proud of during the pilot years of the project. The Barbican and their partners' response to Covid-19 included consultation with teachers about how to support them during Covid-19 through adapting and tailoring delivery models to their needs and schedules. It also included a transfer of work online with bespoke capacity for face-to-face if 'Covid Safe' and commissioning Coney who have a strong and vibrant digital practice to curate Barbican Box.



Partnership Models: Characteristics of Partnership

One of the major findings from this research and overarching recommendation is that there is no 'one size fits all' or 'right' way of approaching a place-based partnership. It is important to enter into a partnership knowing that it will be different and bespoke and that this requires time to be flexible. Throughout the pilot years of the NDP, the nature of the different partnerships shifted and evolved according to the capacity and needs of the organisations involved as well as the needs of the project. As a result of the research attached to the project, three key models and structures emerged:

Networked Partnership

(Place based & firmly embedded into the region's wider cultural ecology, with multiple partners involved in delivery)

Hive Mind Partnership

(Place based & consultative with other key regional cultural organisations)

Single Point of Entry Partnership

(Responding to local need but situated only within regional partner, who holds the relationships with schools and the wider cultural ecology)

Please see page 65 for further details on the characteristics of each of these partnership models and suggested resourcing needs.

Summary of Recommendations

Identifying a Region and Partner for Place-based Approaches to Widening Access to the Arts

- Rigorous approaches to identifying regions and potential partners are encouraged. These could make use of the same metrics used to select regions for the NDP, indices of multiple deprivation, progression to FE/HE, NPO presence, Active Lives survey data etc (these metrics are similar to those used by ACE to identify their 54 'priority places').
- Alongside this approach there is a need to combine with conversations on the ground to gain a more detailed picture of each regional context. Bridge Organisations indicated that often organisations base their strategies for expansion on the same cultural engagement data, resulting in pockets of high investment in the same place and areas becoming overrun with initiatives.
- Ratio of size and infrastructure between the two partners has a direct bearing upon the dynamic and characteristics of the partnership. See 'Characteristics of Partnership Toolkit on Page 65'.
- It is important to engage a variety of stakeholders in order to link the local with the wider system in which it is embedded. This might involve engaging School Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs), Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs), local borough councils and Bridge Organisations in addition to the artistic partner and other artistic organisations locally.
- A networked approach to place necessitates paying close attention to the informal relationships developed in a place and the impact this has on the cultural ecology.
- When considering legacy, there is a need to consider geographical size of the partnering region. Legacy in terms of building networks and connections is impacted by what feels 'local' or personal to you.
- When working in an urban setting, it is important to consider how saturated the market is and what the implications of this will be on your capacity to deliver cultural work with young people in the area. The scale of the work of the partnership in relation to existing provision is important and this may necessitate a larger scale and reach of the project in these regions.

Considering Ethical Complexities of National Strategies

- Partners discussed negative experiences with other large scale arts organisations delivering projects regionally, without an awareness of context and without giving adequate thought to the impact on the area after they left.
- There is a need to get to know a place, listen to the Bridge organisation or other local stakeholders to identify where best to concentrate investment. The NDP negotiated this challenge very well indeed, through a rigorous approach to identifying regional need and opportunity.
- There is a need to be sensitive to context and to the existing cultural ecology when establishing cross sector place-based partnerships. By embedding within the local LCEP or local council, approaching the Bridge Organisation to better understand the local context and listening to local partners, prospective 'national' partners can respond to local need in order to support local provision without destabilising the local cultural ecology or superseding local provision.

The need for Funded Partner Time & A Local Broker Role

- Allow for the lead local broker/partner to evolve organically through a process of discussion and self-selection as opposed to deciding ahead of time and approaching a partner with a fully formed offer.
- This research suggests that funded partner time is essential to the delivery of all three of our identified place-based partnership models; 'Networked', 'Consultative' and 'Single Point of Entry'. Ideally these funded partner hours would be included in the budget for the project to create equality between partners.
- The research indicates that the relationship between schools, students, artist mentors and regional arts organisations could have been strengthened by the presence of a funded 'local broker' role.
- This broker role is essential to the legacy and sustainability of the project in terms of its capacity to strengthen relationships between local arts organisations and schools.

Selecting the right Project Models

- One strategic issue identified by this research relates to whether a project is a capacity building project or a project which services an area through the provision of ad hoc ‘parachute’ engagement models. This influences what happens to an area after free project provision finishes. Providing free services to an area has the potential to destabilise the local arts scene which works with limited funding.
- Delivering a pre-existing project model can be useful as a way to develop working relationships and build the profile of the partnership. However, it can also be potentially problematic for partnership equity to deliver a project which has been conceived and branded by only one partner.
- Conceptually, the co-created strand was described by partners to be important to equality and balance between partners and in theory was highly valued by all partners. When discussing how best to build equal and balanced partnerships, the co-created strand was considered to be essential to reciprocity and equality between partners.
- “Your artistic decision is also your financial decision”: Identify which project model is most likely to support your objectives, and remodel budgets as required to make this your primary focus.

Enhancing Cultural Connectedness

- Connection needs to be embedded further than those participating in the project. This might necessitate formalised knowledge exchange opportunities with SLTs in schools or other artistic organisations in the local area.
- As the NDP is in its very early stages of partnership, some felt these processes had not yet been fully developed and required time. Three years, in partnership terms, is still very early to facilitate cultural connections in place.
- In order to facilitate cultural confidence in young people in the long term, engaging family members and peer networks is important. The NDP could consider how to approach this, should funding be secured in future.

Valuing Everyday Creativity & Cultural Democracy

- The Barbican would benefit from continued discussion and reflection on how debates around everyday creativity, cultural democracy and cultural value impact and influence their engagement work both at home and when partnering in regions around the country.
- The Barbican is going through a period of significant change and thinking around engagement in response to Black Lives Matter (BLM), Barbican Stories and the surrounding debates around culture and value. The Barbican have yet to define how these debates will impact their engagement work and therefore resolving these complexities was out of the scope of the National Development Programme. Further consideration around how these emerging debates and the challenges Barbican are experiencing as a result of BLM and Barbican Stories should impact their approach to engaging ‘nationally’.

Benefits of Cross-Regional Place Based Partnerships for London based organisations

- The benefits which the NDP has brought to the Barbican varied from better understanding and delivering their civic mission to contributing to a ‘levelling up agenda’ and developing the national cultural eco system.
- There was a belief that the national work is diversifying the Barbican’s programme by helping the Barbican to become aware of creative practice from other areas and providing an opportunity to make connections with a diverse range of artists working nationally.
- The NDP provided formal and informal Knowledge Exchange opportunities with a network of cross-sector partners with complimentary skillsets, approaches to co-production, engagement and collaboration.
- There was a sense that the act of sharing makes practice stronger and that collaborating and networking with organisations across the UK would benefit artistic practice, create knowledge sharing opportunities and create a network of links and opportunities for exchange.
- NDP was felt to be a good opportunity for profile building outside of London. Many of the young people and schools engaging in the NDP were not aware of the Barbican prior to the project and data reveals that young people felt an approximately four-fold increase in awareness and sense of connection to the Barbican as a result of taking part in the project.

Embedding Research into Project Delivery

- The research attached to the NDP was firmly embedded into project delivery in a formative way. The researcher and project teams worked closely to embed learning back into project design in an unusual and beneficial way of working. In practice this involved weekly departmental meetings, biweekly research meetings and monthly partner meetings. This close working relationship was useful to both the research, project delivery and ongoing departmental discussions around best practice.
- Embedding a research component into a multi-partner project must be managed sensitively and ethically, since it can have an impact on project design and delivery. It is essential research activity supports the partnership first and foremost. It should complement and build on the research and evaluation activity of the partner organisations and research parameters must not undermine the relationship between partners.

Building Sustainability from the Start

- Place based approaches take time, they are extremely labour intensive and nuanced. It takes time to build trust, get to know an area, build buy in and develop relationships across multiple sectors. This principle must be supported in both project delivery plans and expectation around progress.
- ‘National’ partners may need to commit a minimum of five years to a place-based partnership. If funding for the place-based project is short term (under three years) the project may need to be underwritten by core departmental funding initiatives. This is to ensure sufficient time is allocated to build trust and develop relationships in addition to time to explore what ethical/sustainable exit strategies may look like in each region.
- Funders and all partners should consider at the start of an ambitious project with multiple partners what legacy they plan to leave at the end and how this might be sustained. This might involve embedding changes and learning in local systems, handing over the management of local relationships to local brokers, or indeed embedding activity in local institutions to build enhanced community capacity. However, it may also involve a tapered funding approach.
- All partnerships evolve as a result of a combination of responding to local need and partner capacity. The complexity and subtlety of negotiating change in terms of moving from one partnership model to another is important. There should be no pressure or perception of pressure from either partner to adopt or move from one partnership model to another.
- Since March 2020, the context (locally, nationally and globally) within which the project was conceived has changed radically, and the Barbican, like many other arts organisations of its scale, has been profoundly affected by this. As a result, the organisation is undergoing a period of change, responding to both internal and external conditions. These cycles are an inevitable reality across the sector, and cannot always be anticipated. Where partnership is no longer a possibility, it is important to develop ethical and managed exit strategies, which allow the partnerships to come to as positive a close as possible, with the needs of both partners taken into account.

1. Place-Based Partnerships Introduction

**“ Arrive gently.
Engage patiently.
Stay a while.”**

Carolyn Sawyers, Corra Foundation

1.1 Context Behind the National Development Programme

Arts and culture play a vital role in society. For young people, cultural experiences are increasingly important for their development, particularly as employers across a great number of sectors are reporting the need for a workforce with a range of adaptable, creative and technical skills. There is a growing body of research which highlights the damaging and divisive effects of reduction of access to cultural experiences. These cultural experiences might be those organised by publicly funded arts organisations or they may, indeed, be nuanced, private and complex cultural acts people engage with in their everyday lives and communities. Arts organisations responding to emerging conversations surrounding 'everyday creativity', 'cultural democracy' and cultural value are beginning to develop engagement strategies which trouble the boundaries, hierarchies and value judgements between publicly funded cultural opportunities and the other the ways in which people engage in culture in their everyday lives.

Research that the Barbican commissioned with the Education Policy Institute in 2018, 'Entries to arts subjects at Key Stage 4'¹ explored the impact of the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) in 2010. The research showed a significant decline in the take-up of arts subjects, finding that in 2016, education entry rates were the lowest of the decade. The report also found 'a clear and consistent North-South divide in entries to arts subjects, with Southern regions showing higher entry rates than Northern regions' (9, 2018)². With the prolific academisation of schools nationally resulting in reduced local authority control over curriculum content, arts subjects have begun to be deprioritised in some schools.

Despite a recognised need for greater engagement in the arts amongst young people, there continue to be huge inequalities in the provision of cultural education across the UK. Under austerity, schools are facing budget constraints and becoming more risk-averse, with pressures to focus resources on meeting academic targets. In many deprived areas across the country, we are seeing a reduction in opportunities to create and 'play seriously' through the arts. For many young people, their education is not preparing or enabling them to develop the aptitudes they will need for the future.

Provision is often unevenly distributed across the UK, the latest figures from the DCMS 'Taking Part Survey' show that in the North of England an average of 71.9% of respondents stated they had engaged with the arts once or more in the last year' compared to 81.2% in London and the South. Meanwhile there continues to be a correlation between deprivation and arts engagement, with 67% of respondents in the most deprived areas having 'engaged with the arts once or more in the last year' compared to 84.8% in the least deprived (Taking Part, Quarter 4 statistics - December 2017).

¹Accessed 2/11/2021 <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/asset/4117> pg 24

²Accessed 11/2/2021 <https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/EPI-Entries-to-arts-KS4-1.pdf>

This is further reinforced by the Social Mobility Commission report, 'State of the Nation' (November 2017), which highlighted cold spot areas of the country 'concentrated in remote rural or coastal areas and in former industrial areas' where it is difficult for young people to overcome socio-economic barriers and to progress in life.

The report, published by Kings College, 'Towards Cultural Democracy: Promoting Cultural Capabilities for All' (Wilson, Gross & Bull, 2017) highlights 'the explosion of cultural creativity that could be happening if the arts, creative industries and everyday creativity were better connected'.³ This report makes an important call for action: 'to work together to promote sustained and varied cultural opportunities in every neighbourhood across the country'.⁴ It was this cultural and economic climate which prompted the Barbican, as a well-resourced organisation of scale in the UK, to consider their civic purpose and the role they could and should be playing nationally to strengthen impact and expand their reach to help address the disparities in the levels of arts engagement between different regions in the UK.

The Barbican and Guildhall School of Music & Drama's evaluation of East London Cultural Education Partnership (ELCEP) 'Building a collaborative culture' (2017) identified a range of partnership models that were effective in improving arts opportunities for young people and communities. Barbican felt that some of these approaches to partnership working in the local area of East London, could be applied and piloted in their work nationally. In particular 'place-based', working whereby partners respond to the needs and opportunities of a given location, and models which prioritised a degree of 'co-creation' between partners were trialled and found to have the highest impact and potential to be effective in other parts of the UK. It was felt important to find a model of partnership which allowed for equity between the 'lead' partner (in this case, Barbican, who submitted the funding application) and the regional partners. The regional partners who worked on the National Development Programme Pilot were HOME in Manchester, with whom Barbican had already established a three-year partnership, Harlow Playhouse and PEACH West Norfolk, a Local Cultural Education Partnership, chaired by Creative Arts East.

As a result of this new national agenda and the learning which came from the formation of the ELCEP, in 2019 BCL successfully bid for funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to give their Schools and Colleges work a national dimension, through the piloting of new partnerships outside London. The Barbican Creative Learning 'National Development Programme' (NDP) aimed to explore and evaluate ways of catalysing, convening, and strengthening collaborative partnerships between arts centres nationally, and between arts centres and the school communities that they serve. The aim of the programme was to enhance young people's access to arts and cultural learning across a range of contexts (urban, suburban, and rural), with a particular focus on areas which experience inequality in cultural opportunity.

³Accessed 23/2/2021 <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/-/projects/towards-cultural-democracy>

⁴Accessed 23/2/2021 <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/-/projects/towards-cultural-democracy>

Black Lives Matter and 'Everyday Creativity'

It is worth highlighting here that since the project began, a number of nationally significant conversations influenced the shape and scope of the National Development Programme. These discussions are likely to have been, in part, prompted by the ways in which Covid-19 highlighted the fundamental inequalities experienced by many within the UK. The

conceptual underpinning and rationale for the project has been further challenged by recent conversations concerning the ethical complexities as to what is 'culturally best' for people and who defines this. Many people identified as 'culturally underserved' may well engage in acts of 'everyday culture' in a variety of undervalued ways and these people are most significantly not reflected and represented in the senior positions at major UK arts organisations⁵. This leads to a rather paternalistic top-down structure for widening access and participation in the arts, which is not necessarily a sustainable approach to future proofing regional communities. In part as a response to Kings College London's publication 'Towards Cultural Democracy: Promoting Cultural Capabilities for All' (Wilson, Gross & Bull, 2017) and its focus on 'everyday creativity' and also in light of the complex conversations surrounding the Black Lives Matter campaigns (2020), Barbican, have been faced with the task of re-defining and assessing how they approach broadening access to arts provision in the context of NDP and how best to include participants in discussions around project aims. Terminology like 'limited access' has historically been used by funders and arts organisations to guide project proposals towards addressing inequality of access and provision. The National Development Programme's understanding of 'limited access', as outlined in the project proposal, related specifically to work with schools which have found it difficult to facilitate arts provision or who have student cohorts who may experience barriers to accessing external arts provision, in addition to partnering with arts organisations in areas which are experiencing unequal resourcing and levels of service.

Indicators such as free school meals, local deprivation stats or other protected characteristics which have historically been seen to correlate with inequity of access, relate to populations and don't always allow for the complexity of how individuals choose to engage in culture in multitudinous ways. The questions which publicly funded arts organisations must consider when using these metrics are; how can you add nuance to these indicators once working in an area to ensure that you reach young people who aren't already engaging in a wide range of publicly funded cultural opportunities? How can you re-conceptualize how these publicly funded cultural opportunities relate to and interplay with people's private and complex engagement in everyday acts of culture? And fundamentally who is best placed to say what type of culture people ought to be engaging with and how is it best to harness youth voice within the project to begin these conversations? These discussions and debates were only just emerging when the National Development Programme submitted their funding

"The biggest challenge around the work we have in cultural education is it is hard to define cultural education, where it's happening and not happening. We all default to sources of information that give us proxies for participation." *Bridge Organisation In Depth Interview November 2019*

⁵Accessed 23/2/2021 <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/jun/05/arts-working-class-people-britain-theatre>

application. Subsequently terms which once were commonplace in arts organisation lexicon for instance 'culturally underserved', 'limited access' and 'hard to reach' are being, rightly, challenged.

It should be noted here that during these complex discussions, and towards the end of the pilot years of the NDP, a number of former and current staff at the Barbican released a book of stories of discrimination and institutional racism at the Barbican, entitled *Barbican Stories* (2021). This book prompted the Barbican to take a radical and timely look at both its internal HR practices and engagement with staff, communities and partners. It prompted a swift external review by law firm Lewis Silkin LLP, the outcomes from which were published 9th November 2021, and which directly challenged Creative Learning's use of terms such as 'culturally underserved'. The conversations surrounding this challenging period in the Barbican's history had inevitable impacts on Barbican Creative Learning's partnerships and work, and the impact on the department's delivery and engagement is, at the time of publication, ongoing. The Barbican is experiencing a period of significant change, and a shift in thinking around engagement in response to BLM, *Barbican Stories* and the surrounding debates around culture and value; as this change process is ongoing, resolving these complexities was out of the scope of the National Development Programme. However, it feels important to firmly situate the work of the National Development Programme within this evolving context.

Barbican Box Project Model

Through the practical, collaborative delivery of place-based, co-created projects, devised and delivered in partnership with arts and education providers across the country, the programme tested ways of generating learning, developing infrastructure and sharing practice from across the country. It initially aimed do this via two key project frameworks.

The main model utilised during the pilot years of the NDP partnerships was the well-established 'Barbican Box' project. Barbican Box is a project which was first piloted in London and is aimed at bringing together students and teachers from both primary and secondary schools to work with theatre companies, musicians and visual or performance artists. Barbican Box is a project which aims to be sustainable. It moves away from a pop-up parachute model of schools' engagement by prioritising the Continuous Professional Development needs of teachers and

"The beauty of Barbican Box is that it offers a complete package. Support for teachers, an excellent resource, an opportunity for local artists and (when Covid permits) a chance to perform/display work in our building creating a lasting bond with the students who participate." *Partner Post Pilot Survey, 2021*

The main model utilised during the pilot years of the NDP partnerships was the well-established 'Barbican Box' project. Barbican Box is a project which was first piloted in London and is aimed at bringing together students and teachers from both primary and secondary schools to work with theatre companies, musicians and visual or performance artists. Barbican Box is a project which aims to be sustainable. It moves away from a pop-up parachute model of schools' engagement by prioritising the Continuous Professional Development needs of teachers and the skills developed

which can be internalised in the institution. Barbican Box is a workforce development project, whereby teachers receive Continuous Professional Development (CPD) from artist mentors to deliver an art/theatre/music or cross arts project with the young people in school. The project is centred on a physical Box, which is typically curated by a lead artist. The shape of the Box varies. In 2015 it was a Ballot Box curated by Complicité, in 2019/2020 Hunt & Darton curated the Box which was used in a multitude of ways including both as a stool and container. During one Music Box project run in 2016, the physical box could itself be used as an instrument. Included inside the Box are various props, instruments, stimuli, pieces of text and a support manual for how to approach working with these stimuli. The culmination of the project is a performance of a piece created by the students. In the evaluation of Barbican Box as a model for national expansion, researcher Annabel Jackson identified several factors which made it a beneficial model to support the national development pilot led by Barbican:

“The concept of Barbican Box is extremely strong. Having a physical box creates an excitement and open-mindedness that stimulates idea-generation and play. The box gives boundaries to creativity without setting a direction verbally or hierarchically. Students are inspired to research and to follow their own interests arising from the objects or text. The quality of the box communicates an aspirational message, as well as nourishing kinaesthetic learners.”

AJA Barbican Box Regional Expansion Pilot Final Evaluation Report, 2017

For the National Development Programme, the contents of the box are used to devise and create a performance piece which is performed at the partner theatre in the regions, for instance HOME in Manchester and Harlow Playhouse. In West Norfolk, where the partner Creative Arts East (who chair the PEACH West Norfolk LCEP) doesn't have a regular space for work to be exhibited, members of the PEACH West Norfolk LCEP were asked to support the project by offering a venue to showcase the work. One of the primary aims of the NDP was that it strengthened capacity and the cultural economy in each region, with this in mind it was prioritised that artist mentors working on the project were local to the area. It was felt that this approach was more likely to foster long standing relationships between local artists, partner venue and local schools.

Co-Created Project Model

The second model trialled on the National Development programme was entitled 'a co-creation approach'. This model was essentially about providing a space within the budget and delivery timeframes for an as-yet-unknown project model to be designed in collaboration with the partners in order to ensure a more equitable framework for the partnership to develop. Having an established model, like Barbican Box, provided the opportunity for partners to learn to work together and test dynamics within the boundaries of a tested project model. This was felt by partners during baseline interviews to be useful to a burgeoning partnership. However, the addition of the co-created strand provided space for an equity of partnership to be developed within the pilot years.

A Stepped Approach

In Manchester, the partnership with HOME was already established, and this pre-existing partnership with HOME meant that delivery could begin in Manchester in Year 1, whilst the two new partners were sought. Following an extensive year of research undertaken and many discussions with the ACE Bridge Organisations to identify the two remaining regions in the UK where such a partnership could add value, and the arts centres and organisations best placed to partner with, two further partners were selected. The lead regional partners involved in the pilot of the National Development Programme were HOME in Manchester, Harlow Playhouse and PEACH West Norfolk (via Creative Arts East) in Norfolk and Norwich. As is common with cross sector place-based partnerships, each region also engaged a number of other cross-sector organisations, including educational institutions, bridge organisations, Local Cultural Education Partners and both local teachers and artists. All of these partners were invited to sit on the National Development Programme steering group, the 'National Advisory Board' (NAB) which met three times a year.

In 2019 these partners began to work together. In Manchester, Barbican Box was delivered with Slung Low Theatre company in spring 2019, followed by the Hunt & Darton Barbican Box in spring 2020. At the same time, Complicite's Barbican Box began in Harlow. In West Norfolk, 2019 and 2020 saw some co-created planning and activity between the two partners, and in 2021, all regions participated in a Barbican Box project, with the Michael Rosen Barbican Box project delivered in West Norfolk, and the Coney Box in Harlow and Manchester.

1.2 Covid-19 and A Changed World

Covid-19 Pandemic

The 2018/2019 Academic year saw the successful delivery of Barbican Box in Manchester. However, almost as soon as the first Barbican Boxes of Year Two of the National Development Programme had arrived in schools, and the first CPD had taken place in Manchester and Harlow with both artist mentors and teachers in early 2020, project activity was abruptly stopped by the unprecedented worldwide pandemic, Covid-19. Covid-19 swept across the globe with astonishing speed, halting business, education, social and communal activity including entertainment and the arts, as countries were sent into lock down. The context which led to the National Development Programme was further complicated by this emerging context and the challenges young people faced risked becoming more deeply entrenched by the global pandemic. Arts organisations engaging potentially vulnerable participants, were forced to respond to the situation by generating digital platforms to support their beneficiaries. Universities, FE Colleges and schools were confronted with the unenviable task of putting courses and education online as home schooling became the prevalent way of educating young people during the two major lockdowns which involved schools closing to all bar the children of key workers (March 2020 and January 2021). This resulted in inspiring and inventive examples of remote arts engagement, including home delivered play packs and a variety of projects which were either transferred online or designed to be delivered using remote engagement platforms.

As a result of this context, March 2020 saw artists scramble to respond to our new prescient zeitgeist through creating digital and networked art. Arts organisations were forced to ask the question, how can we be creative in new ways? How can we adjust to new creative remote ways of approaching engagement and participation? How can art be used to support home learning for young people? How can we support teachers during this unprecedented time? Particularly relevant to NDP, partnership working where it supported the overburdened education sector, had to be re-evaluated and in some instances re-structured to support overworked teachers and allow capacity within the arts sector following the many furlough schemes art organisations adopted to survive reduced income streams.

Perhaps surprisingly these enormous challenges also presented some unique opportunities for arts organisations. Artists, galleries and arts organisations, some of whom are not typically renowned for being nimble, responded quickly by generating a great deal of digital content, an area many were not necessarily expert in. Despite these challenges, digital arts engagement opportunities or art made for networks provided huge comfort for those confined to their homes and for parents and carers attempting to home school, often, frightened and anxious young people. Additionally, more cost efficient online Continuous Professional Development opportunities for artists and teachers had the potential for a wider reach since people had more time to dedicate to self-improvement. This provided an opportunity for reaching some people who wouldn't ordinarily engage in the arts or have time or money for extensive subject specialist CPD. As a result of this new context, online

culture saw an astonishing surge in viewing, offering the opportunity to reach new audiences who perhaps would not be able to engage in person. Barbican itself generated 209 pieces of online content (50 articles, 70 podcasts, 27 long reads and 47 videos) and saw a 215% increase in page views during lockdown (from 84,088 views in 2019 to 264,898 in 2020). Additionally, people visited Barbican's webpages for approximately 34% longer than they would typically prior to the pandemic. By swapping physical performance spaces for virtual ones and by using innovative digital methods artists and arts organisations found creative ways to keep people connected during a pandemic that kept people apart.

However, Covid-19 presented many more challenges for arts organisations and schools, for example, quality of access to remote technologies to name one major challenge. Digital poverty, a challenge for schools engaging learners at home prior to Covid, become even more deeply entrenched young people experiencing poverty at home. Not all families had access to a laptop and those that did may have had one computer to share between a family of four or five, resulting in access issues and increased feelings of isolation (2019 Nominet Digital Access for All research project identified that, for 11% of young people, accessing the internet at home was impossible and a further 6% were connecting to the internet via dial up technology two decades old)⁶. A research project launched by The Sutton Trust estimates that one million children and young people did not have access to a computer or tablet or connectivity at home in the early stages of the pandemic. As a result, they estimate that only 23% of pupils were reported to be taking part in live and recorded lessons online every day. Pupils from middle class homes were much more likely to do so (30%) compared to working class pupils (16%). The terrible irony of Covid-19 for young people in the UK is that those facing hardship before were the least likely to be able to access online resources. Poverty in those families was likely to become more deeply entrenched since the pandemic. The barriers to accessing education and the inequalities that ensue will become more profound. Sadly, Covid-19 revealed the scale and depth of inequality in the UK, with women, disabled people, Black, Asian or other Ethnically Diverse backgrounds⁷ and young workers, more likely to be adversely affected by either the virus, or the ensuing working conditions. As a result, engaging young people who are at risk, both became more important and infinitely more challenging after the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This context had devastating consequences for the arts sector. A survey run by the ACE Bridge Network in 2020 revealed 80% of the arts sector saw a financial impact during this crisis, with 49% at risk of closure. It became clear that if small arts organisations were able to survive this time, their provision would look very different given that 'furlough' became common and organisations were at risk of redundancies. This meant that projects were, of necessity, radically scaled back and, in some instances, cut. At Barbican, this meant for the first time in nearly ten years Barbican Box was unable to be delivered in London in the 2020-2021 academic year. Arts organisations faced with responding to the increased challenges presented by Covid, alongside furloughed staff and reduced resources, risked having to rebuild relationships with young people from scratch. Partners & BCL who furloughed staff, in order to receive temporary relief, needed to reduce their capacity to respond to the crisis and its aftermath, subsequently potentially compromising their ability to rethink and reposition themselves post COVID-19.

⁶ <https://www.nominet.uk/digital-access-for-all-launches-to-help-solve-problem-of-digital-exclusion/>

⁷ NB We acknowledge that language and terminology are changeable and constantly evolving, and we remain actively conscious and receptive of the language we use. As such, we recognise that the meaning of these terms will be subject to revision and/or change to reflect best practice.

Impact on research

It was therefore inevitable that Covid-19 dominated the planning and delivery of the National Development Programme, and subsequently this research. Aside from having very little project activity to base the research on for the better part of a year and a half, methods for collecting data had to be redesigned to be 'Covid secure' and the research questions shaped to capture the overwhelming impact the pandemic was likely to have on the place-based partnerships of Barbican's National Development Programme. The baseline research into the contextual complexities, needs, barriers and opportunities of the three regions, initially completed prior to the pandemic, had to be re-researched since so many of these challenges became more deeply entrenched as a result of the pandemic. Conversely other opportunities presented themselves as a result of the pandemic.

What became clear very early on was that the arts funding landscape would be transformed by Covid-19 for years to come, and if arts organisations were to survive, partnership working and sharing knowledge and resources would become more essential to sustainable project delivery. A coordinated place-based 'national' response to issues able to meet local need and allow for engagement at a local level would likely become an even more essential and useful model. This means that the model for partnership that has emerged from the National Development Programme, particularly in relation to responding to the challenges ensuing from the Covid-19 pandemic, is an important area for research and learning.

Barbican's Changing Strategy

It should also be noted here that during the life of the National Development Programme pilot years, the Barbican underwent a period of extensive change, both in terms of its management structure and its strategic approach. The former Director of Creative Learning, Jenny Mollica, whose conceptual framework underpinned this place-based partnership project, moved to English National Opera. In 2021, Will Gompertz was appointed as Director of Arts and Learning, becoming Joint Interim Managing Director when Nicholas Kenyon stepped down, and is now the Artistic Director. Since this time, Will Gompertz has outlined an ambitious and exciting strategic plan for embedding learning at the heart of Barbican's artistic programme and driving forward a less siloed Barbican. This new engagement strategy for the Barbican focusses very much on areas close to home and on developing high quality arts and learning experiences for, with and by local communities. The place for a national strategy, in whatever form that might take, within the complex and swiftly evolving cultural context at the Barbican, is yet to be decided. However, it felt important to firmly situate the delivery of this complex and nuanced partnership project within the Barbican's 2021 rapidly developing cultural and social ecology.

1.3 Research Methodology: A Creative Approach

Research Parameters

The Barbican's National Development Programme demanded a bespoke research and evaluation methodology to assess the learning and impact of the project on the partners, stakeholders, teachers, artists and young people involved. This was in part because the project engaged a number of different sectors and regions. It was also unique since it had to ensure it supported the three partners' existing research and evaluation requirements without duplicating their own work, in addition to working across the different sectors' aims and requirements. It was extremely important that the research was formative rather than summative and that it influenced ongoing project delivery. The research methodology involved a variety of traditional ethnographic techniques, including extensive note taking, two years of observation of partner meetings, National Advisory Board days, project workshops both face to face prior to the pandemic and online during it.

Observation

(Face to Face and online) The researcher undertook unobtrusive observations of face to face training sessions prior to the pandemic, online sessions, CPD events and internal meetings during the two years. The observer recorded data and notes were taken throughout the observations.

Surveys

Surveys were designed and completed by students, teachers, artist mentors, partners, internal staff, Bridge organisations and attendees of the National Advisory Board meetings.

Semi-structured interviews and Vox Pops

Semi-structured in-depth one to one interviews were led by Dr Maia Mackney and involved partner interviews, teacher interviews, artist mentor interviews and internal discussions with Barbican staff.

Case Studies

In order to understand better the longer-term impact of the project on the partners and schools involved, this report included three case studies with teachers and three interviews with artist mentors. Through these in-depth case studies and 'portraits', we hoped to tell the story of how the project impacted the different sectors. This qualitative feedback brings to life the experiences that are contained but are often less vivid within the data included in this report.

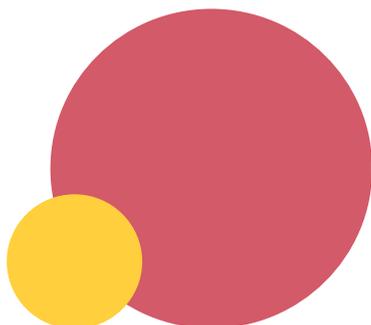
Peer Researchers & Creative Research Methodologies A peer research task, which was embedded in the artistic praxis of the Coney Box project, asked young people to think imaginatively and reflectively about their engagement in culture locally and in turn allow the researcher to consider change in the arts as a process driven, relational and complex multiplicity.

Data Analysis

This report will draw from and analyse written documents resulting from extensive observations of the project and partnership activity. Qualitative data has been analysed using thematic analysis and, where appropriate, common themes have been considered in more depth in this report. Interview data was audio recorded and transcribed in full. This data set will be analysed in relation to the documented intended aims set out in the proposal and funding application.

Research Ethics

Research ethics was granted by Guildhall School of Music & Drama in November, 2019.



Research Aims

Research Title: Place-based Cultural Partnerships: Barbican Creative Learning's National Development Programme

Research Question: Through their National Development Programme, how can Barbican Creative Learning develop regional place-based partnerships in a way which supports the existing cultural landscape in a sustainable way?

Aim 1

To develop a greater understanding of the **cultural ecologies** at play and identify, articulate and feed into the process of addressing the **barriers to arts engagement** in the three distinct regions.

Aim 2

To formulate and further develop best practice for **collaborative place-based partnership** work and establish guiding principles on effective models for **national partnerships**.

Aim 3

To identify what **large scale arts centres** need to consider when working in different regional settings by defining and understanding the commonalities and differences in **models of partnership**.

Aim 4

To monitor and evaluate the progress of **National Development Programme** against its intended outcomes

Aim 5

To contribute to the development of **regional partnerships** by supporting relationships in the regions, sharing knowledge and capturing and disseminating **two-way learning**.

Research Questions

1. In terms of young people's ability to access local cultural learning, what are the contrasts and commonalities in need, challenges and opportunity between rural, suburban and urban locations?
2. How can organisations working nationally collaborate with local networks and infrastructures to improve access to art and culture for young people?
3. What are the guiding principles for effective models of place-based partnerships in the three different NDP contexts?
4. How did the NDP partnerships respond to the new challenges and opportunities presented by Corona Virus in the three regions and what can be learned from this response which could be usefully applied to future place-based partnership models?

2. Place, Partnerships and National Strategies

2.1 Place-based partnerships: An asset-based approach

'Place' is a central facet of the National Development Programme, whose focus on 'place-based' approaches had a foundation in the learning that came from the formation of the East London Cultural Education Partnership, now called East London Cultural Education Alliance. The research completed by A New Direction documented in Place Based Approaches: Characteristics and Learning (Davies) was integral to the decision to model 'place based' partnership on the National Development Programme. Place-based practice challenges arts organisations to re-evaluate how their practice sits in relation to the local ecology and the various prospective partners working across different sectors, whether that be Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs), cultural organisations, Bridge Organisations or schools.

Broadly speaking, place-based praxis aims to be relevant, significant and situated within the context of that place and the people who live there. However, place-based practice is varied and there are distinctions and characteristics unique to each place-based approach. Some place-based partnerships spring up organically at grass-roots community level and others are initiated by a lead partner and work in collaboration with organisations from within a certain place. Place-based partnerships can vary from top-down regeneration schemes, which are often a government led initiatives, to bottom-up community development led by residents or local community interest organisations. Place-based interventions range from issue-based models which are then tested out in place, to projects and partnerships starting from a specific place and its unique characteristics.

"The term "place-based", is currently used to describe a range of approaches, from grant-making in specific geographic areas to long-term, multifaceted collaborative partnership aimed at achieving significant change. In most cases, it is more than just a term to describe the target location of funding; it also described a style and philosophy of approach which seeks to achieve joined up systems change. They are comprehensive programmes or strategies working with a range of partners to address multiple causes of social problems in a locality."

Anheier and Leat, 2006

In *Place-Based Approaches: Characteristics and Learning* (2018), Sarah B Davies from A New Direction describes the three distinct 'points of departure' attached to place-based practice.

1. The 'bigger picture' approach to place-based initiatives:

This approach to place-based work is typically issue led and organised in a top-down fashion by a lead partner. It often has an emphasis on economic development and infrastructure change and is less focussed on capacity building. Community groups are involved as consultees but projects which fall under this category typically have less emphasis on community ownership and decision making.

2. 'Place' as a 'point of departure'

Place-based work which falls under this category is place focussed as opposed to issue led. Partners attempt to find a holistic approach to working in an area by looking at the characteristics of the place. It is an asset-based approach through which community development is facilitated by joining up the varied assets and strengths from within a community. This approach is more responsive to the people from within the community and to the specificities of that place.

3. 'People' as a 'point of departure'

This is often described as a 'communitarian' place-based practice, which is the result of a collective experience of adversity or unrest and which seeks to address social isolation, community participation and other pressing social objectives. It is the approach to place-based work which most heavily draws on the experiences and expertise of members of the local communities, resulting often in a bespoke and tailored 'hyper local' (A.N.D) project which is rooted deeply in the people in place and their local adversities and issues.

It is important to note that the initial approach taken by the NDP and the research attached to it, was not necessarily to place these three 'points of departure' in binary opposition to each other but rather to try find synergies in these approaches through our work. Developing the discussion featured in A New Direction report *Place Based Approaches: Characteristics and Learning*, we aim to ask; can the NDP develop an approach to place-based partnership that uses of a mix of these three place-based approach approaches.

"And as we begin to discover and adapt these mixed approaches, will there remain such a clear difference between the characteristics and points of departures of place-based work? Or are these distinctions a useful mechanism to maintain?" *Davies, 2018*

2.2 A routed, not 'rooted' progressive approach to place

A routed, not rooted, approach to place in place-based approaches to partnership working

Given its centrality to NDP, it is important now to consider the ambiguities surrounding the issue of 'place' and the ways in which these may have been challenged by Covid-19. The concept of place, like that of community, is full of complexity. It can often be romanticised, imbued with a rooted sense of both history and locality. In *Place: An Introduction* (2015), Human geographer Tim Cresswell describes the concept of place as 'simple yet complicated, easy to grasp, familiar yet slippery' (6). Demystifying the complexities surrounding the concept of place is important in terms of its centrality to place-based approaches to participatory art and how art and place interact within Barbican's National Development Programme.

Political geographer John Agnew described the three fundamental aspects of 'place' as a meaningful location:

1. Location (the simple notion of where)
2. Locale (material settings for social relations, the actual shape of place)
3. Sense of place (the subjective and emotional attachment people have to place, its relationship to humans and a human's capacity to produce meaning)

Place can therefore refer to geographic areas and have an administrative meaning which is based on location centred definitions. This is often determined, in the case of place-based approaches to funding, by local authority boundaries and local funding opportunities. These imaginary administrative boundaries may be relatively meaningless to the communities involved in a project and their own nuanced emotional and human experience of belonging to a certain place. Perhaps more important to these individuals is their sense of belonging to a place, or as Agnew described it as 'a sense of place'. This description imbues place with both privacy and ownership. This analysis also highlights the subjectivity of a human's sense of ownership over a place, their feelings that a certain place is 'for them'. The National Development Programme identifies one of their aims to be enhancing the connection between a young person and their local arts centre, with a view to increasing their feeling that the arts are 'for them' and ultimately an increased inclusion in the local cultural offer. Whilst the Barbican Centre, HOME in Manchester or Harlow Playhouse may sit within the boundaries of a participant's geographical location, they may well not feature in that individual's sense of place. A young person's connection to the cultural offer provided by Creative Arts East, BCL's partner in Kings Lynn and West Norfolk is all the more complex since, as is often the case with rural arts organisations, they have no physical space. Rather they support rural touring in village halls and provide screenings of films to very rural areas. The lack of a physical space in this

instance further challenges a young person's relationship with a place and its cultural offer. Despite the differences between the regional partner locations and the specificities of working in an urban, rural or suburban context, it is fair to say what they all share is the fact that the nuances behind feelings of cultural exclusion are often bound to the socio-economic complexities of that place. This makes a place-based approach to partnership significant in terms of being able to understand the local ecology of an area and how best to utilise the local resources in a joined up and effective way.

During baseline research with members of the National Advisory Board, one Bridge Organisation recounted a wonderful story which reflects this hyper local nuanced understanding of place. He described how a head of an LCEP took an unconventional approach to defining the boundaries surrounding place by basing it on how local people identified the town's boundaries.

"Our strongest LCEP is Lowestoft Rising which involves all public sector agencies. It is not borough focussed but focussed on the town itself. The lead person who runs the project is a former senior police officer. When he was asked to do it, he walked from one end of Lowestoft to the other and asked people 'Am I in Lowestoft?', there is a bit.... the posh bit that didn't identify and then he identified, and he focussed the work on the responses of local people as opposed to any of the town boundaries. It is informed by the town boundary, but there is a bit which isn't in the town boundary which they do work with and there is a bit which is in the town boundary that didn't identify and so isn't included. It is that hyper local understanding that makes place-based working happen." *In Depth Festival Bridge 15/1/2020*

In Place: An Introduction (2015), Tim Cresswell highlights the importance of thinking of place 'as a way of seeing, knowing and understanding an area of the world as a rich and complicated interplay of people and the environment', freeing us from thinking of it as either merely in terms of facts and figures or geographical coordinates and boundaries (18). It is therefore important to place-based approaches to socially engaged art, which champion cross-sector interconnections, that we allow for this rich, changing and complex approach to place making.

A progressive, fluid conception of place in place-based approaches to participatory art:

Perhaps the most useful understanding of place, in a globalised world, comes from Doreen Massey who developed a progressive conception of place and space which accounted for how space overlaps with games of power, a term she described as 'power geometry'.

Massey argues that place can be experienced differently by different groups of people and that this is often linked to their socio-economic backgrounds; 'the so-called universal time-space compression became differentiated: different groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility' (Massey 1994, 149). The houses, and in some instances second homeowners, surrounding the Sandringham Estate in Norfolk may have very different experiences and senses of place than some of the rural and economically deprived neighbouring villages. Yes, they share the same local authority boundaries, are on the doorstep of the same cultural offers, are in the same catchment areas and postcodes but their relationship to that place is not equal. Similarly, in Manchester, one

inner city ward in Manchester whilst recognised by all government measures as economically deprived may have easy access to the city centre and therefore the cultural offer. Whereas an outer ward with similar economic challenges is prohibited from experiencing place in the same way by an expensive and inefficient travel system. Harlow, a town which is home to both London commuters with the economic privilege that ensues and long-term local families who have been impacted by the closure and relocation of factories and commerce, is inevitably experienced differently by these two very different groups of people. Massey argues that space, and place, is relational, conflicted and a process of social interaction and that previous spatial theorists did not account for social differences such as gender, class, race and sexuality. Significant to Barbican's intention to expand their programme to reach regional areas is the fact that this understanding of place reveals the potential impact Barbican, and its regional partners, can have on the development of that place, and the ensuing ethical considerations which surround that. An arts organisation's engagement 'in place' is important, since their presence in those communities is in itself integral to the ever-changing nature of that place. This prompted further debate around the role of arts and cultural venues in debates around gentrification. A relational approach to space should inform Barbican's engagement approach when it decides to 'go out' into different contexts and communities. If the Barbican's interaction and interrelations with a given community become a determining factor in the flux and reformulation of that space, then the ways in which Creative Learning and its national partners choose to be present and engaged in a place becomes very important. If we understand space as determined by interactions and a product of interrelations, the Barbican and their national partners' presence in communities becomes a socio-spatial, ethical issue.

This is where the work of Barbican Creative Learning has, historically, been most powerful in East London. Their capacity to act as a 'bridge over the fortress wall' (Mackney, 2018) and build sustainable relationships with both East London communities and cross-sector partners that are embedded and situationally informed, has meant that they are able to take the time to search for communal responses to local issues. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that they chose the 'joined up' approach that 'place-based' partnerships can offer, for a first foray into national work. 'Reclaiming space for less advantaged communities' (Harvie, 2013) and subsequently making cultural places and cultural opportunities for those communities feel accessible and 'for them' in a more sustainable way, is arguably the single most important aim of a creative learning department. This is particularly significant to NDP's aim to enhance access to the arts in a long term and sustainable way through improving the quality and accessibility of arts projects by utilising the skills and resources of a network of regional partners. The unknown factor in this equation relates to conceptualising the role the Barbican can play nationally and, whether they operate as a partner or broker in this network, their responsibility to consider the impact of their work within this cultural context.

This issue is certainly important in terms of how the Barbican engages within their work with East London communities. However, it takes on a whole new significance when the Barbican, one of Europe's largest arts centres and internationally acclaimed London arts organisations, decides to engage on a national level in other regions around the UK., communities and places, that in the first instance, they know little about. Thus, a number of important ethical issues dominated the start of this research and the planning of this project; primarily how will Barbican fit into the existing cultural landscape in order to work collaboratively with partners to support their 'work in place' in a sustainable way? Can the definition of place in this place-based project be shared by both the funder, partners and communities? What can a partnership between regional cultural organisations and Barbican Creative Learning enable that would be difficult to realise in its absence? How can BCL support creative work in socio-economically deprived areas in other parts of the UK, when their own 'place-based knowledge' is focussed on East London? And perhaps most importantly of all, how can knowledge exchange be embedded into the programme so Barbican can learn from the wealth of expertise of their partners from within the regions? The nuances and ethical complexities surrounding these place-based questions for NDP, a nationally driven but locally delivered project, are fundamental to Barbican's capacity to support the work of their regional partners.

2.3 'Place'

During and Following Covid-19

The very concept of 'place' has been challenged by Covid-19. The consequences of lockdown have meant people engage with culture differently, in some cases less and others more. Their homes have been temporarily transformed into creative spaces either through family engagement with online content or through creative approaches to home learning delivered by schools. Increased national and international digital content challenges 'place' and where people associate with as a 'cultural home'. It means smaller local arts organisations able to put out digital content are competing in terms of quality with well-funded national and international art organisations around the world.

There is a great deal of uncertainty about what lies ahead and concerns that our sense of place and space may be permanently transformed. When we venture outside our homes, we observe unfamiliar and distant social interactions, raising questions about how social relations in public spaces may be changing. This may have a profound and long-lasting impact with how people engage with culture in their local area. Barriers to cultural engagement or group art activity may, for the first time, include a feeling of being physically unsafe. A number of questions currently sit unanswered, in part due to the stage of the pandemic and the lack of research into changes in behaviour as lockdowns are eased nationally. How will our relationship with place and public space change? How long will the changes endure? Will the new social behaviours we observe today remain or be ephemeral? Will people's emotional connections with places change and how will this impact what they see as their 'cultural home'?

Covid-19 also presents some spatial opportunities to local arts organisations. Covid-19 has precipitated a feeling that for most people their home area is safest for them and this might permanently change how they interact with those places. The processes of globalisation and time-space compression, driving a neoliberal agenda and the advancement of technologies, have been the predominant factor in shaping the world in the last century. This has impacted on the types of people that are able to visit major arts organisations, and consequently on engagement with local communities. Covid-19 has been the first major challenge to globalisation and has further troubled the concept of an 'international arts organisation'. Covid-19 has also impacted profoundly, in between lockdowns, on who has visited civic spaces. Barbican noted that between July and November 2020 when it was allowed to open to socially distanced audiences, that its geographical catchment shrunk. Unsurprisingly most visitors to the centre after the easing of the first lockdown in 2020, lived within six miles of the building, and happily Barbican experienced a growth in local engagement of approximately 8% on previous years' benchmarks. Conversely those traveling over 50 miles to the venue shrunk by 8%. How these audiences used the public spaces at Barbican also changed, with only 4% of people meeting in a common area prior to their visit to an exhibition or socially distanced event. This provides a unique opportunity for regional arts organisations, for instance Harlow Playhouse who compete with London's West End due its proximity to the capital may find it easier to engage local audiences, who feel safer on home turf. A hyper local approach may be seen as safest so locals may become more engaged in close to home arts offers as opposed to visiting other cities or towns for cultural stimulation. For rural areas, outdoor screenings and events were the first to open up, providing an opportunity for Creative Arts East in West Norfolk.

2.4 National Development Strategies: The Barbican's Approach to Partnering in the Regions

Selecting the Regions: NDP Criteria & Principles for Place-Based Partnership

The NDP had strict and rigorous criteria and a vision for both the selection of the national locations and the organisations and people with whom they wanted to engage with in those places. The process by which they first approached prospective partner was based on many months of rigorous research, lengthy discussions and always with the essential question 'is this somewhere this partnership could add value?'. A key driver was that contrasting settings were included – one urban, one suburban and one rural – to provide an opportunity for learning from different contexts.

Regional Need

- NDP looked for places where levels of participation in arts and cultural activities were in the lower 50% of local authority areas nationally, and so may benefit from additional resource to support local people to co-create and access arts and cultural activities (ACE Active Lives Survey 2015 – 2017), and initiated conversations with Bridge Organisations with responsibility for some of these areas.
- Following this, conversations with the potential lead partners confirmed whether they recognised a need and felt that the partnership could help to meet it.
- Need was additionally defined by analysis of local populations with characteristics historically associated with being underrepresented within arts audiences and workforce – socio economic and progression to FE/HE (Indices of Multiple Deprivation website and POLAR measurements).
- Need was also defined by the lack of a local NPO, or limited NPO investment per head in comparison to other areas (ACE NPO investment in local government district divided by population – using data from ACE NPO map and desk research)

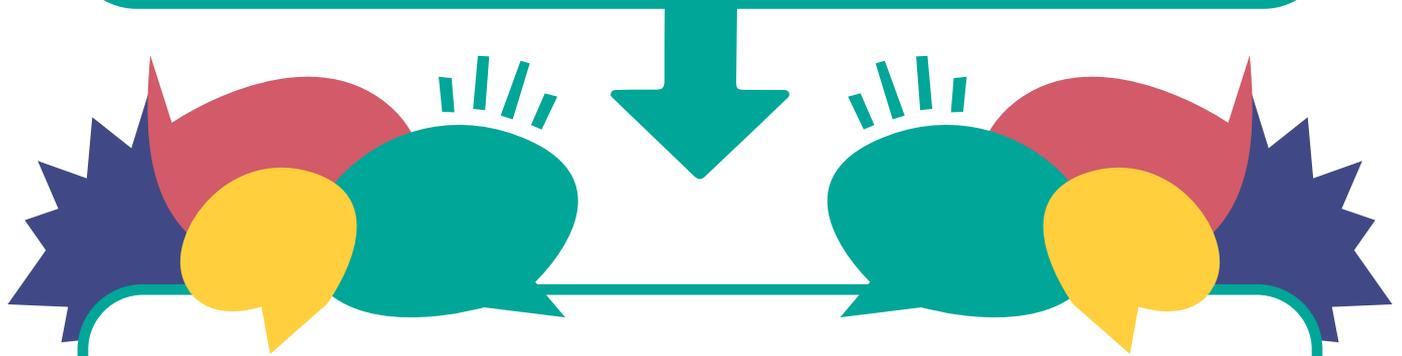
Regional Opportunity

- There needed to be a sense of local motivation and desire to enhance connection between arts and cultural organisations and local schools and young people, and a perception that the timing and circumstances might be right for this kind of partnership (e.g., increased local authority focus on arts and culture, more investment being sought etc).
- Opportunity was defined by a locally embedded organisation or group of organisations who were interested in the partnership and were in reasonable travelling distance of the area, in order to support sustainable local engagement, and with whom there was alignment in terms of strategic aims and ethos around learning work.
- Initially Barbican sought a multi arts venue with at least one member of staff with a responsibility for learning work, but this was flexed (in the case of Harlow & West Norfolk) as the Barbican learned more about the different infrastructures in each region
- It was identified that there needed to be an opportunity for two-way learning, where the Barbican team could learn about the different needs, opportunity and approaches that were present in each region, in a way which might inform their own practice, and in return share their own knowledge and practice with partners.
- Finally, there needed to be enough schools in the local area to make it feasible to run the projects.

Approach to Selecting Regions

Desk research

looking at geography, Active Lives ranking, NPO investment history, socio-economic characteristics



Conversations

with relevant Bridge organisations and LCEPs about local context, need and likely interest in a partnership, possible partner organisations and whether the project proposal would be a good fit for the region



In-person meetings

with potential lead partner organisations, local teachers and cultural leaders, to ensure they feel the partnership would be welcomed and could add value to the local cultural ecology

3.

Our Impact

Project Activity and Engagement Statistics

Most of the project delivery between the 18/19 and 20/21
Academic years comprised the Barbican Box project in
each partner region

The NDP Barbican Box Project Structure

- An artist or artistic company curates a physical Box, containing stimuli connected with their practice, to inspire the creation of original artistic work. This Box is usually accompanied by a teacher resource. The Boxes are then sent into participating schools.
- Participating teachers receive CPD on the practice of the curating artist, and support and guidance on using the Box in their classrooms.
- Teachers are paired with a professional artist in the relevant artform, who also receives training in working with the Box. These artists are drawn from the locality.
- Teachers and artists collaborate over several weeks / months to deliver the project with their class
- During the programme, students are given an opportunity to experience a professional performance or exhibition, and the project culminates with all schools coming together to share their work at a local professional arts venue.

Project activity by Year

Year 1

(18/19 academic year)

Partners:

1 active partner organisation
HOME (Manchester)

Project:

Barbican Box with Slung Low
Theatre Company

Participants:

8 classes from **8 Secondary Schools** in the Greater Manchester region - a total of **8 teachers** and approximately **135 students**.

4 artist mentors

Year 2

(18/19 academic year)

Partners:

2 active partner organisations
HOME (Manchester) and
Harlow Playhouse

Project:

Barbican Box with Hunt and
Darton (Manchester), Barbican
Box with Complicite (Harlow)

Participants:

14 classes from **12 Secondary Schools** in the Greater Manchester and Harlow regions - a total of **14 teachers** and approximately **280 students**.

9 artist mentors

The Box projects began in January 2020, but were cut short as a result of Covid – teacher and artist CPD was undertaken, as was a visit to HOME for students in Manchester, but the bulk of the projects weren't able to take place

Year 3

(20/21 academic year)

Partners:

3 active partner organisations
HOME (Manchester),
Harlow Playhouse and
Creative Arts East / PEACH West
Norfolk LCEP

Project:

Barbican Box with Coney Theatre
Company (Manchester and Harlow),
Barbican Box with Michael Rosen
(West Norfolk)

Participants:

17 classes from **14 Schools**
(4 Secondary schools in
Manchester, 2 Primaries and 2
Secondaries in Harlow and 6
Primary schools in West Norfolk)
- a total of **17 teachers** and
approximately **420 students**.

12 artist mentors

4. Research Findings

Urban, Rural and Suburban Complexities - Three Regional Portraits

The specificity of the regions selected to be part of the NDP will be explored in more detail here. Through painting a picture of the three regional cultural and socio-economic ecologies and telling the story of the uniqueness of their place this research will begin to consider the specificity and differences of working in these locations. These portraits are the result of the baseline research into need and opportunity in the three regions.

4.1 Portrait of Harlow and Harlow Playhouse

The story of the development of Harlow reveals how culturally ambitious and passionate individuals advocating for the arts can define and shape the future of a town's cultural identity for many decades. It is a story which shows how a passion for arts and culture subsequently filters down and impacts arts provision in schools and ultimately young people's engagement in the arts. In recent years a great many enthusiastic individuals have worked to support Harlow's cultural ecology even with limited resources. These local cultural ambassadors have come from arts organisations, and Harlow Town Council, in addition to culturally ambitious performing arts leads from local schools. They have of late found themselves to be swimming against the current and in some case struggling to stay afloat. Harlow Town Council's funding was cut by £0.9m for the funding year 2015-2016. At -15.6% on previous years this was one of the highest cuts in the Anglia region⁸. Sharing the stories of the challenges Harlow has faced, amongst the great many cultural highlights the town has to offer, reveals the impact government cuts have had on Harlow's capacity to support its young people. This is significant since 21% of its 81,944 residents being between 0–15 years, a statistic higher than the national average⁹. It is through exploring the complexities of Harlow's cultural ecology that we can show how place-based partnerships can support young people's cultural engagement. Harlow Playhouse was well placed to be part of the NDP but also how much Barbican Creative Learning can learn from this nimble, generous and responsive venue.

Harlow: A Vision of Suburban Utopia

Harlow, a 'New Town' which was built after WW2 to ease overcrowding in London as a result of the Blitz, is situated in the West of Essex on the border with Hertfordshire and London. Harlow was built on the ideology of creating 'socially balanced communities' prevalent in post war urban planning. The town is formed around a network of roads and avenues, dense housing conurbations and abundant green spaces. Harlow's proximity to London makes it a prime location for city commuters however as a result of the rehousing schemes following WW2, Harlow also has the third highest proportion of social housing in England (26.9% according to the 2011 Census¹⁰). Influenced by the utopian Garden City Movement, the 'New Town' movement contained residential areas proportionate to industry and agriculture. High rise flats built in the 1960s tower over the town centre and Harlow Playhouse, alongside the town's impressive collection of sculptures. Former Harlow resident and Guardian columnist, Jason Cowley, described the progressive and energised culture of Harlow in the 1970s 'as a vibrant place, with utopian yearning'¹¹.

⁸ 22/10/2020 <https://www.itv.com/news/anglia/2014-12-18/councils-in-the-anglia-region-face-funding-cuts-of-14>

⁹ Johnson, Lee. Harlow: A Comparison with Essex and England, 2011 Harlow Town Council, Policy and Performance May 2013

¹⁰ 22/10/2020 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>

¹¹ 17/10/2020 <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2002/aug/01/urbandesign.architecture>

Like many 'new towns' developed in the 1960s, Harlow's artistic history is deeply ingrained in the heart of the town. Art was as fundamental to Harlow's urban planning as the Green Wedges which surround and penetrate the town centre. Frederick Gibberd, the architect who designed Harlow, made a serious commitment to the role art would play in the town and supported the aims of Harlow Arts Trust set up in 1953 to purchase sculptures for the town. Works by Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Lynn Chadwick, Auguste Rodin and William Mitchell were placed in prime residential and town centre locations. With eighty-four sculptures to find on 'Harlow Sculpture Trails', this history resulted in Harlow becoming the world's first 'Sculpture Town' in 2010. Gibberd's approach to the integration of art and architecture is significant to the experience of walking around Harlow, since it represents an approach to town development whereby the art sometimes contrasts sharply with its surrounding environment and culture.

Harlow's Cultural Ecology

Even before Harlow Playhouse opened, Harlow had a strong history with the arts, in particular drama. At one time over 15 drama groups operated in Harlow, regularly winning awards at the British Drama League Festival. In part due to the strong focus on drama, in this new and culturally ambitious town, vested parties campaigned for a performing arts venue for the town. As a result of this campaign, Harlow Playhouse, the cultural heart of Harlow opened in November 1971. The theatre is run by Harlow council. Music was also very important to Harlow's cultural identity; The Square music venue provided a sanctuary for local and national musicians. In 2021, there are a number of enterprising and dynamic arts and heritage organisations operating in Harlow in addition to some established cultural partnerships which include local schools.

Although there is not yet an LCEP in the town, Harlow has been an area of focus for Arts Council England who recently contributed funding to set up a 'Cultural Leaders Group' which comprises people from Harlow Playhouse, as well as numerous cultural and heritage organisations from the Harlow area, local artists and teachers from local schools. In addition to a number of thriving and active arts organisations delivering programmes of work specifically for young people (including Livewire theatre company and Harlow Rock School), Harlow has many other cultural resources. These include the Gibberd Gallery (run by Harlow Art Trust) - a space dedicated to promoting the visual arts, Razed Roof performing arts group, the aforementioned collection of public sculptures, Harlow Museum and Gatehouse Arts. On the outskirts of Harlow, Parndon Mill offers a hub of creativity as a workspace for artists and craftspeople. This rich variety of organisations covering many different artistic disciplines offered the opportunity for place-based partnership working in Harlow. In recent years Royal Opera House Bridge Organisation has run 'Inspire Harlow' events for primary and secondary teachers to share good practice, create new opportunities for children and young people and to connect with cultural organisations.

Harlow Playhouse: Harlow's Cultural Home

Harlow Playhouse is an innovative, inclusive and forward-thinking venue which is at the heart of the community and embedded in the cultural life of the town. It is run by Artistic Director Rory Davies and a small but dedicated team. Harlow Playhouse has a homely feel, it is a welcoming building with excellent facilities and an inviting accessible café. Alongside its communal café and bar areas where local residents can enjoy a drink, it has a sprung floor dance studio, a 120-seater thrust theatre space and a 400-seater proscenium arch theatre.

Although venue hire is part of Harlow Playhouse's business model, local drama and dance groups Livewire and Razed Roof are offered space for free for their work with young people and disabled adults respectively. This gives the venue a vibrant, accessible and youthful atmosphere. As you walk around the venue and sit in the café local arts groups are often heard rehearsing in the workshop spaces.

Harlow Playhouse's programming is diverse to suit the town's different cultural tastes, mixing commercial production with more contemporary fringe offers. Recent research from ACE, using its Audience Finder tool Audience Spectrum which segments the population by their attitudes towards culture, found that the most prominent segments in Harlow are 'Facebook Families' and 'Trips and treats' (with some 'Experience Seekers' also resident in the central postcode CM20 1)¹². Of the ten different Audience Spectrum profiles, 'Facebook Families' and 'Trips and Treats' tend to fall in the lower to medium engagement in culture segments of the population. The 'Facebook Families' segment are often younger, cash strapped, living in suburban or urban areas of high unemployment and are least likely to think of themselves as 'arty'. They often go out as a family and enjoy live music, cinema, comedy and pantomimes. The 'Trips and Treats' segment are more culturally active but still tend to prefer mainstream cultural and heritage offers which can be enjoyed as a family. This presents an opportunity for a venue which is able to offer creative learning activity and family shows, but it also means that the annual pantomime is likely to be their main source of income over more experimental shows.

In addition to operating as a receiving house for productions and events, commissioning high quality performance work is an important part of Harlow Playhouse's model. The Playhouse support artists to research, make and develop new work that 'is made in and for Harlow'. To support the platforming of new work in Harlow, the Playhouse offers an innovative 'Pay What You Can Offer' aimed at creating 'no barrier, no worries, no risk' and to encourage new audiences. Perhaps un-surprisingly given the audience segments prevalent in Harlow, this offer isn't always taken up. Rory Davies discussed the complexities and challenges behind this lack of take up of the 'PWYC' offer in an in-depth interview in January 2020. He described how Harlow Playhouse tends to get more diverse audience for their annual pantomime or commercial programming but the more experimental offer delivered through 'Pay What You Can' is harder to sell. Rory felt that this most likely indicates that people feel that some shows are not 'for them' and stated deeper issues exist in relation to cultural participation locally than solely financial.

This emphasises the importance of projects of this kind, or arts organisations more generally, being aware of the tastes and interests of the participants and audiences they are working with, and alert

¹²Local Audience Research Summary and Recommendations September 2020. Compiled by Becky Jefcoate

to (consciously or unconsciously) making hierarchical value judgements which exclude, for instance, popular and commercial art forms or a community's acts of everyday creativity. Including a broad spectrum of performance supports the Playhouse's ability to welcome a varied audience base to the venue, and to potentially, over time, encourage them to explore the wider programme, be that its more commercial or experimental offer.

Rory Davies discussed how a strategic aim of Harlow Playhouse was to develop and improve its current education, learning and mentoring provision and establish new engagement opportunities. Harlow Playhouse hopes to apply for NPO status in the future, which if successful could support more sustained learning work.

National Development Programme: Opportunities for Place-Based Partnership in Harlow

During the process of deciding which location Barbican should approach about their national strategy, Harlow Playhouse was felt to be full of potential for a cultural partnership. In addition to the town's cultural ecology being opportune for place-based work (with collections of public sculptures, public gardens, a gallery and a local history museum) the resonances between the Harlow Playhouse programme and that of the Barbican suggested a commonality of vision which offered solid ground to begin a partnership. Harlow Playhouse's Associate Artist is Rhiannon Faith with whom Barbican also has a relationship. Additionally, Hunt and Darton (the 2019 Barbican Box curators) had working relationships with both Harlow Playhouse and Barbican. During preliminary conversations with Rory Davies in early 2019, he identified that Harlow Playhouse has good relationships with local schools but is working with limited resources. He felt working in partnership with Barbican could support the Playhouse to deepen their engagement with local schools. The contrasting contexts and modes of operating between the two organisations also provides opportunities to learn from one another.

Challenges and Barriers to Cultural Engagement in Harlow

Although the 'new town' movement aimed to create 'socially balanced communities'¹³, in some ways Harlow feels like a contested place as you walk around the town and sculpture park. Today the UK's New Towns, built on a utopian dream, have been described to be failing after being let down by years of neglect and government cuts. This is felt particularly acutely as you walk around some parts of Harlow, where once impressive architecture now seems to have fallen on hard times. In some areas of the town, Harlow teeters over the edge from brutalism to feeling unsafe, particularly at night. Indeed, Rory Davies identified one of the major challenges of engaging young people in their artistic programme was that parents often do not allow their children out past a certain time since crime is an issue and some estates have become unsafe. Harlow Playhouse itself has been on the brink of closure many times, rescued only by charismatic cultural champions and passionate individuals both from within Harlow Playhouse and the town council. The music venue The Square, after battling impending development on its site for over a decade was finally forced to close in January 2017. Local Labour MP Bill Rammell described the issue in a Guardian interview in 2002 that the town requires

¹³ Social class and the new towns. B. J. Heraud. urban studies vol. 5, no. 1 (1968), pp. 33-58 (26 pages) published by: sage publications, ltd.

considerable investment, which it has not received in recent years. Government funding cuts have had an impact on cultural provision locally but more fundamentally the local economic and cultural ecology of Harlow impacts upon aspiration and the 'cultural capital' of the town's residents resulting in a 'poverty of ambition' (Cowley). According to ACE Active Lives survey data, Harlow is in the bottom 16% of cultural participation stats nationally. There are high occurrences of mid-level deprivation and low levels of progression to HE locally (almost all areas of Harlow fall into quintiles 1 and 2 using HEFCE's POLAR measure) both of which are factors associated with limited access to the arts. There is no ACE National Portfolio Organisation presence in the area. At least 15% of children living locally go to schools outside of the town and these tend to be the children from the middle-class families who are more able to travel. With its proximity to London, these more affluent families also tend to go into 'town' (London) for their cultural trips which means young people aren't always engaging in the wide array of cultural opportunities Harlow has to offer.

What Harlow has in abundance, is heart. As in the town's early days where pioneering and culturally ambitious individuals pushed a radical cultural agenda on the formation of the town, Harlow's cultural ecology is driven by charismatic individuals who are incredibly skilled and passionate about the work they do.

2020 Urban Regeneration of Harlow

Following years of cuts in funding, Harlow is now poised for exciting growth and development. A large-scale urban regeneration project, is due to commence with considerable Government investment. The project will see a regeneration of the Town Centre, a network of attractive walking and cycling routes, a new high-spec rapid bus system and a series of new communities and the relocation of Public Health England between now and 2033. This regeneration aims to make Harlow both a cultural and scientific hub. In Discover Harlow (2018) culture is described as being a central theme which 'will provide the opportunity to further animate the town, bring creativity to the fore, celebrate culture in every sense and be a real reason to attract and retain young people to live and work; hopefully many from London' (p21). Links between Harlow and London Arts Schools are cited as an exciting possibility of the future regeneration plans. Inevitably, Harlow Playhouse will play an integral part in this regeneration scheme. With their knowledge of the local cultural ecology and network of partners from a variety of sectors, there is a genuine opportunity to solidify the town's artistic history in a way which is embedded within its communities. This approach will see Harlow through this period of change in a culturally sustainable way. Additionally, given the focus on making links with London Arts and Cultural Organisations inherent in the aims of the regeneration plans, a partnership between Harlow Playhouse and Barbican makes strategic sense ahead of this major development project.

4.2 Portrait of Manchester: A Cultural HOME

Manchester: From Industrial 'Cottonopolis' to Cultural Capital

Manchester, recently named the UK's new 'Cultural Capital' by Rough Guides, is a vibrant and eclectic city with the fifth largest population in the UK (estimated by ONS at 2,835,686 in 2020 for Greater Manchester Metropolitan County). The local authority for the city is Manchester City Council, which looks after the thirty-two Manchester City wards. These wards make up the largest digital, creative and tech cluster outside of London with 500+ cultural organisations and thousands of local artists working to deliver projects and events. 100,000+ students across Manchester from four universities make the city young, diverse and vibrant. Following post war deindustrialisation, economic decline and the resulting social change which ensued, Manchester was forced to go through a challenging process of economic restructuring and a shift away from a labour market primarily based on industry. Manchester is now particularly notable for its architecture, universities, culture, arts and music, nightlife, science, engineering and sports. The Arts Council England invest £26.6 million into NPOs in Greater Manchester per year and there are 78,500 people working within the digital and creative industries generating more than £4.4 billion of income¹⁴. The recent move of the BBC to MediaCity on Salford Quays is emblematic of an aim to redress an uneven cultural balance between North and South of the UK.



Image: HOME Café. ©HOME

A Cultural HOME

HOME is an international centre for contemporary visual art, film and theatre which first opened in 2015. The purpose-built building was the result of a 2012 merger between two of Manchester's most well-loved arts organisations, Cornerhouse and the Library Theatre Company to form Greater Manchester Arts Centre Ltd (GMAC). GMAC is an Arts Council NPO, with a board of trustees currently chaired by Kathryn Jacob (CEO of Pearl and Dean and on the development board of RADA). HOME "produces the best in contemporary theatre, visual art and film, engagement and

¹⁴<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1980/strategy.pdf> accessed 22/4/2021

creative learning, creative industries and digital innovation”¹⁵. The building is impressively modern and welcoming, with two state of the art theatre spaces. Theatre 1 has seating for just under 500 hundred people and Theatre 2 is a black box theatre space with bleacher style bench seating for 132. HOME has five cinema spaces of varying sizes and an event space with stunning views of Tony Wilson Place and floor to ceiling natural light.

HOME’s vision for engagement, as documented in their Engagement Strategy 2020, is for its programming to be:

“central to making Greater Manchester a major city celebrated for its distinctive art - art that enriches the lives and life chances of its people, a magnet for artists and creatives with the highest engagement in the arts in the UK.”

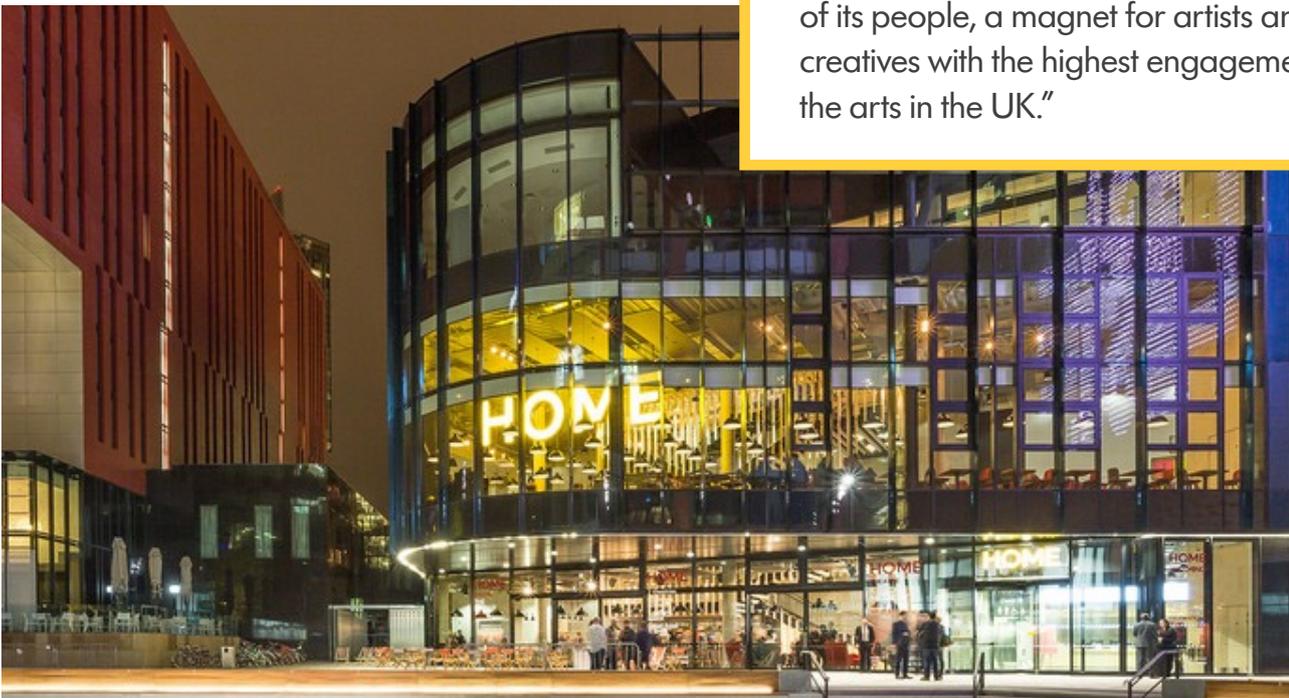


Image: HOME from Tony Wilson Place, ©HOME

HOME have an eclectic and diverse programme and not only work across all art forms but also challenge and blur the lines between art forms, often championing a hybrid cross-art practice in the work they support and deliver. This is one of the main similarities with Barbican’s own programming, and a strong feature which drew the two organisations to partner together. Through their theatre programme they produce and programme questioning, ambitious and often international projects and involve audiences with a variety of theatrical experiences including foreign language plays, hosting touring productions, work from emerging artists and theatre makers in addition to more established dramaturgs and practitioners of national and international standing. HOME’s engagement programme focusses on four core strands, schools and colleges, young creatives, communities and volunteering. Their ‘schools and college’ strand focuses on enriching student learning and experience for 14-19 year olds, including through the Barbican Box partnership. Throughout all art form programming, HOME are very committed to environmental sustainability and raising awareness of sustainability and environmental social responsibility. This impacts their programming across all theatre, cinema, visual arts and engagement. Of all the partner’s National

¹⁵ <https://homemcr.org/about/history/> accessed 18/3/2021

Development Programme, HOME is the most similar in terms of size and art form and engagement programming to Barbican. Despite the fact HOME have an established learning and engagement department who work with schools across Manchester, they identified early in the scoping phase for National Development Programme that the partnership would enable in-depth engagement over longer periods of time with young people and schools in Manchester, which might not be possible for them otherwise.

Barbican Box at HOME and the National Development Programme

The partnership between Barbican Creative Learning and HOME is slightly different to the format of the other two NDP regional partnerships, since it began two years before the National Development Programme began delivery. In 2017 Barbican and HOME delivered 'Barbican Box at HOME', the first year of Barbican Box Regional Expansion Pilot delivered to four schools. In part because of the fact the partnership was a continuation from the Barbican Box Regional Expansion Pilot, the Manchester partnership is unique. HOME and the Barbican Creative Learning teams had two years' experience of partnering on Barbican Box prior to the NDP, which meant that they felt more able to test new approaches to delivery and partnership. During the scoping phase of approaching prospective regional partners, it was felt by both venues that there were clear resonances between HOME and Barbican's programme, venues and priorities. This, in addition to the existing relationship between the two venues beyond that of the learning teams, meant that the partnership was considered to provide organic opportunities to develop over time. In the other two regions NDP works with, it was expected that time would need to be taken to learn about each other's praxis and priorities, it was felt that HOME and Barbican's partnership on the NDP would likely be able to 'hit the ground running'.

Manchester City Council and The Local Cultural Ecology

In addition to its rich cultural history and wide array of arts organisations and artists, the success of Manchester's cultural scene is also due to a mixed model funding stream with funding coming from private sector grants, earned income through ticket sales, national public sector grants as well as Manchester City Council's own investment in its city. Manchester City Council is not only a major investor but also a firm advocate for culture in the city. In the financial year 2019-2020 its investment in local cultural organisations and projects represented approximately twenty percent of the city's total combined income. MCC invested over eighteen million pounds into the arts and culture sectors through grants and contracts in 2019-2020 financial year and this resulted in a good arts provision across Manchester. In addition to the many varied and diverse cultural organisations and venues working across Manchester, there is also a successful Cultural Leaders Group: Engagement and Learning Network which ensures and prioritises that not all arts organisations are working with the same schools and communities but are balancing opportunity and working together strategically to ensure delivery across the city. In 2020, Manchester launched its own Cultural Education Partnership (MCEP, now rebranded as MADE) chaired by Z Arts. However, despite this recent investment in the arts in Manchester, its flourishing cultural economy and its Rough Guide status as 'cultural capital' of the UK there continue to be 'cold spot' areas around the city where young people experience significant barriers to participation in cultural learning.

“The relationship between culture, class and identity has been a consistent theme linking studies of Manchester’s past and present. A contemporaneous survey of local arts attendance showed market penetration at below the national average in almost two-thirds of Manchester and Greater Manchester postcodes, with annual attendance rates at arts venues averaging out at 20 per cent of the population.” *Miles, 2*

Manchester has areas of extremely high deprivation, as well as several areas with very low levels of progression on to HE, both of which are characteristics associated with limited access to the arts. There is a national north-south divide in terms of the study of arts subjects and arts participation generally, with areas in the south of England having higher rates, and in 2016 the northwest region having the third lowest level nationally out of ten regions of arts take-up at Key Stage 4.

These are issues MCC is acutely aware of and hoping to combat through the provision of rigorous data which supported a targeted approach to engagement within the city. Due to Manchester’s relatively high level of cultural provision in the city centre but persistent ‘cold spot’ areas, in 2016 Manchester City Council launched a Cultural Impact Survey, which aims to provide rigorous data to identify these underserved areas and schools around the city so that arts organisations can approach engagement in a more targeted way. In its fourth year, the annual Cultural Impact Survey aims to supply data to analyse the economic and social impact of cultural organisations in Manchester. The survey showed that there was cultural activity taking place in all 32 wards in the city but that this activity was not evenly distributed. Amongst other statistics, the Cultural Impact survey identifies which wards in Manchester have high cultural engagement and which wards are in a ‘cold spot’ are as well as identifying specific schools who don’t engage.

“Engagement is not fully distributed, but activity takes place in every one of the 32 wards in the city. There is a high concentration in the city centre. The closer you live to the city centre the more likely you are to be engaged. The very far out areas are the least engaged areas. This mirrors other indicators of deprivation such as employment and school attainment.”

Manchester City Council, In Depth Interview

Challenges and Barriers to Cultural Engagement in Manchester

The Greater Manchester Strategy for Culture and Creativity ‘Grown in Manchester, Known around the World’ report identifies that whilst Manchester is an international hub for creativity and culture worldwide, these opportunities are not always experienced evenly by local residents. The Active Lives Survey shows a 15%-point difference in levels of engagement and participation between the most and least engaged districts of Greater Manchester. This disparity in terms of engagement levels

locally is multifaceted. In many of the more disadvantaged wards, residents have complex lives and culture simply isn’t at the top of their priority list, which means parents don’t, or aren’t always

able to support young people to engage in the arts. Similarly to Harlow and West Norfolk, some sectors of Manchester's population experience a cultural capital deficit with some young people and their families not feeling mainstream cultural venues are spaces which are 'for them'. This doesn't necessarily mean these people don't engage in acts of everyday creativity in their home lives but rather that they don't always feel able to engage in publicly funded cultural activities and spaces. Despite the wide variety of cultural venues in Manchester and its relatively small geographical size, one of the major challenges to cultural engagement for a large part of the population is the transportation network. Ironically, they share this major challenge with the most rural of the NDP partners, CAE in West Norfolk but for very different geographical reasons. The ticketing system in Manchester is not integrated, making costs prohibitive for many and it can take up to an hour to travel a relatively short distance. This makes it challenging for both individuals but also schools to arrange visits to cultural venues. Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester responded to this issue by piloting free bus passes for 16/17 year olds and local arts organisations were heavily involved in advocating for this scheme. Coupled with this challenge, HOME identified in early discussions that one barrier to engagement for young people is crime, with parents not wanting young people using public transport system late at night.

In order to ensure that the NDP partnership with HOME was serving communities who had been less able to engage with the cultural provision on offer locally, the Barbican Box project needed to approach school's recruitment in a targeted and strategic way. They attempted this by prioritising schools with higher proportions of Free School Meals, as well as those who accessed arts provision in the City of Manchester less frequently. The rich and varied cultural scene in Manchester, the great number of emerging artists which could be supported through the programme, coupled with the similarities in terms of the programming between HOME and Barbican meant ongoing partnership through the National Development Programme made strategic sense. What was particularly interesting from the perspective of research into the potential for place-based partnerships was the fact that the two organisations knew each other's praxis well. Therefore, the National Development Programme could offer an opportunity to test the parameters possible with more established partnership working.

4.3 A Portrait of West Norfolk, PEACH & Creative Arts East: Engagement without Bricks and Mortar.

King's Lynn and West Norfolk: How Place defines a Cultural Home

The borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk sits in the county of Norfolk in Eastern England and has an overall population of 147,451. The borough's administrative centre is King's Lynn, which is nestled on the banks of the River Great Ouse and is equidistant between Peterborough and Cambridge. The district is comprised of the main urban area of King's Lynn, which is 28km² and has a population of approximately 34,500 people, alongside 102 surrounding parishes. To the north of this largely rural district sits the stunning Norfolk coastline and the North Sea and to its west a small part of the Fens. King's Lynn railway station, one hour from Cambridge, is located at the end of The Fen Line and offers regular direct services to London King's Cross, which takes just under two hours.



Image © Creative Arts East / Trish Thompson. Dante or Die

“As a large rural county, almost two thirds of enterprises in Norfolk are located in rural locations compared to a third nationally. Location, rurality and infrastructure all play a part in shaping the structure of employment and enterprises in Norfolk.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Vital Signs Report (2016), 53

The challenge of defining the boundaries of place is acutely felt in King's Lynn and West Norfolk, an issue which has often undermined the potential for collaboration with the wider county of Norfolk, until recently. This has meant as a region it has been isolated, both rurally and politically. This has affected how people in West Norfolk define place; the political boundaries that exist in the area mean little to the people who live there. This key contextual issue relates to how areas define their position in relation to the surrounding boroughs, cities and counties. This influences where people identify as living and ultimately this has an impact on their cultural identity, the areas they identify as belonging to culturally, where they go to for culture and where they think of as their 'cultural home'.

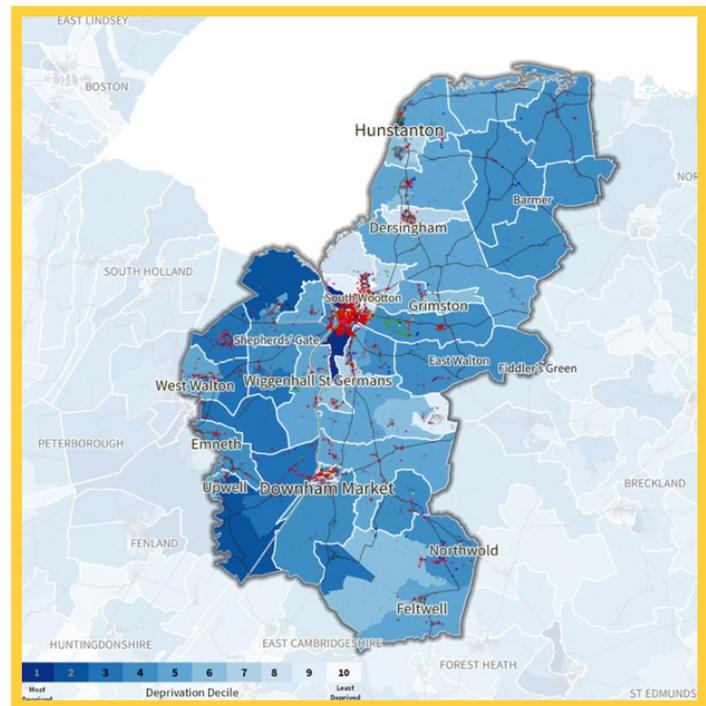


Image credit: https://research.mysociety.org/sites/fms/_maps/authority/uk_KLN/

“In particular, in West Norfolk there is an emphasis towards King's Lynn as a key town in the borough. The position of West Norfolk both politically and in terms of the psychogeography of the place, as you get down to parts of it begins to feel more like Cambridgeshire. It's those issues of having political boundaries rather than boundaries that people move to and respond to are really very important. We have got to be building out and strengthening those relationships in rural parts of that district and we haven't done that yet. It is always a bit of a challenge in rural communities in terms of where people and families look to and belong culturally. That is very problematic in terms of engagement.” *Festival Bridge In Depth Interview, 15/1/2020*

The boundaries of place in this region have also impacted upon the formation of the Local Cultural Education Partnership, PEACH West Norfolk, which at the moment, whilst being a borough-wide partnership is heavily weighted towards representation from those operating in and around King's Lynn. The rural/urban classification scale¹⁷ defines rural as settlements with less than a 10,000-resident population, however even within this scale there are subcategories of 'mainly rural', 'largely rural' and 'urban with significantly rural'. Selecting regions for the NDP required a more nuanced understanding of place than these somewhat blunt categorisations allow. In Manchester, whilst some of the outer wards might be defined as 'suburban' according to the rural/urban classification scale, they are still firmly priorities of Manchester City Council and are thought of as part of the sprawl of the main city centre. Similarly, in West Norfolk, King's Lynn, with its 34,000+ population would not be classified as a rural area; however, it is firmly associated with rural Norfolk and acts as a hub town for large swathes of surrounding rural areas and may well still subject to similar challenges associated with rural

¹⁷ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/597751/Defining_rural_areas__Mar_2017_.pdf

cultural engagement. These hub towns play important roles for the rural areas, providing services, employment, business and leisure. The schools in King's Lynn also serve families from neighbouring rural villages.

West Norfolk and The Local Cultural Ecology

Contrary to challenges around rural access and the arts, according to ACE Active Lives Survey people living in all types of rural areas have higher rates of regular arts engagement (3 or more in the previous year) than people living in urban areas. This is a trend which is seen across all rural regions in the UK and across a wide range of socio-demographic groups living in rural areas, compared to the same groups based in urban areas. People living in rural areas are more likely than people living in urban areas to actively participate in a rehearsal or performance of a play/drama, play a musical instrument for pleasure, play a musical instrument live for a performance, sing to an audience, dance, undertake photography as an artistic activity, engage in a visual arts activity (painting, drawing, printmaking and sculpture), read for pleasure and engage in textile crafts. Additionally, people living in rural areas are more likely than people living in urban areas to attend live dance events, live music performances, theatre, craft exhibitions and visual arts exhibitions.

West Norfolk has a resident and emerging arts scene and conversations with the Arts Council England Bridge organisation Festival Bridge, revealed a significant change in momentum around culture in the region in 2019. This shift resulted in the provision of a new Cultural Prospectus and council-run Culture Board, the formation of the LCEP and a strong relationship between Festival Bridge and West Norfolk Academy Trust. The Culture Board has connections to New Anglia Local Enterprise Cultural Strategy and is well structured in terms of the local strategy of the area. There are also a network of ambitious and talented artists working across the region. However, despite this new infrastructure, Head of Festival Bridge Michael Corley stated in 2019 that more broadly the cultural infrastructure is limited in the area and has historically been based on heritage projects and heritage restoration. He identified this lack in infrastructure to be due, in part, to funding based on a project-by-project basis which hasn't created a substantive legacy or increased capacity in the region. This is not surprising given that there is no NPO in the region and as an area it has received comparatively little Arts Council Funding.



“The area has really very limited cultural infrastructure. There are strong museums in King’s Lynn, the library is quite active and there has been a Heritage Action Zone in the town which have renovated a lot of the heritage sites. There has been some HLF investment in recent times. Much of it relies on project funding, so it is in a project funding cycle. King’s Lynn and West Norfolk has been a challenge for us, it felt like an area we should be working in and that had potential to be working in.” *In Depth Interview, 15/1/202*

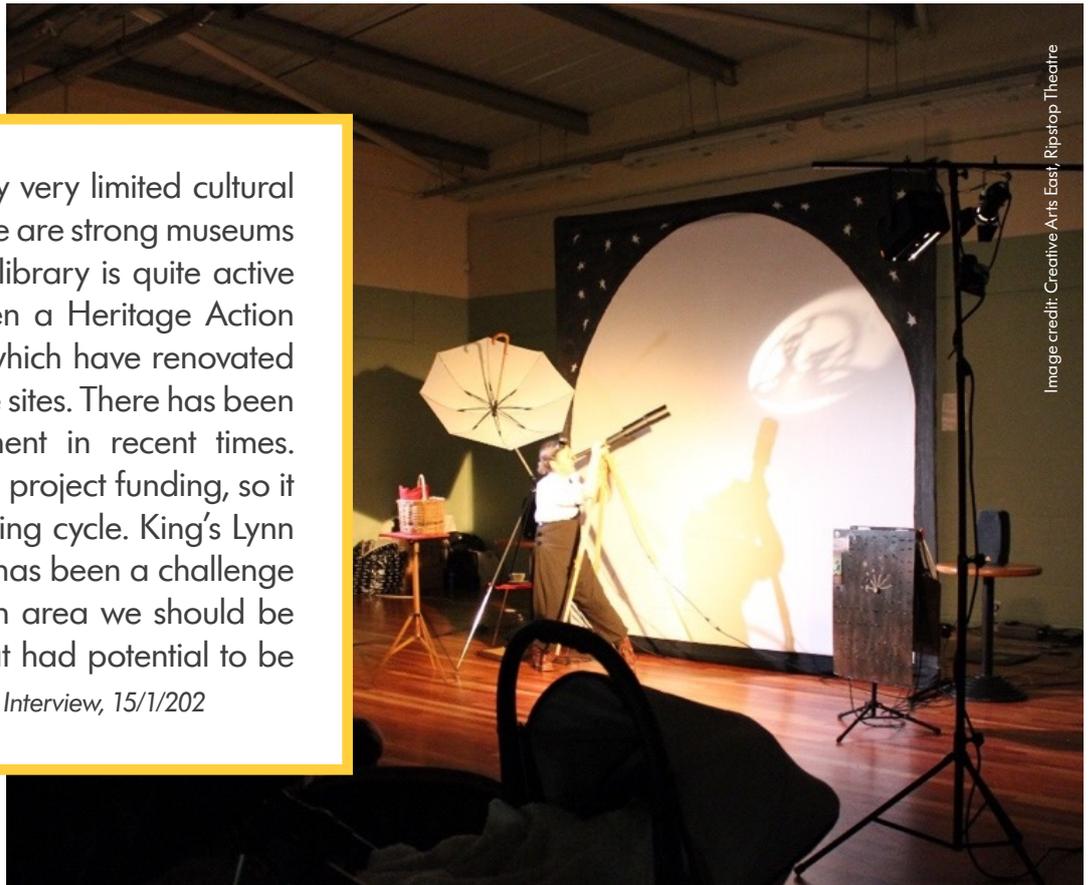


Image credit: Creative Arts East, Ripstop Theatre

PEACH West Norfolk was seen as key to the successful delivery of NDP in this region. The fact that Barbican could embed activity within an LCEP was considered to be very beneficial to NDP and its potential to a) act as a capacity building project and b) to have a legacy in the region. The resident and growing contemporary arts scene in West Norfolk, was felt to provide potential programmatic connections particularly between the Barbican, King’s Lynn Festival and Creative Arts East. The fact that the region is very rural offered the Barbican an opportunity to adapt and deliver work in a very different context, with different resources and challenges and to hone their ability to work in this multi-stakeholder partnership. Of the three partnerships the NDP developed in its pilot years, the partnership in West Norfolk was the most embedded in the local cultural ecology from the outset and this had positive implications for project delivery further down the line.

Creative Arts East and PEACH West Norfolk: Bricks without Mortar Engagement

Creative Arts East is an arts and community development charity who work with rural and/or under engaged audiences across Norfolk, Suffolk and the wider Eastern region. Their work includes the rural touring of professional live performance in community spaces such as pubs, libraries and schools, support for community cinema screenings, and the direct delivery of creative workshops and training opportunities. Creative Arts East are the lead organisation for PEACH West Norfolk, and Executive Director, Natalie Jode, acts as the Chair. As a venue-less organisation, CAE have evolved to become extraordinarily creative, nimble, accessible and inventive at creating engagement

models which reach the most rurally cut off regions of Norfolk and Suffolk. Much can be learnt by the Barbican from their capacity to deliver high quality creative learning projects within this context, not least their ability to reach communities which are geographically distanced from physical cultural infrastructure.

PEACH West Norfolk is one of 90+ 'Local Cultural Education Partnerships' (LCEPs) across England, set up to improve the alignment of cultural education for young people as part of The Cultural Education Challenge launched by ACE in partnership with the Department for Education. There are a number of formal arts spaces such as galleries, theatres and museums represented on the LCEP as well independent artists, local schools and academy trusts, councils, young people, and stakeholders from across the wider county such as Norfolk Music Hub, National Centre for Writing and Norwich University of the Arts.

Venue-less engagement is more challenging in areas where place is contested and local residents struggle to select an area they associate as their 'cultural home'. Without an arts building to feel at home in and visit regularly in an area you associate as belonging to, inventive engagement models become extremely important. The Head of the Bridge Organisation

for West Norfolk identified in baseline research that place-based definitions based on local authority borders can become challenging if participants don't associate with that place. This is the case in West Norfolk and this impacts how the NDP began to engage in the region. A hyper local approach to place-based working has been suggested as necessary or it can make cultural belonging or finding a 'cultural home' challenging. However, rural partnerships might find this most challenging since they have to incorporate larger swathes of country to make use of capacity.

"PEACH enables networking between representatives and exists to develop and evolve the strategic and practical work of the cultural education partnership as a whole and of its individual contributors."¹⁸

"In terms of our capacity to work in a hyper-local way, some of our more rural areas we are covering quite large areas of the country because that means we can gather 3 schools together and 2 arts organisations and that increases reach and capacity. If we went smaller and increasingly hyperlocal, we would be investing in one organisation." *Festival Bridge In Depth Interview, 15/1/2020*

This means the people engaging in the project may not all identify with the large area which the place-based partnership covers, it might mean 'local' artist mentors selected to build capacity in the region are in fact living far away from the schools they are working in. An inability to operate a hyper local place-based approach in rural areas, due to lack of capacity, affects how artists and arts organisations can often be seen as 'outsiders' to an area.

¹⁸ <https://www.creativeartseast.co.uk/our-work/peach-west-norfolk> accessed 8/11/2021

Rural-Urban Divide: Challenges and Barriers to Cultural Engagement in West Norfolk

The Arts Council England Rural Evidence Data Review identified that “grants for the arts success rates for applicants residing in rural census output areas, though rising, are lower than for those who reside in urban areas. 46 per cent of eligible applications from rural areas result in an award, compared with 52 per cent in urban areas”. Applicants residing in rural areas made 13% of individual and 14% of organisational Grants for the Arts applications in the two and a half years leading up to August 2014. 12% of all awards were made to applicants residing in rural areas. Activity funded by Grants for the Arts was identified as benefitting 9,061 unique postcodes in England with 19 per cent related to rural settlements. (5). In addition to this West Norfolk is a region with inequality, (mirroring in fact the regions surrounding the Barbican) it incorporates some very wealthy areas on the border with deprivation.

“There is massive inequality in West Norfolk. Having Sandringham and stately homes, villages like Burnham Market where every third car is a Ferrari next to very deprived villages a mile away. It is a very unequal community. Those families would go to one of quite a few private schools and much of it is second home ownership as well. The wealth may not be resident in the region.” *In Depth Interview, 15/1/2020*

Unsurprisingly access and transport is an issue for people in West Norfolk. King’s Lynn is the main town in the area and has quite a lot of opportunity however a few miles out of the town people experience considerable challenges to get into the town without a car. West Norfolk has limited access and scores low on cultural amenities in the Norfolk Community Foundation Report in 2016 (39 when England average is 100) and it is well established that the cost of delivering rural services can be significantly higher than that in urban and suburban areas. There are high levels of deprivation in Education and Training category, below average cultural participation and no NPO based in the district. It

has been difficult for young people to achieve their aspirations and it has been identified as a Social Mobility ‘Cold Spot’. Despite the fact that people living in the East of England have higher rates of regular arts engagement than both urban-based respondents within their home region and other rural-based respondents nationally, King’s Lynn and West Norfolk has been identified in the Vital Signs report as a particularly vulnerable area of Norfolk. In 2021 Arts Council England announced that they were taking a Place Based approach in their Delivery Plan linked to their 2020-2030 ten-year strategy Let’s Create. One of the 54 places identified as in particular need of investment was Fenland, on the border of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk. Although King’s Lynn and West Norfolk was not a key place-based target area for ACE, their average annual investment fell lower than Fenland at £1.71 per capita and they have 50% active engagement. The place-based approach ACE has adopted in their delivery plan aims to ‘level’ the playing field in term of arts investment and ensure appropriate support to rural and coastal social and economic development. This form of rural and geographic proofing aims to ensure government policy intervention is fair and equitable and equally spread across the country.

When asked why West Norfolk had been particularly challenging to implement cultural engagement work in, Michael Corley identified that due to the small, culturally sparse and rural nature of the area, collaborative projects between individuals had often already taken place, with varying success. The Borough Council, in austerity, had been outsourcing its cultural provision to Live Leisure Group. Whilst there were interested and engaged individuals, there was a lack of cultural leadership locally. Most importantly he identified a lack of trust and partnership habit in the area which impacted on their capacity to implement and convene collaborative LCEP type work prior to PEACH West Norfolk. One of the main aims Michael Corley identified as being key to the legacy of the NDP in the region is building local 'partnership habit' and trust in partnership working.

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¹⁹ <https://www.creativeartseast.co.uk/our-work/peach-west-norfolk> accessed 8/11/2021

5.

Research Findings

**Getting Started,
Responding to Need,
Barriers and Opportunity**

The cultural ecologies outlined in the three regional portraits in section three defined the delivery of the project and partnership. They are representative of the nuanced approach to understanding place which is essential to place-based projects and partnerships. The complex selection process for identifying the regions and partners where the NDP could add value took into account the complexity of the local socio economic and cultural contexts. These portraits fed into understanding the needs, barriers and opportunities in each area which in turn impacted project delivery and planning.

The following three 'Research Findings' sections, will evaluate the National Development Programme against its project aims and offer guidance for best practice guidance for place-based partnerships working nationally. They include selected data from in depth interviews and project surveys.



Image: Children at Snettisham Primary School working on Barbican Box, West Norfolk © Snettisham Primary School

5.1 Contrast and commonalities in Need, Barriers & Opportunities in the Partner Regions

Theory of Change

A Theory of Change (TOC) is a type of methodological tool for planning and evaluation that is often used in not-for-profit and government sectors to promote social change. TOCs define the longer-term goals of a project and then map backwards to identify the necessary preconditions to achieve those longer-term goals. An evaluation framework, which is linked to the TOC, will ensure that the evaluation methodology gathers the necessary data to assess the extent to which the short and longer-term project goals are met.

The process of drafting a Theory of Change for a multi partner, multi sector place-based project can be complex. In particular, it is challenging since the Theory of Change is designed to capture change processes by identifying and responding to need through activity and measuring both the immediate and longer-term impact the programme has had on its stakeholders and the wider sector. In multi partner projects there may be multiple and conflicting aspired outcomes, even within just one regional area. It is worth briefly discussing here the process by which the TOC was drafted. Following a period of desk research, it was identified that a TOC for a multi partner project (for instance an LCEP formation) ought to be drafted in a face-to-face workshop with all stakeholders present. This is so that the TOC reflects each partner's ambitions for the project and responds to each region's needs and opportunities. It is also important so that each partner feels equally invested in the project and that the partner who submitted the funding bid (in this case the Barbican) isn't seen to steer the outcomes or lead the project without proper consultation. Indeed, an individual TOC for each region may be required to fully tailor the partnership to the place.

Despite understanding the benefits of this collaborative approach to drafting a TOC, it was felt that, given the challenge of aligning multiple partners' schedules, starting from an entirely blank page might not be possible. As such, a working document TOC was initially drafted by the Regional Partnerships Project Manager at Barbican with input from the Post-Doctoral Research Fellow and other members of the team. As part of a process of baseline research, the researcher shared a working document with all partners and discussed, during in-depth baseline interviews, how the TOC might be improved to better reflect their aspirations for the project and their region's unique place-based needs.

"We would like clarity on how each project responds to the Theory of Change. Does each project need to achieve it all or is it expected that each project will weight the outcomes differently depending on the local context?" *Partner Baseline Survey, November 2019*

These suggestions and questions were then used to adapt and re-shape the working document with partners. The TOC was returned to at staggered intervals during the project by partners and Barbican during National Advisory Board meetings.

The way in which the research attached to the NDP fed into the project delivery was formative and iterative. The Researcher and Regional Partnerships Project Manager were in weekly contact with bi-weekly research updates used to inform practice. During the early stages of baseline research, the researcher helped to identify regional need and context which was in turn used to inform the project delivery and planning processes. This was a refreshing, unusual and mutually beneficial approach to aligning a research process to live project delivery.

Partner Need: Long term engagement, CPD and knowledge sharing

During these early stages of the partnership, each regional partner was asked to identify what local need they felt the National Development Programme was responding to. Their responses ranged from delivering long term engagement that would not be possible in its absence, provision of CPD for teachers, to better understanding their audiences. Partners identified that the project responded to local need. In Manchester this was aligning to city council and MCEP aims for engaging target wards.

“In terms of our capacity to work in a hyper-local way, some of our more rural areas we are covering quite large areas of the country because that means we can gather 3 schools together and 2 arts organisations and that increases reach and capacity. If we went smaller and increasingly hyperlocal, we would be investing in one organisation.” *Festival Bridge In Depth Interview, 15/1/2020*

Most of the partners had not been able to deliver CPD to teachers due to lack of funding and internal capacity (66% none at all and 33% under 5 per year) and artists (33% none at all and 33% under two per year). Partners stated they were unable to offer longer term projects to schools. Partners also identified that they were interested in the knowledge sharing opportunities that partnership working presents.

“The chance to better develop relations with artists teachers and young people, supporting schools in their professional development and engaging and understanding a younger audience.” *Partner Baseline Survey, 2019*

“NDP will help with raising ambition and aspiration in West Norfolk Children and Young People, teachers and parents as well as the profile of West Norfolk in terms of its availability for and willingness towards arts development. It also offers the opportunity for reciprocal learning between Barbican and regional organisations.” *Partner Baseline survey, 2019*

During baseline surveys 100% of partners stated that the work of the National Development Programme was ‘extremely important’ (33%) or ‘Very Important’ (67%) to their strategic development. 100% of partners identified that NDP was ‘very significant’ (33%) or ‘quite significant’ (67%) at fulfilling their organisations strategic and social aims as well as their artistic and cultural aims.

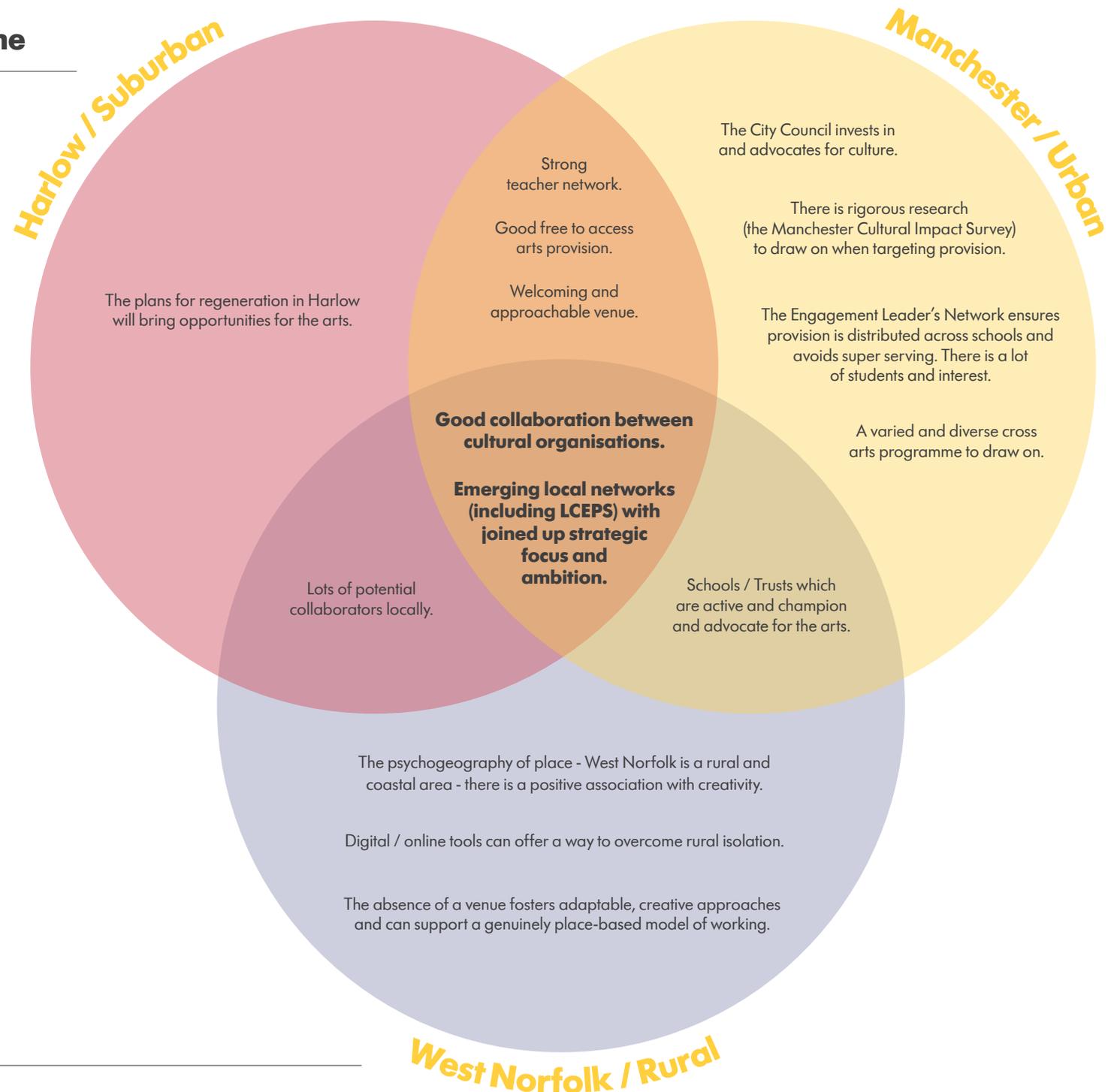
100% of partners stated that NDP partnership would enable them to achieve aims which would be difficult to realise in its absence. These aims were identified by partners as the capacity to run in depth engagement with a number of local schools. Some partners were able to offer ad hoc engagement with schools prior to partnering with Barbican but longer-term projects were not possible in all three regions. Partners also identified that the project would increase their understanding of the local

creative learning sector and add profile to their work locally. In West Norfolk, Creative Arts East commented that the work of NDP was an important component in establishing their local LCEP and providing project opportunities to interested schools.

“Over the next two years the Barbican Box project is an integral part of the development of the PEACH West Norfolk LCEP. It will increase cultural ambition in children and young people and engender more interest in external arts partnerships by schools. We hope it will raise enthusiasm for LCEP participation by schools.” *Partner Baseline Survey, 2019*

Venn Diagrams Opportunity and Need Pre Covid-19

During baseline research including extensive in-depth interviews and baseline surveys, the local needs/challenges and opportunities in each area were identified. During a National Advisory Board meeting these were discussed by partners and common challenges and opportunities related to the provision of cultural learning opportunities locally were identified through a Venn diagram task. These were collated and added to the needs and opportunities identified during the baseline research, the results of which are featured in a summary below.



Opportunities

Challenges

School engagement with external organisations is often led by an 'inspirational figurehead' at the school, rather than being embedded across the school, so this relationship is precarious.

Projects not linked to the curriculum or resulting in a qualification impacts SLT buy-in.

High levels of Pupil Premium can suggest that finance might be a barrier for some families (although Pupil Premium does allow for external provision to be bought in by schools).

Local communities with lower socio-economic background and complex lives - engagement in formal culture not a priority.

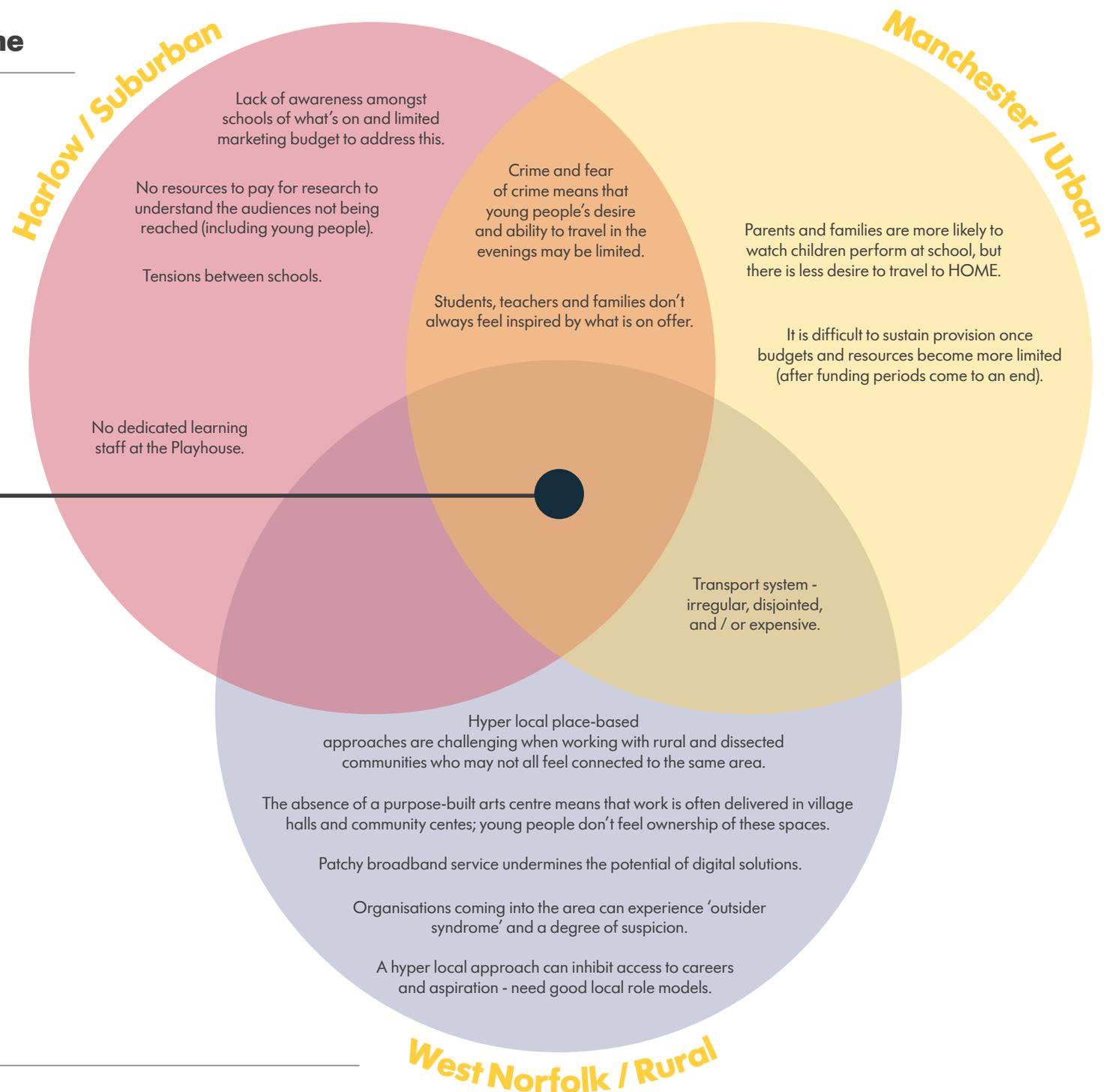
Expectations around the etiquette of arts buildings can be off putting.

Possible assumptions around the arts being inaccessible. Young people and their families unable or unwilling to travel outside their immediate geography.

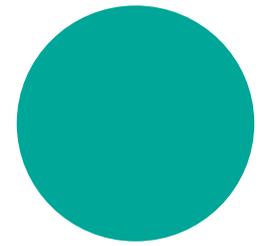
Little tradition of participation in formal, publicly funded arts within home life, the arts not seen as a lifelong choice. A sense that it is 'not for us'.

Careers in the arts seen as unreliable or unsustainable, so not encouraged.

Limited resource and capacity within arts organisations to deliver learning programmes.



5.2 NDP Response to Covid-19: Adapting the Delivery Approach



100% partners rated NDPs response to meet the needs presented by Covid-19 as 'very effective'. 83% of staff working on the project at Barbican felt the response to the needs presented by Covid-19 was 'very effective' (50%) or 'effective' (23%).

Partners identified in post pilot surveys that one of the things they felt most proud of was the way in which NDP adapted to meet the needs presented by Covid-19.

"We responded quickly but sensitively to meet the needs presented by Covid-19 in our area." *Partner Post Pilot Survey, 2021*

"A great deal of work was undertaken to ensure the project could be delivered effectively in the face of Covid-19." *Partner Post Pilot Survey, 2021*

The fact that the project was able to continue in a hybrid form, with some face to face but predominantly online delivery, was felt to be one of the great successes of the partnership in all three regions. The capacity for adapting to the needs of each location was felt, in part, to relate to the place-based approach of the NDP which was designed to adapt and respond to local need. This place based and responsive approach was described by members of staff at Barbican and by partners to be extremely time consuming and labour intensive, particularly as a result of Covid-19 and the changing landscape following the furlough scheme and local and national changing government regulations. One of the challenges which Covid presented was how to develop a relationship between the partner organisations and teachers, students and artist mentors when in person site visits and showcases were not possible.

"We were able to deliver Box using both hybrid and fully online models, in all regions. What was more difficult was replacing the in-venue activity (showcases and performance visits) which are often the key moments in terms of supporting a relationship between students and the partner venue. There may have been ways we could have done this creatively, if we had had more time, capacity and resource." *Barbican Internal Staff Post Project Survey, 2021*

"The LCEP was established to address local access to culture and low uptake by schools, NDP has radically transforme that through its delivery output Barbican Box." *Barbican Internal Staff Post Project Survey, 2021*

Post Covid-19 Regional Opportunities and Barriers

As a result of the rapidly changing cultural ecology following Covid-19, it was felt essential to conduct a new baseline analysis of changing local need and opportunity resulting from the impact of the pandemic on the cultural sector. This involved a new scoping desk research which looked at the impact of Covid-19 on the three different regions. This was shared with partners and partners were asked to comment on the new challenges and opportunities which were presented as a result of Covid-19. These are included in summary form below.

Ways in which the impact of covid has or may positively affect the provision of and access to local cultural experiences and activities:

- There has been an increase in free digital content online for young people
- Increased national awareness & parental buy-in for the arts due to digital online content & home-school.
- A better understanding of digital delivery may benefit those living in very rural areas, and methods being utilised to reach people during lockdown could have lasting applications. When we asked about possible future approaches to arts engagement following schools re-opening in our online teacher survey, 100% of respondents Agreed or Strongly agreed that they were interested in 'arts projects which use remote or online engagement methods'.
- Barriers ranked top 3 to providing a rich cultural offer for schools in Manchester (pre-COVID) were budget for arts trips, transport for trips to arts venues, and school priorities. 4 of 5 teachers in Manchester who completed the schools survey during covid felt that these barriers could be overcome through remote engagement or online learning by removing travel costs.
- Opportunity for increased youth voice engagement / youth advocacy in digitalised projects.
- Digitization allows us to connect further afield, e.g. with other organisations taking part in the NDP, and makes staying connected more cost effective and easier to facilitate.
- Less pressure on SATs, exams and Ofsted gives space for the arts as part of a holistic recovery process.
- On the Barbican's school survey during covid, teachers in all three areas revealed an increase in importance placed on supporting local arts organisations and artists (increasing from 83% to 100% in Harlow, from 66% to 87% in Manchester and 0% to 33% in West Norfolk). A potential move to hyper local approaches post-Covid could strengthen people's relationships with local venues.
- Accounts of schools working with local artists and 'keeping it local'. There has been a renewed focus on facilitating access to enhance curriculum delivery in bespoke and localised ways. 'What's on your doorstep' is feature of Covid so far. In Harlow, schools reached out to Harlow Playhouse's technical team for support in generating digital content during lockdown, and worked with local youth theatre company Livewire to produce a lockdown piece with 60 young people.
- Potential for hyper local approach to recruitment and employment of freelancers might mean more opportunities for local artists, potentially particularly impactful in rural and suburban areas with smaller pool of artists seeking work.

Ways in which the impact of covid has or may negatively affect the provision of and access to local cultural experiences and activities:

- Digital Exclusion/Poverty means young people from less affluent backgrounds are finding it particularly difficult to access online content.
- In Manchester it was reported that '*Alternative approaches to engagement not reaching the most vulnerable including children and young people with SEND. Despite using a range of tools to engage with young people including social media and video conferencing, partners estimate that only 30% of young people who would normally engage in face-to-face activities are being reached, citing accessibility as the biggest barrier for households*'²⁰
- Covid 19 presents more of an issue in very urban densely populated areas which have seen it spread faster than rural (and some suburban) areas. A move to hyper local could mean London / Barbican Creative Learning / outside artists face challenges engaging in rural or suburban areas, due to local anxiety about people from urban areas with higher rates of infection.

²⁰The State of the Youth and Play Sector in Manchester (2020), page 6

- Home schooling is making arts and cultural access issues more deeply entrenched for those young people for whom school is the primary place for accessing the arts.
- Removing barriers to access and inclusion for young people to engage in the digital offer is challenging with limited additional funding.
- Increased mental health issues amongst young people, stemming from isolation, bereavement and trauma, and the impact on their education.
- Covid may deepen disadvantage (e.g. unconscious bias in exam grade prediction, and further strain on families experiencing poverty).
- A challenge to planning and programming for schools and arts sector is how quickly the Covid 19 situation and regulations change. The need to respond speedily means reduced capacity for extracurricular engagement.
- There is a fragmented picture due to 'bubbling', and a need to have multiple models of delivery (physical version, digital and some blended models) – again, a challenge with limited resources
- Is an urgent need for CPD around innovative approaches to online delivery. Educators & artists want help navigating online platforms & signposting to quality
- Is the potential to deprioritise arts subjects in schools post Covid. In contrast some schools have said they will prioritise the arts since wellbeing will be the schools' focus, indicating provision may be patchier than it was.
- After school clubs / extracurricular activity not happening in the way it has done before (physical space issues/'bubbling')
- Is challenging to foster relationships with local schools who are reluctant to engage in face-to-face delivery.
- The increase in national and digital content challenges the concepts of 'place' and 'a cultural home'. Locally produced digital content is competing with well-funded national and international art organisations around the world.
- A new trend as the pandemic progresses: 'zoom fatigue'- resulting in drop off
- Digital content often produced on the assumption participants will be on a laptop, but there is a need to tailor sessions for different devices (e.g. phones, tablets).
- The financial impact of covid has been felt across the sector, with many organisations fearing permanent closure, and 55% of staff being furloughed . This reduction in resources and staff capacity challenges the sector's ability to plan and adapt for the post-Covid world.
- The funding landscape will be transformed by Covid, and there is the potential for funds to be re-allocated away from the arts and towards immediate covid response.

6.

Research Findings

**Evaluating the
National Development
Programme**

Project Aims

6.1 Catalyse, Convene and Support Stronger Relationships between Arts Centres and Schools

Connection between schools and regional arts partners

The National Development Programme aimed to adopt a 'place based' approach to developing collaborative partnerships, with a view to responding to a local need and to achieve change in a specific sector or sectors. Place-based work is more than just a term to describe the target location of a given funding stream but refers to an approach to working within a region seeking to embed into the local cultural ecology and join up different sectors to work collaboratively to build connections and achieve significant change in the long term. The NDP recognised the need for a comprehensive asset-based programme and strategy which worked with multiple partners and sectors to address and respond to a local need. It aimed to ensure that relationships between local arts organisations and the education sector were collaborative, able to build the capacity of those working on the ground and were subsequently more likely to be sustainable. It was therefore hoped that the primary project delivery model, Barbican Box, would facilitate increased and sustained connection between schools, artists and the regional partners long after Barbican left the area.

"Numerous local schools have limited access to the arts, Barbican Box ensures that the schools who sign up have a great experience and the teachers tend to continue a relationship with our organisation after the project finishes." *Partner Post Pilot Survey, 2021*

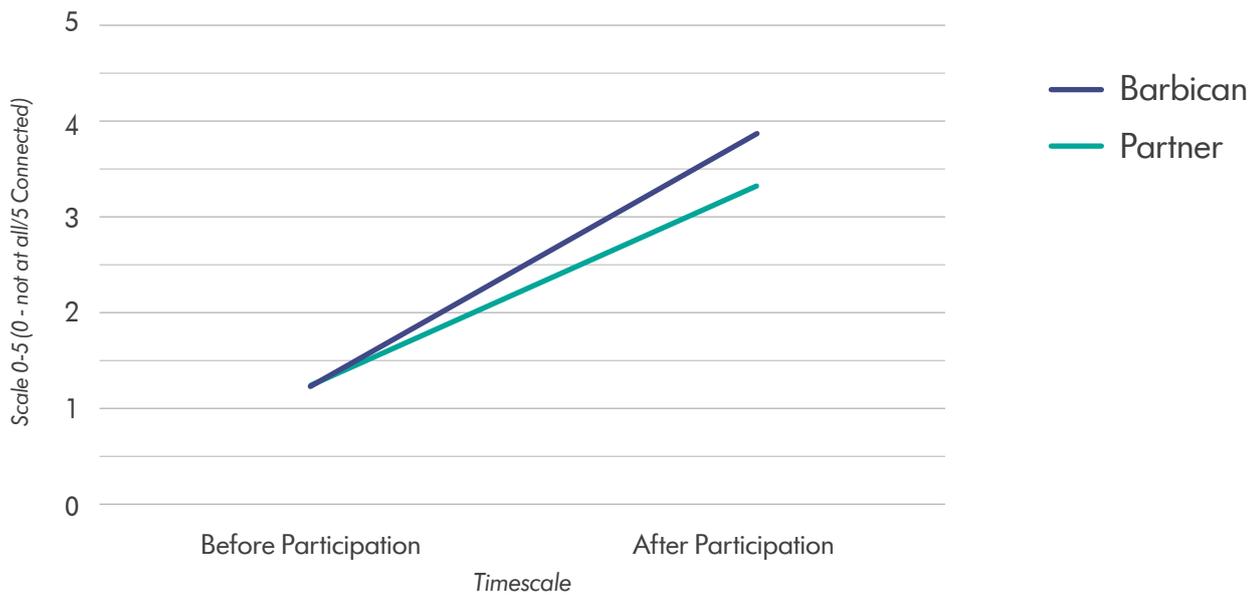
Schools were asked to identify on a scale of 0-5 how connected they felt their school was to the regional partner and Barbican before and after the project. Teachers testified during pre- and post-project surveys that engaging in the Barbican Box project and the National Development Programme had strengthened their relationship with both their local venue and with Barbican Centre. This was particularly true in West Norfolk and Harlow, where there is less market saturation and the partner venue in Harlow and partner arts organisation in West Norfolk are one of fewer organisations working in the area. In Manchester, HOME is one of dozens of cultural organisations working locally (there are over 500 in Greater Manchester as a whole²²¹) and there is considerably more market saturation in the area.

²²¹<https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/1980/strategy.pdf>

When the data relating to connection between local school and arts venues taken both before and after the project was averaged across all regions, it revealed on average a close to fourfold increase in connection to Barbican and a threefold increase in connection to their local venue.

Chart 1: Aggregated Data All Regions Post Barbican Box Teacher Survey

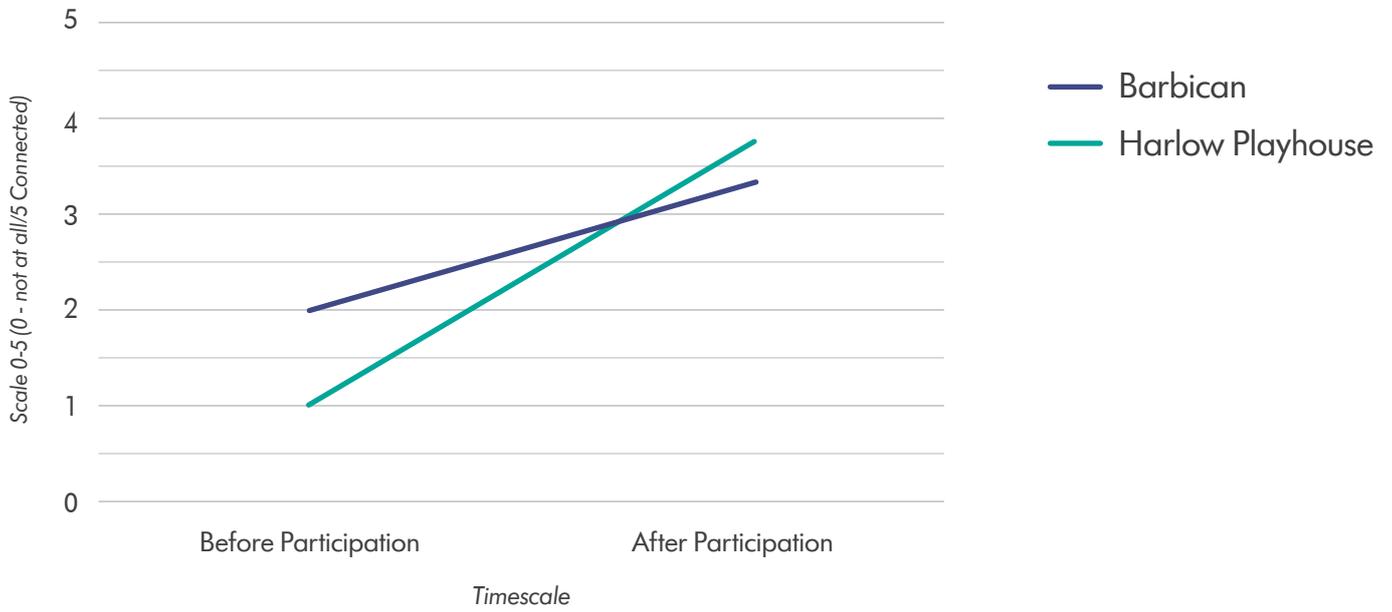
How connected is your school to the following organisations as a result of participating in Barbican Box



When the data was separated to reveal differences in each region in terms of increased connectivity to regional partner the data showed that in Manchester there was less of an increase in sense of connection than in the other areas.

Chart 2 & 3: Aggregated Data All Regions Post Barbican Box Teacher Survey

Harlow: How connected is your school to the following organisations as a result of participating in Barbican Box?



West Norfolk: How connected is your school to the following organisations as a result of participating in Barbican Box?

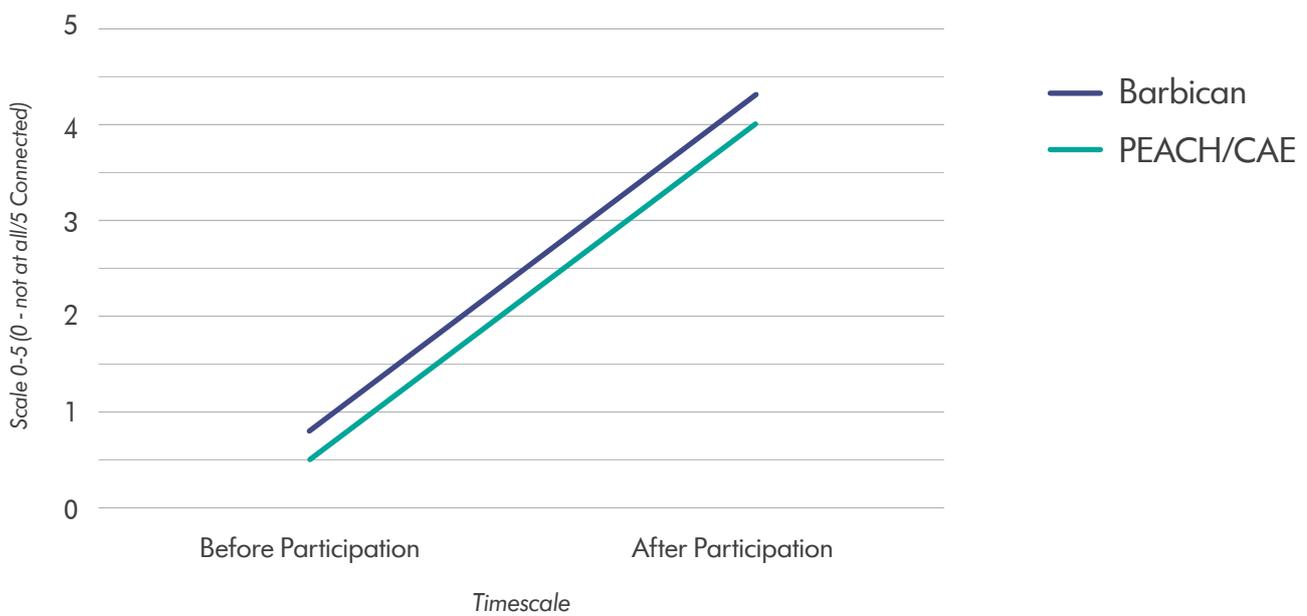
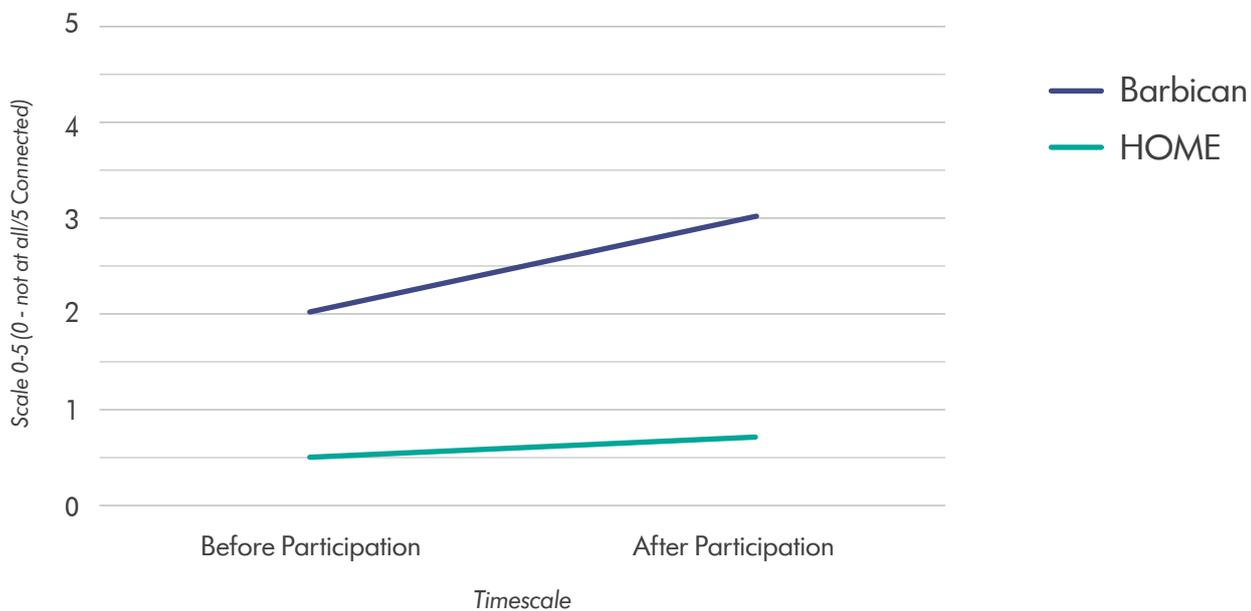


Chart 4: Aggregated Data All Regions Post Barbican Box Teacher Survey

Manchester: How connected is your school to the following organisations as a result of participating in Barbican Box?



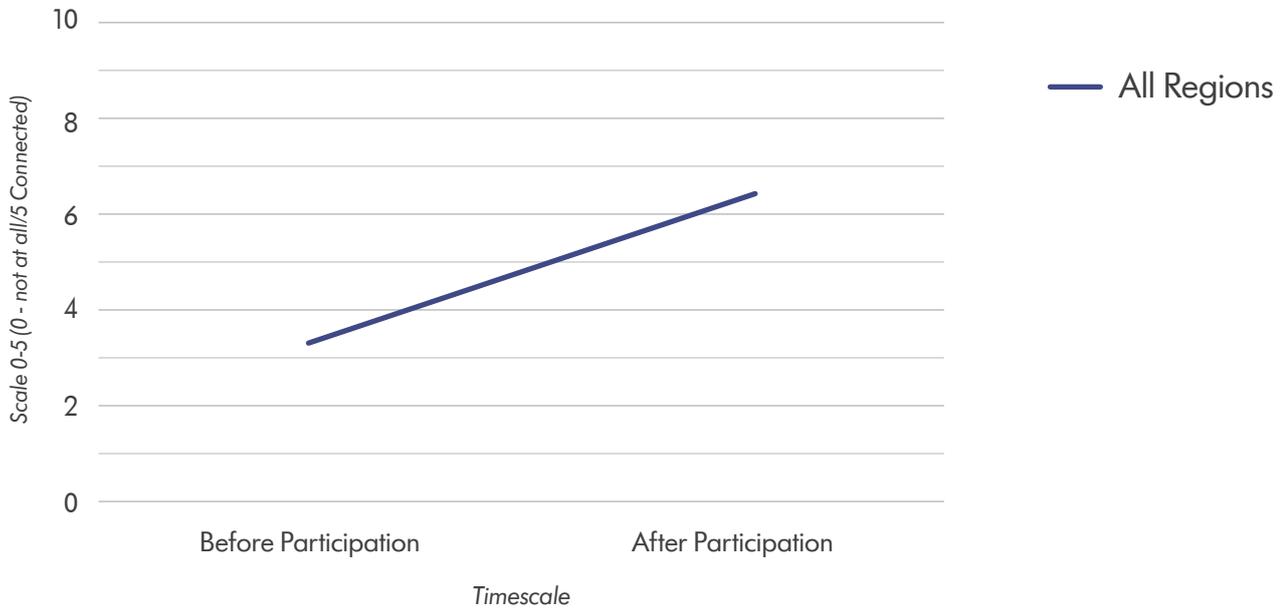
This discrepancy in increased sense of connection between schools and regional arts partners in Manchester and Harlow/West Norfolk may be due to the geographical size of Manchester and the comparative saturation of arts organisations in the area. Additionally, it may relate to the geographical distance and ease of travel for schools to HOME, with some schools considerably further away than schools in Harlow are to Harlow Playhouse and indeed even rural schools to some of the areas CAE/PEACH deliver work.

Cultural belonging is often defined by what feels 'local' or personal. As areas with a smaller cultural infrastructure than Manchester, personal relationships and connections are potentially more at the heart of the cultural landscapes of Norfolk and Harlow and are the mechanisms by which lots of cultural activity happens. There is a smaller pool of arts organisations working in both these regions and therefore their prominence is more acutely felt. Both Harlow Playhouse and CAE have quite small staff teams in comparison to both Barbican and HOME, and it may feel more possible to imagine how the connections created through participation in a project such as Barbican Box could result in ongoing relationships in these contexts.

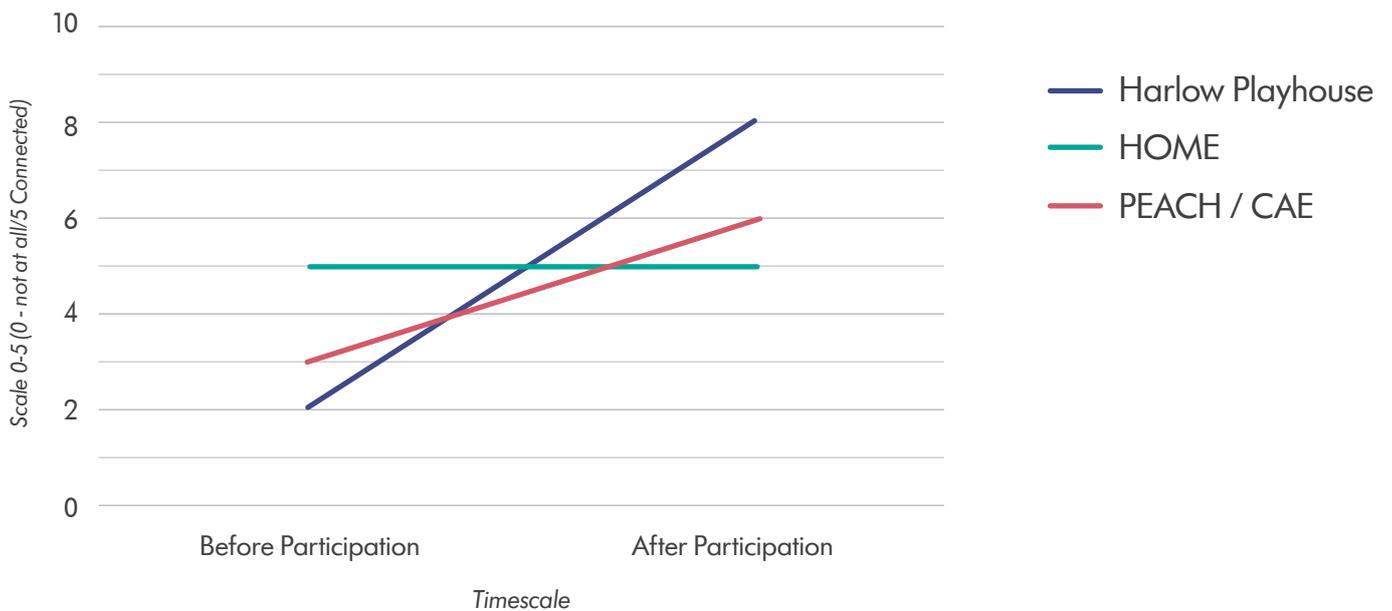
This finding was mirrored in the data from the regional arts partner. When the data is separated, it shows that HOME feels their sense of connection to local schools has remained constant both before and after the project.

Chart 5 & 6: Aggregated Data All Regions Post Pilot Partner Survey, 2021

All Regions Averaged: How connected is your organisation to local schools as a result of participating NDP & Barbican Box?



How connected is your organisation to local schools as a result of participating NDP & Barbican Box?

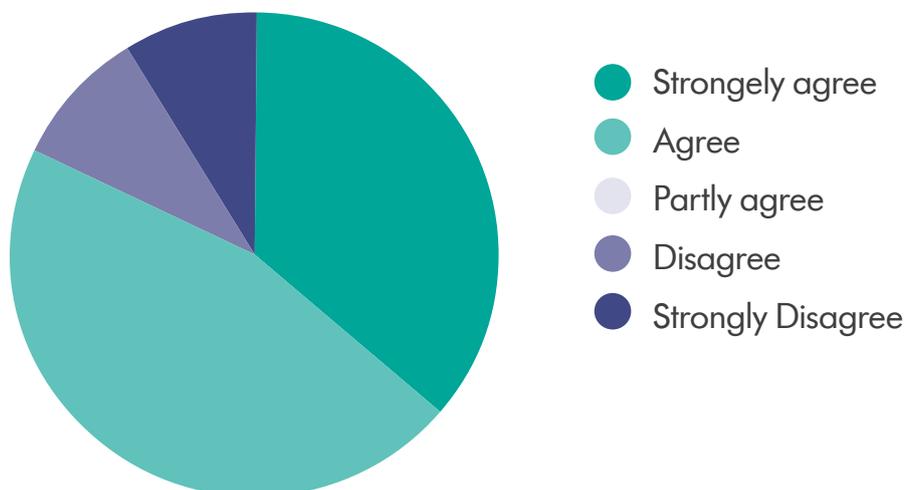


Challenges to connecting local schools to regional venues: Covid-19 and Project Models

The research indicates that facilitating the connection between schools and regional venues has to some extent been possible. However, this was challenging to facilitate for several reasons. In part it was challenging due to Covid-19 and the impact the pandemic had on the feasibility for schools' visits to regional venues and the sharing of Barbican Box work through on site showcases. Had Covid-19 not interrupted face to face work the partners would have 'taken over' the running and managing of the showcases and schools would have visited local venues to see work as part of the project. These on-site visits would have made it easier for teachers and young people to associate the project with the regional partner and feel a sense of connection to their cultural offer. This is evident when the data was aggregated across regions to see which partner the schools associated the project with. 45% of teachers associated the project with Barbican Centre and 55% of schools associate the project with both organisations equally. 67% of Artist Mentors associated the project with Barbican, with only 33% associating it with both organisations equally. During in-depth interviews both artist mentors and teachers commented that increased site visits and communications from local partners would have better facilitated the building of local connections.

Chart 7: Aggregated Data All Regions Post Barbican Artist Mentor Surveys, 2021

Which arts organisations do you most associate Barbican Box with?



This issue is obviously complicated and compounded by the project title, Barbican Box. Increased connection with the regional partner was also made more difficult to effect due to the model chosen to facilitate the place-based approach, Barbican Box, and the balance of workload between lead partner and regional partners. Delivering a 'Barbican' project impacted upon how much the stakeholders associated the project with the regional partner. Despite the compelling quantitative data around increased connection between local schools and regional partners, some artist mentors and teachers commented that because most of the communications about the project were through Barbican, this meant that their associations with the work sometimes lay just with Barbican.

“Delivering a Barbican model also meant that Barbican managed most of the project delivery, so opportunities for strengthening the relationship with the local arts centre may have been missed. The intention was to develop these opportunities over time as we got to know each other’s organisations, as well as to co-develop new models from scratch, but the disruption from Covid interrupted this.” *Barbican Internal Staff Post Project Survey, 2021*

Association of the project with the regional partner was also impacted upon by partner capacity to project manage parts of the project, watch sessions online and visit schools. Although this was exacerbated by the Covid-19 furlough scheme, this issue could be mitigated in the budget by funded partner hours or the appointment of regional brokers in addition to the project leads. This solution has evolved naturally in some regions (although currently without funding in place), for instance in West Norfolk some of CAE time working on the project had allocated time from their PEACH budget. These regional ‘brokers’ hold and manage the schools’ relationships to ensure sustainability in the long term, making funded time important to sustainability. Partners discussed during post project in depths that this could be feasible through a fixed term freelance contract, although this would not be as sustainable in terms of relationship development with schools. However, in larger organisations HR processes might make fixed term contracts more challenging. Harlow Playhouse & CAE felt that this would be easier to facilitate, whereas HOME felt that a new position just for this project (with the instability short funding streams create) might be a challenge to get through HR processes and would also involve line management by one of the HOME team.

Connection between schools and local artists

One interesting finding which resulted from the research was that schools often testified to feeling an increased sense of connection most acutely to local artists (often more so than to both the regional partners and to the Barbican) as a result of participating in Barbican Box. It was always the aim of the National Development Programme to take a capacity and infrastructure building place-based approach and therefore it was considered extremely important that local artists were recruited as artist mentors. Considerable effort was made to recruit local artists whose practice complimented the practice of the lead Barbican Box curator (Hunt & Darton in 2019/2020 in Manchester, Complicité in Harlow in 2019, Coney in 2020/2021 in Manchester and Harlow, Michael Rosen in West Norfolk 2020/2021). This was not always straightforward, since their practice often needed to straddle several different art forms, and be coupled with experience of working in schools.

“The criteria for mentors were quite niche - they ideally needed to have a practice that could straddle visual arts and theatre / performance art. It was also desirable for them to have experience of working with schools/knowledge of the respective art form curriculums, as well as an interest in the Coney practice of game playing and using technology.” *Barbican Internal Post Project Survey, 2021*

During delivery, it was important to adopt a degree of flexibility around the specificity of artistic practices, to work with the expertise in place, and also to have a contextualised understanding of what constitutes a ‘local’ artist pool, taking into account geography and population density. What may be considered fairly distant by a city dweller, can feel local to someone in a rural setting.

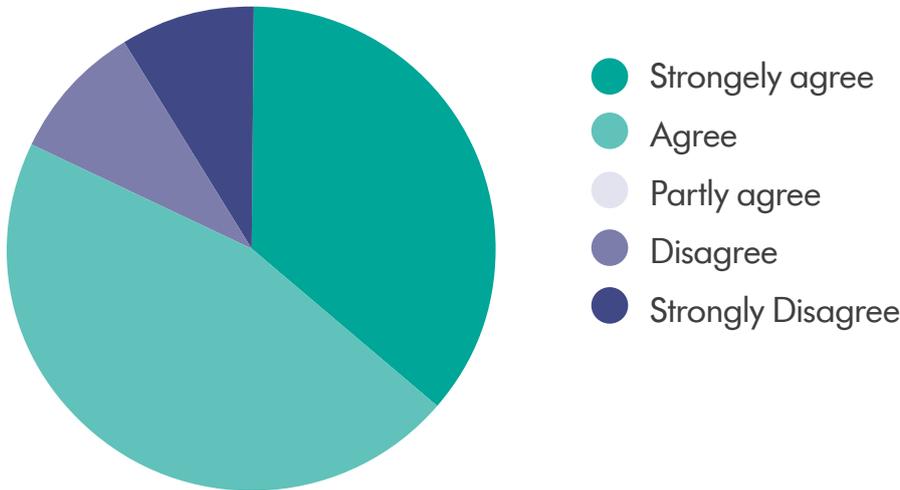
During in depth interviews teachers frequently commented that they planned to invite their artist mentors back into the school independently to run either CPD sessions with teachers or work directly with students.

“There’s lots of people in the school that have been very interested in what we’re doing on Barbican Box. It would be nice to be able to share it with them a bit more. Our artists have both said that they’re happy to be involved with our school. So I know that if we had a CPD art day, I could get them in to lead a little workshop. And so I know that that’s going to have a big impact. I think the art will spread quite happily through the school” *In Depth with Teacher West Norfolk, July 2021*

In West Norfolk, one artist mentor with extensive experience in the arts education sector said Barbican Box had been the first time she had worked as an artist in local schools. Previously she had found it difficult to ‘break into’ the sector and felt she lacked connections and contacts with local schools. Artist Mentors have already shared opportunities with their schools to take part in other projects since Barbican Box completed in all three regions. 82% of teachers agreed that Barbican Box had helped connect them to local artists.

Chart 8: Aggregated Data All Region Post Barbican Box Teacher Survey, 2021

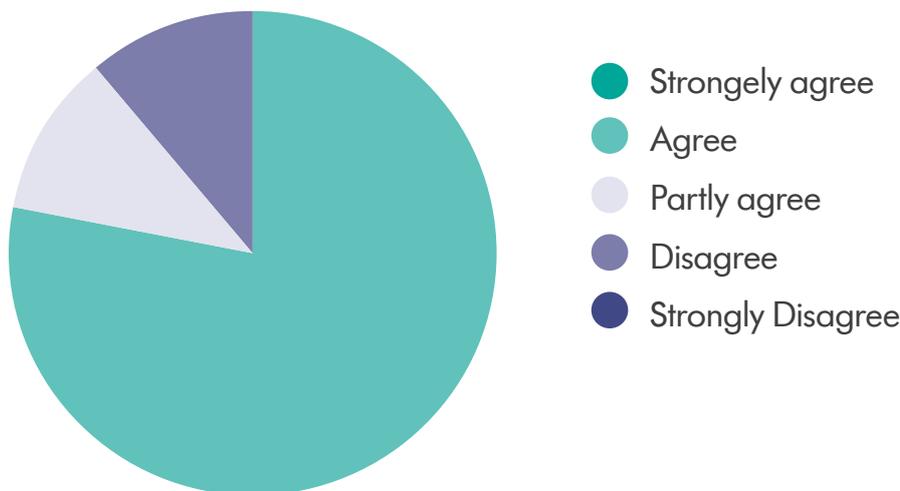
The project has helped me to make connection to local networks and partners



78% of artists mentors felt they had a better understanding of education contexts locally through working on Barbican Box and 100% stated that the project had helped them to make connections to local networks and partners in the arts education sector.

Chart 9: Aggregated Data All Region Post Barbican Box Artist Mentor Survey, 2021

I have a better understanding of educational contexts through working on this project



The research suggests that it is important to the sustainability of place-based partnership work that local artists are recruited. This recruitment model takes considerably more time and is far more labour intensive for the lead partner but reflects best practice in terms of place-based partnerships which respond to local need (and particularly where local need relates to capacity building). This model sits in contrast to a parachute approach where the lead partner might rely on pre-existing contacts from their own region to deliver work nationally. This is where the partnership can enable capacity building as opposed to bringing in projects which destabilise local cultural ecology.

Connections to wider Cultural Ecology in the Region

During one in depth interview a teacher in West Norfolk commented that the project had resulted in her signing her school up to be part of the local LCEP, PEACH West Norfolk.

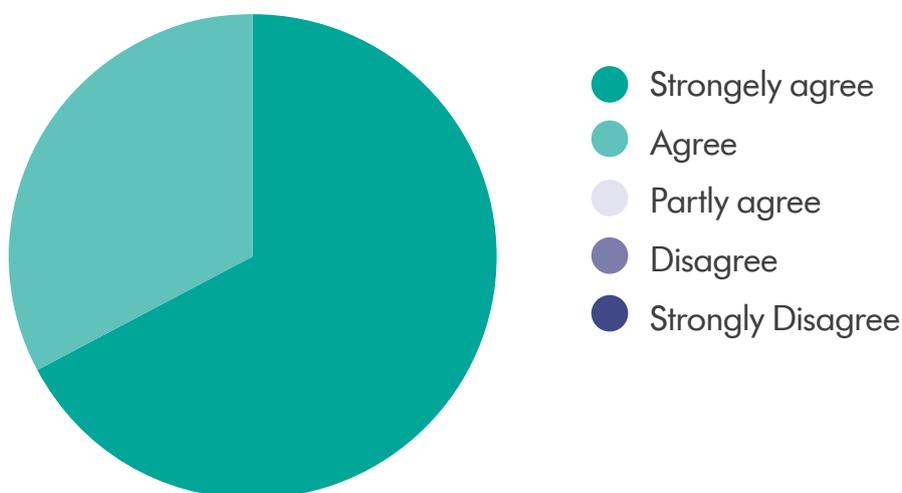
In Harlow, the Bridge Organisation Royal Opera House Bridge commented that, in part as a result of the activity of National Development Programme the Harlow Cultural Leaders Group was moving closer towards establishing itself into an LCEP. This had previously not been possible, despite many attempts to establish an LCEP in the region, there was not enough activity to offer schools and there wasn't the infrastructure to support the LCEP long term.

Artist mentors, some of whom had previously felt cut off from the cultural infrastructure in their own areas have commented on their increased sense of connection to both the cultural and education sectors locally.

100% of artist mentors 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the project had helped them to make connections to local networks and partners.

Chart 10: Aggregated Data All Region Post Barbican Box Artist Mentor Survey, 2021

The project has helped me to make connection to local networks and partners



6.2 Enhancing Access and Participation in the Arts for Young People²³

In A New Direction's paper 'Organism not Mechanism: An Ecological Approach to Cultural Learning' (2016), John Holden considers an ecological approach to stimulating cultural learning in young people. He argues that previous ways of approaching cultural learning focus on 'delivery' and 'provision' and do not consider cultural learning as process driven, deeply rooted in the lived experience of young people. It is this approach which he describes as a 'cultural ecology'. The role that arts organisations and the education sector play in supporting this ecology through a joined up and a networked approach, he sees as critical to increasing a young person's long term cultural confidence. Holden considers how high educational attainment has been linked to enjoyment and participation in culture, indicating how important it is for schools to partner with funded arts organisations to create the conditions for young people to engage in culture as a 'normal and regular part of their lives' (4).

"An ecological approach to culture combines two strands of enquiry. One treats the system of culture as an integrated field, concentrating on the quantity and quality of relationships between the creators, producers and participants who are involved in cultural activities, and studying the networks that they inhabit. Here, the stress is on interconnection and looking at culture in the round. The other ecological method is to look at culture as a process, concentrating on how culture comes into being, flourishes, disappears and regenerates."²⁴

This four-part process, he describes, as involving emergence, growth, evolution and resilience. The latter creates a legacy of individual cultural confidence and cultural connectedness. Facilitating connectedness and cultural confidence was one of the core aims of the National Development Programme's place-based work with young people. The TOC states that one of the main outcomes for young people was 'increased awareness, confidence and desire to access the local cultural learning offer outside of school'. The aim in terms of legacy was that when Barbican left the regions, there was a legacy of cultural connectedness in place. This section will explore the extent to which this was successfully facilitated through the work of Barbican Box in Harlow, Manchester and West Norfolk. This will be approached through considering four connected areas which contribute to an ecological approach to cultural engagement with young people.

²⁴ A New Direction 'Organism not Mechanism' (2016) John Holden, Page 4

1. Who NDP engaged with and why?
2. The extent to which the project increased young people's connections and networks locally
3. The extent to which cultural confidence was improved in the young people NDP worked with
4. Increased awareness of the diverse range of careers in the arts and their interest in future study.

Increased connection and confidence to engage in local cultural offer

Holden notes that a systems approach to cultural learning and ecology encourages arts organisations to think about their role in providing a network of cultural opportunities and how they can identify and respond to gaps in provision locally:

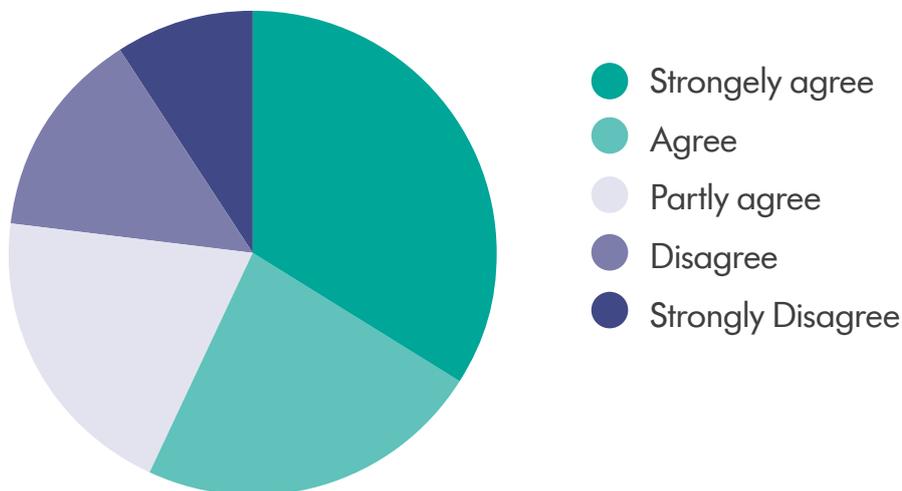
"Another way of looking at the place of a child in the cultural ecology is to look at his or her position within a network of cultural opportunities, experiences and organizations. Such an approach would examine the connectedness of different individuals or groups and expose the gaps that need to be addressed and the connections that need to be made."²⁵

80% of teachers stated that the project had addressed barriers their students typically face in accessing and engaging in cultural provision locally and 64% stated that the partnership and delivery of Barbican Box regionally was meeting a need in their region. Increasing connections to the local cultural offer was one of the main aims of the NDP's work with young people. This aim was to some extent facilitated through the young people's participation in Barbican Box. However, Covid-19 prevented the project from being delivered the way originally intended, and this impacted NDP capacity to deliver against this aim. The 2019-2020 Hunt and Darton and Complicité Boxes were interrupted by Covid-19 (although students were able to visit the Hunt and Darton café at HOME in Manchester in 2020). In 2021, the Coney Barbican Box and Rosen Barbican Box projects were mainly delivered online, with on-site visits to watch work and perform in showcases rendered impossible. This impacted on NDP capacity to support local networks and connections in the three regions for young people except through digital activity with local artist mentors and regional partners' presentations at online showcases. Despite this challenge, 57% of students participating in Barbican Box stated that, as a result of engaging in the project, they were more interested in visiting or taking part in arts and cultural activities in their local area.

²⁵ A New Direction 'Organism not Mechanism' (2016) John Holden, Page 4

Chart 11: Aggregated Data All Region Post Barbican Box Student Survey, 2021

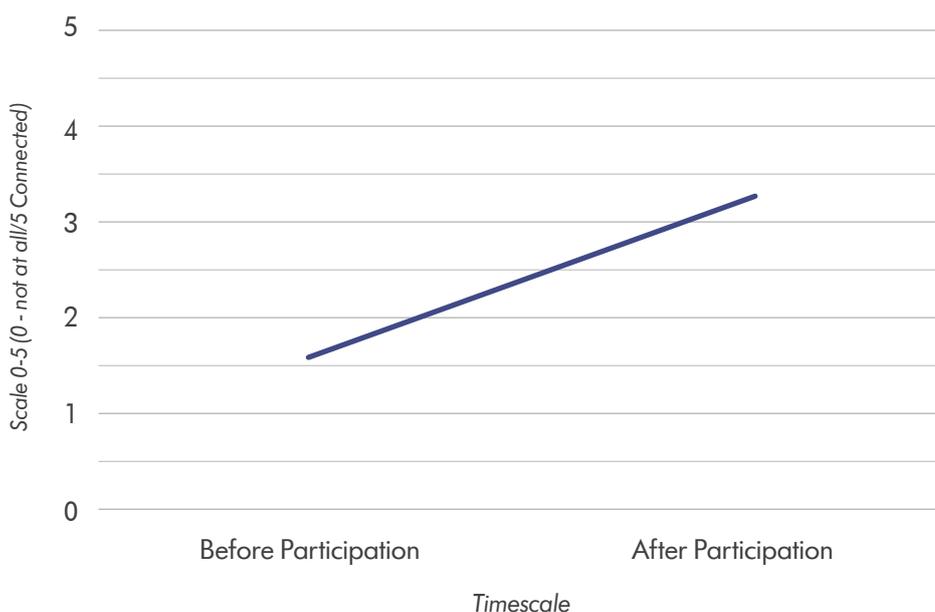
I am more interested in visiting or taking part in arts and cultural activities in my area since taking part in Barbican Box



The data collected from Manchester students relating to their feelings of connection to HOME both prior and post project is also promising and shows an increase in connection to the venue, despite the challenges presented by Covid-19 and reduced in venue activity.

Chart 12: Post Barbican Box Manchester Student Survey, 2021

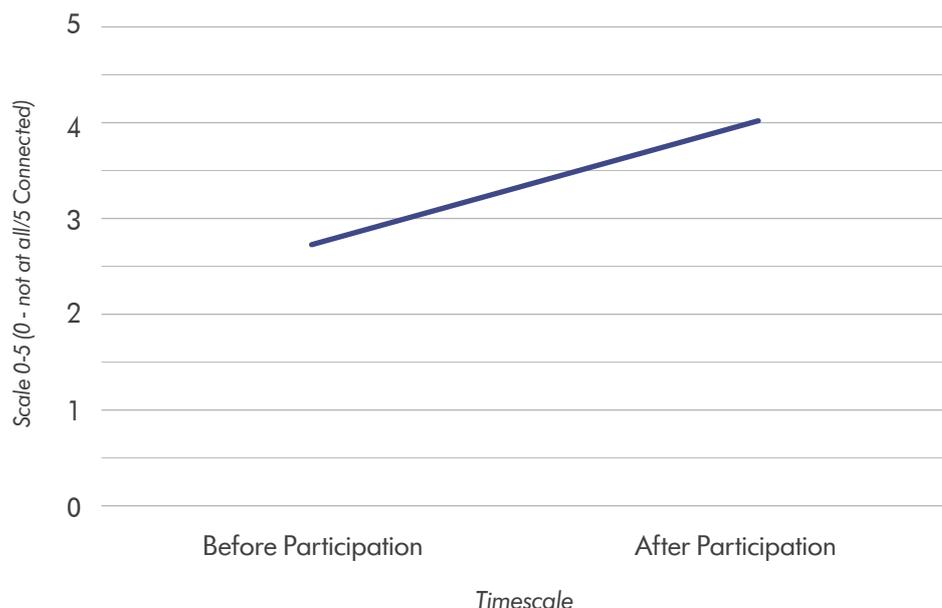
Students: How connected are you to the partner organisation (HOME/HP/CAE) as a result of engaging in the project?



Students in Manchester also testified to feeling an increase in confidence to go to local theatres, cinemas and arts centres as a result of engaging in Barbican Box.

Chart 13: Post Barbican Box Manchester Student Survey, 2021

Students: How confident are you going to local theatres, cinemas and arts centres as a result of engaging in the project?



88% of teachers across the regions stated that the project had ‘definitely’ (55%) or somewhat (27%) increased awareness of cultural provision locally as a result of participating in the project.

Student Peer Research Task: Cultural Participation Locally: As part of the research attached to the NDP, teachers were asked to run some creative peer research tasks with their students. These tasks asked students to consider what cultural organisations they visit in the local area and how they engage in cultural activity locally. Students were asked to draw a map of places they like to visit culturally.

This peer research was designed with a view to exploring local barriers to cultural engagement and was a process which highlighted to one teacher in West Norfolk how important it is for them to make connection to local arts events. Most of the students either engaged in the arts in school or were taken to venues in cities either locally or further afield. Seeing this documented through the peer research renewed the teacher's enthusiasm to engage with their Local Cultural Education Partnership.

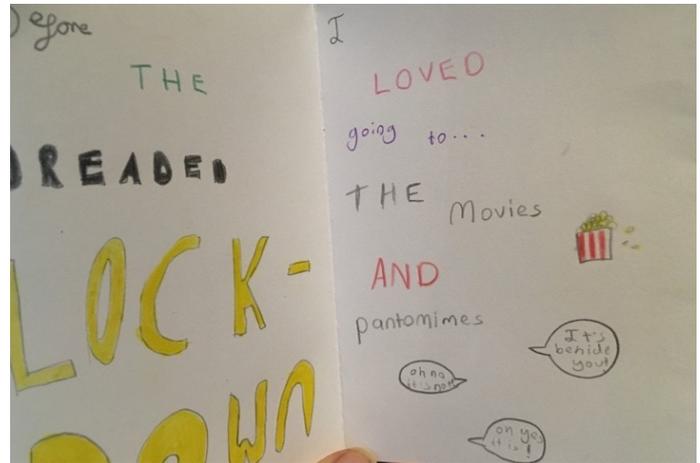


Image: Student Peer Research Task ©Nelson Academy



Image: Student Peer Research Task ©Nelson Academy

"They were all very enthusiastic about the art we do in school. Our annual exhibition was really the only art they knew that they could visit in our area, otherwise it was Norwich, Cambridge and London they had been to. This raised my desire to make more links with PEACH and other local arts venues."

Teacher Correspondence, September 2021

This is one of the major successes of the project in this area and an example of where place-based partnerships such as Barbican's National Development Programme can facilitate sustainable change through catalysing local connections, supporting the existing local ecology and enhancing networks in the regions.

Increased awareness of diverse careers in the arts

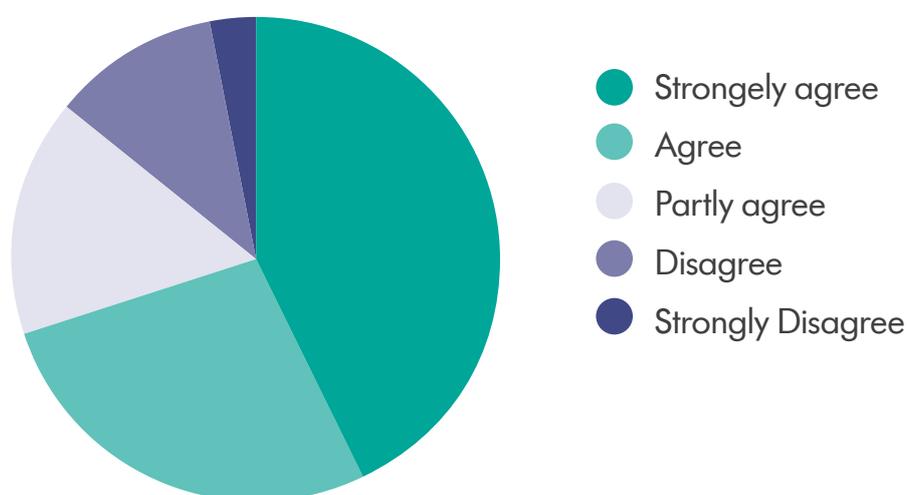
One approach to facilitating cultural confidence was to improve young people's awareness of the diverse range of careers available to them in the creative sector. Often young people associate the role of the artist as abstract or unobtainable, either putting them on a pedestal or thinking that

earning money and supporting a family as an artist would not be financially viable for them in the future. This in turn impacts the take up rate of arts subjects at FE and HE level. Exposing young people to professional artists and their work has always been a central tenet of Barbican Box. However, during conversations and activities at National Advisory Board meetings, aimed at identifying and responding to local need in the three regions, it was identified that partners would like to both increase and formalise this component of the project. Demystifying the role of the artist in society was considered by partners to be an important route to enhancing access for young people and encouraging them to consider the arts as a viable career. As a result, this component of the project was increased. Artist mentors introduced their practice, explained what their journey to being an artist had been and what a career in the arts can consist of. In Norfolk, some of the artists gave virtual tours of their studio space to students.

70% of students in Manchester and West Norfolk who completed the evaluation, stated that participating in the project had made them aware of different and diverse careers in the arts. 91% of teachers stated that the project had 'definitely' (55%) or 'somewhat' (36%) increased awareness of careers in the arts.

Chart 14: Aggregated Data All Regions, Post Barbican Box Student Survey, 2021

Barbican Box has made me more aware of different careers in the arts



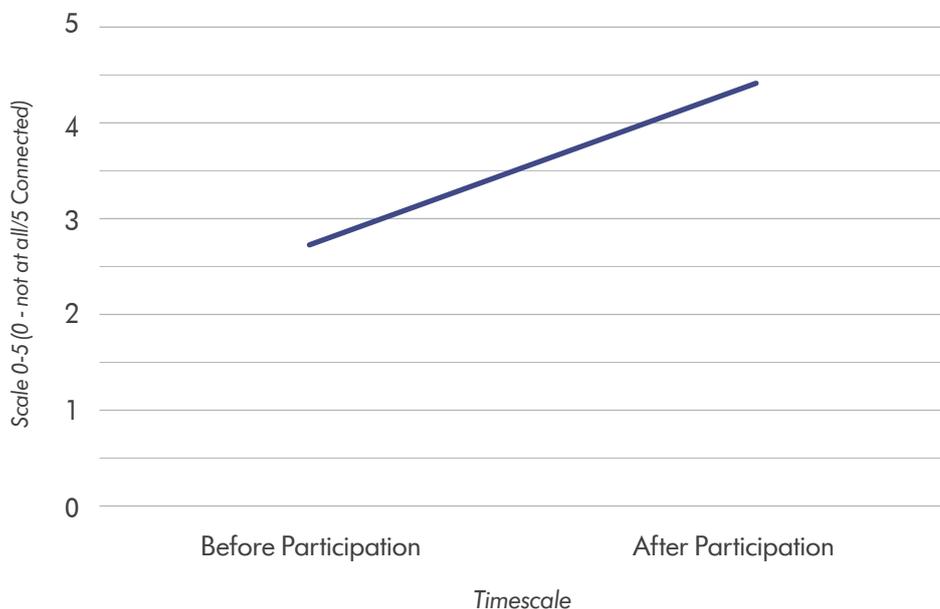
Increased desire to pursue the arts

A compelling 60% of students stated that engaging in the project made them more interested in pursuing either future study or a career in the arts.

82% of teachers stated working with professionals in professional contexts was more likely to raise their students' aspirations to study the arts at FE/HE level.

Chart 15: Manchester Post Barbican Box Student Survey, 2021

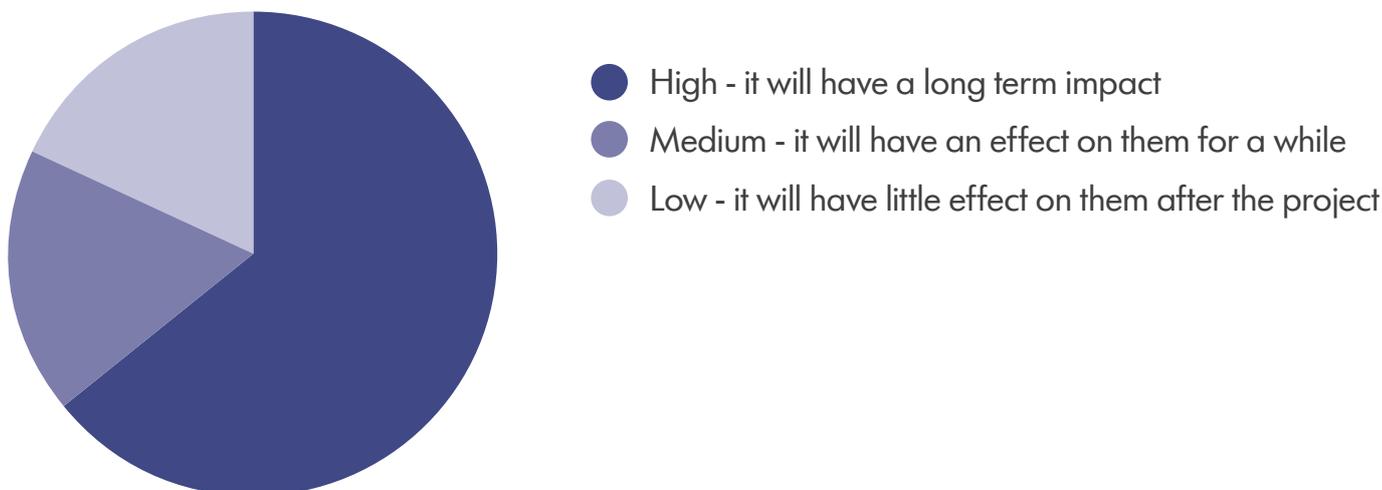
Students: How interested are you in studying the arts in the future as a result of engaging in the project?



64% of teachers in the three regions stated that they felt the project would have a long-term impact on their students.

Chart 16: Aggregated Data All Regions, Post Barbican Box Teacher Survey, 2021

Please rate the level of impact you think this project will have on your students?



6.3 Develop and Provide Models of CPD for Teachers and Artists to Innovate Classroom Practice

During baseline research, the NDP identified that availability and provision of subject specialist Continuous Professional Development was an issue in all three regions. 66% of partner organisations identified in baseline surveys that they had not had capacity prior to this project to deliver CPD for artists and one third of the partners had been unable to deliver CPD for teachers as part of their programme. Teachers in all regions identified in baseline surveys and in-depth interviews that subject specialist CPD was often not provided within their school and freelance artist mentors commented that they often couldn't afford to fund their own CPD (or dedicate valuable time to free CPD opportunities). Happily, Covid-19 brought an increase on online CPD which was accessible and affordable, and many teachers and artists commented that they enjoyed these opportunities. Despite this, Barbican Box was often cited as the main piece of CPD in which artists and teachers had been able to engage and was therefore considered highly valuable.

CPD Learning from Barbican 2018-2020 Review

As part of the National Development Programme research, a review was conducted in 2020 which looked at continuous professional development (CPD) models and how best to innovate to improve classroom practice. This was undertaken with a view to understanding what represents 'innovation' and 'excellence' in teacher and artist development and how best we can support this through National Development Programme. This review was based on the surveys of teachers and artists conducted following their CPD days on Barbican Box between the years 2018-2020. In some cases, it also looked at CPD questions on surveys conducted at the end of each Barbican Box project between the years 2018-2020. Data was aggregated across all surveys to attempt to understand how well CPD is working as part of Barbican Box more broadly. In addition to this quantitative approach, each qualitative comment included in the surveys which related to what artists and teachers felt worked well or could have been improved was assessed and thematically linked by a colour coding system to attempt to quantify the qualitative comments and place them in broad themes.²⁶

A number of improvements were suggested to the CPD model Barbican Box used, most commonly 'valuing teacher and artist time' by ensuring CPD day timings were tight and communications were succinct. However, over and above these practical suggestions for improving the CPD days, three interesting common themes emerged from this piece of self-contained research

²⁶ A Review of Barbican Box Teacher and Artist Mentor CPD 2018-2020, Dr Maia Mackney (2020)

1. CPD can only effect innovation in classroom practice if teachers are supported to apply their project learning to their own teaching practice after the project completes, something which teachers stated they often found challenging.
2. Teachers and artists highly value collaboration and two-way learning and CPD which provided a space for teachers and artists to learn from their mutual skill sets was considered to be 'innovative'.
3. Teachers described how CPD should have a legacy and that in order to develop innovative practice (and advocate for the arts), learning should be embedded across the wider school. CPD which incorporated mechanisms for sharing and embedding learning across the wider school was deemed to be innovative.

Theme 1 **'Applying Learning'**

When reviewing historical data relating to Barbican Box CPD one area the Barbican Box project model may develop is how best to support teachers to integrate what they learned during the project and on their CPD days into their wider teacher practice. 1 in 10 teachers surveyed between 2018-2021 who took part in a Barbican Box project were not sure that they had been able to achieve this and 24% of teachers were not sure that the project had supported them to develop their teaching practice in the classroom. 5% of teachers commented in Barbican Box surveys between 2018-2021 that they were feeling apprehensive about how to integrate what they learned during the CPD day into their classroom practice after what they described as a 'short' CPD experience. This was particularly true when working with new or highly technical equipment or introducing very new or radical artistic praxis. Teachers valued CPD that allowed time to reflect on how learning could be applied to their wider practice and a space to discuss and reflect with their colleagues about how best to approach integrating learning into their teaching practice.

Theme 2 **'Two Way Learning'**

One of the most common broad themes, identified in thematic qualitative analysis of Barbican Box CPD data, was that what teachers and artists valued most was the opportunity for collaboration and two-way learning that they experienced during the Barbican Box CPD days. This theme included the opportunity to network with other teachers, connect with artists and share practice. Teachers felt the Box CPD days provided the opportunity for joint planning and groupwork which they don't typically experience. This represented approximately 17% of all qualitative comments on Barbican Box surveys between the years 2018-2020. Teachers and artists commented that the most innovative model for CPD, and what they valued about Box, was one which didn't adopt a transactional approach where an artist or arts organisations impart a way of working to teachers. Rather, they create a space in which teachers and artists can experiment together and share their respective skill sets in an equal way. During in depth interviews teachers and artists both commented that whilst Barbican Box did attempt to create these spaces for shared learning, that this approach could be formalised and given more time within both the CPD and in the planning sessions between artists and teachers during the project.

Theme 3

Teachers often commented on how the project learning ought to be embedded across the wider school. This was felt to be particularly valuable in primary schools since learning could be easily applied to all year groups and used in the teaching of several curriculum subjects at primary level. However, teachers in secondary schools commented that embedding learning across the wider school would help to advocate for the importance of the arts to other teachers and SLT. Teachers often felt that CPD opportunities were self-contained and didn't include mechanisms for sharing learning more widely.

With these themes in mind, the next section will explore how Barbican Box 2020-2021 delivered in these areas.

Innovative CPD Models

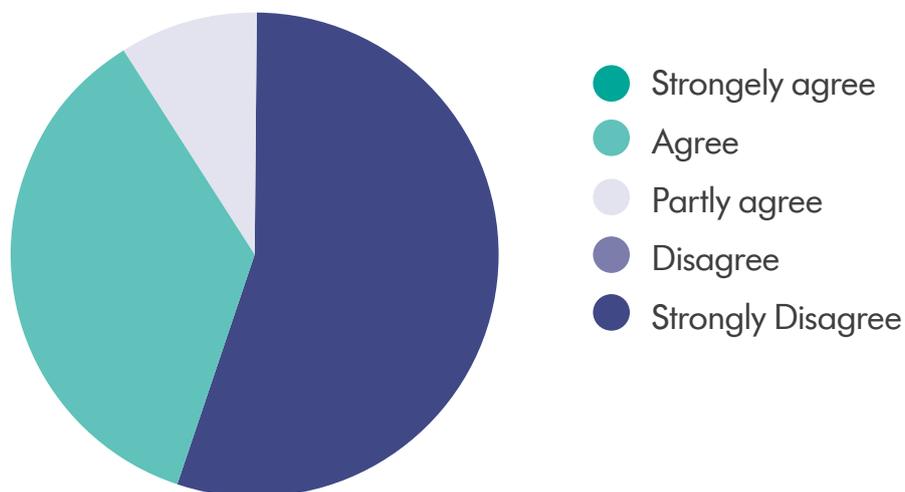
Teachers and artists highly valued the CPD offered as part of Barbican Box. During In depth interviews teachers commented that the CPD had encouraged the development of innovative approaches to their classroom practice and fostered new knowledge and skills suitable to the classroom. This was described in some cases to have been integrated into their practice outside of the project, however some teachers commented that this could have been formalised within the project with increased time allocated for reflection and planning.

“The only time I've had any CPD is when I've gone on the Arts Mark development days and spoken to people on all the support days. Barbican Box has made me realise how much you can get out of it which is relevant and can be applied to all areas of the curriculum. I want to really have a go and get involved with things to get everything that's available. The initial session with Michael just gave us so many ideas. You wanted a Dictaphone... he lifted all the different things you could do with poetry and language. And he would come out with these brilliant little sound bites like the 'secret strings'. I felt like I really wanted more people in the school to be able to hear him talk like that. So we shared some of it with the school across all the year groups in a training session.” *In Depth Interview, Teacher West Norfolk. July 2021*

100% of teachers across all the regions strongly agreed, agreed or partly agreed that they felt more inspired to innovate classroom practice as a result of participating in Barbican Box.

Chart 17: Aggregated Data All Regions, Post Barbican Box Teacher Survey, 2021

I feel more inspired to innovate classroom practice as a result of participating in this project

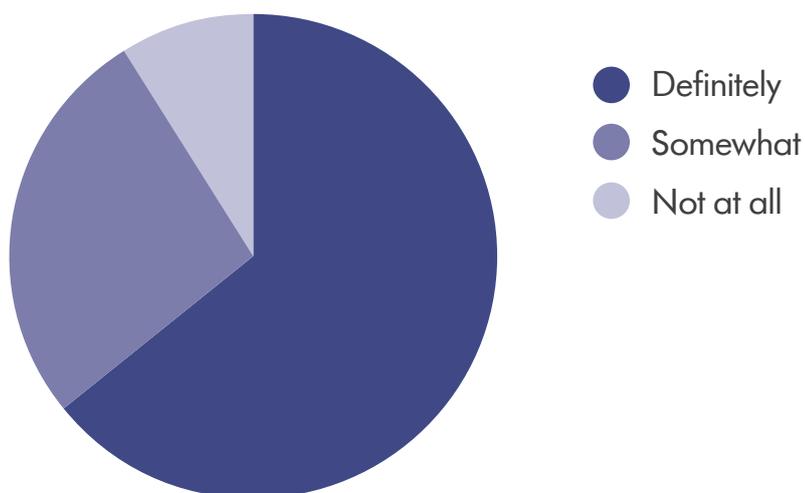


Developing Teachers Skills and Practice

91% of teachers across all three regions stated that the Barbican Box project had developed their artistic teaching practice and broadened their teaching skills.

Chart 18: Aggregated Data All Regions, Post Barbican Box Teacher Survey, 2021

Has Barbican Box developed your artistic teaching practice and broadened your teaching skills?

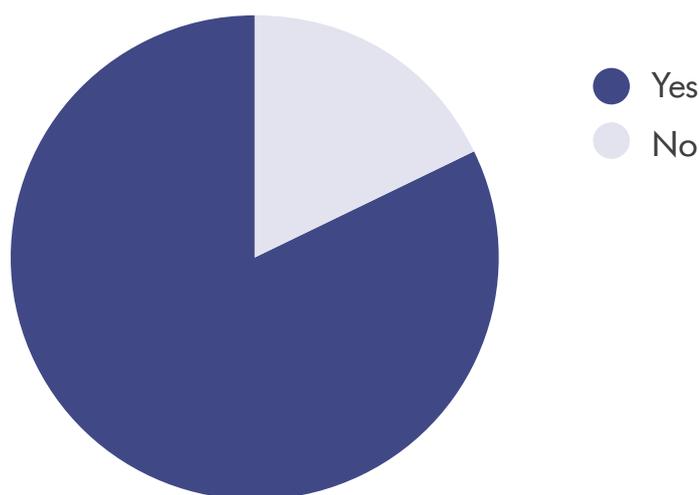


Embed Learning Across Wider School: Integrating project learning into teaching practice and the wider school

82% of teachers across all three regions engaging in NDP stated that they planned to embed and share learning from the project with their colleagues at the school. Covid-19 brought some benefits to being able to share learning with the wider school, through digital resources and videos recorded by artists for Michael Rosen's Barbican Box and the Coney Box had a digital platform that teachers could share with their colleagues. Teachers commented during in depth interviews that they felt this could have been supported more within the project and that in future years when activity returns to face to face, having digital resources, which can be widely shared, would help to create a legacy for the project.

Chart 19: Aggregated Data All Regions, Post Barbican Box Teacher Survey, 2021

Do you plan to embed and share learning from this project with your colleagues at school?

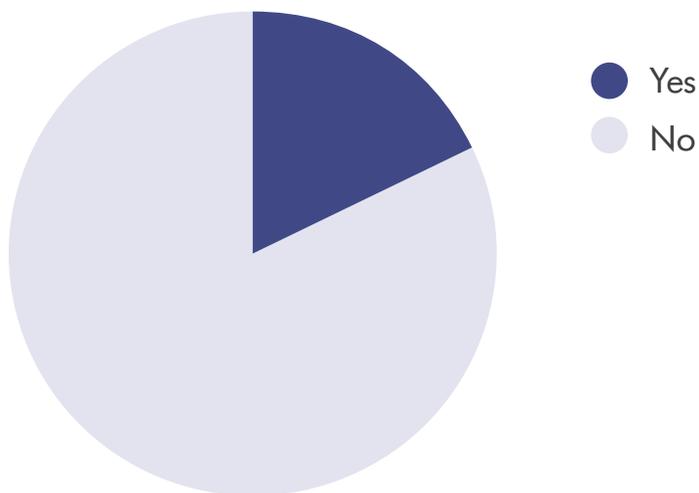


Whole School Understanding of the Arts: Increasing Visibility of Arts Across Wider School

82% of teachers stated that the Barbican Box project had increased visibility and profile of the arts as subject areas within their school. This was described to have been easier to do since Covid-19, since many resources created by artist mentors for teachers were digital and could therefore be readily shared with the school.

Chart 21: Aggregated Data All Regions, Post Barbican Box Teacher Survey, 2021

Has Barbican Box increased visibility and profile of the arts as a subject within your school?

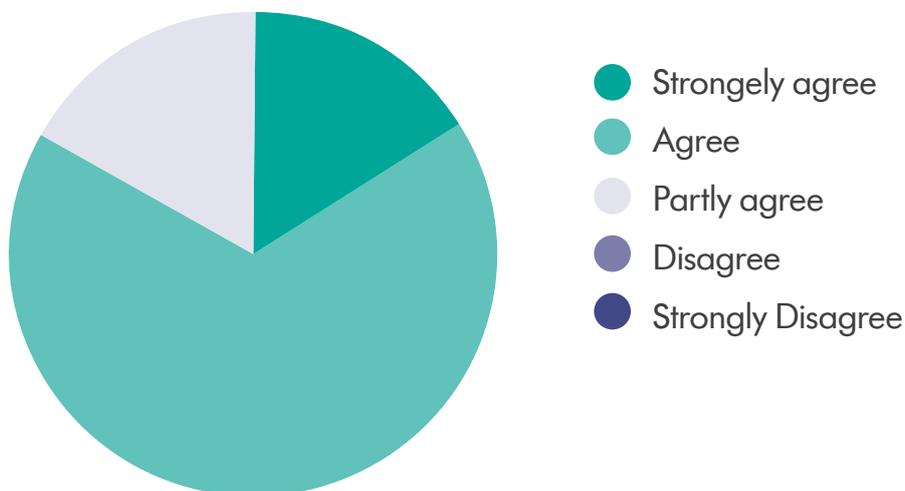


Developing Teachers Skills and Practice

91% of teachers across all three regions stated that the Barbican Box project had developed their artistic teaching practice and broadened their teaching skills.

Chart 21: Aggregated Data All Regions, Post Barbican Box Teacher Survey, 2021

There is increased whole school understanding of the value of a creative curriculum as a result of our engagement in Barbican Box



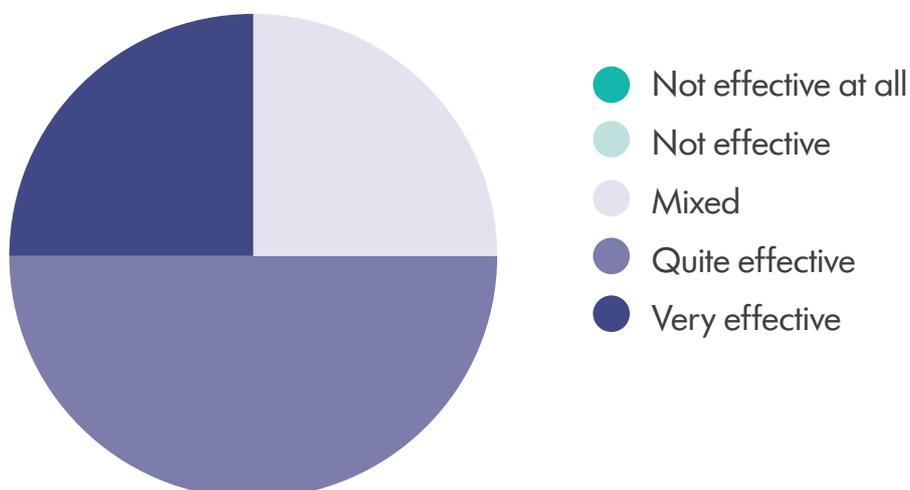
6.4 National Advisory Board: Supporting Project Delivery and Knowledge Sharing

The National Advisory Board (NAB) meetings were often challenging to plan for and required managing the diary constraints of multiple cross sector partners. They were aimed at improving partnership working, increasing connections between arts organisations and educational settings and as a knowledge sharing platform. Although the data suggests these aims were met by the NAB activity, it was felt by many that this format for 'coming together' across regions ought to be reimagined in the future. Data in this section has been aggregated across three separate surveys (Partner, NAB attendees and internal surveys at Barbican).

75% of people who attended NAB meetings (partner organisations, bridge organisation, internal staff from Barbican and teachers) stated that the sessions were 'very effective' or 'effective' at improving partnership working. 67% of attendees stated the sessions were 'quite effective' at increasing connections between arts organisations and educational settings. Facilitating cross-sector connections through the National Advisory Board meetings was challenging as it was difficult for teachers to commit to these sessions with their workloads and schedules. This became more challenging during Covid-19 lock downs when teacher workload prevented participation in the National Development programme, outside of the time they committed to delivery Barbican Box in their schools.

Chart 22: Aggregated Data All Attendees at NAB Days (Partner, Internal and NAB Surveys), 2021

How effective were the NAB days at improving partnership working?

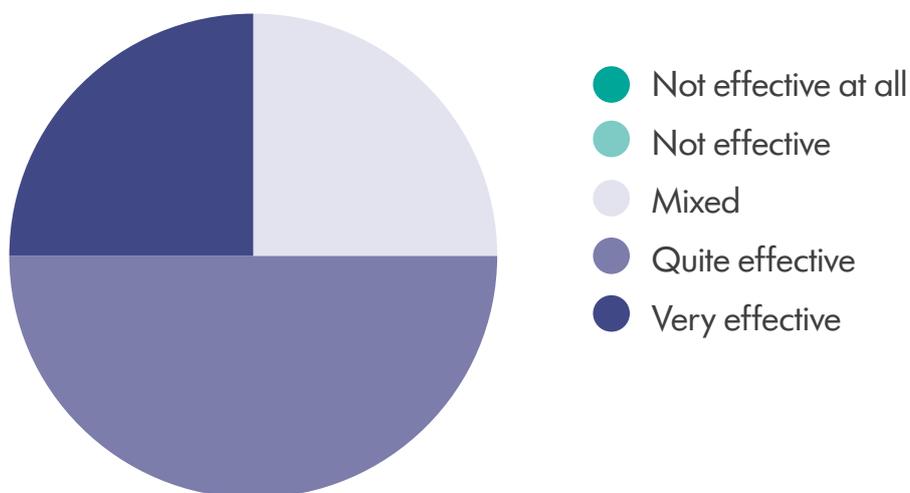


In post project discussions, partners and teachers offered quite conflicting advice as to how best to re imagine the NAB days. Bridge organisations suggested taking a hyper local approach where local stakeholders attend a focussed session exploring the needs and opportunities in their region. This, they suggested could be in addition to an annual or biannual 'national' celebratory sharing of practice, knowledge sharing and idea brainstorming meetings. Some felt this hyper local approach would be beneficial and allow for a wider range of local stakeholders (teachers, council, Bridges and arts orgs). However, some partners felt a hyper local approach to NAB activity could overlap with other local meetings, for instance PEACH West Norfolk, MCEP, Harlow Cultural Leaders Group and Harlow Education Consortium.

Most people appreciated the knowledge sharing opportunities 'national' NAB days provided. 75% of people who attended NAB meetings (partner organisations, bridge organisation, internal staff from Barbican and teachers) stated that the sessions were 'very effective' or 'effective' in aiding knowledge sharing.

Chart 23: Aggregated Data All Attendees at NAB Days (Partner, Internal and NAB Surveys), 2021

How effective were the NAB meetings at improving knowledge sharing?



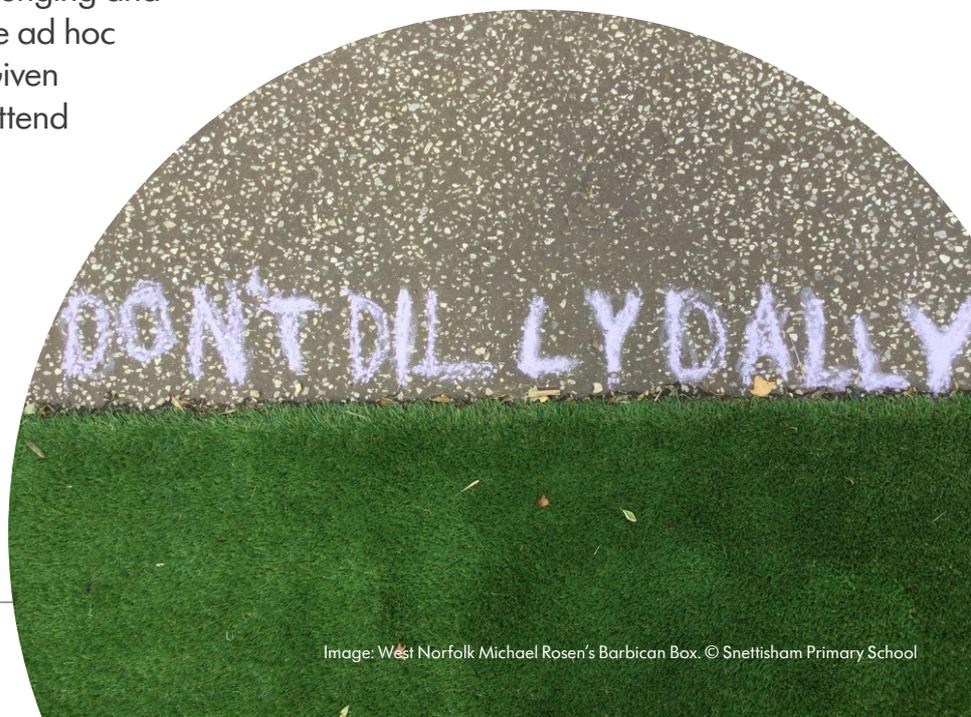
There was a disparity between the internal data and external data relating to knowledge sharing, revealing that the learning for internal staff was stronger than for both partners and NAB attendees. This related to knowledge sharing and project learning and indicated that knowledge sharing and learning internally was easier to facilitate, perhaps through informal discussions and during other meetings. This may indicate that the NAB didn't work as well as was intended in terms of its capacity to act as a knowledge sharing space for partners and outside stakeholders. The other major factor which inhibited knowledge sharing throughout the project was that Covid-19 interrupted project activity resulting in a lack of evaluation data. This meant formal knowledge sharing opportunities, for instance through the sharing of evaluation and research data with partners, was not possible.

Internal Survey (Barbican Staff)	External Survey (Partners)	NAB Attendees (Bridges/Teachers)
84% of internal staff felt the project had shared knowledge effectively between partners	66% felt knowledge was shared effectively between partners	33% felt knowledge was shared effectively between partners
84% strongly agreed or agreed sharing learning led to a better understanding of best practice in cultural learning	33% agreed sharing learning led to a better understanding of best practice	33% agreed sharing learning led to a better understanding of best practice (66% disagreed)

Partners stated that they would like to see facilitated sessions, led by teachers, curriculum leads and Senior Leadership Team at NAB meetings. These teacher-led sessions would help the group to better understand the education sector’s needs and how to support them post pandemic. Partners also suggested that reciprocal learning could be better embedded if partners could host/chair a NAB session, share strategies, or project models for engaging with teachers so other regions can learn from national approaches.

Bridge organisations and partners commented that any ‘national’ meetings need a greater focus on sharing practice, perhaps with guest SLT speakers from local schools. Partners felt it is important to understand the ‘national’ picture and that the biggest benefit of NAB days had been hearing what schools need, not just understanding local need but showing national trends for addressing barriers to participation and how arts organisations can support schools in achieving this.

Capacity was an issue for many partners, with attendance being difficult particularly when the session was face to face and involved travel time. All attendees appreciated the ability to engage on Zoom as opposed to lengthy travel times. Although some felt the face to face NAB was more fruitful and easier to make connections. Some people interviewed suggested the use of the word ‘national’ was misleading, since it implies a wider spread of stakeholders representing England as opposed to a few regions across the UK. Teachers commented that committing to regular meetings is challenging and that perhaps their attendance could be ad hoc and targeted at knowledge sharing. Given how hard it has been for teachers to attend NAB days, perhaps an annual ‘teach meet’ model might fulfil partner need for knowledge sharing and learning what schools need.



7. Research Findings

Guiding Principles for Place Based Partnerships

7.1 Asset Based Approach: Supporting Existing Local Partnerships Models to Improve Access

Ethical Complexities of National development Strategies

Partners articulated the benefits of national development strategies in their areas and discussed how larger funded organisations can bring a great deal of expertise, connections and resources to an area which experiences less investment. During early stages of the research and throughout, partners identified some issues which can be caused through the approach some arts organisations use to work in regional areas. Partners discussed negative experiences with other large scale arts organisations delivering projects regionally, without an awareness of context and without giving adequate thought to the impact on the area after they left.

Bridge organisations also indicated that often organisations all base their strategies for national working on the same cultural engagement data, resulting in pockets of high investment in the same place and areas becoming overrun with initiatives. Partners described how there is a need to get to know a place, and listen to the Bridge organisation or other local stakeholders to identify where best to concentrate investment. Partners commented that BCL's National Development Programme had negotiated this challenge very well indeed, through a rigorous approach to identifying regional need and opportunity. This challenge is likely to be exacerbated by arts organisations attempting to meet funding remits for NPO status by aligning their delivery of projects with the 54 priority places identified by Arts Council England in their Let's Create Delivery Plan (2021), therefore resulting in pockets of high investment on the border of low investment - separated only by a postcode.

“National expansions are inherently a good thing, there is some suspicion behind the motivations behind it. There is a push from Arts Council for national expansion. These organisations have a great deal of expertise, knowledge and resources, the larger funded bodies, not just London organisations. That can only be of benefit to rest of the country if they are deployed where they are needed and where there is a good rationale for them to be working. The biggest challenge around the work we have in cultural education is, it is hard to define cultural education, where it's happening and not happening. We all default to sources of information that give us proxies for participation. That formal drive from national organisations who look at the same data and even locally we have a number of places which are overrun with initiatives.” *Festival Bridge In Depth Interview, 15/1/2020*

Capacity Building Projects

A second strategic issue identified by this research relates to whether a project is a capacity building project or a project which services an area through the provision of ad hoc 'parachute' engagement models. This impacts what happens to an area after free project provision finishes. Providing free services to an area has the potential to destabilise the local arts scene which works with limited funding. There was felt to be a need for sensitivity around this from national organisations in general. In relation to the NDP, although Barbican Box is heavily subsidised, so could fall within this potential pitfall it was described by partners to be a capacity building project and the NDP in general has shown sensitivity to this contextual issue. There is a need for place-based projects to think about legacy in relation to this issue.

"People are coming in and not building capacity whilst there and then moving on. So, the national organisation needs to really consider what they are offering, whether a programme is about building capacity or whether it is a supply programme. If it is supply that is entirely fine but then you need to have a sensitivity to the local market, because a lot of the free stuff can completely skew and can be problematic to providers working locally." *Festival Bridge In Depth Interview, 15/1/2020*

There is a need to be sensitive to context and to the existing cultural ecology when establishing cross sector place-based partnerships. In order to support local provision without destabilising the local cultural ecology or superseding local provision, it was suggested that it was important that the lead partners embedded with the local LCEP or local council, made use of the Bridge Organisation to better understand the local context and listened to local partners about how best to respond to local need.

Time, Legacy and Sustainability

In *An Ecological Approach to Place Based Work*, Dr Jonathan Gross and Dr Nick Wilson discuss how place-based initiatives often do not effectively address issues of sustainability. There can be a lack of clarity between partners about what is being sustained, for instance the programme itself, the organisation, the partnership or the longer-term impact on the community. There is a need when approaching multi partner project delivery that, early on, all partners define what they want to be sustained and share this vision of the legacy of the project. Partners need to discuss early on their exit strategy in each area and discuss which local broker will 'hold' the ongoing relationships established in the early stages of the project. These conversations can be facilitated by a shared session dedicated to drafting the Theory of Change for the project prior to delivery or even, ideally, sourcing joint funding.

"With Barbican Box recruiting eight schools, there was enough of a critical mass, not to just be another project because projects are brought down by arts organisations all the time. But this was one which was long enough and with enough people that it really had more of a legacy." *Bridge Organisation In Depth Interview, July 2021*

Time limited funding streams which resource activity rather than processes, structures or partnerships in the longer term often lead to partners identifying project based outcomes as their approach to sustainability. Given that the funding from Esmée Fairbairn was limited to three years, project specific outcomes were often identified as the most likely long-term impact over a continued capacity to partner in the long term. In the case of Barbican Box, partners identified a number of potential long-term project impacts:

- The impact of the project on teaching practice and teacher capacity to embed learning across the curriculum and school.
- The capacity for the project to advocate for the importance of the arts to SLT leading to increased investment and support of the arts within the curriculum.
- Increased connection between local artist mentors and schools, leading to a more networked local cultural ecology.
- Increased connection between teachers and partner venues leading to stronger relationships and a more networked local cultural ecology.
- Increased connection between students and both local artists and regional partners.

Partners and Barbican staff were hesitant to commit to identifying concrete sustainable outcomes of the project in post project discussions and surveys, feeling that it was too soon to do so. Where they felt able to identify longer-term outcomes, they usually related to skill development, increased local connections and networks.

“New ways of working have become a legacy of the project in our regions. Access to new artists and content, confidence in delivery. New partnerships with schools; trialling new methods of working.” *Bridge Organisation In Depth Interview, July 2021*

“Schools are able to connect and form strong partnerships with their local venue, hopefully leading to their work being showcased there.”

Partner Post Pilot Survey, 2021

“Bolstered connections with schools and new artists is the main long- term legacy. For a Local Authority run venue, funding is a requirement and the hardest challenge for long term sustainability.”

Partner Post Pilot Survey, 2021

The change that can be realised within a three-year place-based multi partner programme (even without Covid-19 hampering its efficacy) can feel limited and Barbican staff identified the limitations of the project in terms of sustainability:

“(What I think it would be useful to prioritise) is a bespoke framework for longer term partnership working, suited to the needs of each individual partnership. More co-developed work, which better reflects the identity of both (or all) partners. Development of project models which can be sustained, including engagement with Barbican teams beyond Creative Learning.” *Barbican Post Pilot Internal Staff Survey, 2021*

If sustained systems change and partnership were the aspired legacy of the NDP, longer term funding streams would need to be sought. This is likely to be challenging given the UK’s current funding ecology. Indeed, it would be useful to suggest funders would need to re-evaluate funding cycles for place-based partnership work and look to offer longer term funding cycles for work that involves partnership in order that they are funding work which commits time to developing complex and nuanced approaches to partnership working. Sarah B Davies from A New Direction identified in *Place Based Approaches: Characteristics and Learning (2018)* that with short term place-based partnership work, improved capacity and capability can be observed ‘in pockets of the community but health, economic and deeper set social outcomes are likely further down the line’. Davies identifies that it often takes one full year of relationship building between the partners, getting to know a place and building buy in ahead of project activity. She continued to state that partnership working is only solidified through 7-10 years of collaboration. The research attached to NDP supports this finding. In the last three years Barbican has developed three very nuanced, different and bespoke approaches to partnership working and it may be that these relationships are not able to continue to flourish under the current funding cycles for partnership work. We are starting to see the longer-term benefits of the partnership. Of particular note is the fact that the Harlow Cultural Leaders Group is likely to become an LCEP. This was something which prior to the Barbican’s work with Harlow Playhouse had not been possible and is one of the more profound and lasting impacts of the partnership. Sarah Waterman at Royal Opera House Bridge Organisation and Rory Davies at Harlow Playhouse suggest the provision of a long-term model of engagement by the Barbican and Harlow Playhouse has been one of the factors which has catalysed this emerging LCEP. In West Norfolk, Barbican Box has been one of the main offers of their established PEACH West Norfolk LCEP, and as a result of this provision, there is increased interest in participating in the LCEP with new local schools becoming active members.

In Post Project surveys Bridge Organisations identified that where the project might improve, is the creation of a sustainable approach to partnership working and for Barbican to promote the benefits of the work to local stakeholders in each region.

“I think the longer-term legacy will be seen in the ambitions of the partnership to work in this way again. It would be great to see a sustainable plan worked up between all the partners. The project legacy will be schools and kids that are even more enthusiastic, artists who are better placed to work in schools and a clearer sense of the needs in each area. I think this is with the caveat that it would be really good for Barbican to get in a room with the key stakeholders and say ‘this is what we as a national leading light believe could be possible in your area’. Almost branching into consultancy and advocacy. What immediately comes to mind is working with the borough council in each area and finding the right kind of group at the council to listen to what we believe is needed to take this work forward.” *NAB Post Pilot Survey, 2021*

It will be important for the Barbican to think through their internal strategic approach to national partnership working, specifically looking at how, and if, these emerging partnerships could support the Barbican’s new strategy for arts and learning. On first look at the Barbican’s strategy released in 2021 there seemed to be an increased focus and investment on engaging diverse communities locally in a meaningful and long-term way, rather than a renewed interest in the national work. Internal members of staff identified that if sustainable national partnership is a priority in the Barbican’s strategy in the future, the work should not happen in a silo but should include engagement with teams beyond Creative Learning, to ensure that it has the widest possible impact.

7.2 Creating a Balanced Partnership: Designing Models and Co-conception & Co-creation

Delivering Pre-Existing Models or 'Franchise' Models

During the early stages of benchmarking against other organisations doing similar work, research indicated the different impact delivery models can have on the development of the partners relationship. In particular, partners and bridge organisations discussed the difference between delivering a transactional 'franchise model' within a region and co-creating work together. Barbican Box was not described as a 'franchise model' by partners. However, partners did discuss the challenge presented by delivering a project which has been developed by the 'lead' partner within their regions. In particular, they identified that this creates a power imbalance and inhibits the capacity for schools to associate the project with the local partner. 45% of teachers associated the project with Barbican Centre and 55% of schools associate the project with both organisations equally. 67% of Artist Mentors associated the project with Barbican with only 33% associating it with both organisations equally. This has been explored in other areas of the report. However, partners unanimously found Barbican Box to be an excellent project model through which they could first experience collaboration. Indeed, given the lack of resources in some regions, it may be that some prospective regional partners might prefer a pre-existing model or franchise model. However, if reciprocity and equality is important to the place-based partnership, developing models collaboratively should be a priority.

At the very first NAB day partners asked the question 'how much can we influence Barbican Box?'. It is interesting that this was one of the first questions asked by partners, since it speaks to this issue. A few of the partners, during baseline calls, discussed the extent to which they would be able to influence artistic content of the Box by being able to help choose the lead Box curator in future years in addition to being able to change the delivery timeframes for Barbican Box. Partners indicated that they would favour a more local lead Box curator able to work directly with teachers in the regions but didn't feel able to demand that of the partnership.

Co-Created Project Models

Delivering a pre-existing Barbican branded project in other regions in the UK was identified by some members of the internal team at Barbican as potentially problematic and this was the rationale for the inclusion of a second co-created strand of work. In particular, delivery of Barbican Box in isolation

is challenging since the ownership and knowledge of the project model sits with Barbican and this impacts the regional partners capacity to build and manage the relationships with the schools.

“Rather than take an existing Barbican project to partners, we could co-conceive a project which is then run in each place. The sensitivity with which this project was delivered has meant that it has mitigated against the issue of a London Organisation landing somewhere, but it has taken an enormous amount of work to work in that nuanced way. If we were to work in a national context, then the conception of the idea, I think needs to be co-created. I can't really see a way in which an existing programme will offer the sort of mutuality that would be ideal in working in a national or an English context.” *Barbican Senior Producer In Depth, July 2021*

It should be noted all partners greatly appreciated Barbican Box and felt that in those early years of learning to work together, having a tried and tested project model to deliver was extremely beneficial to the emerging partnerships. However, when pressed in in-depth interviews to think through the impact of the delivery of a Barbican branded project, partners agreed ultimately that to guarantee equality between partners a co-created model would be preferable. This was the rationale behind having a co-created strand attached to the pilot years of the NDP. The co-created strand wasn't able to begin to be delivered until autumn 2021 in West Norfolk, and early 2022 in Harlow, with Box delivery taking priority during the 20/21 academic year. Partners placed varying emphasis on the co-created strand of work during early stages of the project, with the more established partner in Manchester placing less emphasis, in the early stages, on this strand of work. This was due to staff capacity at HOME which was exacerbated by Covid-19 and the furlough scheme. This may also speak to differences between establishing totally new partnerships, with co-created work included as a shared intention from the outset, and building on a partnership model already in existence, with an established format historically based on the delivery of Barbican Box.

Conceptually the co-created strand was described by partners to be important to equality and balance between partners and in theory was highly valued by all partners. Although despite this no partner stated they were in a position to commit resources to facilitate co-creation. In post project surveys 100% of partners identified Barbican Box as 'very significant' to the National Development Programme partnership whilst 66% of partners stated the co-created strand was 'not at all' or 'not significant' to their work with Barbican. Co-creation is extremely time consuming and requires time and space for ideas to develop organically between partners. This was not easy to facilitate, partly since Covid-19 and the furlough scheme led to a situation where all partners only had capacity to commit to the delivery of Barbican Box. However, over and above this reason, there were other issues with the design of the project in the first stages that impacted upon how the co-created strand was prioritised by all stakeholders in the first instance.

“Integrating and aligning priorities, perspectives and contexts which are similar but different, and developing a shared language and a genuinely shared process for delivery to allow for co-creation and co-production. This requires a lot of time, and sometimes it was difficult to find this time, especially once Covid hit. We wanted to take a co-produced and collaborative approach, but this was sometimes difficult to adopt when delivering a pre-existing project model, and I’m not sure that it was clear where the opportunities for co-production were. I think this would have benefited from being pre-agreed amongst all stakeholders at the start.”

Barbican Internal Staff Post Project Survey, 2021

Allotting considerably more funding to the delivery of a Barbican branded pre-existing project model, de-prioritised the space to co-conceive a second model developed in collaboration with the regional partners. If the co-created work is to be a priority, additional funding for the co-created strand (suggestions included as much or more than Barbican Box or indeed in place of Barbican Box) would mean there would be more significance placed on the importance of this work. The comparatively smaller budget allocated to the co-created strand meant it was less at the forefront of delivery than the Barbican Box project. Interviews with internal staff revealed budgets would either need to be increased to allow for delivery of both these core strands or co-creation could replace Barbican Box in future years. This finding was seconded by members of the team at Barbican who commented that in order for partners to prioritise the co-created strand it would require considerably more investment in a re-worked budget.

“Your artistic decision or your content decision is also your financial decision. If you really want to make sure that it’s going to happen, you have to give it the appropriate financial contribution right at the beginning.” *Barbican Senior Producer, In Depth Interview, July 2021*

However, it is important to note that even if this strand of work were to have been funded appropriately, partners would still have struggled to commit resources to fully co-conceiving an entirely new project without funded partner hours. Partners described that they were unable to commit time to the co-created model due to capacity issues, which were exacerbated by Covid-19. Partners in Manchester commented that had they had funded partner hours, or additional capacity, the co-created strand would have been of value to them. Therefore, this issue further demonstrates how funded partner hours become integral to the success of any co-conceived or co-created project models.

Funder Partner Time & The Role of the Local Broker

Partners identified in baseline research and later in post pilot surveys and in depths that funded partner time is essential to the delivery of place-based partnerships. This became one of the main hindrances to resourcing the project in each region.

In West Norfolk the lead partner, Creative Arts East, overcame this issue by devolving funding from their PEACH budget to offer Barbican Box as a PEACH activity. This freed up time to work on the NDP, which worked well with Barbican Box and led to schools joining PEACH.

“When Barbican said they wanted to work with West Norfolk, because of the lack of capacity that exists in the cultural and arts scene in West Norfolk, partners didn’t come forward. People expressed concern that there was no or little payment to support the project....That is why LCEPs have had false starts, they were talking shops because nobody could offer themselves up to be the lead because there weren’t the resources. Man-hours are not covered for Barbican Box and that could be a problem for partners. We have big fundraising gaps too and whilst we earn out of PEACH West Norfolk, if PEACH wasn’t paying we wouldn’t be able to put time and resources into it; we would need to be putting our time and resources into finding funding elsewhere. CAE can be the man hours because PEACH gives us a management fee to convene and Barbican Box fits into PEACH’s remit and aims.” *In Depth Interview, 15/1/2020*

Ideally these funded regional partner hours would be included in the budget for the project. The project and partnership need to be adaptable to context and in the case of an arts partner with no dedicated CL team member, this may mean additional administrative roles taken on by BCL or funding a freelance contract locally. A dedicated Creative Learning person with funded hours may in fact be a prerequisite for equality within a place-based partnership. The research indicates that the relationship between schools and regional arts organisations in some areas could have been strengthened by the presence of a funded ‘local broker’ role. In the absence of a funded role, all partners took on this responsibility to some extent but often lacked capacity to fulfil the role entirely. This broker role is essential to the legacy and sustainability of the project in terms of its capacity to strengthen relationships between local arts organisations and schools. Funding this role accordingly is also important in order that a local broker can manage and maintain relationships with schools after the project finishes.

7.3 Characteristics of Place Based Partnership Models

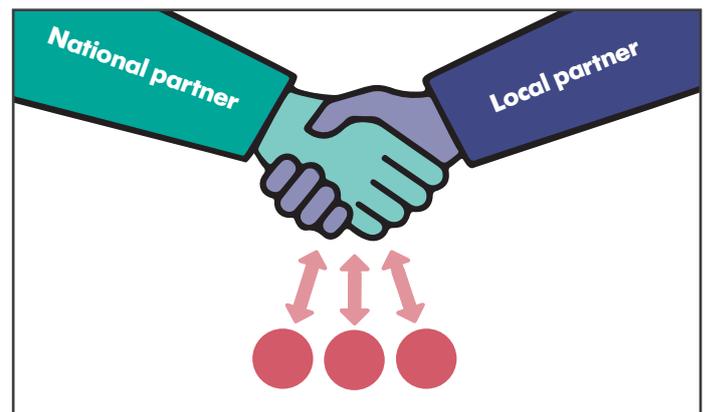
“Do we want to have a cohesive, unified approach to our national partnerships, or do we want to say there are different things we can learn from these different relationships and they are all of value and we should allow space for that?” *Regional Partnerships Project Manager In Depth, July 2021*

These models refer to ‘national’ and ‘regional’ partners. For clarity, ‘national partner’ refers to any large arts organisation from any metropolitan or non-metropolitan area in the UK who is interested in working in partnership in other regions in the UK. They are likely to initiate the partnership/seek initial sources of funding.

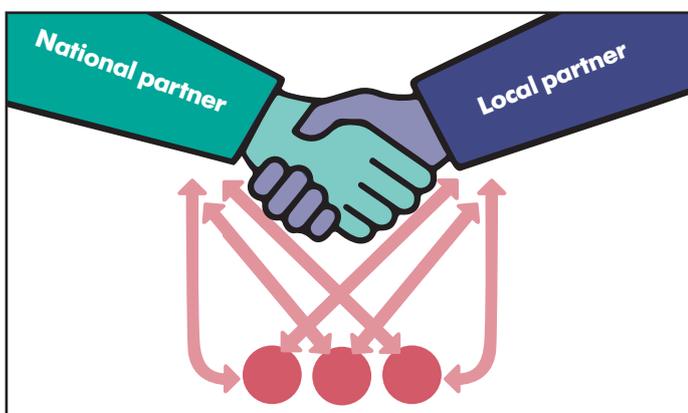
Throughout the period of the NDP, the nature of the different partnerships shifted and developed, according to the capacity and needs of the organisations involved, the impact of covid, and the needs of the project at the time. During this time, there were some general models and structures which emerged.


Local culture, heritage and education sector organisations and stakeholders

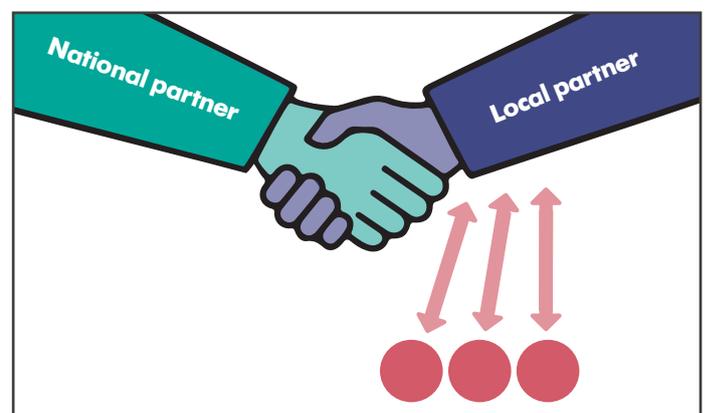
Networked Partnership



Hive Mind Partnership



Single point of entry' Partnership



'Networked' Partnership (closest example West Norfolk NDP Partnership)

The networked partnership model works with a single regional partner to develop delivery relationships with a range of local organisations and stakeholders.

Characteristics of a 'Networked Partnership':

Development

- Initially brokered with guidance from Bridge Organisation or Local Borough Council on local needs and whether a good fit for the region.
- Relationship-based and firmly embedded in wider cultural ecology (LCEPs, other arts organisations/cultural leaders' groups).

Engagement with place

- Partnership is contextualised and directly consultative of a range of local cultural leaders and representatives from education sector.
- May involve community stakeholders or youth advisory groups in order to be rooted deeply in place and responding to local need.
- May involve cross sector stakeholders.
- Possible for multiple organisations to host or be involved with project delivery.

Features

- Adopts an approach to place-based partnerships which most heavily draws on expertise of broad range of partners, stakeholders and communities resulting in bespoke, tailored and 'hyper local' projects.
- A 'place' focussed partnership, approach to working which responds to specificities of place.
- An asset-based approach through which community development is facilitated by joining up the varied assets and strengths.
- By adopting a joined up approach to engagement with local stakeholders, the conditions for collaborative conversations between the lead partners, in response to their shared learning, are enhanced.

- Potential to pursue joint funding applications to support shared project delivery.
- Aims for co-creation, with partners developing work collaboratively in response to local need.

Requirements

- A lead regional partner with a funded convening role in local cultural sector, who is embedded in local cultural landscape, and who is keen to work collaboratively with other local and national partners.
- Funded member of partner staff to bring expertise to strategic planning and project design, to hold (and lead on where appropriate) relationships with schools, artists and other local stakeholders, and manage elements of project delivery.
- Capacity within national partner to engage in strategic planning and project design, to co-hold relationships with local stakeholders and to share delivery responsibility
- Local advisory group or steering group useful to this partnership but requires investment.
- Willingness to submit joint funding applications and/or to contribute finances to project delivery.
- Buy in from wider cultural organisations and networks locally.
- Capacity within 'National' partner to attend local cultural groups and meetings and cultivate relationships.
- May be most appropriate for areas with a number of small to medium arts and cultural organisations, where capacity within a single organisation is limited, and a relationship with a geographically based collective rather than a large single 'hub' organisation, allows ownership and workload to be distributed.

'Hive Mind' Partnership (closest example Harlow NDP Partnership)

Characteristics of a 'Hive Mind Partnership'

Development

- Initially brokered with guidance from Bridge organisation or Local Borough Council on local needs and whether a good fit for the region or moving towards 'Hive Mind' from 'Single point of entry partnership' by branching out to embed in wider cultural context during the partnership.

Engagement with place

- Partnership is contextualised and directly consultative of a range of local cultural leaders and representatives from education sector.
- Has a connection to the wider cultural ecology or ambition to connect to the wider cultural ecology, but with project delivery channelled via single regional partner.
- Connects with local knowledge sharing opportunities, for instance Cultural Leaders Groups.
- The regional partner gathers and shares knowledge, and brokers and holds relationships with local stakeholders, but for capacity and resourcing reasons the national partner may at times (upon consultation with the regional partner) take the lead on these relationships on behalf of the partnership in order to inform delivery.

Features

- A 'place' focussed partnership, and an approach to working which responds to specificities of place.
- An approach to place-based partnerships which learns from expertise of broad range of partners, stakeholders and communities resulting in bespoke, tailored and 'hyper local' projects.
- Aims for co-creation, with partners developing work collaboratively in response to local need.
- Potential to pursue joint funding applications to support shared project delivery.

Requirements

- Regional partner who is embedded in local cultural landscape, who is keen to work collaboratively with other local and national partners.
- Funded partner time in order to bring expertise to strategic planning, share relationships with schools, artists and other local stakeholders (perhaps less extensively than 'Networked Partnership'), and manage elements of project delivery.
- Capacity within national partner to engage in strategic planning and project design, to co-hold relationships with local stakeholders (leading on these when required) and to share delivery responsibility.
- Interest in and support for project from wider cultural organisations and networks.
- Capacity within 'National' partner to attend local cultural groups and meetings and cultivate relationships.
- May be most appropriate when one partner has more capacity than the other, or when capacity fluctuates during the life of the partnership.

'Single Point of Entry' Partnership (closest example Manchester NDP Partnership)

Characteristics of 'Single Point of Entry' Partnership

Development

- Not necessarily approached through Bridge or local council but developed through similarities in artistic and/or strategic scope, vision and intentions.

Engagement with place

- Less direct interaction between local stakeholders and the national partner, with the regional partner holding relationships with wider organisations in area (for instance LCEPs, Borough Councils, other arts organisations) and bringing knowledge from these to shape project delivery for the context.
- Community groups could be involved as consultees, but the regional partner would likely lead on the involvement of these.

Features

- An approach to place-based partnerships which harnesses the local knowledge and expertise of the regional partner to create bespoke, tailored and 'hyper local' projects.
- Existing similarities between partner scale, scope and programming, as well as the structure of the partnership, may mean that it is more focussed on effective delivery and enhanced reach than it is on capacity building and knowledge exchange.
- Where this is the case, it may be that it is most suited to supporting a national franchise or locally tailored approach to a pre-existing project model.
- Given suitable project delivery set up, has the capacity to provide more focussed prominence for the regional partner, as the national partner is less visible locally.
- 'National' partner more likely to drive centralised funding applications but regional partner inputs expertise around tailoring project to local need.

Requirements

- Regional partner who is embedded in local cultural landscape, who is keen to work collaboratively with other local and national partners.
- Funded staff time within regional partner to bring expertise to strategic planning and project design, and to manage elements of project delivery
- In addition, this model more than the others requires the regional partner to have a schools engagement or creative learning manager or similar, who can take responsibility for gathering and sharing all info on the needs and priorities of local schools and artists, in order to shape the project.
- Capacity within national partner to engage in strategic planning, project design and to support elements of delivery
- May be most appropriate when the partnership is between cultural organisations which are similar in scale, and in a more densely populated urban area with a highly developed commercial cultural ecology. In this instance, it may feel impractical (and, depending on the scale of the project, unwarranted) for a national partner to connect directly with local networks beyond the regional partner organisation, particularly if the partner already undertakes similar engagement work of their own.

8. School and Artist Case Studies

8.1 Barbican Box Manchester: Melland High School, City of Manchester



Melland High School
BRIGHT FUTURES EDUCATIONAL TRUST

School Context and Student Demographic

- Melland High School is an SEN School, situated in the wards of Gorton and Abbey Hey in the City of Manchester
- Melland received an Outstanding Ofsted
- Melland provides for students with a range of disabilities and learning difficulties including young people with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) and Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) between eleven and nineteen years.
- Some of the students who attend Melland High School also have additional difficulties such as autism, emotional and behavioural problems and sensory impairments. Around a fifth of their young people have high dependency health care needs and all their students have a statement of Special Educational Needs.
- Melland has 57.1% pupil premium, which is well over the 27.7% national average, and is Polar Quintile 1. Indices of multiple deprivation statistics for the local borough indicate that it is in the 10% most deprived nationally. Of the students who attend Melland, around a half are of White British heritage with the largest other ethnicity being of Pakistani heritage.

Arts, Culture and the Curriculum

Melland is situated within one of the City wards, Gorton, that Manchester City Council are asking arts organisations to target to increase cultural engagement. Manchester Cultural Impact Survey reveals that Gorton has low to moderate schools' cultural engagement (58-67% of schools engaged with at least 1 cultural organisation). Despite these wider borough engagement figures, Melland has a thriving cultural offer and they are led by a supportive and driven Principle, Sue Warner, who



Image: Melland High School © Melland High School

is willing to fund school trips and find extra time for rehearsals. Arts and creative learning, which is deeply ingrained in the culture of the school, isn't driven by any one person but rather is embedded in the wider school ethos and across curriculum subjects. Unlike a mainstream secondary offering GCSEs and A Levels, Melland offers OCR qualifications, The KS3 and KS4 OCR curriculum offers their students the opportunity to focus on literacy, numeracy and ICT in addition to functional and transferable skills. As such, art, drama and creative approaches to teaching are used across the curriculum with the science classroom being described to be a 'very performative space' often transformed by forward thinking teachers, for instance into interactive space stations. Similarly, drama is often used in English to introduce young people to new texts. Melland offers Arts Award to its students but does not currently have Arts Mark status.

In a typical, non-pandemic year, Melland staged a Christmas production every year as well as supporting students to make use of Melland's sensory studio. Each summer Melland put on a mini arts festival with performance stages and music, something they have been unable to do for the past two years due to Covid-19. In addition to this internal provision, Melland have engaged with external arts organisations on a number of projects including Barbican Box, Shakespeare School's Festival and the music project Rawchestra. Melland's drama and media teacher, Dan Hughes, articulated a belief that a creative approach to the curriculum and embedding the arts across the wider curriculum is easier to facilitate within an SEN context, particularly at Sixth Form level. He stated that the sixth form at Melland is able to offer a tailored and bespoke curriculum depending on the skillset or interests of the students. Having worked in both contexts, mainstream and SEN, he described the freedom SEN contexts have to embed and prioritise arts across the curriculum, since there is less pressure on traditional routes to attainment and fewer requirements to prioritise core curriculum subjects. This has meant that some of the barriers to arts engagement that mainstream secondaries face, for instance a rigid curriculum or the recent de-prioritisation of the arts in favour of core curriculum subjects, are not always applicable to this SEN context. This is something which Dan describes as 'a breath of fresh air'. Mirroring baseline data gathered during the early stages of the research, Dan Hughes stated Melland's main barrier to arts participation is Manchester's transportation network, which is both costly and time consuming. He also described how many of their learners never visit cultural organisations with their families, making participation at school all the more essential. A recent trip to the Lowry as part of Arts Award revealed that many students had never visited an art gallery before. The ways in which Melland prioritise the arts within their school culture is apparent in their most recent OFSTED inspection, where the arts were praised. OFSTED noted that additional funding had been sought to overcome barriers to participation.

"Leaders ensure that the pupil premium funding helps disadvantaged pupils overcome their barriers to learning. For example, pupils enjoy taking part in the school's 'Rawchestra'. Additional funding has helped provide keyboards, guitars and drum kits so that eligible pupils can develop their musical skills." *Ofsted 2018 Review*

Dan Hughes attributes Melland's love of the arts to a holistic approach to both student transferable skill progression and wellbeing. He witnessed, on return from Covid-19 lockdowns, how much his students needed to get back into drama, dance, arts and media. He described it as extremely beneficial to their mental wellbeing and a 'release that makes them feel safe' (Hughes In Depth Interview, May 2021)



Image: Melland performing at HOME in 2019, © Melland High School

"The group that will be participating in Barbican Box are the highest functioning group of formal learners and they love drama. They absolutely love it. After lockdown when we come back in September, the thing that really released them and made them feel happy, settled again and safe was doing drama." *Hughes In Depth Interview, May 2021*

Making a Case for Creativity: Barbican Box at Melland

Melland have worked on Barbican Box at HOME for the last two years, visiting and performing at HOME each year. Creative Learning has done a lot of work on adapting Box to an SEN context over the years. Although Barbican Box is not specially tailored to meet the needs of an SEN school, the sensory and tactile approach to devising that working with props facilitates is suited to an SEN context. Hughes described the freedom that this approach to creating work facilitates for his students, stating that Barbican Box reduces the pressure on his students to learn lines, an issue which he said is often prevalent in some of the other external provision offered by arts organisations. Barbican Box was described by Dan Hughes to be an excellent model for supporting his students' learning and developing their confidence. In particular he highly values the fact that students can develop their own work and respond to the stimulus themselves.

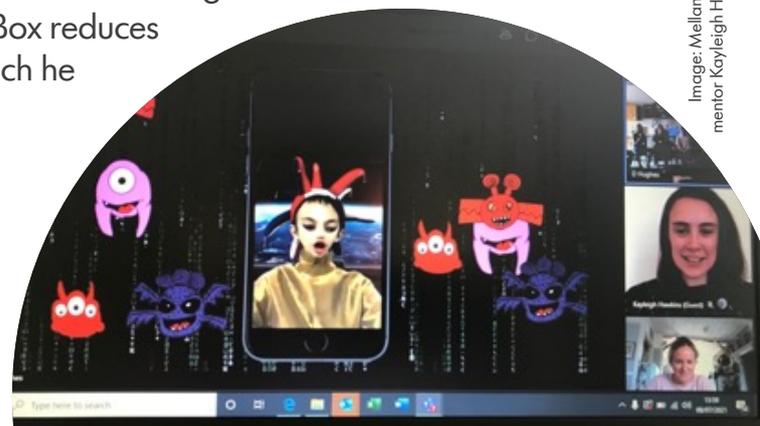


Image: Melland online sharing session with artist mentor Kayleigh Hawkins, © Maia Mackney

"One particular student who was anxious about even going into a room with a new class. From doing drama and a little bit performance with Barbican Box, she is now a student leader and will get up and talk to whole classes. She's part of the Manchester City Girls' Football Team and she's almost like a spokesperson for them now. Her face is on the side of busses. You can see the increase in confidence from her being in year seven right up to today, a lot of it comes from getting those opportunities on a stage and being able to speak and interact with other people." *Hughes In Depth Interview, May 2021*

Visits to the school by artist mentors, and in Covid times digital activity, has enabled engagement without the need for the school to use Manchester's inefficient transportation system.

In 2021, as part of Coney's Barbican Box, Melland was paired with artist Kayleigh Hawkins, a Manchester based theatre director and facilitator. Dan described how he and Kayleigh worked collaboratively together to deliver the sessions which, due to Covid restrictions, were facilitated online. Dan's students were inspired by the idea of being 'agents' and together they created a film 'gift' for the school, something which positively impacted on the students' wellbeing. In the film the young people were secret agents, Men In Black, saving the school from an alien invasion (which more than one person interpreted to be a metaphor for Covid!). Due to the compressed time period given to the project, Dan opened the project up to other creative lessons. In their drama lessons they created performance content and scripts, in art they designed the aliens that were to feature in the film and in media they animated and edited the filmed material. Dan described how Coney's approach of a 'gift for the school' meant that the project filtered out to the wider school population with other form tutors recording TikTok videos with their students which were then edited into the final film. The screening of this film caused a great deal of joy around the school as students who hadn't participated in the project saw themselves dancing in the final sharing. Dan described how working in this highly visible way encouraged other teachers to think creatively and encouraged SLT buy in.

"The project has had a massive impact on their wellbeing. Once they saw the finished product, you could see a massive change. When we showed it to the whole school, you could see the whole school on the webcams up dancing and singing and getting really excited" *In Depth Interview, July 2021*

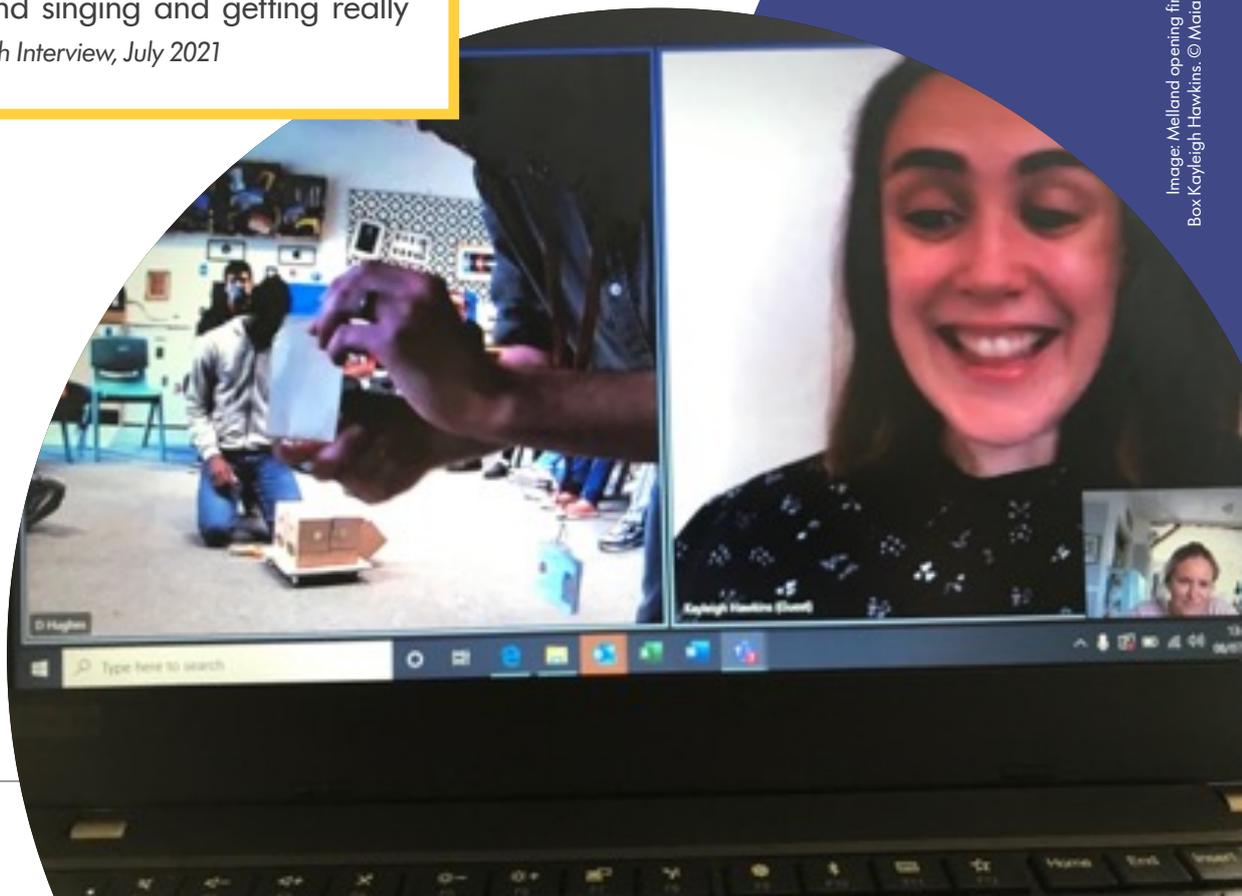


Image: Melland opening final stages of Coney Box Kayleigh Hawkins. © Maia Mackney

Legacy: Partnerships, Networks and Connections

Melland have a strong relationship with HOME, something which Dan Hughes attributes to previous Barbican Box project and the work of his colleague John Barry. The school's relationship with HOME was solidified through ongoing participation in Box and the fact that it both provided a platform for a deeper level of engagement and a model which was flexible enough to suit the needs of their students. Prior to the start of the pandemic, HOME invited Melland to performances that they thought were appropriate and he described how his students felt very welcome at HOME.

"HOME have been really good at inviting us down. When they go down to their stage to perform, that interaction with a professional lighting engineer or professional director or professional actor, that means so much to our students. That engagement and interaction with somebody that's actually doing something that they are really keen to do as well."

In Depth interview



Image: Sixth form visit to HOME, 2017, © Melland High School

Facilitating site visits and showcases have been challenging this year due to Covid restrictions, with Manchester particularly badly affected. This connection with the venue is one of major components of the project that enables the strengthening of relationships between local educational institutions and the regional partner. However, Dan suggested other ways in which connection to the local arts organisation might be strengthened by partnerships such as the National Development Programme. During an in-depth interview Dan Hughes stated that one way he feels relationships with venues could be solidified, would be through more opportunities for student work experience placements. Melland prioritises careers fairs quite often and he feels the cultural sector is very underrepresented in terms of both careers talks and work experience placements compared to hospitality and the service industry. This careers component could be facilitated by HOME and/or the Barbican in future years. Dan commented that having local professional artists visiting the school was a major success of the project, one that enabled potentially longer lasting networks between schools and the local arts ecology to be made. Formalising the careers talk and industry knowledge sharing opportunities would be one way the project could be improved.

Recommendations

Dan felt that due to the compressed time given to the project which came about as a result of Covid-19, that he didn't feel as able to take as many risks with his approach as he would have done otherwise. In previous Barbican Box projects, which have been longer and face to face, he stated they were able to experiment more with their practice and try to integrate the lead artists practice into their own teaching. However, he found Coney's practice exciting in terms of its capacity to encourage play and risk taking and described their digital approach to be essential to schools during this challenging time.

8.2 Barbican Box West Norfolk: Nelson Academy, West Norfolk



School Context and Student Demographic

Nelson Academy is a large non-denominational school in West Norfolk, providing education for ages 3 to 11. Downham Market is a regional hub town with a population of 10,000, but a number of parents from surrounding villages also choose to send their children to Nelson Academy. This has made Nelson, rated Good by OFSTED in 2016, a larger than average primary school with a two-form entry and 417 pupils. The number of young people who have a statement of special educational needs and/or an education, health and care plan is above the national average, as is the number of pupils who receive pupil premium at 34%. 34% of Nelson's young people are eligible for free school meals, well above the national average of 17.7%. Nelson Academy falls into POLAR quintile 1, meaning progression to FE/HE is more statistically unlikely for their young people. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), which combines seven subcategories to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation, reveals that in terms of education young people from the area are in the 40% most deprived nationally. Nelson Academy, which converted to academy status in 2014, received major capital investment and built a Special Resource Base (SRB) which caters for young people with ASD and other special educational needs. Year Five teacher, Gill Sekatawa described how the demographic of children who attend Nelson Academy is quite diverse. Some children of commuter families, whose parents work in nearby cities, attend Nelson alongside children from surrounding rural towns and villages.



Image: Display board featuring the project work. © Nelson Academy

Arts, Culture and the Curriculum

Nelson Academy was given Silver Arts Mark status in 2019 and is working towards Gold. The school has a thriving arts scene, with a former ballerina on the TA team running dance classes and an ambitious drama lead who puts on productions each year. Prior to the pandemic, students were being taken to West End productions by the drama lead and had peripatetic music lessons run by Norfolk Music Hub. Gill is the art subject lead at Nelson Academy, having been an art teacher for five years in Africa prior to starting at Nelson. Gill has coordinated projects whereby the school worked with the Sainsbury Centre to deliver an arts project with their children and with Norfolk and Norwich Open Studio exhibitions. Gill commented that one of the reasons they were given silver Arts Mark status, and not gold, was because they couldn't demonstrate that they had worked with enough outside agencies and arts organisations. Therefore, Barbican Box was a good opportunity to start to develop those relationships with both local and national outside providers. Gill is hopeful that starting to make those connections with the wider arts ecology in West Norfolk, through Barbican Box, might put them in a better position at their next Arts Mark review. Commenting on the opportunity to be involved in Barbican Box Gill said "Our young people do get a good breadth of art experiences, but Barbican Box has been bigger and with more scope for stretching out and embedding across the school than anything else we have done. We have had stand-alone arts days where artists come in for a workshop but I feel this is going to have a longevity to it that other provision hasn't" (Gill Sekatawa In Depth, May 2021)

Making a Case for Creativity: Barbican Box at Nelson Academy

Two teachers at Nelson Academy worked on the Michael Rosen Barbican Box project in 2021, Year Five Gill Sekatawa and Year Four teacher Michael Bidder. One of the benefits of digital delivery was that the parallel teachers from both year groups were able to sit in on sessions and work on the project, meaning that four groups worked on Barbican Box at Nelson Academy. Year Five was paired with Kaitlin Ferguson, artist, educator and founder of the peer-led network of artists in East Anglia 'Artist Educator Social Network'. Michael Bidder's Year Four group was paired with print textile artist and educator Rosy Prue. During three remote sessions, Kaitlin and the students created Zines based around the poetry and the objects in the Box. In class time Gill explored the contents of the box, reading the poems with the class and discussing them. They watched Michel Rosen's YouTube channel and in one session made cakes responding to Rosen's poem Chocolate Cake. Gill praised the dedicated planning time between artist and teacher which is an integral component of Barbican Box. She stated that not only did this create a reciprocity and equality between artist and teacher which enabled co-delivery but also that it has enabled the school to create a network of artists they can call upon for future work.

"We had the sessions to plan with the artists and I feel that we got to know each other beforehand to talk through ideas. So we knew more, we were invested in it more before it even started."

Gill Sekatawa In Depth, May 2021



Image: Zines made by students at Nelson. © Nelson Academy



Image: Cakes made by YP at Nelson inspired by the poem Chocolate Cake by Michael Rosen. © Nelson Academy

One of the main impacts the project has had on her students is increased feelings of confidence in accessing and enjoying poetry. Additionally, Gill commented on the project impacting positively on student wellbeing following prolonged absences from school during the Covid-19 lockdowns. Gill commented that during their lunch break, students often wanted to watch Michael Rosen's YouTube channel while they ate their lunch. When asked what she felt it was about poetry and the project which had enhanced her students' wellbeing she said:

"The poems just let you escape. And the way that Michael tells them and performs them meant the children were just in hysterics watching these videos, and they just needed to laugh. They just giggled. They would look with anticipation to Tuesday, saying 'Is Kaitlin coming today?' and they talked about her like she was actually coming. Even through the screen they felt like they knew her and had met her" *In Depth Interview, July 2021*

One of Kaitlin's sessions prompted a student to return home and use an old typewriter to write poems himself.

"I'd like to say a HUGE thank you to all at the Barbican Project HQ and to Kaitlin for the wonderful sessions we have had so far! One lad in particular was raving about it at home and about the typewriter. He has spent the evening typing up poems on his aunt's old typewriter! His poems are actually VERY clever. I don't want the project to end as it has been THE BEST mental health activity we have had in this difficult time. We LOVE the box, the poems and every minute with Kaitlin. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!" *Partner Post Pilot Survey, 2021*



Image: Year 5 Student at Nelson Academy typing poems at a typewriter. Courtesy of Nelson Academy

There have also been opportunities to embed learning across the wider school. Gill has since run an internal whole-school teacher training session where she ran a few of the activities suggested by Rosy Prue and Kaitlin Ferguson with teachers from Reception right up to Year Six. The activities have applicability to all year groups and can be as easily adapted to support the Year Six curriculum as it would be to deliver them to reception classes. Gill wants to utilise some of the techniques Kaitlin used to teach (using her phone and an additional camera) in the hopes she may be able to share work more widely in the school. Nelson has a display board up showing some of the students' work, but hopes a more interactive approach might widen access and improve visibility of the project.

"There's lots of people that been very interested in what we're doing in the school. I've already shared two of the activities last night at the staff meeting, one that Rosy did with Mike's class and one that Kaitlin did with ours. So, the teachers all know about that, and I illustrated how those activities might be adapted to support the curriculum from reception right through to Year 6. So I think the art and learning will spread quite happily through the school." *Gill Sekatawa*
In Depth, May 2021

Legacy: Partnerships, Networks and Connections

One of the foremost aims of the NDP project is to leave in place after project completion, a sustainable network of connections between local arts organisations, local artists and education providers. This place-based approach aims to avoid destabilising the existing cultural ecology in each region through the provision of unsustainable ad hoc projects, but rather to support and enhance existing networks and partnerships which may continue long after Barbican leave the area. Covid has made project delivery challenging, scuppering opportunities for making connections to local arts centre through site visits, school visits from CAE and showcases. We are, however, beginning to see that despite these challenges, partnerships and connections are being made between schools, artists and arts providers in each region. One such example is in West Norfolk, where Nelson Academy is the newest member of the PEACH West Norfolk LCEP, a direct result of their participation in Barbican Box. In June, just after Barbican Box finished, Nelson embarked on their next Arts Mark review completing their second development day for that process. Engaging with PEACH West Norfolk and Creative Arts East was identified by the school as a major component which could improve their current Arts Mark status.

"I had heard of PEACH and CAE but I hadn't ever worked with them. That's what I am particularly pleased about; the project has opened doors to Creative Arts East and PEACH. It has been on my list of things to do and making that connection to PEACH has been useful, we now get emails from them. We have just completed our second development day for Arts Mark and making those connections will be a big part of that process" *Gill Sekatawa*
In Depth, May 2021

Since this time Nelson Academy has now joined the PEACH West Norfolk LCEP. This is something Gill felt was catalysed by their engagement in Barbican Box. Nelson have also managed to make connections with other local schools, something which was also suggested to be a 'Next Step' towards receiving Arts Mark Gold status:

"Kaitlin was also working with Snettisham and so we set up a What's App group so we could talk to each and share our work with the other schools. Hopefully we have a link with that school now. That was a little extra from the project, one of the things in our Arts Mark Next Steps was to have a bigger outreach and make connections with other schools and agencies and Kaitlin facilitated that. Our zines will go to Snettisham's class and theirs will come to ours. When the students were watching the sharing, they were entranced."

Ofsted 2018 Review

"Our artists have both said that they're happy to be involved with our school. We have said that this is a link we are not going to let go. I have posted on Class Dojo workshops Kaitlin is running. I know that if we had a CPD art day, I could get them in to lead a little workshop when things are back to normal. And so I know that that's going to have a big impact."

Ofsted 2018 Review

Gill commented that Nelson Academy will certainly bring both Rosy Prue and Kaitlin Ferguson, both of whom are local to West Norfolk, into the school. This highlights how important it is that place-based partnerships always ensure a rich and diverse group of local artists are engaged in the partnership to ensure a legacy is left after the project is completed. Gill has shared workshops that both artists ran during the summer with parents in the hope that they will take their children to local arts activity over the holidays.

Recommendations

Gill commented that given the issue with travel presented by families living very rurally, it would be beneficial if arts organisations were able to visit schools for longer projects. Continued signposting to events happening locally and ongoing communication, particularly from the regional partner, would enable the school to disseminate offers to their families. Nelson's ability to make connections with Snettisham Primary highlights how Barbican Box and other NDP projects might better facilitate and formalise connections between schools in addition to aligning with Arts Mark criteria. Gill discussed how using digital technologies, including those which exist within the school, can allow staff across the school access and insight into the project. Finally, the journey Nelson went on with their Artist Mentor reveals the benefits of prioritising time for teachers and artists to get to know each other beforehand into the budget for Barbican Box.

8.3 Passmores Academy, Harlow

School and Artist Case Studies

Passmores Academy, rated Good by OFSTED in 2018, is a large comprehensive secondary school in Harlow, Essex. The academy has an annual intake of 240 pupils in Year 7 and has an approximate student body of 1,000. Passmores, which was featured on the 2011 TV series 'Educating Essex', doesn't have a sixth form and students often move onto other Further Education providers locally. Passmores, and Harlow in general, is in a POLAR 1&2 area meaning progression to HE is statistically less likely for its young people. It has a thriving arts scene and has ambitious advocates of the arts on its Senior Leadership Team. Whilst they are currently not an Arts Mark School, they offer a broad a balanced arts curriculum including drama, art, music and photography at KS4. Pupil premium is above the nation average at 32.5% of the student body and 16.8% of students at Passmores are eligible for free school meals. Pupils are predominantly of White British Heritage and the proportion of disadvantaged students at Passmores is above the national average.



Image: Passmores Academy © Passmores

"We have higher than average SEN and Pupil Premium at Passmores. I support them directly as a Head of House, making sure that pastoral care is delivered where needed and relationships built with families in need. As a drama teacher I am expected to cater for the learning needs of all students in my lesson and make sure all learning is accessible for them. Differentiation of class materials and resources is an expectation of all teachers in the school. Aspirations and expectations stay high, regardless of ability. We have some very able learners as well and last year a number of our alumni students went off to Cambridge University following successful completion of their A levels." *Teacher In Depth Interview, November 2021*

Arts, Culture and the Curriculum

Despite the challenging national cultural education context outlined in this report precipitated by a reduction in funding and a national focus on core curriculum subjects, Passmores has still managed to create a thriving art offer for its students. Students at Passmores have six hours of creative curriculum in total (two hours each of music, drama and art) within their fortnightly timetable. They also have strong extracurricular arts provision, with a year 7 and 8 Drama Club as well as a Key Stage 4 Drama Club which works on the NT Connections project. Passmores have an encouraging and ambitious Senior Leadership Team, who were described by Head of House and Drama teacher Karen Warncken, to 'go the extra mile' to make sure students have access and funding to support their creative learning journey. This results in Passmores having a variety of music and art clubs that run after school, an annual school musical which performs in July and strong links with local cultural organisations. Of particular note is the fact they manage to organise an unusually high number of artistic trips (pre Covid) and their drama teacher attributed this to an involved and supportive Senior Leadership Team as well as aspirational and ambitious arts and drama leads.

"We bring GCSE students to Harlow Playhouse's Pay What You Can offer and the more experimental stuff. We don't use Pay What you Can as much as we should, the logistics of organising any trip is really challenging. We do a lot of trips throughout the year anyway. The challenge in organising these is not a funding issue as our SLT are very supportive. It's time, time involved in doing the trip and getting the letters out. Pay What You Can is easier to manage but it's the admin involved. We have upped the number of trips we do, as a department we try to manage a trip a month." *Karen Warncken In Depth Interview, January 2020*

Making a Case for Creativity: Barbican Box at Passmores Academy

Passmores have engaged with Barbican Box for two years running with the Barbican and Harlow Playhouse. They first engaged in 2020 on the Complicité Barbican Ballot Box and secondly on the Coney Box in 2021, both of which were heavily impacted by Covid-19. The first project was interrupted by Covid and resulted in Passmores attempting to finish the project sometime later in class time and the Coney Box was a product of Covid and in part designed to be engaged with remotely. Drama teacher Karen Warncken described the positive impacts of the Complicité Barbican Box in two ways, firstly the impact it had on both her and her colleagues teaching practice and secondly on her students' skills in devising.

“We are trying to get specialist practitioners in for each KS4 class at least once a year, this has been an initiative we have installed following our participation in the Barbican Complicité Box project. It does eat quite a large portion of our budget (about £250 per workshop, which is approx. ¼ of our usual budget) so we regularly attempt to seek bonus funding through the Jack Petchey foundation to supplement this. The Complicité project was especially helpful with supporting staff in teaching physical ways into devising theatre – often our students get stuck when tasked with creating their own theatre, which is requirement (30%) of their GCSE qualification. The Complicité techniques and exercises have been helpful in supporting this.” *In Depth interview*



Devising has been a particularly challenging component of the GCSE curriculum for Passmores students and Karen described how they found devising ‘easy to access’ through the Barbican Box project.

“Barbican Box has allowed us to have specialist practitioners in to work with KS4 students, this has benefitted both their engagement and attainment in practical drama skills. The trip to see Birth was also partly funded by Barbican Box as well.” *In Depth Interview, July 2021*

Legacy: Partnerships, Networks and Connections

Passmores already had strong links with Harlow Playhouse prior to the start of the project, since Artistic Director Rory Davies is a former student of the school and has maintained good links with the drama department. However, Barbican Box was the first time the school had been able to engage in the long term with Harlow Playhouse on a project.

“We have always had a good relationship with Harlow Playhouse, Rory Davies is an ex-pupil that we maintain contact with. The Barbican Box project has allowed us to further develop that relationship and widen Harlow Playhouse staff awareness of our enthusiasm for the arts and our willingness to work more collaboratively and visit more often.” *In Depth Interview, November 2021*

Karen described how better communication with Harlow Playhouse would increase the chance of the school being able to organise visits and trips, therefore strengthening theirs and the student's connection to the venue. Increased marketing from Harlow Playhouse since Barbican Box has been one of the legacies Karen has noticed from the project.

"There has already been an increase in marketing materials from Harlow Playhouse. Sometimes we don't always get the time we need to organise a trip, if marketing materials are shared close to the date of the performance/event. We would love to visit more regularly or host more visits from Harlow Playhouse's staff and continue to work on raising technical and performance aspirations." *In Depth Interview, November 2021*

Recommendations

Passmores was also involved in the Coney Barbican Box in 2021, however Karen described how she and her colleague who participated in the project felt this experience had less of an impact on both teaching practice and student experience. This partly related to the fact that the Complicité Barbican Box aligned very well with the devising components of the GCSE Drama curriculum and supported student's need to learn devising, whilst the Coney Box was firmly situated in the Covid era and related more strongly to improving wellbeing than a specific part of the arts curriculum. The intention behind this was to create a freedom and flexibility of artistic output, which could allow each school to create something in an artform of their choice, and regardless of the Covid restrictions in place, but for Passmores, a more specific artform focus would have been preferable.

Teachers working on the project at Passmores felt that they would have preferred a less guided framework, and that whilst the interactive element and box itself was exciting, that the objects inside didn't inspire the devising process in the same way. These challenges were exacerbated by the fact that Passmores was unable to finish the project due to Covid local lockdowns, and one teacher commented that the impact may have been increased if they had been able to continue with the project into the summer term.

Whilst the Coney Barbican Box did not appeal to Passmores in the same way as the Complicité Box, Karen is keen to continue their involvement in the project. She suggested that a refresher training on Complicité's techniques would solidify their learning. One of the main benefits of both boxes, including the Coney Box, was the fact that it helped students make connections to their local arts ecology.

"The Complicité Box was a very physical and high energy approach to creating theatre. It was directly linked to creating theatre and drama and furnished staff with skills to use during their own teaching of GCSE and KS3 drama." *In Depth Interview, November 2021*

“The links between Barbican Box and the talent of mentors it brings to the area is valuable. Students in the area are getting a new in-depth learning experience and are excited to be connected to the Playhouse. Local theatre feels beyond some of them and it is encouraging and inspiring young people to get involved with local theatre and to talk about their needs and experiences.” *Teacher Post Project Survey, 2021*

8.4

Jade Williams, Manchester



Photo © Kaljit 'Kooj' Chuchan

Key Info at A Glance

- Jade is a multidisciplinary artist and creative facilitator based in Manchester who worked on the 2021 Coney Barbican Box project.
- Jade worked with a Year 8 group at Hathershaw College, Oldham, Greater Manchester, delivering three face to face sessions
- Barbican Box was the first time Jade had worked with both HOME and the Barbican.
- Jade made good links and connections with Hathershaw College through the project, which she thinks may be useful in the future, particularly since she is qualified to work as a supply teacher.

Background

Jade originally trained at Manchester Metropolitan University to be a Spanish and French teacher, teaching for four years in mainstream secondary school in Rochdale. She began to get involved in Carnival Arts outside of her work as a teacher and wanted to bring that creativity to her work with young people.

“I wanted to be more creative with young people. I was developing myself as an artist in dance, creative writing and drama. I started doing facilitation in 2019. I started working with Community Arts North West, and over the past couple of years I have been working in different primary schools and youth group settings facilitating young people in different art forms as well as developing my own solo projects.” *Jade Williams in Depth, July 2021*

Jade is now a multidisciplinary artist and creative facilitator based in Manchester. Jade described how she always tries to connect and integrate each artistic discipline so that her work is fully multidisciplinary. Barbican Box was her first time working with both the Barbican and HOME Arts Centre.

Making a Case for Creativity: Barbican Box

Jade has a unique perspective on the challenges young people face in engaging in the arts since she has worked both as a teacher in secondary schools in Greater Manchester and as a socially engaged artist. Jade described how one of the issues she had witnessed in schools is the pressure on teachers to prioritise core curriculum subjects and subsequent cuts to performing arts departments.



Image: Jade's session at Hathershaw, students exploring the box. © Hathershaw College

“Creating the space and time for creative projects to happen in school is a real challenge. That was one of the factors in me wanting to pull back from mainstream education as I saw creativity going and that took the fun out of learning.” *Jade Williams In Depth, July 2021*

Jade described how the Coney Box enabled the young people to ‘play’ through the concept of the ‘Secret Agent’, something which not only created a great deal of excitement in her group but also a sense of agency and ownership. This element of young person led co-creation and play was the major component of the project which she feels will influence her work in the future.



Image: Jade leading a session with students. © Hathershaw College

“I really liked how the young people were engaging with the project itself. The idea of them becoming secret agents, all of that excitement and the idea of play that Coney brings to it. Young people were designing their own projects, researching and creating something for their school. We gave them that space and time and that was important. It does give them that sense of ownership. It's really important for them to consider their wellbeing, in school that can get quite lost. There is more of a push in terms of the mental health of students in schools now, but we still have to do assessments...they still always have pressure and expectations. So, it still gets lost. We gave them the time and the space to really consider that and create something for each other that can help, even if it's a very small impact.” *Jade Williams In Depth, July 2021*

In her three sessions Jade worked face to face alongside the teacher and students to use movement, drama and creative writing to create a gift for their school. The final output was wellbeing maps with directions for places to go to get support and some inspiration quotes. The students also created a song which they performed at a final online showcase.

Successful Delivery Strategies

Jade particularly appreciated how collaborative the relationship was between her and her teachers at Hathershaw, commenting that each brought their respective skills to the pre project planning meetings and discussed what might work well with the group. She stated that there was a flexibility to the project which meant that they didn't need to approach delivery with any fixed idea of outcomes or activity in mind. This meant they felt able to let the young people guide the process more than she has on other engagement projects she has worked on. Jade found this an unusual and rewarding way to work, in a cultural context which often calls for quite fixed objectives and delivery targets.



Image: Jade leading a session with students. © Hathershaw College

Legacy: Partnerships, Networks and Connections

Jade commented on how important it was that the project worked with local artists. She felt this was significant in terms of building sustainable relationships between schools and the local arts ecology. Additionally, she felt this would have an impact on raising the young people's aspirations by introducing them to artists from their area who work in the creative industries and helping them to see a career in the arts as a possibility. Jade commented that she hoped she would develop her relationships with Hathershaw in the future and that this was one of the biggest successes of the project for her so far.

"It was great that this project used local artists and that they were given that opportunity to connect with local schools. So I think there could be more of that, having that network and collaboration. I think for the young people to see someone that is from their area, especially if they have an interest in pursuing creative arts outside of school, to get them to see that this is what local people are doing now. These are the opportunities that might be available, and it could also help to bridge that gap for young people" *Jade Williams In Depth, July 2021*



Image: Student's brainstorm ideas for wellbeing maps. © Hathershaw College

Recommendations

- Jade commented that if the project was designed to strengthen relationships between schools, artists and HOME that more work needed to be done to make HOME visible within the project. She associated the project more with the Barbican and Coney, since most input and communications were with those organisations. She felt that this might have been different had Covid-19 not necessitated transferring sharings and performances from onsite at HOME to online platforms.
- Jade commented that the collaborative relationship between artist and teacher was one of the successes of the project. Developing self-sustaining relationships between local artist mentors and the education sector is likely to be one of the main legacies of the project in the regions.

8.5 Rosy Prue, West Norfolk



Key Info at A Glance

- Rosy is a Norfolk based artist, educator, project manager and consultant working in the cultural education sector.
- Rosy Prue worked on the Michael Rosen Barbican Box project with Nelson Academy's Year Four class and with Year Three at Heacham Junior School delivering remote engagement sessions.
- It was not only Rosy's first time working with the Barbican but also as a creative practitioner with schools in her immediate local area.
- Rosy had prior connections with Creative Arts East through the PEACH West Norfolk LCEP.

Background

Like many working in cultural education, Rosy has had varied and diverse employment experience, the breadth of which captures the oft-used expression 'portfolio career'! Primarily she now describes herself as an artist and educator. However, she has also worked in strategic positions for national creative learning projects. Rosy originally trained in Printed Textile Design at University of Creative Arts in Farnham, later completing a PGCE in Secondary Art and Design and teaching in schools. She made the choice to leave teaching but continued her connection with the cultural education sector and often works with Arts Awards, moderating assessments and training advisers. For several years Rosy worked with Creative Partnerships, the UK government's flagship national creative learning programme, established in 2002 to develop young people's creativity by forging relationships between schools and arts practitioners. Funding cuts precipitated by the 2010 coalition government meant this flagship programme ended in 2011 and in 2014 Rosy moved to Norfolk. Since this time, she has worked as a freelance artist-educator, project manager and consultant working in creative and cultural education across Norfolk and further afield. Rosy was interested in working on Barbican Box as she recognised its potential to facilitate collaboration and the exchange of ideas, learning and practice between participants. Additionally, she was interested not only in how it might develop her own creative practice but also how it might further support her to make connections with schools

in her local area. Rosy commented that although she very much enjoyed working indirectly and at a more strategic level as a project manager and an Arts Award trainer/moderator, she was particularly interested in continuing to develop her practical, 'hands-on' artistic delivery.

"The Box provides a fantastic, structured format from which to link to and explore the work of other artists whilst also unearthing and developing further ideas and connections. A lovely, inspiring combination of both 'open-ended' and 'contained'! Having moved to Norfolk 7 years ago and taken time to find my freelance feet here I would now love to engage more directly with my locality, building relationships with local schools and a community of artist practitioners."

Rosy Prue, 2021

Making a Case for Creativity: Barbican Box

Rosy praised Barbican Box's capacity to facilitate connectivity and partnership between different sectors. This process of creation and collaboration she described as 'alchemy'. There were several outcomes she identified through her involvement with Barbican Box; in particular she felt that the project responded to a local need in bringing high quality art experiences to rural schools. One of the challenges she noted in terms of young people's capacity to engage in the arts locally is rural exclusion and a lack of accessible venues for young people to call 'their own' or see as a space that is 'theirs to visit'. She acknowledged that within the performing arts discipline this is starting to change with organisations such as The Workshop in King's Lynn (an offshoot of Norwich-based The Garage) offering engagement activity to young people. She believes this rural exclusion has had an impact on young people over a number of years, creating a 'poverty of aspiration' in some young people locally. This is why the work of Creative Arts East, through their rural touring programmes and engagement with projects like Barbican Box are particularly important in rural areas. The positive impact on the aspirations of young people of seeing Michael Rosen live on screen and being able to meet, ask questions and share work with professional artists was potentially profound.



Image: Found Poems and collages responding to Rosen's Box. ©Nelson, Academy and Rosy Prue

All of Rosy's sessions with her schools were delivered digitally/online. She confessed that this produced some initial challenges! The school had some technical glitches during her first session, which made her rapidly realise that she couldn't facilitate an art session online the way she would face to face by simply streaming live activity. In between her first and second session she changed tack and began to pre-record 'how to' content which she uploaded onto Google Drive to be accessed by the class teacher during the sessions. This gave some protection against any further technological issues that

might arise during live streamed sessions as well as providing the school with a bank of re-usable digital resources beyond the session/project. Alongside these pre-prepared resources, she would Zoom with the class to introduce each session and the new creative activities and respond to the artistic content they had created - for example, drawing tasks she had set, poems they had written and adapted. The class teacher would then take the lead in showing the students the pre-recorded content and supporting them to start their creative activities, while Rosy would stay 'in the background' of the Zoom call (with video off and microphone muted – but available should the teacher need to get in touch) before 'popping up again' towards the end of the session to see what progress had been made. Students explored mark-making and drawing, gel-plate printmaking, stamp-making, collage and 'found poetry'. They were also introduced to the concept of making a simple gif out of photographed imagery. Rosy sent individual collage packs into school, containing materials such as sequin-waste, stickers, bubble wrap and painted papers, that the students could use for their collages and printmaking. At the end of the run of sessions Rosy asked students to select one piece of artwork that they had created. These chosen pieces were then scanned to create a digital image that could be printed professionally as a postcard (two of each were printed – one for the school and one for the child to keep). This meant that ultimately students had potentially three different expressions of their work - their hard copies, a digitally printed postcard of their chosen artwork and an animated gif.

In terms of the impact of the project on her own practice, Rosy described how rare it is to have the opportunity for CPD as a freelancer.

"Up until this year I have felt very unnourished in terms of CPD. One of the things I loved about being employed in Creative Partnerships was that ability to share practice and ideas. Being a freelancer often means not having that input, either not having the money or time to afford to go to it. This project, and I will put it in the context of Covid as there have been more opportunities online that are either free or cheap, subsidised, and accessible - they have fed me over the past year. I could listen to Michael Rosen all day and you can make connections with his practice and so many other people's so easily. It was great to meet the other artists involved too and explore the ways in which you might use Zoom." *Rosy Prue In Depth, June 2021*

Legacy: Partnerships, Networks and Connections

Given her past programme management role in Creative Partnerships, Rosy's insights into Barbican Box and the National Development Programme were particularly useful. One way she described Barbican Box was in terms of its role as a capacity building project aimed to strengthen the infrastructure and networks in the local area. Although Rosy had built relationships with PEACH West Norfolk and Creative Arts East prior to the start of Barbican Box, she had yet to build a network of schools she could work with locally. Building a relationship with her two schools has been one of the main impacts of the project on Rosy's professional practice. This finding was consolidated in the school case study where Nelson's Year Five teacher Gill Sekatawa commented that the school is

committed to getting Rosy back to run sessions in the future, in addition to themselves joining Rosy at the PEACH West Norfolk meetings.

“The word that has stuck with me during Covid is ‘hyper-local’. I felt like I hadn’t been able to do enough stuff here in West Norfolk - I didn’t have quite the right connections. I had connections in Norwich and had done Arts Awards work at The Garage in Norwich and in Peterborough. I just felt that Barbican Box is the opportunity for me as a creative practitioner, as an artist myself, to make those connections. I’ve got something tangible now I can put in front of a school. I am a bit more known locally. You are in that catch-22 of not being able to convey what you can offer schools, what you do and how you do it. The potential feels much stronger now since Box.” *Rosy Prue In Depth, June 2021*

Recommendations

- Rosy felt some teachers didn’t primarily associate the project with PEACH and Creative Arts East, rather with the Barbican and Michael Rosen. Although likely exacerbated by Covid-19 and an inability for onsite visits from CAE, this ‘association issue’ creates a challenge for a capacity building project which aims to strengthen relationships between local arts organisations and schools.
- A Barbican conceived & branded project is problematic when combined with current structure of roles with most communications around the project coming directly from the Barbican.
- The Barbican could step back at certain key stages of the project and be replaced with sufficiently funded partner time and a ‘local broker’ role able to manage most school communications and ‘hold’ relationships with schools.
- This ‘association’ challenge is more complex when partnering with rural arts organisations without fixed ‘bricks and mortar’ spaces that young people can visit, showcase work and subsequently feel a sense of ownership over the space.
- This case study highlights that an increased capacity to lead on key project elements by the partner is important in this context. Additionally, more emphasis on co-created work where collaboration between partners leads to increased visibility of the regional partner may be particularly important to non- ‘bricks and mortar’ partnerships.
- Ideally there would have been more opportunity for partnership working on the project between artists and teachers. She felt that not all the teachers knew what the expectations were for them beyond the artist mentors’ direct input in sessions. Clarification on this early on in the project could have improved equity and collaboration between teachers and artist mentors.
- Rosy felt communication and timings of communication between the Barbican and artist mentors/schools could have improved this so that teachers and artist mentors understood what was expected of them well in advance of the session delivery stage.

- In order to develop innovative classroom practice, additional time for relationships to develop and for teachers and artists to bring their respective skillsets to the working relationship is needed. This is particularly important since Barbican Box is a capacity building project primarily concerned with facilitating teacher CPD, not only with artists delivering high quality participatory work to students.

“The creative process work takes time. Ideally, I would come with my ideas and they would come with theirs... because how it worked in practice was I came with ideas and asked how they would work for the school. There was still a sense of ownership, but it wasn’t quite as balanced as it could be.” *Rosy Prue In Depth, June 2021*



- Rosy commented that one of the benefits of online digital delivery was that the school now has a legacy pre-recorded digital resources which they can use time and again and share across the school.
- Rosy’s description of the Creative Partnerships ‘Creative Agent’ role is particularly relevant to the National Development Programme’s ‘co-creation’ ambitions. She described how powerful the Creative Agent role was in developing programmes which were not ‘off the shelf’, but were tailored to the specific needs of the young people, schools and arts ecology of the local area. Much like the funded ‘local broker’ role which partners and bridges described as pivotal to equity between the partners, but with an additional creative remit.

“It was about bringing artists/creative practitioners and schools to work very closely in partnership through a Creative Agent. That melding role which helped to design bespoke, creative, educational experiences. The power that that synergy has when you’ve got a group of young people... an artist doing something that isn’t an off the peg workshop but that draws on everyone’s skills... And that comes out of that partnership rather than just dropping something into an area.” *Rosy Prue In Depth, June 2021*

- Rosy felt that Barbican Box could work in a similar way - facilitating those creative, cross sector collaborations with a view to building capacity in a local area and responding effectively to local need.

8.6

Sally Hardcastle, Harlow



Photo © Sally Hardcastle

Key Info at A Glance

- Sally is a performance designer based in Essex, who worked on the Coney Barbican Box in Harlow in 2021.
- She delivered three face to face sessions with Katherines Primary Academy's Year Six teacher.
- Sally is well connected to the local arts ecology in Harlow and sits on the Cultural Leaders Group with Rory Davis, Director of Harlow Playhouse.
- Her relationships with local schools have been strengthened as a result of her participation in the project.

Background

Sally is a performance designer based in Harlow and Chelmsford in Essex. Since graduating with a BA in Theatre Design from Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance in 2016, she has worked with organisations including Wild Rumpus, Lewisham Youth Theatre, Redbridge Drama Centre, The Bread and Roses and The Gate Theatre. Sally is co-founder of social enterprise Matipo Arts and has a particular interest in new writing and community-based art. more strategic level as a project manager and an Arts Award trainer/moderator, she was particularly interested in continuing to develop her practical, 'hands-on' artistic delivery.

"After I graduated, I did a lot of facilitation. I went into schools and talked about model making and working at scale and being a designer, practical designing, getting their costumes, making the puppets. It was about facilitating their learning and also giving them some industry knowledge." *Sally Hardcastle In Depth, July 2021*

Sally has a good knowledge of the local cultural ecology in Harlow and this has helped her to better understand the context and plan her work with Matipo Arts to respond to local need. Since moving to

Harlow, and later Chelmsford, Sally has become very connected to the arts scene in Harlow. She has her own studio at Pardon Mill, has worked with Gatehouse Arts and Eastgate Gallery and sits on the Cultural Leaders Group, which will likely become the Harlow LCEP. This gives her an interesting insight into both the challenges to engagement for young people and the many opportunities in Harlow.

“Harlow is very lucky in a way, because although it is quite deprived in some ways, it has a really good (but underfunded) infrastructure of cultural and artistic organisations. We have the sculpture collection in Harlow... you walk down the road and you’re walking past a Gerda Rubinstein sculpture or a Barbara Hepworth. Schools are quite aware of that and a lot of children do sculpture-based learning in their class because it’s around them.” *Sally Hardcastle In Depth, July 2021*

She commented that whilst Harlow has good infrastructure the provision is not also consistent or joined up and this impacts young people’s capacity to engage in the arts in a sustainable way.

Making a Case for Creativity: Barbican Box

Sally worked with the Year Sixes at Katherines Primary Academy in Harlow. She described how whilst the school has a large proportion of young people experiencing high levels of deprivation, it is positive, ambitious and culturally engaged.

All of Sally’s three sessions with the Year Six class at Katherines Primary Academy were delivered face to face. The format for the project was that the first two of the five sessions were teacher led. The first session involved the students exploring the Box and the second was about the students conducting investigation and reconnaissance around their school, discovering how different areas around the school made them feel. Sally and the class teacher chose to split their allotted 1.5-hour planning meeting into two shorter 45 mins sessions, one before and one after the first two teacher-led sessions. In Sally’s first face-to-face session she learned what the students had discovered during their ‘reconnaissance’ of the school and set them a mission of ‘giving a gift to the school’. During this session she discussed with the class ideas for what their gift might be and how they might respond to the reconnaissance phase of the project. During the final session, Sally’s supported them to create their gift to the headteacher and the whole school, which was a mural painting on the side of a shipping container in the playground. The mural included their handprints marking out ‘2021’, their names and some words and pictures which represented ‘happiness’.



Coney Barbican Box © Melland High School

“The students were really aware of Covid and in their reconnaissance stage they told me about how tough the last 18 months has been for everybody and how it’s really impacted upon their well-being. In the end though the gift was about brightening up an area of the playground that is not so happy and bringing a bit of cheer to that area essentially. It was also about them leaving something to remember them by because they were Year Six and about to leave.”

Sally Hardcastle In Depth, July 2021

Successful Delivery Strategies

Aside from making a new connection to a local Harlow school, one of the main benefits of the project for Sally was the CPD sessions with Coney. She particularly appreciated the fact the CPD was on Zoom, since it was more convenient to fit in around other work and it facilitated a broader and more diverse group of people to network with and share ideas. School made them feel. Sally and the class teacher chose to split their allotted 1.5-hour planning meeting into two shorter 45 mins sessions, one before and one after the first two teacher-led sessions. In Sally’s first face-to-face session she learned what the students had discovered during their ‘reconnaissance’ of the school and set them a mission of ‘giving a gift to the school’. During this session she discussed with the class ideas for what their gift might be and how they might respond to the reconnaissance phase of the project. During the final session, Sally supported them to create their gift to the headteacher and the whole school, which was a mural painting on the side of a shipping container in the playground. The mural included their handprints marking out ‘2021’, their names and some words and pictures which represented ‘happiness’.

“I am always on the lookout for things to improve my own practice, and I’ve done various sorts of Mental Health First Aid courses or working with children with trauma but no subject specific CPD which is relevant to my practice. The Barbican Box CPD was useful and positive. Having it on Zoom was very convenient and it was nice to have the Manchester people in the same CPD, it meant there were more ideas and more people to meet” *Sally Hardcastle In Depth, July 2021*

Sally commented on the fact that the project had already influenced her own practice. Specifically, she plans to experiment with the performative play-based nature of Coney’s work at Matipo Arts. The way she described the work of Coney and the how it enabled students to feel powerful and ‘experts’ in their school echoes much of the practice of early TIE specialist Dorothy Heathcote and Mantle of The Expert.

“Coney are quite a performative and a play-based company. We’re looking at putting some of it into the work that we’re doing with Matipo this Saturday, particularly around the ‘optional game’ that Coney plays, which is a really interesting thing that I just latched on to straightaway. It was so fun and so interesting and that giving participants the option to say ‘we’re engaging in this completely. I am a secret agent, and I am completing this mission’ or ‘I’m playing the secret agent game at school’ had an interesting dynamic on the group.”

Sally Hardcastle In Depth, July 2021

Legacy: Partnerships, Networks and Connections

Since running the Barbican Box sessions, Sally sent Katherines Primary information about free workshops which Matipo Arts ran during the summer at Parndon Mill. The first of these was entitled ‘Discover Arts Award Through Piracy’, followed by some music and sound workshops later in the season. She is hopeful that her relationship with the school will develop as a result of her connection with them during the project. One of the benefits to the Barbican of working with a regional partner within commuting distance of London is that it broadens the Barbican Centre’s pool of artists for future work. Sally is one such artist, who would be keen to work more with the Barbican and has an excellent knowledge of working in London and good relationships with London schools.

Sally commented that one area the project might have been improved in terms its capacity to build partnerships and connections local in Harlow, is increased contact from Harlow Playhouse and signposting to other opportunities at Harlow Playhouse.

Recommendations

- Sally commented that she felt that the CPD could have been longer and/or more spread out to give time to digest the information they had received and think about the implications on their practice.
- Mirroring the comments from some of the mentors and teachers in the other regions, Sally stated that communication with the Barbican about Barbican Box was excellent but that she didn’t feel any increased sense of connection with Harlow Playhouse as a result of the project.
- Given that a number of people have independently commented on this lack of association of Barbican Box with the partner venue or organisation, it indicates an issue with the project design. This is most likely due to the uneven weighting of communication from partners to those involved in the project.
- This has likely been exacerbated by Covid restrictions, which removed the opportunity for schools to visit venues and showcase their work. It is essential that if the project continues to be funded that the partner theatre/organisation is considerably more prominent in the project delivery.

9.

Recommendations

Inevitably, place-based partnership is indivisible from its singular context and the specificities and conditions of the people and organisations involved and these may vary from urban to suburban to rural contexts. Whilst it might be problematic to suggest transferable recommendations, this research has drawn together commonalities, principles, and markers transferable to other regional locations and contexts in the UK and pulled out common themes which could be used to guide future place-based partnerships.

9.1 Summary of Findings & Recommendations

Identifying a Region and partner for Place-based Approaches to Widening Access to the Arts

- Rigorous approaches to identifying regions and potential partners are encouraged. These could make use of the same metrics used to select regions for the NDP, indices of multiple deprivation, progression to FE/HE, NPO presence, the Active Lives survey etc (these metrics are similar to those used by ACE to identify their 54 place-based target areas).
- This research indicates that the impact might be more if the area is not too metropolitan or if the regional partner is not in an area of high arts saturation. It is important to consider how the scale of the operation connects to the wider area structures (e.g city, local authority, regional) and what other structures are in place to sustain the impacts/aspired change past the life of the project.
- Ratio of size and infrastructure between the two partners has a direct bearing upon the dynamic and characteristics of the partnership. See 'Characteristics of Partnership Models' on Page 65.
- It is important to engage a variety of stakeholders in order to link the local with the wider system in which it is embedded. This might involve engaging SLT, LCEPs, local borough councils and Bridge Organisations in addition to the artistic partner and other artistic organisations locally.
- A networked approach to place necessitates paying close attention to the informal relationships developed in a place and the impact this has on the cultural ecology. The Regional Partnerships Project Manager at Barbican went to numerous local cultural meetings (Harlow Cultural Leaders Group, meeting with the chair of the local MCEP in Manchester and frequent attendance at PEACH West Norfolk meetings) and these informal relationships had extremely positive impacts on supporting local connections. In one instance this was cited as impacting the development of an emerging LCEP.
- When considering legacy, there is a need to consider geographical size of the partnering region. Legacy in terms of building networks and connections is impacted by what feels 'local' or personal to you. Personal relationships and connections are potentially more at the heart of the cultural infrastructures of less urban conurbations, such as West Norfolk and Harlow and are the mechanisms by which lots of things happen. There is a smaller pool of arts orgs working in these regions, resulting in this experience having increased impact on ongoing relationships locally. In Manchester, market saturation and a poor transportation network may create a challenge in terms of creating lasting connections.
- When working in an urban setting, it is important to consider how saturated the market is and what the implications of this will be on your capacity to enhance the cultural landscape in the area. The scale of the work of the partnership in relation to existing provision and local populace is important and this may necessitate a large scale and reach of the project in these regions

- Partners ought to consider if they need to maintain a particular aesthetic which is tied to their 'brand' and how prepared they are to flex this alongside the needs of their partners and the tastes of their regional audiences.

Clarity Between Partners: Roles & Responsibilities

- Clarity from the outset about the rationale behind a place-based approach, its purpose and what place-based means is essential. Some of the partners were unaware of the complexity around place-based approaches and some of the artists and teachers involved in Barbican Box did not know it was attached to a wider place-based project.
- It is necessary to examine and state honestly the assumptions and values which an organisation is bringing and to define the level of partnership needed. Being realistic about what can be achieved in the given time frame is essential as is defining the place-based partnership model which will support this. Not all partnerships must be complex, nuanced and involve extensive co-creation but this might be needed in certain contexts. What partnership model will best deliver the aspired for place-based outcomes in this region? What capacity and investment is needed to support this partnership model? See 'Characteristics of Partnership Toolkit' on page 65.
- There is a need for clearly defined roles and responsibilities, in addition to realistic expectation about what can be achieved within given time frames by individuals.
- If possible, through funded partner hours, regional partners should manage communications and relationships with schools and artists to ensure sustainability and a network local cultural ecology. The 'national' partner should step back from organising the logistics of the project showcase in the regional venue and performance visits should be facilitated by partner organisation in order to encourage a legacy of local connections.
- Increased and comprehensive social media and branding for the project may have made teacher recruitment easier and ownership over this should be shared between all partners. Separate versions of communications which support voice/brand of each partner would mean all partners are able to share content in a way which reflects their brand voice.

Ethical Complexities of National Strategies

- Partners identified issues which can be caused through the approach some arts organisations use to work in regional areas. Partners discussed negative experiences with other large scale arts organisations delivering projects regionally, without an awareness of context and without giving adequate thought to the impact on the area after they left.
- Bridge organisations also indicated that often organisations base their strategies for expansion on the same cultural engagement data, resulting in pockets of high investment in the same place and areas becoming overrun with initiatives.
- Partners described how there is a need to get to know a place, listen to the Bridge organisation or other local stakeholders to identify where best to concentrate investment. Partners commented that Barbican Creative Learning's National Development Programme had negotiated this challenge very well indeed, through a rigorous approach to identifying regional need and opportunity.

- There is a need to be sensitive to context and to the existing cultural ecology when establishing cross sector place-based partnerships. By embedding within the local LCEP or local council, approaching the Bridge Organisation to better understand the local context and listening to local partners, prospective 'national' partners can respond to local need in order to support local provision without destabilising the local cultural ecology or superseding local provision.

Bespoke Approaches to Place Based Partnerships: Characteristics of Partnership

- One of the major findings from this research and overarching recommendation from this research is that there is no 'one size fits all' or 'right' way of approaching a place-based partnership. It is important to enter into a partnership knowing that it will be different and bespoke and that this requires time to be flexible.
- Throughout the pilot years of the NDP, the nature of the different partnerships shifted and evolved according to the capacity and needs of the organisations involved as well as the needs of the project.
- Three key place-based partnership models evolved, which have been described as 'Networked Partnership', 'Hive Mind Partnership' and 'Single Point of Entry Partnership'. Each of these partnership models have bespoke characteristics, resourcing needs and suggested ethical 'exit' strategies.

Funded Partner Time & A Local Broker Role

- Allow for the lead local broker/partner to evolve organically through a process of discussion and self-selection as opposed to deciding ahead of time and approaching a partner with a fully formed offer.
- This research suggests that funded partner time is essential to the delivery of all three of our identified place-based partnership models; 'Networked', 'Consultative' and 'Single Point of Entry'. Ideally these funded partner hours would be included in the budget for the project to create equality between partners.
- The research indicates that the relationship between schools, student, artist mentors and regional arts organisations could have been strengthened by the presence of a funded 'local broker' role. In the absence of a funded role, all partners took on this responsibility but often lacked capacity to fulfil this role entirely.
- This broker role is essential to the legacy and sustainability of the project in terms of its capacity to strengthen relationships between local arts organisations and schools. Funding this role accordingly is important in order that a local broker is able to manage and maintain relationships with schools after the project finishes.

Project Models

- One strategic issue identified by this research relates to whether a project is a capacity building project or a project which services an area through the provision of ad hoc 'parachute' engagement models. This influences what happens to an area after free project provision finishes. Providing free services to an area has the potential to destabilise the local arts scene which works with limited funding.
- Delivering a pre-existing Barbican branded project in other regions in the UK was identified by some members of the internal team at Barbican as potentially problematic and this was part of the rationale for the inclusion of a second co-created strand of work. In particular, delivery of Barbican Box in isolation is challenging, since the ownership and knowledge of the project model sits with Barbican and this affects the regional partners' capacity to build and manage the relationships with the schools.
- Delivering a model branded only with the name of the lead partner (the partner who submitted the funding application) impacts upon the extent to which local regional schools, young people and artists associate the project with the other regional partners. It also affects the extent to which the partners can influence and shape the pre-existing project model to suit the needs of their context. If building capacity and connections in regional areas is the aim of the place-based partnership, an alternative could be considered.
- A pre-existing project model can be a very useful way of developing a working relationship and building the profile of the partnership, but it's important to consider what scale of project is necessary for this. It may be more helpful to deliver smaller, low risk projects together initially, allowing more budget and focus for co-created work later on, especially if this is where you feel the most strategic value is.
- Conceptually the co-created strand was described by partners to be important to equality and balance between partners and in theory was highly valued by all partners. When discussing how best to build an equal and balanced partnership, the co-created strand was considered to be essential to reciprocity and equality between partners.
- The comparatively smaller budget allocated to the co-created strand meant that in practice, it was less visible than Barbican Box. In order for all partners to prioritise the co-created strand it would require considerably more investment in a re-worked budget which included funded partner hours to commit to developing a project model collaboratively.

Cultural connectedness

- Building relationships is critical to the success and sustainability of place-based work. This relates not only to relationships built with the regional partner but also an awareness of how your work might impact other relationships locally.
- Connection needs to be embedded further than those participating in the project. This might necessitate formalised knowledge exchange opportunities with Senior Leadership Teams in schools or other artistic organisations in the local area

- As the NDP is in its very early stages of partnership, some felt these processes had not yet been fully developed and required time. Three years, in partnership terms, is still very early to facilitate cultural connections in place.
- In order to facilitate cultural confidence in young people in the long term, engaging family members and peer networks is important. The NDP could consider how to approach this, should funding be secured in future.

Benefits to London based arts organisations

- The benefits to the Barbican which the NDP brought varied from better understanding and delivering their civic mission to contributing to a 'levelling up agenda' and developing the national cultural eco system.
- There was a belief that the national work is diversifying the Barbican's programme by helping the Barbican to become aware of creative practice from other areas and providing an opportunity to make connections with diverse range of artists working nationally.
- The NDP provided formal and informal learning and Knowledge Exchange opportunities with a network of cross-sector partners with complimentary skillsets, approaches to co-production, engagement and collaboration, which was able to inform the work of Barbican Creative Learning staff.
- There was a sense that the act of sharing makes practice stronger and that collaborating and networking with organisations across the UK would benefit artistic practice, create knowledge sharing opportunities and create a network of links. These links could be used for the delivery of work, work placements and exchanges for partner staff, GSMD students, Barbican Young Artists and for Barbican staff.

Building Sustainability from the Start

- Place based approaches take time, they are extremely labour intensive and nuanced. It takes time to build trust, get to know any area, build buy in and develop relationship across multiple sectors. This principle must be supported in both project delivery plans and expectation around progress.
- Time limited funding streams which resource activity (rather than processes, structures or partnerships in the longer term) often lead to partners identifying project-based outcomes as their approach to sustainability. Given that the funding from Esmée Fairbairn was limited to three years, project specific outcomes were often identified as the most likely long-term impact over a continued capacity to partner in the long term.
- Partnership working takes time and a willingness to work as equal partners. Literature indicates that pursuing systemic and sustainable change in place-based partnership work requires up to and exceeding a 10-year commitment. This should be considered whilst seeking initial funding. Is your organisation committed to a national strategy in the long term and prior to developing these nuanced (but person centred and fragile) partnerships? Does your organisation have the staff infrastructure (for instance not fixed term short contracts), to facilitate and develop these relationships in the long-term?

- Funders and all partners should consider at the start of an ambitious project with multiple partners what legacy they plan to leave at the end and how this might be sustained. This might involve embedding changes and learning in local systems, handing over the management of local relationships to local brokers, or indeed embedding activity in local institutions to build enhanced community capacity. This may involve a tapered funding approach.
- Since March 2020, the context (locally, nationally and globally) within which the project was conceived has changed radically, and the Barbican, like many other arts organisations of its scale, has been profoundly affected by this. As a result, the organisation is undergoing a period of change, responding to both internal and external conditions. These cycles are an inevitable reality across the sector, and cannot always be anticipated. Where partnership is no longer a possibility, it is important to develop ethical and managed exit strategies, which allow the partnerships to come to as positive a close as possible, with the needs of both partners taken into account.
- Ultimately, in terms of Cultural Sustainability, when considering the Levelling Up/Place Based agenda it may be preferable that regions receive investment directly, without the need for a 'national' partner. However, some of the 54+ regions identified by ACE and other national funders, don't necessarily have the capacity, connections and infrastructure to develop and deliver long term engagement work with schools and communities. Sudden and large investment in these areas therefore isn't always the best solution. In these instances, national partners can be extremely beneficial bridges able to support arts organisations to establish and develop infrastructure, networks and capacity locally in order that sometime in the future each regional partner is in a better position to receive funding directly for place-based partnership work. This may be the reason the work in Norfolk and Harlow seemed more embedded and impactful (in terms of supporting the strengthening of relationships between schools and the local partner) than in Manchester, where the lead partner is more similar in size and scope to the Barbican.

10.

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10.3 Research & Evaluation Methods and Responses

Feedback Method	Who was invited to respond	Number invited	Responses	Percentage of respondents
Baseline Arts Partner Survey	All partners from arts organisations (Home, CAE, Harlow Playhouse)	4	4	100%
Baseline Phone Calls to arts partners	All artistic partners (Home, CAE, Harlow Playhouse)	4	4	100%
Baseline Phone Calls to Bridge Organisations	2 of the 3 potential bridge organisations	2	2	100%
Baseline Phone Calls to other relevant regional organisations	Manchester City Council & Z Arts	2	2	100%
Baseline Phone Calls to Internal BCL Staff	Selected staff from relevant projects or NDP	3	3	100%
Baseline Phone Calls to Evaluators	Evaluators ELCEP & Creative Schools	3	2	100%
Baseline Interviews with Harlow teachers (2010/20)	Harlow Teachers at CPD day	2	3	60%
Baseline Interviews with Harlow Artist Mentors (2019/20)	Artist mentors Harlow	5	2	40%
Baseline Interview with Lead Box Designer Harlow (2019/20)	Complicite	1	1	100%
Baseline Interviews with Manchester Teachers (2019/20)	Manchester Teachers	11	3	28
Baseline Interview with Lead Box Designer Manchester (2019/20)	Hunt & Darton	2	2	100
Baseline Interview with Lead Box Designer Manchester (2019/20)	Teachers	6	5	83
Baseline Survey Barbican Box Teachers Harlow 2019/20	All Artist Mentors	5	5	100%
Baseline Survey Barbican Box Teachers Manchester 2019/20	Teachers	11	11	100%
Baseline Survey Barbican Box Artist Mentors Manchester 2019/20)	All Artist Mentors	4	4	100%
NDP Covid Impact Schools Survey	Schools in all three regions	unknown	16	N/A
Baseline survey Rosen Barbican Box YP Survey 2021 West Norfolk	All involved in project	222	131	59%
Baseline Rosen Barbican Box Teacher Survey 2021 Went Norfolk	All involved in project	8	6	75%
Baseline Rosen Barbican Box Artist Mentor Survey West Norfolk	All involved in project	4	4	100%
Rosen Barbican Box YP After Survey West Norfolk	All involved in project	222	97	43%

Feedback Method	Who was invited to respond	Number invited	Responses	Percentage of respondents
Rosen Barbican Box Teacher After Survey West Norfolk	All involved in project	8	6	75%
Rosen Barbican Box Artist Mentor After Survey West Norfolk	All involved in project	60	4	100%
Baseline survey Coney Barbican Box YP Survey 2021 Manchester	All involved in project	60	0	0%
Baseline Coney Barbican Box Teacher Survey 2021 Manchester	All involved in project	4	3	75%
Baseline Coney Barbican Box Artist Mentor Survey Manchester	All involved in project	4	4	100%
Coney Barbican Box YP After Survey Manchester	All involved in project	60	10	16%
Coney Barbican Box Teacher After Survey Manchester	All involved in project	4	2	50%
Coney Barbican Box Artist Mentor After Survey Manchester	All involved in project	4	3	75%
Baseline survey Coney Barbican Box YP Survey 2021 Harlow	All involved in project	139	26	18%
Baseline Coney Barbican Box Teacher Survey 2021 Harlow	All involved in project	5	2	40%
Baseline Coney Barbican Box Artist Mentor Survey Harlow	All involved in project	4	3	75%
Coney Barbican Box YP After Survey Harlow	All involved in project	139	0	0%
Coney Barbican Box Teacher After Survey Harlow	All involved in project	5	3	60%
Coney Barbican Box AM After Survey Harlow 2021	All involved in project	4	2	50%
Pilot Years Partner After Survey	All partners	3	3	100%
Pilot Years Internal Barbican Survey	All Staff working on NDP	6	6	100%
Pilot years NAB Attendees Survey	All attendees	5	3	60%
Partner Post Project In Depth Interviews	All partners	3	3	100%
Case Study Teacher Interviews	Selected teacher from each region	3	3	100%
Case study Artist Mentor Interview	Selected teacher from each region	3	3	100%
Post Project Bridge Organisation In Depth Interviews	Both Bridge organisations representatives	2	2	100%