

# A NEW DIRECTION

We create opportunity

## The London Cultural Education Challenge 2015 – 2018, Summary and Reflections

### EQUITY AND GEOGRAPHY

**64%** of school pupils live in outer London.

**2 in 5** Londoners aged between 11-20 have not been to an art exhibition or live music event in the last year.

**1 in 5** Londoners under 19 say that theatres and art centres are difficult to get to.

**THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL SECTOR IS PARTICULARLY DENSE WITHIN CENTRAL LONDON.**

Can we reduce London's cultural offerings based on where young people live?

Can we ensure that future cultural places consider accessibility for all young people?

WWW.ANEWDIRECTION.ORG/UK/CULTURAL-EDUCATION-CHALLENGE

### ENTRY TO EMPLOYMENT

**1/6 JOBS** in London are in the creative sector.

**25%** of 16-24 year olds in London are out of work.

**29%** of London's key stage 3 leavers are becoming creative professionals.

**THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY IS BOOMING UNEMPLOYMENT IS TOO.**

Can we ensure all young people benefit from the growth and employment opportunity in creative and cultural industries?

Can we break down existing barriers to secure greater diversity within London's creative and cultural sectors?

WWW.ANEWDIRECTION.ORG/UK/CULTURAL-EDUCATION-CHALLENGE

### A SUPER-SERVED SYSTEM

**86%** OF SCHOOLS feel lack of information is a barrier to their cultural engagement.

**ONLY 23%** OF SCHOOLS who are interested in doing more, report being actively sought out by cultural organisations.

**SOME SCHOOLS FIND IT HARD** to get information about London's cultural offer AND OTHERS GRAB EVERY OPPORTUNITY.

Why do the majority of cultural organisations and schools report difficulties in working with each other?

How do we create more opportunities for school pupils to engage with cultural organisations?

How do we ensure all schools have an opportunity to work with cultural organisations, not just the best connected?

WWW.ANEWDIRECTION.ORG/UK/CULTURAL-EDUCATION-CHALLENGE

### EQUITY AND WEALTH

**LONDON IS THE 6TH RICHEST CITY IN THE WORLD** but 1 in 5 school pupils qualify for free school meals.

**Financially disadvantaged young people are less likely to visit an exhibition or attend an event at a museum/gallery than their peers.**

**0.5M** children below the age of 20 in London live below the poverty line.

**80%** of children from the richest 10% are not in need for every day.

**But only 40%** of children from the poorest 10% are not in need for every day.

Why is cultural engagement among economically disadvantaged youth disproportionately low?

How can we support greater engagement in cultural activity for all young Londoners?

Can we ensure family income does not determine access to culture?

WWW.ANEWDIRECTION.ORG/UK/CULTURAL-EDUCATION-CHALLENGE

### NEW LONDON AND NEW SCHOOLS

**330,000 MORE PEOPLE** in London since 2008. From 2015-2021 the population is expected to rise by 1 million.

**90,000** extra school places needed in 2015-2016.

**PARK ROYAL** 60,000 JOBS BEING CREATED 22,000 NEW HOMES

**ELEPHANT & CASTLE** £2 BILLION REGENERATION PROGRAMME 4,000 NEW HOMES BEING BUILT

**NINE ELMS** £5 BILLION INVESTMENT & 35,000 JOBS 18,000 NEW HOMES

**THE ROYAL DOCKS** £22 BILLION INVESTMENT 11,000 NEW HOMES

How do we ensure cultural education is part of the foundation for London's growth and development?

Can we create new models of working which cement the provision of cultural education for all?

How can cultural education be permanently woven into future regeneration and planning agendas?

WWW.ANEWDIRECTION.ORG/UK/CULTURAL-EDUCATION-CHALLENGE

### INFLUENCE AND DIVERSITY

**WHAT IS ARTS & CULTURE TO YOUNG PEOPLE (AGED 13-18)?**

**ARTS** Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Dance and Music

**CULTURE** Food & Drink, Film, Fashion, Sport, Music, Media, Games, Crafts, etc.

Can we communicate arts & culture more effectively?

Can we ensure young people are better able to influence what arts and cultural organisations do?

Can we build cultural provision that children and young people want?

WWW.ANEWDIRECTION.ORG/UK/CULTURAL-EDUCATION-CHALLENGE

The London Cultural Education Challenge Themes

Written by **Corinne Bass, Senior Partnerships Manager** at A New Direction with the A New Direction team

## Contents

Introduction and Overview	3
The London Cultural Education Challenge in Numbers	6
Five Questions for the Future	7
Reflections: Programme Aims	8
Reflections: Delivery Process	18
The Future and Next Steps	23
Glossary	25
Further Reading	26

# Introduction and Overview

On February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015, A New Direction hosted a meeting for over 100 cultural, creative, education and public sector professionals involved in different ways in the cultural education landscape, to introduce, and open up for discussion, the London Cultural Education Challenge. Through the Challenge, a three-year programme spanning 2015-2018, A New Direction aimed to bring about a 'step-change' in cultural education for young Londoners.

Research prior to the event had indicated that six themes shown in figure one would be important in this endeavour, but what should our priorities be? How should we focus our resources to best effect? Who should be involved? This was the start of the Challenge.

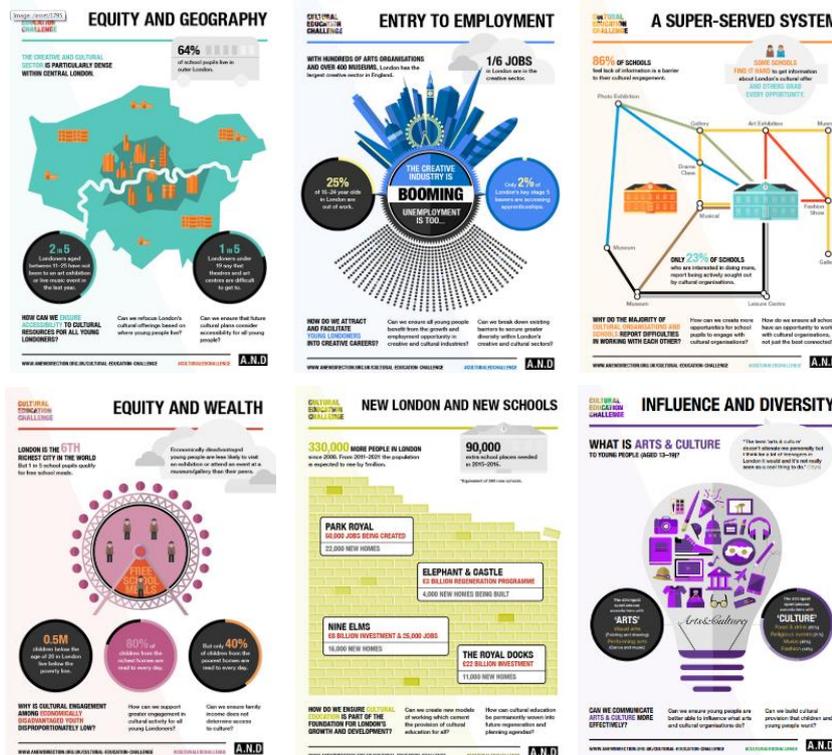


Fig. 1. Six London Cultural Education Challenge Themes

Three clear priorities emerged from attendees at that opening event:

- How do we involve young people in decision making and support them to make informed choices ensuring young people have ownership of culture?
- How do we develop and coordinate strategic partnerships which include new organisations and build capacity?
- How do we cope with austerity, ensure investment and sustainability to challenge inequalities?

From the outset the Challenge was about new ways of working together – as cultural and creative organisations, public and private sector partners, communities and participants - over the long term to address some systemic and deep-rooted challenges for our sector. As would later emerge through our Action Research programme, we were embarking on a ‘generational’ commitment. The ambition for parity and consistency in high quality opportunities for young people across London is not something that could be solved in three years. However, we did want to open up a dialogue and conversation rooted in the key issues for young people and children and to test and model ideas that could be further developed. A New Direction would invest just shy of £900,000 in new programmes supporting this ambition up to 2018.

This summarising report brings together information from across the Challenge. We have included data on investments made, information about who was involved and findings drawn from monitoring and evaluation materials. The first section outlines findings and reflections drawing on evaluation clustered around our three programme aims, which mirror those priorities emerging from the February event:

- Constructing sustainable, innovative partnerships for the delivery of cultural education across London
- Providing better cultural education outcomes for young people (0-25) in London
- Generating new sources of funding to improve cultural education opportunity

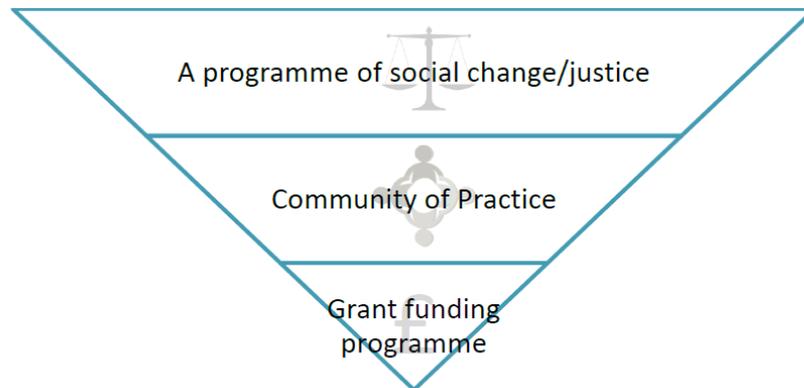
The second and final section includes reflections from A New Direction around the process of the Challenge programme connecting with the three levels of programme structure introduced below.

## **London Cultural Education Challenge Structure**

Embedded within the Challenge was an action research process led by Dawn Langley. Dawn’s work tracked the journey of the programme in its development and delivery and the experience of those involved. Within her discussion document exploring cycle 1 in spring 2016, Dawn suggested three programmatic levels of the Challenge (fig. 2). ‘At a functional level, it is a grant-funding programme, at a delivery level it is a community of practice and at a strategic level it is a significant change project’ (Dawn Langley, Action Research cycle 1 discussion document, May 2016).

The three levels together offer a holistic view of the Challenge – it isn’t simply a grant making programme, but nor is it only a campaign or solely focussed on developing a community of practice. Across the discussion of outcomes, learning around

partnerships and investment that follows, aspects of these three levels of the Challenge programme are present throughout.



*Fig. 2. Levels of the London Cultural Education Challenge taken from Action Research Reflections – Cycle One; Discussion Document.*

This document is intended to sit alongside information about the different programmes and pieces of work that have been involved with the Challenge over the past three years. You can find blogs, a podcast featuring reflections from partners, and programme descriptions on A New Direction's website at the link below. This report also sits alongside four reports written by Dawn Langley within her Action Research process: discussion documents from action research cycles one, two and three, and a Summary document looking back at the last three years. These are also available on our website here: [Cultural Education Challenge 2015-18](#).

## The London Cultural Education Challenge in Numbers

**Over 13,000 young people** were involved in programmes in which A New Direction invested between 2015 and 2018

Activity took place in **half of London's boroughs**

**Over 700 organisations** were involved in delivering, planning and supporting the programmes

A New Direction has committed £868,000 and partners have shown £960,000 in parallel investment making the **total programme investment £1.8million.**

### Total investments committed through the London Cultural Education Challenge

Programme	Lead Partner	Total investment
Cultivate	Enable Leisure and Culture	£115,000
Creative Youth	Ovalhouse	£128,600
Music for Change	Creative Futures	£50,000
Creative Schools	The Barbican Centre	£170,000
Creative Croydon	Croydon Music and Arts	£75,000
Getting Ready Dance	London Youth	£67,685
#CultureMakers	Westway Trust	£134,922
Bellingham Partnership	Lewisham Education Arts Network	£27,000
ICA x Peabody Housing Trust x Kingston University	Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA)	£25,000
Our Hayes, Our Heritage	Uxbridge College	£25,014
Project Oracle, Arts Cohort	Project Oracle	£25,000
A vision for 2026: Hackney – the child-friendly city	ZCD Architects	£25,000
<b>Total:</b>		<b>£868,221</b>
<b>Total match investment committed across programmes investment:</b>		<b>£961,123</b>

## Five questions for the future, drawing on key learning from the London Cultural Education Challenge

**1. Developing strategic joint working takes long-term commitment, flexibility, trust and compromise.**

*Question: How can we make sure resources and capacity are in place to enable the full potential of partnership working to be realised in cultural education in London?*

**2. There is enormous potential in models that distribute leadership for cultural and creative learning.**

*Question: How can partners work together to shape and deliver a local cultural learning plan which places children and young people at the heart of London's culture, heritage and creativity?*

**3. Prototyping, testing and modelling new approaches to supporting creative and cultural learning opportunities comes with risks and asks for new ways of working.**

*Question: What can we learn from other places about innovation practices? How can we better capture and share learning of what is working well in new innovations?*

**4. All Challenge programmes embraced and celebrated the involvement of young people in programme oversight, planning, delivery and reflection.**

*Question: What needs to be in place to help us listen to the concerns of young Londoners on an ongoing basis, and ensure young people's voices are represented in decisions at all levels from policy to programme planning?*

**5. There is important cross-over between our ambitions for all young Londoners to play an active part in London's culture, with the ambitions of a range of partners.**

*Question: How can we engage a range of organisations in longer-term planning and partnerships for cultural education?*

# The London Cultural Education Challenge 2015 – 2018 Reflections: Programme Aims

## I. Providing better cultural education outcomes for young people (0-25) in London

### New delivery practices and new models for local organisation

Over 13,000 young people have been involved in the Challenge in different ways; as participants, co-producers, and leaders. The roles young people have taken and the type of engagement has varied considerably. All of the programmes receiving investment through the Challenge explored, tested and developed a new partnership structure connecting across one or more sector with the ambition of improving outcomes for children and young people.

For some, this involved trialling new joint delivery models between organisations with different focus areas collaborating for the first time which might bring significant impact for children and young people if taken to scale. Music for Change, for example, led by Creative Futures, received £50,000 from the Challenge with parallel investment from a range of funders including John Lyons Foundation and Youth Music. The project worked in a focussed area of north Westminster with 10 early years' settings supporting young people through a research-based music programme. The programme aimed to strengthen children's early learning and development, in response to findings in 2013-14 that school readiness targets were not being met, and worked in collaboration with NHS Speech and Language Therapists to support children with mild or early language delay.

This programme was rooted in deep local knowledge and technical understanding from partners. Evaluation found the children involved showed above expected levels of development across all assessed areas of the early years foundation stage and significant musical skill development. Following the programme's success Creative Futures are hoping to be able to expand opportunities to work with families to enrich music making in the home and considering shaping online resources for teachers and other early years professionals. You can read more in this blog from Creative Future's Creative Director, Julian Knight: [Cultural Education Catch Up, Music for Change](#).

Similarly, #CultureMakers, led by Westway Trust, looked at the potential for a new way of connecting cultural opportunity and social action. Young people aged 15-26 were invited to apply for a small personal grant of up to £400 and offered support by

Westway working with partner vInspired to develop and present their personal projects. Along the way participants were introduced to local cultural partners, and connected with artists and mentors in different ways. Work presented included films, curated discussions, music and documentary work. You can read more here: [Westway - Culture Makers](#).

In other situations, Challenge programmes looked to shape new collaborations which might have an impact on the coordination of cultural education work, with a key innovation around support for consistency and distribution of resources. For example, the brokerage strand of Creative Schools aimed to support schools who identified as being interested in developing more arts partnerships to connect with a range of local organisations and providers. Schools were supported in undertaking a needs-analysis which led to creation of a bespoke menu of local opportunities. 45 new creative projects in schools were brokered over the course of the programme across a range of art forms and partners with over 5000 young people involved in creative activities. You can read more on the Creative School's website: [Creative schools](#)

A key consideration and topic of discussion with partners over the past three years has been around 'sustainability', replicability and opportunities to continue or grow successful aspects of the work trialled to scale. For many this has meant exploring routes for the continued support for central or connecting staff – either through embedding this role within existing infrastructure or through distributing this work across a number of existing roles or organisations. For many, successful links have been made with existing local infrastructure and the range of partners involved in the programmes is testament to the breadth of connections fostered. However, encouraging adoption of new approaches is long term work and in many ways, after three years it is too early to tell the potential impact of some of the delivery models which will come in to their own when operating at scale.

For those programmes which looked to develop joint delivery, often the number of young people involved in the work remained consistent or steadily increased across the course of the programme. However, where the programme was about a *system* around distribution and coordination of activity, the numbers of young people involved tended to be low towards the start rising around half way through the programme as the new infrastructure or approach took hold. As funders and joint investors of activity which is designed to push system change we need to be mindful that we won't always see high numbers of participants within the duration of the funded programme, we may need to be content to sacrifice outputs in order to pursue outcomes.

## Geographical spread

One of the outcomes identified in the initial launch event of the Challenge as a possible indicator of a step-change, was a more developed cultural offer in outer London. Outer London is home to the majority of London's children and young people and some incredibly creative and strong practice. However, public investment, for example investment through Arts Council England's National Portfolio, in outer London boroughs is typically lower than inner London.

Activity supported through the Challenge took place in over half of London's boroughs. Some activity was open to young people both locally and further afield and as such it's hard to be exact about where in London young residents will have seen impact from the Challenge. However, a good number of the programmes had a very localised focus with a specific ambition to support a collaborative approach at a localised level. Of these programmes, six of the boroughs in which they worked (Croydon, Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge, Waltham Forest, Newham and Hillingdon) were in outer London, and seven (Westminster, Wandsworth, Lambeth, Hackney, Kensington and Chelsea, Islington and Lewisham) in inner London. There is a slant here towards central and central east boroughs with the exception of Hillingdon, London's most westerly borough.

## Place

Inherent in the framework for the Challenge is a broad definition of culture, with an interest in connecting with our understanding of this term as Londoners – what does culture mean to us? What does this tell us about how we might support it and support young people to play an active part in its development?

Many programmes that received investment through the Challenge took a local focus, allowing a holistic view of the situation for young people. Often partners looked to establish links with policy areas beyond education and culture, for example connecting with health, housing, communities and the police. An interesting set of conversations emerged around the broad role of culture and artistic practice in a place overlapping with, for example, young people's ownership, space, and safety.

Over the three years of the Challenge Ovalhouse led a programme working with three leading housing associations – Metropolitan Housing, London and Quadrant and Hyde Group – as well as the Walcot Foundation which addressed the question, 'how can housing associations, local cultural partners and young people work together to address barriers to cultural engagement and broaden young people's horizons?'

Within Ovalhouse's final evaluation, perceptions of place came through as a learning theme. Conversations with the programme's Young Associates suggested that ideas of 'place' are fluid rather than fixed, drawing on 'individual experience as well as family history, the things we share with those around us and the things that create

difference' (Author: Chrissie Tiller writing in the evaluation for Ovalhouse, Creative Youth programme). Ovalhouse reflect on the need for significant space and time within place-based programmes to enable discussion and reflection, as well as the importance of making sure there are ongoing ways for young people's voices to be heard within cultural institutions both in programming and wider policy decisions.

Finding the amount of space needed to really build these local conversations in a busy programming environment can be difficult, and these questions also see us move towards a broader piece around the civic role we take.

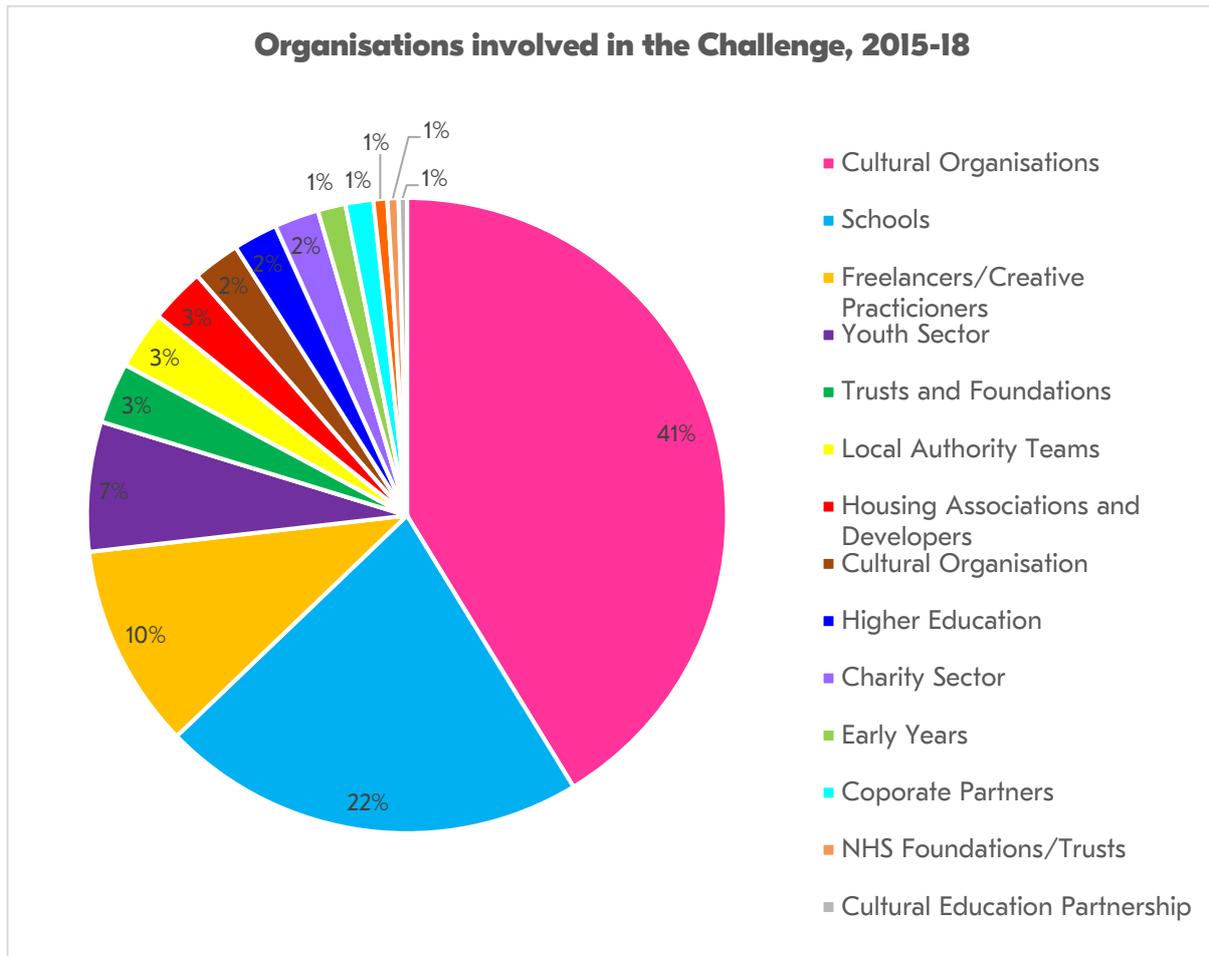
## **Young people as leaders**

In many programmes, young people were involved as leaders both of their own creative opportunities and within local strategic conversations emerging from Challenge partnerships; young people's role as co-producers became a defining feature of the Challenge.

We saw within #CultureMakers above how young people were not only shaping their own cultural journeys, with a range of partners providing input along the way, but also shaping contributions to key local concerns they saw.

Within Creative Croydon, Croydon Youth Arts Collective (CYAC) developed across the first two years of the programme and continues to play a central role in the borough's Cultural Education Partnership. Outcomes CYAC members felt the programme had brought for them included confidence, technical skills including project management, public speaking, empowerment and that they felt more connected to their community. In addition, the strength and clarity of considerable consultation proved invaluable in the local coordination and development work the organisational programme partners undertook and continue to undertake. Further local investment will hopefully lead to ongoing outcomes for local young people in Croydon. You can read more about CYAC here: [CYAC Reports](#).

## 2. Constructing sustainable, innovative partnerships for the delivery of education across London



*Fig. 4. Types of organisations involved in the London Cultural Education Challenge*

The first 10 partnerships receiving investment through the London Cultural Education Challenge reported working with 712 organisations. As shown above cultural and creative organisations and schools made up over half of programme partners. Dawn Langley noted in her cycle two discussion document that most Challenge partnerships tended to be bi-lateral – that is non-profit and public sector collaborations, or tri-sector – non-profit, public and commercial sector partners. In the latter case, often the local authority acts as intermediary.

The practicalities, challenges and opportunities of partnership development was a key learning theme throughout the Challenge. Within the partnerships Lead Partners were

often asked to act as brokers, convenors and facilitators of conversations between organisations using a variety of different languages, from different parts of the sector and with different ambitions. Some partners have developed advice about partnership working drawing on their experience.

[\*Building a Collaborative Culture\*](#), for example, shares learning around collaborative working developed through the process of establishing the East London Cultural Education Partnership (ELCEP). The publication explores different partnership models, shares financing information and highlights activities linked to eight identified stages of partnership development.

Within her cycle two discussion document, Dawn highlights a number of common success factors that emerge through the literature on partnership working:

- Selecting the right partners – ensuring participation from complementary organisations, making sure that the right organisations are involved and securing buy-in at a senior level.
- Achieving an effective structure for decision-making (especially where multiple partners are involved).
- Setting goals – ability to set shared goals that matter both to the partner organisations and to wider society/the intended beneficiaries.
- Developing trust and building consensus – in order to work well together, partners need to understand one another at organisational and personal level.
- Focusing on practical achievements – although it will take time to establish direction and working practices, partnerships need to take action and avoid becoming a ‘talking shop’.
- Maintaining partners’ commitment and involvement – partnerships need to sustain impetus, provide leadership and direction, respond flexibly to changing needs, and make sure the partnership is achieving its aims.
- Committing adequate resources – partnerships require sufficient resources to facilitate meetings and other communication, apart from the funding required for specific partnership activities.
- Being able to demonstrate impact – ultimately, partnerships should be able to provide evidence on the difference they make to their intended beneficiaries.

A New Direction has also recently published our [Powerful Partnerships Resource Library](#). This online resource brings together a collection of case studies, tools and research which we’ve found valuable and interesting in place-based strategic partnership working. Included are some resources used through the London Cultural

Education Challenge including an activity to make 'Mess Maps' as a way of approaching Wicked Problems, created and introduced by Dawn in one of our partner meetings.

Each Challenge programme had one Lead Partner, who was recipient of investment from A New Direction and responsible for monitoring and reporting. The relationships beyond the lead partner varied. In some cases there was a distributed leadership model, with other partners taking on responsibility for different aspects of the programmes. In other cases the governance structure was more centralised, with the lead coordinating a range of relationships. In her three-year Summary document, Dawn shared a visual representation of the different types of networks generated through the Challenge, shown below as figure five. As Dawn explains:

*"In the first formation, the Lead Partner has worked with a range of other partners, but has then delivered directly with/to young people. In the second formation the Lead Partner is part of a wider group that in turn then works with a range of other partners who work with young people directly. The final configuration is a hybrid of both in that the Lead Partner has worked with some young people directly and worked with second partners to support their delivery."*

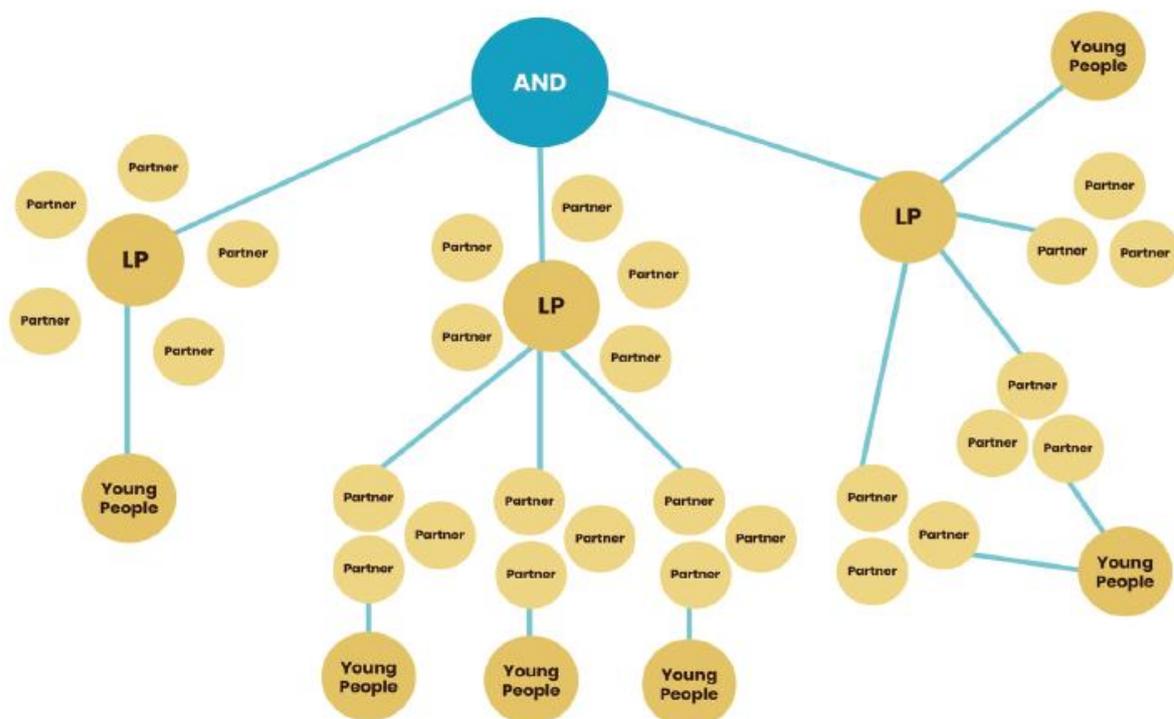


Fig. 5. Network types present in the Challenge, taken from Action Research Reflections: 2015-2018 Discussion Document.

Dawn sets these findings in the context of existing understanding of network structures – further described in her 2015-2018 discussion document - and suggests the variety offers an opportunity for partners and A New Direction to further investigate the potential opportunities and challenges of these different models. One immediate observation is around the different roles Lead Partners are taking here. Primarily Lead Partners were cultural education professionals with considerable experience of quality programme delivery. In the second two models above, rather than only taking this delivery role, these Lead Partners have taken on a non-delivery strategic position.

A consistent point raised in Challenge programme evaluations was the commitment and capacity needed solely to work on partnership development, particularly when shaping programmes working between organisations from multiple sectors. For many this process was the focus of at least the first six months' of the work. Sometimes this process revealed challenges or aspects of the work that required a new or different approach to that which had been planned, which then needed to be renegotiated. Partners found this process was ongoing throughout the course of the programme. In many ways this iteration is consistent with a prototyping or research and development approach, but speaks again to the need for centralised capacity to drive new approaches, particularly working with other sectors.

Each quarter A New Direction asked lead partners what help and support we might be able to offer to them. Answers frequently asked about brokering relationships for programmes, connecting with other Arts Council England or external initiatives live in the sector, platforming or sharing work, and sometimes for support in local conversations, to bring a pan-London perspective.

At the end of the Challenge, programme leads were asked, 'What advice would you pass on to someone starting on this journey?' Responses included the importance of patience and tenacity; and making sure you have clear and solid evidence for your approach, which can be very unifying when decisions are stretched.

### 3. Generating new sources of funding to improve cultural education opportunity

To date £961,000 has been committed in investment from partners against the funds A New Direction committed to the 12 programmes listed in figure one in 2015-2018, exceeding the target of 100%. A breakdown of the proportion of this investment offered by different types of investors can be seen in figure six below.

Type of investor	% of Match
Trusts and Charitable Foundations	22%
Local Authorities	17%
Cultural Partners and Schools contributions	15%
Local Development Trusts	14%
Housing Associations	13%
Developers/Regeneration partners	9%
Sport England	7%
Higher Education	3%

*Fig. 6. Partnership investment by type of organisation*

Investments in the Challenge were made across two application rounds, with two investments following outside of these processes. 'Place' and collaboration with the property development community specifically was a central focus of the second round of investment which was a response to a number of factors including the growth of interest in 'place-based' approaches and the relatively low number of applicants coming forward to respond to the 'New London, New Schools' theme (one of the six themes at the centre of the Challenge) in the first round.

In part, this focus explains the prominence of these partners within the list above, but across the Challenge, partners reported clear areas of overlap in the ambition of organisations responsible for local development and the ambitions of the Challenge. These particularly included community development and skills and progression for local young residents. Local authorities were also considerable partners in the Challenge, and as mentioned previously often acted as intermediaries, introducing or initiating connections to support the development of this work.

Trusts and foundations remain consistent investment partners for cultural education. It's worth noting however, that where trusts and foundations were involved as match investors in Challenge this was usually as part of a portfolio of funds – where there were multiple investors in a programme. Where the investors were a single organisation or one of two or three, usually another partner – a developer, or local authority took a more prominent role. Trust and foundations representatives were also almost never involved in steering groups for programmes whereas most other

investment partners were in some capacity – potentially providing more join up to the system.

Awareness of the Challenge varied considerably across secondary partners including those offering investment – some knew of the campaign, and had had conversations with A New Direction around the programme and its ambitions and, as Dawn notes in her cycle two Action Research discussion document, some only were aware of the programme in which they were taking part and not that it was part of a bigger programme of work across the city. In the future we are interested in how we can bring investment partners together earlier in the process to consider joint approaches to strategic development for cultural and creative education in London.

# The London Cultural Education Challenge 2015 – 2018 Reflections: Delivery Process

The London Cultural Education Challenge was managed and administered by A New Direction with funds from Arts Council England as part of our grant as Bridge Organisation for London.

Here we share some brief reflections on the process of delivering the Challenge, split into observations at each of the three programme levels suggested within the introduction.

## I. As a Grant Funding Programme

Two different application processes were undertaken across the three years. In each, partners were invited to submit an expression of interest, and shortlisted applicants were then invited to submit a fuller application or 'business case' for their initiative and attend an interview. Minimum annual investment was £25,000 from A New Direction and maximum investment was £100,000 a year, over up to three financial years (2.5 calendar years: summer 2015 to December 2017). The Challenge Group and Young Challenge Group offered advice to A New Direction on investments.

45 applications were received in the first application cycle, for which the deadline was 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015, and seven investments made. 10 applications were received in the second cycle which focussed on place-making and one particular theme of the Challenge 'New London, New Schools', and five investments made including two additional amounts to existing Challenge funded programmes. An additional two investments were made with agreement of the Challenge Group outside of the application process.

For every £1 invested by A New Direction we asked £1 be contributed by a partner investor. In this we hoped to double the funds to support the work, and build new investment relationships for cultural education and learning in London. This 1:1 match is a requirement of our funder, Arts Council England.

### Application timelines and processes

Through the Challenge we were committed to testing and trialling new ideas and approaches for cultural learning, specifically involving cross-sector relationships. A key theme emerging across Challenge programmes was the significant time and approach this work takes to develop, including establishing joint language, aims and ambitions,

working practices and clear roles and responsibilities. In her cycle two discussion document Dawn shares learning from the literature around factors affecting the success of 'cross-sector socially-oriented' partnerships. As well as the above, partners will be negotiating historical factors or factors arising from previous experience, as well as different organisational motivations.

For the first round of the Challenge, full information and guidance notes for prospective applicants were live on a newly designed micro-site by 30<sup>th</sup> March 2015. The deadline for responses followed on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2015. As Anita Kerwin-Nye, our Challenge Group chair, noted in her blog at the time all of the applications we received would have contributed to the aims of the Challenge, but a slightly longer timeline might have allowed for more involved conversations earlier around the 'systems-change' aspects. As Anita noted, 'there were a range of really great projects doing good work but it was hard to see how they could create culture change or share their learning.'

Within her action research Dawn also suggested A New Direction might have helpfully offered additional sessions, for example, around innovation alongside the application process. How, as investors, we can build in enough time, support and the right process to allow new ideas and opportunities to flourish is something we've thought a lot about in the lead up to the launch of Challenge London, the new iteration of the London Cultural Education Challenge. For Strand 2 – through which we expect new partnerships to come forward – we have allowed over five months from the full information being live to the expression of interest deadline, and tried to pepper that time with Q&A opportunities, other relevant A New Direction events and opportunities to meet with the team and discuss and share ideas. We hope this allow for fuller and iterative programme development before application, hopefully supporting additional grounding for partnerships once investment is established.

## **Flexibility and constraint**

A New Direction was transparent from the outset that we didn't know what the solutions were to the contextual challenges we'd identified and shared with partners in introducing the Challenge, but we hoped we could invest and work alongside a range of organisations to test some ideas over the coming three years. As the Challenge was established as a programme of test, experimentation and learning, A New Direction tried to establish a flexible and iterative approach to grant management – along the way timelines, plans and ideas shifted and changed in every programme to some extent.

All Challenge partnerships set their own outcomes framework for their programmes. This meant the work could be locally focussed and appropriate for their setting. Although the overall 'research question' and ambitions of the programmes stayed relatively consistent throughout the three years, some of the specific outcomes they were looking to achieve shifted and changed. The combination of these two factors

made approaching summative evaluation more complicated. Some partners adopted action research approaches, which worked well allowing for iteration across stages of the programmes. Others looked at impact broadly across strands of work rather than outcome measurement at the end responding to a baseline at the outset. Sometimes this required negotiation between the different funding partners around reporting requirements.

## **Challenge and Young Challenge Groups**

Throughout the programme A New Direction worked with two groups of advisers.

The Challenge Group brought together eight senior professionals from across youth work, museums and heritage, property development, education and cultural learning. A representative from Arts Council England also joined group meetings, acting as an observer during the application assessment processes.

The Challenge Group acted as much more than a panel to support investment decision making – speaking to the change and community of practice levels of the programme, they were able to open up connections and contacts for us, and meetings contained careful reflection and advice about aspects across the development and delivery of the Challenge.

11 young people were involved with the Young Challenge Group across the three years. As well as offering advice on investments, Young Challenge Group members were part of interview panels, attended project partner and networking meetings and hosted a workshop as part of the GLA's Festival *Who Are Ya?* in April 2016 exploring the central themes of the Challenge.

***“This has made me believe that young people need to be involved/ considered through every aspect of the project when public money is being spent on community outreach.”***

*Young Challenge Group Participant*

Feedback from the group showed they would have valued the opportunity to get more involved with the funded projects – visiting as observers to get first-hand experience of the work – as well as to have had the opportunity to meet with other young people who are part of programmes receiving investment. Members attended some programme performances and outcomes, for example the Getting Ready Dance showcase held at Southbank Centre, and one member of the Young Challenge Group undertook a work placement with Westway Trust after meeting representatives from the #CultureMakers programme at our first partners' meeting. You can read more about her experience here: <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/blog/culture-as-a-tool-for-urban-regeneration>. However, many of the group worked or attended school or college during daytimes when most activity within programmes receiving investment took place, and it was difficult logistically to make these connections. A New Direction

are now working with a new Young Challenge Group to support Challenge London over the next four years and hope to be able to explore creative ways to enable participants to connect more directly with the programmes receiving investment.

## **2. As a Community of Practice**

As Dawn Langley discusses in her cycle two Action Research discussion document, initially, we discussed a community of practice as connecting Lead Partners for the funded projects. However, as the programme developed, partnerships also shaped their own local or programme-based communities of practice and this level of the suggested programme structure was re-framed to focus around building 'cross-sector socially-oriented partnerships'.

A New Direction organised termly meetings for lead partners in the funded programmes to come together. Feedback gleaned through Dawn's action research process and informally, was that these sessions were valuable in finding solutions with peers and learning from other work emerging. Given this development across the three years of local communities of practice, through the next phase of the Challenge L A New Direction will open up this peer learning opportunity more widely than the Challenge partners to others working on consortia led or cross-sector partnership work in London.

We also experimented along the way with a 'Basecamp' site through which partners could share files and ask questions. This site was very under-used with only a handful of messages posted across the two years it was live. However, throughout the process of the Challenge partners did express an appetite to share resources and ideas through their quarterly monitoring. Specific interests included evaluation methodologies for complex multi-layered initiatives, advice on running local commissioning processes, and partnership development guidelines and best practice. In addition Dawn suggested through her action research process that a glossary of terms would be of value to enable lead partners to bridge the gap between different terminology and language used across sectors. With this in mind we will continue to experiment with ways of collecting, organising and sharing materials developed across Challenge programmes.

## **3. As a Programme of Social Change**

The London Cultural Education Challenge was aligned at a national level with Arts Council England's Cultural Education Challenge. The latter programme is a call to action for partners across culture, education and the public sector to work together in new ways to ensure joined up, consistent and high quality opportunities for all children and young people. Both the London and nationally driven Challenge emerged at a time of significant shift of policy in education, with the introduction of

new accountability measures and pressures creating challenges for schools in prioritising arts and culture. Alongside this we have seen economic challenges in the financial climate for cultural partners and local authorities, and intense pressure on youth service provision. Ultimately the Challenge themes were rooted in an ambition around equality of opportunity and fairness in this climate.

Across the three years of the Challenge, A New Direction have drawn on the six themes at the heart of the programme in presentations attended by partners in arts and cultural organisations, Arts Council England and London's Music Education Hubs as well as in meetings with organisations working in property development, housing and education. Some of these meetings were directly connected with the Challenge programme, for example, in preparation for the second round of investment in 2016. In other situations these materials became part of a broader message for A New Direction around how we might achieve a system-wide change in London. Partners' spoke often about the value of having this evidence grounding the ambitions of the Challenge programme in the development of partnerships. For example, in the Challenge podcast recorded in February 2018, one Lead Partner comments, 'if you're developing from a strong need or evidence base you can always return to that...when you're working with lots of different partners that have different needs and different ambitions that can all provide a ...cornerstone'. We found the infographics had resonance across partners from a range of different types of organisations.

The three-tiered structure of Challenge as noted in the opening section of this report was suggested by Dawn Langley in her cycle one Action Research discussion document. The model raised interesting conversations with Challenge Lead partners, with some concerns raised about the positioning of the programme as one of social justice. As Dawn notes in her report from the following year (cycle two), these concerns included that social justice speaks to an incredibly wide issue and the partners could only ever make a small change here, alongside the possibility of the instrumental purposes of creative engagement taking too much prominence over the intrinsic. Many partners were engaged in influencing policy or organisations' practice as part of their programmes, but overall partners saw this aspect of the work rooted in a commitment to change in terms of cultural education.

## The future and next steps

In March 2018 A New Direction launched Challenge London, the next phase of the London Cultural Education Challenge. We have again looked at current research into the challenges young people face in terms of their ability to develop their creativity and engage with culture.

In presenting the themes within the illustration shared in figure seven, we have tried to indicate the fluid and connected aspect of different challenges to encourage a child-centred and holistic approach to new ideas that might address these factors.

We are taking a great deal of learning from the past three years into the new programme, for example advice and guidance from partners' experience of cross-sector working, a greater understanding of timescales and processes of establishing strategic local programmes, practical learning for example around timelines and flexibility relating to the grant funding programme, and a sense of some of the opportunities for opening up the Challenge as a programme of change, for example through a public peer-learning programme.

### Acknowledgments

We'd like to thank everyone who has been involved with the London Cultural Education Challenge over the past three years, it has been a pleasure to work with partners, advisors and those who have supported programme delivery. We're very much looking forward to continuing the work of the Challenge into its next phase.



Fig.7. Challenge London illustration of themes

## Glossary

**The London Cultural Education Challenge (The Challenge)** – The London Cultural Education Challenge is a three year joint investment programme aiming to bring about a step-change in cultural education in London. The Challenge is administered and managed by A New Direction with funds from Arts Council England.

**The Challenge Group** – The professional advisory group sitting at the heart of the Challenge programme and advising A New Direction on investments we make.

**The Young Challenge Group** – An advisory group of young Londoners aged 15-25 sitting at the heart of the Challenge and advising A New Direction on investments we make.

**Lead Partners** – Each programme receiving investment through the Challenge has a Lead Partner who holds the grant with A New Direction on behalf of the partnership of organisations involved in the work.

**Cross-sector partnerships** – Organisations involved in cultural education from more than one professional sector, for example education, culture or housing, shaping joint practice to share expertise, resources or methodologies to collectively support future work.

**Challenge partners** – Organisations involved on the ground and strategically in planning and delivering programmes receiving investment through the London Cultural Education Challenge

## Further Reading

Below is a list of links to external blogs, articles and pages where you can find more about the work undertaken through the Challenge over the past three years

### **Programmatic information**

Overview information including links to blog posts by Challenge partners:

<https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/what-we-do/cultural-education-challenge>

Further information about the first 10 investments made through the London Cultural Education Challenge: <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/what-we-do/cultural-education-challenge/the-initiatives>

### **Application rounds**

Data summarising the expressions of interest received in the first application round:

<https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/asset/2000/view>

Two blogs from the Challenge Group Chair, Anita Kerwin-Nye, written following each of the application processes: <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/blog/cultural-education-challenge-first-insights-from-our-chair>

<https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/blog/10-rules-for-being-a-better-funder>

### **Young Challenge Group**

A blog from Lara Stavrinou, who worked with the Young Challenge Group, written one year into their meetings together:

<https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/blog/whats-next-for-the-young-challenge-group>

The Young Challenge Group visit the Arts Council:

<https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/blog/how-do-you-squeeze-creativity-into-a-box-on-a-page>

### **Challenge podcast**

The first Challenge podcast, with reflections from programme partners, recorded in February 2018: <https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/what-we-do/cultural-education-challenge/challenge-podcast>