

Evaluation brief, Challenge London

Introduction

Challenge London is a new four-year joint investment programme managed by A New Direction (AND) with funds from Arts Council England.

London's cultural heritage and artistic and creative opportunities are rich and varied. As Londoners we can access world-class and cutting edge experiences in concert halls, arenas, parks and streets. However, we're also a city with challenges of inequality, and we know that not everyone always feels empowered to shape culture and be involved with the breadth of opportunities available.

Through Challenge London we will invest £900,000 in partnership work in London between 2018 and 2022, to move towards our ambition of all young people being able to develop their creativity and play an active part in the culture and heritage of the city. For every £1 we invest, we'll ask a partner investor to contribute another £1.

We're looking for an evaluator to work with us on a programme-wide evaluation, synthesising learning and outcomes across evaluations from individual initiatives in which we invest, and helping us to gather and share programme-wide learning.

About us

A New Direction helps London create, think and learn. We are a not-for-profit organisation that exists to ensure all children and young people in London can develop their creativity and play an active part in the culture and heritage of the city. Our focus is on London, but we work with partners across the country and internationally, and are keen for our work to have an impact beyond the boundaries of the capital.

Our main focus is on creating system-wide change: working with partners to ensure that the infrastructure that supports children and young people — schools, nurseries, the cultural sector, local authorities etc. — takes account of their need to play, be creative and experience culture. This means identifying areas of inequality, campaigning for policy change where that is a barrier, working with key stakeholders and other influencers, training and supporting professionals who work with children and young people, and attracting new funding and investment.

We also run and deliver programmes which enhance children and young people's capacity to be creative and in particular their ability to get work in the creative sector. We do this where we see there is a need and a good fit with our skills and experience but we are always keen to share this learning with others and ensure our work benefits the wider sector and our long-term vision.

Challenge London

Through Challenge London we aim to invest in, and bring new investment into, the systems that support children and young people to thrive through arts, culture and creativity in London.

Our research has identified [six factors](#) we think can help or hinder a young person's capacity to be creative in our city. Challenge London invites organisations involved with the services and opportunities that support young people to work with us to develop, test and embed strategic initiatives and delivery systems that speak to these themes, and will enable the best experience for children and young people now and into the future.

Key to the programme is a partnership approach – we don't think any one organisation can tackle these big questions alone - and we are interested in the opportunities presented by working across organisational-boundaries. Through Challenge London we're keen to receive applications from consortia or partnerships drawing together expertise, for example, involving school improvement partnerships, youth sector, property developers, creative industries and employers, local authority teams and arts and cultural providers. Practice and principles of 'cross-sector' partnership working is an important learning theme for the programme.

Key to our investments is long-term sustainability – we see our funds as seed investment from which long-term solutions can grow. Applications into Challenge London are through two [strands](#) with initial investment processes taking place across the 2018-2019 financial year. More information can be found [here](#).

We are working with two advisory groups through Challenge London – the Challenge Group and Young Challenge Group (who are aged 15-24). These groups will provide advice to us on the investments we make and support programme development.

Challenge London builds on the London Cultural Education Challenge – a three year programme running between 2015 and 2018 through which AND invested just under £900,000 in 12 initiatives with 1:1 match. Dawn Langley led an Action Research programme across the three years which helped us learn, iterate and develop the work across the period alongside partners who were receiving investment. Within her work, Dawn developed a programme theory of change for Challenge, which is included as an appendices with this brief.

Evaluation purpose

We have three primary purposes for Challenge London evaluation:

- Accountability for our investments to Arts Council England and A New Direction's board
- Understanding the successes, challenges and impacts of our investments
- Internal learning around programme development and delivery
- Learning for AND, and to share with others involved in the work of the sector including around
 - Future opportunities
 - The practicalities, impact and value of cross-sector partnership working
 - Where and how our ambitions overlap with other organisations, sectors or professional institutions who might support resourcing for this work – and what the opportunities are to move this forward.

Questions

Challenge London has three aims:

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

As part of the set-up for the upcoming Challenge London programme we're keen to work with the evaluator to consolidate a programme wide theory of change for Challenge London, to underpin the evaluation, and decide the questions that will be the focus for the evaluation

of the coming four years. We hope this will include a number of consistent questions to which we might ask partners to respond in their individual programme evaluations.

Interest areas include the following, grouped around our programme aims:

- **Partnerships:**
 - How successful have the partnerships developed through Challenge London been in achieving their strategic ambitions? And why?
 - What has been achieved by a partnership approach that may not have been achieved by one organisation working along?
 - What have been the critical success factors and challenges for consortia or collaborative programme development and delivery?
 - What language is shared across the range of organisational partners with an interest in this work?
 - Have partnerships been successful in ensuring representation and that concerns of young people and those who work with them are central to strategic decision-making?
- **Outcomes:**
 - What outcomes have been seen for young people in the life of the programmes in which we've invested?
 - What has the reach, influence and impact been of the work in which we've invested for young people and the organisations that work with them?
 - What evidence is there that the work will continue to deliver outcomes for children and young people into the future?
- **Investment:**
 - Have the programmes in which we've invested achieved 100% match investment from other sources?
 - Across the programme what type of organisations have offered partnership investment?
 - Do our investments demonstrate value for money?
 - What have we learnt about future business models for strategic local area partnership work?
- **Programme delivery:**
 - How have the different aspects of the programme design and delivery affected the success of applications and the work in which we've invested?
 - Has our management of the programme been supportive, efficient and effective?
 - What could we do better or differently next time?

Values

A New Direction's organisational values are Trust, Equity, and Culture and Creativity. We hope these are reflected across our work including within our evaluation processes.

We're keen to work with programmes in which we're investing as partners and collaboratively with them towards evaluating the programme. We'd be excited about new and creative approaches to our evaluation.

Data collection

Below are details of the structures in place so far for monitoring, evaluation and reflection within the programme. We'd like the evaluator to suggest an appropriate method for data collection within their proposal. We anticipate that data collection might be mixed between drawing information from monitoring and individual programme evaluations, data collected by the A New Direction team and data collected by the evaluators.

- Individual programme evaluations

Each initiative will be asked to develop and deliver an evaluation plan for their individual programmes. Partners are asked to create a logic model sharing their programme plans as part of their application and, if successful, we hope to work with partners to develop these in to a fuller theory of change.

Each partnership receiving investment from A New Direction will be asked to complete brief quarterly updates to track changes to delivery or budget plans, and with the opportunity to discuss any concerns or opportunities.

An indicative evaluation will then be submitted by programmes at an agreed mid-point (depending on the length of the funded period) and a full programme evaluation at the end of the grant agreement.

Although the evaluator's work will focus on a programme-wide evaluation, we would be interested to work with the evaluator to develop guidance for the programme-specific final evaluations to ensure consistency and join-up.

- Group meetings and peer learning

Representatives from programmes receiving investment through the Challenge will be invited to come together at least once a year to meet and share their programmes and experience. There would be opportunities within this session for discussions or activities which might connect with the evaluation.

Individuals working on programmes receiving investment will also have the opportunity to join a peer learning programme alongside other partnership or consortia led programmes in London.

- AND Lead Officers

A member of the A New Direction team is allocated to each programme receiving investment as a Lead Officer. This person is the first port of call for enquiries and will meet with the Lead Partner for the relevant programmes twice a year.

- Young Challenge Group

Members of the Young Challenge Group have expressed interest in being part of the programme-level evaluation process, and we're keen to investigate opportunities for this.

Timings and deliverables

Deadlines for proposals to A New Direction: Monday 30th July

Decisions and first meeting: week commencing 6th August (please let us know in your proposal if this week will be difficult and we can look for an alternative to this)

Evaluation framework, theory of Change and plans for implementing the evaluation to be complete by: 7 September 2018

Strand 1 programme start dates: From September 2018

Interim findings: December 2019

Final Report to A New Direction: February 2022

We would like to discuss and shape deliverables with the evaluator as part of an initial planning phase. Below is an initial idea of timeline and reporting. We're interested in varied formats and have previously produced content in audio and film as well as written documentation.

- Evaluation framework, programme-wide theory of change and key questions to be agreed with A New Direction by 7 September 2018
- Interim reports (December 2019):
 - An internal document for A New Direction discussing learning around programme management, delivery and implementation
 - An external-facing report or other documentation sharing interim learning against agreed questions.
- Feedback sessions sharing outcomes from interim reports (spring 2020):
 - With the A New Direction team
 - With Challenge Partners
 - Further sessions could be possible connecting with A New Directions' networks or wider interested groups
- Final reports (December 2021 – February 2022 (to be agreed))
 - An internal document for A New Direction discussing learning
 - An external-facing report or other documentation sharing findings and learning around the Challenge aims.
- Feedback sessions sharing outcomes from final reports (Spring 2022)
 - With the A New Direction team
 - With Challenge Partners
 - Further sessions could be possible connecting with A New Directions' networks or wider interested groups

Liaison at A New Direction: Corinne Bass (Senior Partnerships Manager) and Hasina Allen (Partnerships Coordinator) will be your primary contact at A New Direction.

Budget: Over the life of this contract we're not anticipating spending more than £50,000 and will be looking for proposals that are competitive in price.

Please share a proposal outlining your anticipated approach, and relevant previous experience to Corinne Bass by Monday 30 July.