Appendix 2 | Case Studies

Arts and Disability

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1. Projects overview

This report explores disability focused projects within the Cultural Olympiad, focusing on their impacts on Deaf and disabled artists and the wider arts sector. The findings are based on case studies of two large programmes: *Unlimited* and *Accentuate*, and nine smaller projects or commissions which sat within them.

The evaluation process involved:

- Telephone or Skype interviews with eight artists commissioned via the *Unlimited* programme
- A further eight interviews with project producers, host venue staff and managers at LOCOG and Shape.
- Analysis of online content on project blogs.
- Analysis of evaluation reports, commissioned artists’ final reports to ACE, and monthly progress reports.

Note: Within this report, the phrase Cultural Olympiad refers both to the four-year lead up of cultural programming, starting in 2008, and its twelve-week culmination, the London 2012 Festival in 2012.

1.1 Key Findings

- The Cultural Olympiad led to step-change in the quality and scale of work produced by both established and emerging disabled and Deaf artists in the UK. For those artists already producing work of a very high calibre who received commissions through Unlimited, the opportunity has raised their profile within the sector, and increased wider public awareness of their work.
- The Cultural Olympiad has led to an improvement in skills across the disability arts sector, in project management, finance, marketing, administration and accessible interpretation.
- Communications, networks and partnership working between Deaf and disabled artists and the wider arts sector has strengthened as a result of the enabling opportunity provided by investment in programmes through the Cultural Olympiad.
- While there is no definitive data on the issue, research indicates that levels of media coverage varied widely from project to project. For example the *Unlimited* programme as a whole did not attract significant coverage, but individual projects did, such as Sue Austin’s *Creating the Spectacle*, which was featured extensively in the media and in LOCOG’s own promotional material. There was no clear consensus amongst those interviewed about whether they believed that the Cultural Olympiad has led to improved media coverage of the work of Deaf and disabled artists, in terms of the quantity or quality of editorial content. However there was a general feeling that the Paralympic Games had been positive in its representation of disabled people.
- While there will be a positive legacy for many of the individual artists and companies involved, sustained legacy from the Cultural Olympiad will be reliant on continued funding and strategic support for artists and their regional support networks. ACE have made a commitment to continuing the *Unlimited* programme, and the value and format of this support are currently under discussion.
1.2 Arts and disability programmes in the Cultural Olympiad

The London 2012 Cultural Olympiad contained a combination of large strategic programmes and individual projects which involved disabled and Deaf people as artists, audiences and participants. The major strategic programmes were:

Unlimited

The flagship programme for disabled and Deaf professional artists within the Cultural Olympiad was Unlimited, which was announced in 2008 as one of the original Major Projects, and later integrated in its entirety into the London 2012 Festival. Funded by ACE, the other national arts councils, Creative Scotland, LOCOG, the Olympic Lottery Distributor and the British Council, Unlimited aimed to celebrate Deaf and disabled artists on an unprecedented scale, raise the profile of individual artists and offer them new opportunities. The focus of the programme was on raising the profile of UK Deaf and disabled artists, and exposing audiences to work by artists of the highest calibre. It was not intended to be a development or training opportunity for artists, as those chosen were by definition already reaching high standards of excellence. However, the emphasis placed on artists creating new work, on a bigger scale, and experimenting creatively, did enable artists to enhance their creative skills and confidence in project management. Through this funding stream, 29 artists were commissioned to create ambitious work which would be showcased all over the UK, ending with a season at the Southbank Centre during the Paralympic Games in 2012. They were also able to access additional funding for research, training and mentoring, as were their producing partners, through two additional funds: Unlimited Talent, and Producer Capacity Building Fund. The commissions were chosen by a committee of experts, including at least 50% disabled representation, chaired by Ruth Mackenzie. The artists came from all over the UK, and worked across a wide range of artforms, with many taking the opportunity to experiment with new media or collaborate with artists from other disciplines. Five projects were international partnerships, supported financially and with facilitation from the British Council.

Accentuate South East

Unlimited was not the only major cultural programme which was developed around disability. In the South East, the regional programme for the Cultural Olympiad was themed around disability as well, taking inspiration from the excitement generated by the Paralympic Games coming back to its original home of Stoke Mandeville. This was used as an opportunity to bring a wide range of strategic partners together, in a coalition much broader than the cultural sector, which included arts, sport, leisure and heritage. The programme aimed to create long term improvements in the regional infrastructure for Deaf and disabled people, which in turn would raise the profile of disability equality.

Beyond these two programmes, a number of projects involved Deaf and disabled artists across different strands of the Cultural Olympiad, including four events presented as the Paralympic Flame Festival which took place across the four UK nations as a Paralympic Torch Relay celebration. Beyond the Cultural Olympiad, the most high profile and watched events, with huge live and TV audiences, were the Paralympic opening and closing ceremonies. They involved a large number of professional disabled artists (many of which also contributed to Unlimited and other programmes) as well as volunteers, and involved young disabled people from the Olympic host boroughs.
1.3 Context

The commissioning and programming of work by Deaf and disabled artists does not happen in a politically neutral context. There were several tensions in the development of this work, particularly in the later stages of the project and while the work was being showcased during 2012, which were discussed by the artists, venue programmers and producers interviewed.

Interviewees described the current situation for many disabled people as one of fear and uncertainty, as they will be heavily affected by changes to benefits entitlements, local authority cuts to social care and other service provision, and increased means testing of access to out-of-work benefits. The rise in levels of hate crime experienced by disabled people was also referenced as a factor, as was the negative stereotyping of disabled people as ‘benefits scroungers’ in the media.

Given these issues, the presence of a high profile, positive cultural programme focused on disability was seen by several interviewees as very important, because of its potential to change public perceptions and discourse, in addition to the impact such a programme could have on awareness of the contribution that Deaf and disabled people make to the arts. Some felt that it was right that the programmes were representative of the diversity of work produced by Deaf and disabled artists, embracing artists who produced work with the broadest range of themes. Other interviewees felt that this was an unmissable opportunity to put disability issues and disability culture on a national platform, and wanted to see the programming represent this.

Arts organisations which specialise in presenting disability arts or working with Deaf and disabled people as audiences and participants are experiencing the same current funding constraints as the wider arts sector. As a result, specifically in relation to Unlimited, some interviewees questioned the way in which the programme was structured to channel funding to individual artists for one-off commissions, at a time when they perceived the infrastructure which supports emerging disabled artists to be under threat.

Many interviewees felt that coverage of the Paralympics and the opening and closing ceremonies in particular, had potential to shape a more positive view of disabled people and create pride and excitement in the disabled community. However, there was a concern that some of the coverage of disability would be patronising, focus too heavily on the details of the disabilities themselves, and on human interest stories, and in the case of the Paralympic media coverage, focus too extensively on stereotypical representations of disabled athletes as inspiring ‘superhumans’. As a result, interviewees reported that some Deaf and disabled artists and activists were reluctant to engage with the Cultural Olympiad. One interviewee stated that ‘many people felt that the Paralympics would be bad for disabled people’. It was necessary to build trust and confidence before partnership working could be established within her project.

The programming of disability arts within the Cultural Olympiad represented an unprecedented amount of funding, development and presentation of work by Deaf and disabled people in a concentrated period of time. This was generally seen as positive, especially by commissioned artists in the Unlimited programme. However interviewees also questioned whether the impact would be limited by the amount of other cultural activity happening at the same time, and whether the media would choose to focus on more mainstream events.
1.4 Impacts on artists

The research team looked at emerging evaluation from the Unlimited and Accentuate programmes, and carried out interviews with sixteen people connected to the delivery of those programmes, including eight commissioned artists from the cohort of 29 artists or companies with Unlimited commissions, three members of staff at LOCOG and Shape, four project producers and a festival programmer.

Based on this research, the impacts of the Cultural Olympiad on Deaf and disabled artists can be summarised as follows:

• Artists pushed personal boundaries and developed much more ambitious work.
• Artists were able to showcase their work on bigger stages and in more prestigious venues. While many of the disabled artists and disability arts companies involved already had well established profiles, involvement in the Cultural Olympiad represented a significant moment in their career to date.
• Some artists, particularly those at an early stage in their career, felt that their work received more attention and more national media coverage because it was part of the Cultural Olympiad.
• Artists were able to show their work to larger audiences.
• Artists reported enhancing their creative skills and experimenting with new artforms and media.
• Confidence in their ability to manage projects was enhanced by the experience of leading larger projects, including budgeting, administration and leading teams.
• Artists were able to access very high quality training and mentoring, which was bespoke to their own development needs (through Unlimited).
• Artists established relationships with cultural organisations or individuals which may lead to further future collaboration
• There is considerable potential for projects to continue in future through touring opportunities for theatrical productions, offers of exhibition space, and fundraising for the roll out of community arts activities.

1.5 Impacts on audiences and participants

Interviewees suggested that the impacts of disability related programming within the Cultural Olympiad for audiences and project participants were:

• The projects contributed to an improvement in the accessibility of cultural organisations and the quality of their welcome and visitor services.
• Venues were able to attract Deaf and disabled audiences through the programming of work by Deaf and disabled artists.
• Productions, exhibitions and events became more accessible to disabled people as projects experimented with creative approaches to interpretation and integrated accessible content into their work.
• Deaf and disabled people were inspired by the quality and content of these programmes, with an impact on their own confidence and aspirations (Accentuate).
1.6 Impacts on the cultural sector

It is clear that the Cultural Olympiad enabled a substantial increase in the funding available to Deaf and disabled artists, and provided funding for some disability arts organisations to develop new work. This meant that artists have been able to demonstrate that they can achieve excellence on a par with the mainstream arts sector when given access to the same financial, technical and other resources. As a result they expected to find it easier to access the support and venues they needed to create similarly ambitious work in future.

The projects demonstrated the value of programming work outside the spaces in which art by Deaf and disabled artists is usually seen, in reaching new audiences and developing creative partnerships. This happened both in large mainstream venues not traditionally known for programming the work of disabled artists, and in unusual spaces or public spaces, through site specific installations and events.

The projects have also contributed to an improvement in the skills base in the cultural sector. Firstly they have improved and expanded the creative skill sets of individual artists and performers through the provision of funding which has allowed them to spend time on research and experimentation as well as through take up of training and mentoring opportunities. Artists also described how they have learnt a lot about production, project management, funding and networking through their involvement in the Cultural Olympiad. Secondly, arts organisations and venues have developed skills around working with Deaf and disabled artists, marketing their work to new audiences, and developing learning and participation programmes for Deaf and disabled audiences.

The programmes demonstrated the value of partnership working and its benefits to the public: organisations and individuals within the disability arts sector formed supportive and mutually beneficial partnerships which enhanced the quality of the work; partnerships between the disability arts sector and others including arts, heritage and sport were explored, leading to benefits for audiences such as new accessibility initiatives; and the international links forged through some of the projects encouraged people with disabilities from very different social perspectives to communicate and share ideas and practice.

On the other hand, the unprecedented amount of programming, particularly in 2012, which involved Deaf and disabled artists and performers, highlighted capacity issues within the sector. In particular these related to the availability of BSL interpreters and audio describers who can work to the standard required for onstage performance, and the inadequacy of mainstream casting agents’ networks and contacts with disabled performers, leading to the best known names being heavily in demand. Producers developing theatre projects in the Unlimited programme described difficulties in casting performers, and in scheduling rehearsals and other meetings around their performers’ involvement in multiple projects.
1.7 Impact of the Cultural Olympiad and Paralympic Ceremonies

Interviewees described the benefits of their projects sitting within the Cultural Olympiad largely in relation to the role the Cultural Olympiad played in encouraging ambitious thinking, securing the involvement of strategic partners to work towards shared goals, and creating impetus through the imposition of a fixed timescale.

Artists described how they were freed up to think creatively about their projects because they were expected to be ambitious and provide high quality, and the budgets were there to support this. A programme manager described how she could ‘be strict about quality’ because the work was intended for an international showcase.

The Cultural Olympiad created a high profile platform for disability arts, especially the Paralympics Opening Ceremony. There was more varied coverage of disabled people and disability issues in the national media. Certainly, less established artists had seen a benefit in terms of their work being reviewed and promoted more than before. However, two programming partners felt that media coverage of their events was much less than they had anticipated. For instance, the value of Dadafest’s media coverage in Liverpool was around a third of its level in 2010. There was a sense of frustration that cultural programmes were unable to attract coverage because they were in competition with the Games for media attention.

1.8 Legacy

Most interviewees felt that it was too early to state with any certainty what the impact of the Cultural Olympiad would be for Deaf and disabled artists.

Individual artists and project managers felt that there was a benefit to them from their participation, in terms of improved skills, having new and high quality work on their portfolios, and the extension of their professional networks. In some cases, the Cultural Olympiad had already led to further opportunities, or at least to interesting discussions about the future. Accentuate was looking at a range of options for continuing its most successful activities, while a range of the international projects from Unlimited are being confirmed to continue in the lead-up to the Rio 2016 Games.

There was also specific reference to the potential of international work to continue, especially partnerships with Brazil in the lead-in to 2016. For example following the development of a partnership with a samba school for people with disabilities in Rio for the Blue Touch Paper Carnival project, the New Carnival Company will be continuing to work with them on a project for 2016. British Council are leading on the arrangement of international tours for many of the Unlimited commissions in 2013, including the Lapa Londres Festival, which will showcase the work of UK Deaf and disabled artists in Rio.

However, several interviewees acknowledged concern that without funding to continue to build on the successes of the Cultural Olympiad, and investment in a regional infrastructure to support disability arts, there would not be a legacy from these programmes. Since the interviews were completed, ACE have made a commitment to continuing funding to build on the success of the Unlimited commissions.
2. *Unlimited* Programme: Overview headlines

2.1 Introduction

*Unlimited* was a series of 29 commissions celebrating arts, culture and sport by Deaf and disabled people, the largest ever celebration of arts and disability culture in the UK. Artists were invited to submit applications to create ‘high quality ambitious work by Deaf and disabled artists that can be experienced by a broad range of audiences in a wide range of spaces, to help celebrate the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Artists were encouraged to ‘push past their personal best alongside Paralympic athletes, by creating work which opens doors, changes minds, and inspires new collaborations.

The objectives of the *Unlimited* programme were to:

- Stage a festival celebrating disability arts and culture
- Increase the participation of disabled people in the arts and cultural sector and creative industries as artists, audiences, participants and spectators
- Promote high quality work by disabled people nationally and internationally
- Increase the number of disabled people employed in the cultural sector as artists and practitioners
- To continue to promote disability equality, the social model, rights and inclusion
- To develop new ways of working and innovation through partnerships.

The Unlimited commissions were targeted at Deaf and disabled artists, both established and early in career, working at a very high standard. This was an opportunity for excellent artists to develop new work and improve their profile, and the programme was not designed to be a skills development or training programme, although funding for capacity building was available. The applications for commissions were judged on their own merits by a panel of experts chaired by Ruth McKenzie, and including consisting of representatives of all UK Arts Councils, London 2012, British Council, disabled artists advisors and potential showcase partners. There was at least 50% representation of Deaf and disabled people on the panels for each round of commissions.

Submissions were considered on the basis of their creativity and quality, and open to artists working in any artform. Projects ranged from those which took a clear political stance on disability issues, to others which were not themed on the subject of disability in any way. The range of art forms encompassed within the *Unlimited* programme included theatre, dance, visual arts, film and comedy. Methodologies chosen by the artists to develop the work were equally diverse, with some choosing to work with creative collaborators or to open up the process to participants, while others worked alone.

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Evaluation Methodology

This case study report contains an overview of the impacts of the *Unlimited* programme on commissioned artists and the wider disability arts sector, and an exploration of some of the challenges and issues involved in the delivery of such an ambitious and complex programme. The report also explores the programme’s positioning in relation to the Cultural Olympiad and the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the potential legacy of *Unlimited*. The report includes case studies of eight commissioned projects.

The findings are based on:

- Interviews with programme managers at LOCOG and Shape
- Interviews with eight artists featured in individual case studies
- Interviews with staff at host venues, and project producers
- Review of background documentation related to the project, including final evaluation reports submitted by all commissioned artists, and monthly progress reports and funding applications for case study projects.

2.2 Programme Description

The *Unlimited* programme was originally developed in 2008 with the first commissions beginning in 2010. The programme encompassed the following:

- *Unlimited commissioned works* – 29 commissioned original works by artists working across a wide range of media including visual arts, performance, music, film and comedy. There were two rounds of commissioning, and funding for development of the work followed by a second application for further funding to exhibit or present the work. ACE officers in the regions worked with their local networks to encourage artists to apply.
- *Unlimited Talent* – commissioned artists were invited to apply for up to £2000 for learning and professional development. They spent this in a range of ways, including mentoring, research visits and training.
- *Producer Capacity Building Fund* – producers working with commissioned artists were also invited to bid for up to £1,250 for training and development activity which would support them in producing the *Unlimited* commission. This was used in a variety of ways, including consultancy support to develop social marketing for *Unlimited* projects, and mentoring in negotiation and communication skills for producers of international projects.
- *Unlimited International* – five of the projects were developed in collaboration with disabled artists in Brazil and South Africa, with the support of the British Council, while other artists travelled overseas to research and develop their work. The British Council also arranged for 26 international delegates to see *Unlimited* work at the Southbank Centre, with the intention of developing international links which would benefit artists who wished to tour their work abroad.
- *Shape project management support* – Shape Arts, a development and training organisation working in disability arts, was commissioned to lead on the project management of a number of commissions on behalf of LOCOG and ACE.
- *Unlimited at Southbank Centre* – all of the commissions were presented at a ten-day festival at the Southbank Centre, London, scheduled to coincide with the opening of the Paralympic Games. This was seen as key to the programme, offering an opportunity to showcase the work to a mainstream audience and to attract attention from the national and international arts community and the media.
2.3 Context

As described in section 2 (Project Overview), like other Cultural Olympiad programmes, Unlimited commissions were not viewed by the disability arts community as politically neutral. Some interviewees described tensions around the Paralympic Games, and how the media portrays Paralympians in stereotypical ways which are not helpful to the wider community of disabled people. Others referenced the difficult climate for disabled people due to benefits changes, cuts in social care provision, lack of access to employment, and cuts to disability arts organisations.

As a result, there was hope in the disability arts sector that these commissions would enable Dead and disabled people to tell their stories and enable debate and discussion of these issues on a high profile platform. One artist stated that the commissions ‘needed to happen politically’. Another commented that given the current climate, she felt it was important to use the commission to ‘make disability culture’. However other artists felt that the wide variety of artists, subject matter and media within the Unlimited programme may have challenged audience assumptions about Deaf and disabled artists.

2.4 Impact on Artists

The Unlimited programme had a strongly positive impact on the participating artists. A number of themes emerged from the interviews and project reports relating to artist development.

Creativity and experimentation
The funding available through Unlimited commissions was considerably more than many artists had been used to, and this enabled them to be ambitious in their creative thinking. Artists valued the opportunity to spend so much time on research, development and rehearsal, and to present work in progress to an audience as part of their development phase.

I have produced by far and away the best work of my entire career (Helen Petts)

This creative freedom and ambition manifested itself in a number of ways. Firstly, artists experimented in their own practice, working with new media or challenging themselves to do things differently. For example within the case study cohort, Paul Cummins learnt to cast bronze, Sophie Woolley wrote for children for the first time, and Rachel Gadsden developed her first international collaboration. For many artists, these creative experiments will have a lasting impact on their future work. Simon Allen describes the impact of Unlimited on his practice as a ‘profound shift in what I want to achieve’.

Scaling up
It is clear that artists within the Deaf and disabled community saw Unlimited as a huge opportunity to be much more ambitious about the scale and scope of their work, to show it on a high profile platform, and in some cases to reposition and rebrand themselves. Artists felt that being part of a series of commissions which included very high profile and highly respected artists and performers alongside newly emerging talents had encouraged everyone to ‘raise their game’.

This scaling up process was visible in the physical scale of the completed work. For example several artists were able to use larger casts of actors and dancers in their work or to incorporate more complex visuals (Menage a Trois, Skewered Snails). Paul Cummins committed himself to the design and making of six separate bespoke installations of ceramic flowers in his English Flower Garden project, when usually he would expect to deliver no more than two exhibitions annually.

As a result of this scaling up, 517 creatives were employed to work on Unlimited commissions, of which three-quarters were disabled.
Links between disabled artists and the wider arts sector

The projects enabled individual artists to develop their professional networks, and to form new relationships with arts companies and venues. They also offered opportunities for artists to create site-specific or touring work which was suitable for outdoor performances or could be staged outside traditional arts venues. For example Jez Colbourne’s *Irresistible* was designed for an outdoor space on Ilkley Moor, and has since been successfully performed in Mind the Gap’s performance space and at St Helens Central Library.

Artistic collaboration

The commissions also offered opportunities for artists to work in collaboration with others on the staging and development of their work. In some cases these collaborators were more experienced and acted as advisors and mentors, supporting the creative development and presentation of work. In others, commissioned artists were able to create employment for freelance creative professionals including dancers, actors, costume and set designers and technicians.

International collaboration

A number of projects involved artists and companies in working internationally for the first time, and they described this experience as having a significant impact on their practice and on the quality of their work. All of the artists and companies who led international projects expressed an interest in maintaining the relationships they had developed and developing new international partnerships in the future.

Skills development, training and mentoring

For many of the commissioned artists, *Unlimited* represented their first opportunity to lead on the creative direction and production of a piece of work. As a result they had very much valued the opportunities provided via the *Unlimited* Talent and Producer Capacity Building funding streams. These were especially welcome because of the difficulty freelancers and those working in very small companies have in funding their own training, or identifying appropriate mentors. The mentoring support available had a strongly positive impact on the creative development of the projects, as it offered the opportunity for artists to identify their own mentors and specifically address their development needs as they related to the *Unlimited* commission. Six of the eight interviewed artists noted the improvement in their skills in financial and project management as a result of their *Unlimited* commission, and felt much more confident about taking on bigger projects in the future.

Accessibility and participation

The *Unlimited* commissions had provided funding and impetus for artists to experiment with building accessibility into their work in a way which enhanced the experience of the whole audience. For example Sophie Woolley’s play *Bee Detective* explored how to use choreography and movement, projected animation and captioning, alongside BSL interpretation, as a way of making her story clear to a young audience made up of children and families, whether or not they were Deaf, disabled or had learning difficulties.

Other projects were developed as participatory projects. For example *Boomba Down The Tyne*, a carnival arts based project, offered participants with learning disabilities an opportunity to develop puppetry and dance skills. The Dean Rodney Singers project involved people from all over the world participating and creating content using social media to share and communicate. The concept for *In Water I’m Weightless* was based around the audience being an integral part of the work, not just spectators.
For artists, this experimentation has enhanced their skills and confidence in developing accessible work which engages and develops a dialogue with the audience, and this will impact on the presentation of their future projects.

**Higher profile**

There was some evidence that the *Unlimited* commissioned artists took new steps to reach audiences and open up their development processes, communicating on dedicated project websites, Facebook pages and Twitter. This was an extension of their usual promotional activity on social media. However there was no clear consensus about the value of social media as a promotional tool for the *Unlimited* commissions.

Several artists, especially those who were early career, had benefited considerably from increased levels of media interest, compared to their previous work, driven both by the link between the projects and the Cultural Olympiad, and possibly by the fact that they were making work on a bigger scale. For example the striking visual imagery produced in Sue Austin’s *Creating the Spectacle* was featured extensively in the national print media (Daily Mail, Independent, Guardian).

**A commission for disabled artists**

Artists referenced the positive benefits which came from the commissions being specifically for the Deaf and disabled artists, which meant that the work could be structured around their needs. Training, for example in disability awareness and BSL, helped to develop communication across project teams.

> An unexpected aspect of the project I really appreciated was not having to pretend to be able-bodied. It was fine to say I felt too ill to do something. It was fine to be in a meeting lying down on a couch. (Artist)

**Concerns and negative impacts**

While generally artists reported a highly positive experience of working on their *Unlimited* commissions, there were some issues and concerns raised about the impact of the programme. Firstly, the requirement both to make work on a bigger scale while experimenting creatively, on a high profile platform, within the timescales dictated by the Cultural Olympiad, was particularly stressful. Several artists experienced times during their development of the commissions when they felt they had taken on more than they could cope with. Some artists found they had to pace their work more carefully in order to avoid it taking a toll on their physical health. However as described above, artists also made reference to the benefits of working on a commission which was specific to disabled artists.

While the commissions were seen as a hugely beneficial opportunity to step up in the scale and complexity of their practice, there were some concerns expressed by early career artists, in relation to the pressure to develop such high profile work with little previous experience, and for theatre projects in particular, about whether they had enough profile and reputation to be able to access the larger venues the work was designed for. Some artists expressed concern that they were being encouraged to make work which was too big and too expensive to be staged by the small theatres and festivals which were most likely to programme their work. As a result, they were uncertain about how to move their careers forward beyond the *Unlimited* commissions.

Finally, artists expressed frustration at the amount of development time which was taken up by administration. Providing reports to LOCOG, ACE and/or Shape, drawing down funding from the various funding streams within *Unlimited*, dealing with paperwork relating to Access to Work, and particularly the LOCOG approvals process for publicity materials, had a negative impact on the creative process.
2.5 Impacts on the sector

A high profile showcase for disability arts

Artists were convinced of the value of the Unlimited programme as a showcase for the work of Deaf and disabled artists, particularly the festival at the Southbank Centre. Most importantly, they felt that the programme presented very high quality work, and this work was presented as being valid in its own right, and not interesting because the artist who made it is disabled. There was some evidence that the Unlimited commissions had value not just because they showcased work to audiences, but also because they showcased work to the wider arts sector. Artists expressed the view that though it was too early to tell whether new opportunities would emerge from the Unlimited commissions, work had been seen by reviewers, producers, artistic and casting directors, and that this could improve their careers in the long term. For example, Kaite O’Reilly used her well established networks and contacts in the disability arts sector to introduce Deaf and disabled performers to the casting director of a large mainstream theatre company.

Improved profile in local/national/international media

For most of the commissioned artists, their Unlimited commission did lead to positive media coverage. Some projects, including In Water I’m Weightless, Boundless, and Unlimited Global Alchemy, received extensive press coverage and the artists felt that there had been a positive impact on their own profiles as a result.

Improved skills base

Unlimited has supported the development of individual artists’ creative skills through training and mentoring. Several interviewees also referenced the wider benefits to the disabled arts sector resulting from artists and producers’ development of production and project management skills.

Accessibility and audiences

The interviewees highlighted the progress made by venues in improving their communication with disabled audiences and the accessibility of events, exhibitions and performances. These impacts were varied, and across the Unlimited programme they included the following outcomes:

• Venues improved the quality of their marketing and communication of disability arts to both disabled and general audiences.
• Work reached non-traditional venues, and therefore wider audiences – for example work was shown at Alnwick Castle (Bee Detective) and the Houses of Parliament (English Flower Garden)
• Accessibility was creatively integrated into the work for the benefit of all members of the audience, and the learning from this experimentation will be of value in future projects. In performance work, this often involved creative use of AV, whereas visual artists created tactile work and encouraged visitors to engage with it. Many Unlimited events incorporated touch tours, audio description and BSL interpretation.
• Many of the projects had participatory elements which enhanced access to the work for a wider audience, and involved disabled people as active creators. For Boundless, the artists mentored a dance company in their delivery of workshops for a school in South Africa. Mad Gyms and Kitchens incorporated a series of workshops for young disabled people. However in other projects, education elements had to be scaled down from those proposed originally, as a result of budget and timing difficulties.
• Some commissions were designed specifically for children (Bee Detective, Macropolis), and many others were family friendly, partly as a result of the efforts made to improve accessibility.
• Venues including the Southbank Centre improved their accessibility to disabled audiences in relation to signage, visitor welcome and facilities.
• There was lots of shared learning around how to improve approaches to web and print design in order to create accessible marketing materials.

**Partnership working**
The delivery of the *Unlimited* commissions was characterised by extensive partnership working between a range of individuals and organisations. All of the projects were the result of a network of partners taking on various roles in delivery. The wider *Unlimited* programme was also managed as a partnership between LOCOG, ACE and Shape Arts, who were commissioned to provide project management support to some artists.

Artists were required to work with arts organisations who could draw down and manage their funding. In many individual projects these partnerships worked very well and there was a mutual benefit in the arrangement, especially where the arts organisations were also involved in the development of the work, or where the arrangement was a starting point for the development of a mentoring relationship with the artist. In some projects however, there were inevitable tensions.

These partnerships enabled *Unlimited* to increase its impact as a programme.

**International partnership development**
*Unlimited* included five commissions which developed art through collaborative working with international artists in Brazil and South Africa. Other artists made international research trips, including Jez Colbourne, who travelled to China. The Dean Rodney Singers project made extensive use of the internet to find performers from around the world who each contributed to the development of the final work.

A great deal of learning emerged from these projects in relation to the development of international disability focused arts projects. Most significantly, artists made reference to the powerful experience of working with disabled artists in countries where disability rights agendas are not prominent, and there has not been adoption of a social model of disability. There was a value for Deaf and disabled people abroad in meeting and working with Deaf and disabled British people who are working as professional artists and performers.

There was also a steep learning curve for artists and producers in dealing with challenges around communication and negotiations. On a practical level, *Boomba Down the Tyne*’s producers found that they struggled to communicate with Brazil via Skype, and needed additional translator support during their visit. The Dean Rodney Singers project made extensive use of the internet very successfully in running their global project – and people have been as interested in the digital practice as they were in the fact that the project was created by a learning disabled artist.

All of the international projects have led to relationships which both sides want to continue.
Challenges and issues for the disability arts sector

A number of issues and challenges did emerge for the disability arts sector as the projects developed. Most of these related to capacity within the sector, as this was the largest ever programme of disability arts events, happening alongside the Paralympic Opening and Closing Ceremonies and a number of other projects, including artists commissions for Stoke Mandeville Hospital and projects associated with the Paralympic Torch Relay.

Capacity
Interviewees highlighted a number of areas where there were capacity issues, specifically:

- High demand for experienced Deaf and disabled performers, especially during summer 2012, exacerbated by mainstream casting agencies having limited awareness of Deaf and disabled performers. One artist described the casting process as ‘a rugby scrum’.
- BSL interpreters experienced enough to work with professional artists and to sign for an audience, with availability to participate in meetings, workshops and rehearsals.
- Fully accessible rehearsal spaces and accommodation.

Venues
Some artists found it difficult to identify suitable venues to show their work. This problem was a complex one, with a range of complicating factors depending on the project. Artists had been encouraged to scale up their work and be more ambitious, leading them to create work for big spaces with high production values. However when they sought to tour the work, they found either that it was not considered mainstream enough for the venues large enough to cope with the technical specification, or that it was too expensive to stage. This was frustrating for artists and venues alike. Dadafest, a well established Deaf and disabled arts festival based in Liverpool, entered into negotiations with many of the Unlimited artists about showing commissioned work, but was only able to secure a small number of the events for their festival. This was because of the high costs of staging the work, and also because of timetabling issues.

Timetabling
Timetabling issues affected many of the commissioned artists in 2012. Several of the commissioned artists were involved as collaborators in other commissions, or in separate projects, some related to the Cultural Olympiad. In turn, their performers and technical support staff were also involved in other projects.

Dadafest moved their festival from its customary Autumn slot to August in order to capitalise on the increased focus on disability issues and the Cultural Olympiad in the run up to the Paralympic Opening Ceremony. However this led to scheduling clashes with the Southbank Centre’s Unlimited programme, and did not have any benefits in terms of increased media coverage.

Artists had to make compromises in order to comply with LOCOG and ACE’s timetable for the whole programme. For example, in the case of Claire Cunningham’s Menage a Trois production, this resulted in her having to host a press night in Glasgow while the Edinburgh Fringe Festival was running, and as a result it was very difficult to persuade journalists to attend.

Marketing to Deaf and disabled audiences
A number of artists raised issues around the marketing of their work, particularly around reaching Deaf and disabled audiences. Marketing was often the responsibility of venues which had little experience of marketing work via local networks of Deaf and disabled people. PR companies hired to promote work often similarly had little experience of reaching Deaf and disabled audiences, or targeting the disability press, and were reliant in some cases on contact lists provided to them by artists. Artists pointed out the difficulty of marketing touring work, as marketing relied on local
networks and contacts in each location and was difficult to run centrally. Marketing was an area where artists felt they would have benefited from more centrally co-ordinated support.

2.6 Relationship with the broader Cultural Olympiad

Artists described several benefits which emerged from the project’s position within the Cultural Olympiad, and the London 2012 Festival.

Firstly, they saw the Cultural Olympiad as a catalyst without which this scale of programming by disabled artists would never have been commissioned. While some artists put forward projects they had already started to develop, all agreed that they would have taken much longer to develop and would have happened on a smaller scale where it not for the Cultural Olympiad.

Further, the siting of the projects within the Cultural Olympiad gave them a status and weight which they would not otherwise have had, which was particularly valuable for early career artists when approaching potential partners, especially in international projects. Their inclusion within the Cultural Olympiad necessitated ambitious creative thinking as the projects would receive a lot of attention.

The creation of an Unlimited ‘brand’ and in particular the joint showcase for all of the commissions at the Southbank Centre was overwhelmingly seen as a very positive experience, and artists felt that the presentation of this series of works by Deaf and disabled artists, within a major London venue, would not have happened without the impetus provided by the Games. The artists had gained a great deal from showing their work at the Southbank Centre, including opportunities to make contact with arts professionals, casting directors and venue managers, and the chance to network and see each others’ work. They had reached a new audience. They were very impressed by the Southbank Centre’s management of the showcase, and by the effectiveness of their marketing campaign, which resulted in over 90% of tickets being sold.

For some artists, the inclusion of their projects within the Cultural Olympiad had led to increased coverage in the media for themselves and their projects, or the profiling of individual performers. However two artists felt that the level of coverage their work received was perhaps slightly less than they would expect, because of the amount of cultural and sports programming happening at the same time. They questioned whether the timing of the Southbank Centre showcase so closely with the Paralympic opening ceremony actually had a negative impact, as press interest in disability issues was focused on the Games.

Artists and producers also reported a series of difficulties in meeting LOCOG’s requirements in relation to branding. The process of getting approval for marketing material was complex, time consuming and frustrating, and in some cases had created problems when artists missed venues’ print deadlines. There was no central website which brought together information about the Unlimited commissions, and some artists felt that the programme had become lost in the wider Cultural Olympiad, and might have benefited from more strategic support.

Being part of the Cultural Olympiad had a mixed effect on project management. Artists valued the support they had received from LOCOG and Shape to develop and manage their commissions. While some found the reporting requirements to be an unnecessary burden, and possibly an indication that LOCOG ‘did not trust artists’ to be able to deliver, others felt that they helped them to keep on track. Shape staff were praised for being accessible and easy to deal with, especially in supporting artists with Access to Work processes, although some artists felt that the team could have been more proactive in helping them to resolve issues quickly. Many of the artists had received a lot of support and encouragement from their regional ACE officers, who had championed and facilitated their projects from the start of their application process through
to their completion. Some artists felt that more could have been done by the partnership of ACE, LOCOG and Shape to broker opportunities to show their work, and artists found it difficult to respond to opportunities because of LOCOG ‘wanting to retain control’, particularly over the timing of previews.

2.7 Legacy

For artists

Artists described Unlimited as having left a significant legacy in terms of their own improved skills, confidence and connections to other artists and organisations. Many were actively seeking opportunities to further develop and show their commissioned work, for example looking at international touring (for example to Brazil, Hong Kong and Turkey), or building the work into their company’s repertoire. Each of the case studied artists had either moved on to delivery of another project, or had work in the pipeline which they were waiting to start. Two were working towards postgraduate qualifications, and two were working on international residencies.

All of the artists interviewed felt that Unlimited would have a positive longer term impact on their profile and career, although at the time of the interviews, most could not specifically point to any new opportunities which had emerged directly from the Unlimited programme. They felt this was something which would emerge over time and the impact of Unlimited on their own career development was not quantifiable at this stage.

For early career artists, there was a challenge in managing the next phase of their career. Unlimited had provided them with an opportunity to scale up their work and show it on high profile national stages. However they were concerned that the funding would not be available to support them to continue to work in this way.

For the arts sector

The sector has built its capacity, in that there is now a pool of disabled artists and performers who have further developed their skills, and have shown that they can create high quality work for mainstream venues and attract a large audience. Producers have had access to training and capacity building, and have hands-on experience of producing disability culture, which they could use to promote this work more widely. There is significantly increased knowledge in relation to disability arts specific international partnership working. Participating venues have developed their knowledge and understanding of disability arts and disabled audiences, for example around enhancing the accessibility of venues, and communicating more effectively. There is also a body of work which could be toured or restaged and has the potential to reach a larger audience. There is a strong feeling of confidence and pride in the way Deaf and disabled artists showcased their work on a national platform to critical acclaim.

However several interviewees identified the need for sustained investment if Unlimited is not to be a one-off event. They pointed out that Unlimited funding went to 29 artists, a very small proportion of the Deaf and disabled artists making work in the UK. They identified a need for future funding streams to offer opportunities to emerging disabled artists, and to support the regional infrastructure which enables them to build their careers to the point where they can apply for such opportunities. They also pointed out the high cost of staging work at a time when the sector as a whole is facing extensive funding cuts.
3. **Unlimited commissions: Selected Case Study Analysis**

3.1 **Unlimited Global Alchemy**  
Artist: Rachel Gadsden

Rachel Gadsden is a contemporary visual artist whose previous work includes residencies at Hampton Court Palace and the UK Parliament. Her work crosses the mainstream and disability arts sectors. **Unlimited Global Alchemy** was a collaboration between Rachel, working with producers Arts Admin, and members of the Bambanani Group, an artist/activist group for people living with HIV/AIDS in Capetown, South Africa. The resulting work, including paintings, short films and live performance, explores what it means to experience a disabling illness and fight for life, opening up debate around the role of the arts in healthcare, and the global challenge of HIV, as well as the disability and human rights agendas. **Unlimited Global Alchemy** was Rachel’s first international project, and first experience of collaborating with an artist based overseas. The commission has encouraged her to continue to make and present work internationally, and to address human rights issues through her practice. It has also provided members of the Bambanani Group with opportunities including the chance to travel and present their work in the UK, and to develop their practice through paid work.

**Unlimited Global Alchemy** came about when Rachel Gadsden encountered a bodymap at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, made by the South African artist and activist Nondumiso Hlwele. She felt a powerful sense of connection to the work, and tracked down the artist to find out more. Nondumiso was one of a group in Capetown who had had early access to anti retro viral medication to treat HIV, and as a result had been kept alive with medical intervention for a long time. Rachel found parallels with her own experiences of disability and reliance on medication to stay alive.

Nondumiso is a member of the Bambanani Group, which works to support people living with HIV through creative activities, for example making bodmaps and memory boxes. Rachel proposed to work with the group through a six week residency in Kayelitsha Township, Capetown, to create work which could be exhibited in South Africa and in the UK. The group has found it difficult in the past to maintain regular activities, and not all of the members would consider themselves to be practising artists. Rachel took on a workshop leader role in the project and sought to build their confidence and capacity as a group.

The administration of the project was onerous and time-consuming, given the amount of international travel and communication required. This was a logistically complex project, with a range of different elements all coming together within a tight timeframe. In addition, the process of building relationships and negotiating the project with the Bambanani Group was very challenging. Artistic practice is prioritised very differently within communities in South Africa, and the education system and infrastructure which supports artists in the UK is not in place. Arts for health practice is still emerging in South Africa, and the disability agenda, especially as it relates to HIV/AIDS, sits within a very different historical and social context in comparison to the UK, as the social model has been more recently embedded in legislation in South Africa. Given the levels of stigma surrounding people with HIV/AIDS, the subject matter of the work was inevitably highly sensitive, at a personal and political level.

The approach taken to these various challenges was to use **Unlimited** development funds to support the staff and participants to work through the process of negotiating the project. Rachel used **Unlimited** Talent funding to access mentoring from Gill Lloyd, who has extensive experience of developing international arts projects, and of South Africa in particular. Two Arts Admin staff members used a Producer Capacity Building grant to commission bespoke training in mediation,
brokering and conflict resolution. The Bambanani artists were paid fees for their contribution to the project, and agreements about the creative leadership of the project and crediting of the work were very carefully negotiated at the start, with the support of Jean September at the British Council.

Elements of the work were exhibited in several places:

- A two-month exhibition at Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge
- Presentation of the paintings, films and performance at the Southbank Centre, London
- Presentation of the project at dedicated disability arts festivals: Freedom to Create, Capetown and at Dadafest, Liverpool
- Creation of an accompanying website and exhibition catalogue.

The project could not have created these outcomes without Unlimited funding. Although Rachel Gadsden was determined to collaborate with Nondumiso Hlwele, it would have been difficult to find enough funding to pay fees to the South African artists, and this was vital to the group dynamic and the success of the residencies. A smaller scale project may have been possible. However participation in the Cultural Olympiad enabled Unlimited Global Alchemy to reach a much wider audience, and enabled the Bambanani Group to participate in a much larger scale project than would otherwise have been possible for them.

Rachel is now exploring opportunities to return to South Africa, possibly to take part in a museum based residency and to travel with the Bambanani Group to the Eastern Cape. In the meantime, she has been invited by the British Council to produce a major solo exhibition in Qatar as part of the UK – Qatar Year of Culture 2013. The ‘extraordinary experience’ of delivering this commission as both an artist and producer, has brought her work to a global audience, strengthened her skills in arts management, and empowered her to think differently about her role as a disabled artist.

### 3.2 In Water I’m Weightless
Artist: Kaite O’Reilly

**In Water I’m Weightless** is a series of monologues, written by Kaite O’Reilly, which were inspired by the imagination, experiences and attitudes of disabled people across the UK. Unlimited enabled Kaite to create work which showcased some of the country’s best actors from the disabled community, on a national stage. The production was highly praised by critics, and also provided rare development opportunities for a number of disabled actors, through a series of workshops and an extensive casting process, which was efficiently project-managed in order to ensure that performers could also make the most of opportunities to take part in other activities linked to the Cultural Olympiad.

Kaite O’Reilly is an established writer and dramaturge, whose work has been performed internationally. Some, but not all, of her work directly addresses what it is like to live with the ‘atypical body’, and she has advocated for disabled actors over many years, challenging the common practice of ‘cripping up’, in which able bodied actors play disabled characters.

The Unlimited commission presented Kaite with an opportunity to further develop *The D Monologues*, a collection of writing she had started as a result of a Creative Wales Major Award. This grant had provided Kaite with the opportunity to research and experiment with the monologue form for the first time, and to see and research relevant international work. Kaite received two Unlimited commissions. The first enabled her to spend time developing *The D Monologues* through a further process of research, writing, and sharing through readings and
workshops with disability arts groups around the UK. The second commission provided some of the funding required for National Theatre Wales to stage the work as a fully developed, choreographed and designed production, retitled In Water I’m Weightless, firstly at the Millennium Centre in Cardiff, and later at the Southbank Centre in London.

Kaite was clear that as an established and successful artist with a national and international profile, she would use this commission to engage with the disabled community and present disability culture on a national platform.

The point of the original grant application was that I would go around the country talking to people, create monologues, and then at a grassroots level, share the work with my community, disabled people....I saw it as an opportunity for me and a community that I was going to be part of with an ensemble company, making disability culture...on a national platform.

The project was well structured in order to maximise development opportunities for Deaf and disabled actors. There have been Deaf and disabled actors cast in productions in national theatre companies, but no all disabled casts performing on these high profile stages. After the casting director initially struggled to pull together a list of appropriate actors to approach, Kaite used her own network and contacts to put together a much more extensive list. Some of them have since been put forward for other roles as a result of this process.

The casting process was designed as a development opportunity for actors, who were auditioned through participation in workshops in Cardiff and London, and sought to address the lack of experience of many disabled performers in auditioning for large mainstream theatre companies. The casting process took place a year ahead of rehearsals, with dates confirmed well in advance. This has enabled actors to schedule other work around their commitments to In Water I’m Weightless, especially in the opening and closing ceremonies for the Paralympic Games.

The ensemble cast consisted of young actors working alongside highly experienced performers, something which Kaite feels offered them a unique opportunity to learn and improve:

‘if you’re going to perform on a national stage with David Toole, you’re going to raise your game’.

3.3 Creating the Spectacle
Artist: Sue Austin

Creating the Spectacle was developed by artist Sue Austin. She creates art which focuses on the wheelchair as an empowering and enabling, rather than restrictive, object. Working with a technical and support team headed by co-producer Trish Wheatley, with additional production mentoring provided through Unlimited Talent and Producer Capacity building funds, Austin created films and live performances in which she ‘swam’ in the world’s first self propelled underwater wheelchair. The project has had a significant impact in two ways, attracting extensive media coverage, and developing Austin’s understanding of how to produce and stage live events. The profile of this project has been very high, leading to an exciting range of new opportunities for the artist.

Sue Austin is a multimedia, performance and installation artist, whose work focuses on the wheelchair as a metaphor to raise questions about the value of diversity in society. She uses her work to explore the power of self-representation and self-narration in challenging society’s creation of the disabled as ‘other’. Working with Trish Wheatley, Sue has developed
Freewheeling, an initiative which aims to develop artistic ideas and concepts and promote academic research which aims to reposition disability arts and the status of disabled artists. *Creating the Spectacle* is Freewheeling’s first major project.

*Creating the Spectacle* was made up of two main elements: films and live performance. Sue filmed two pieces underwater in the Red Sea, working with director of photography Norman Lomax alongside a wider team who provided creative and technical support for the dives. One of these films was a separate commission from LOCOG in which Sue took the Paralympic Torch under the sea. The second element of the project was live performances, the first of which took place in Fleet Harbour, close to the Olympic and Paralympic sailing venue.

Prior to the *Unlimited* commission, Sue had accessed funding from ACE’s Impact scheme to develop a prototype underwater wheelchair, with the intention of applying for *Unlimited* funding to develop the project further. Without this seed funding, there would not have been sufficient development time for the project within the timetable necessitated by the Cultural Olympiad. The Impact funding also helped to confirm that the project was viable, and built Sue’s confidence in her ability to deliver it.

This was a huge technical challenge, requiring much technical innovation in the development of the wheelchair, the underwater filming and the staging of the live events. Funding from *Unlimited* enabled Sue to fund the technical team required to assist her with the project, including dive specialists, camera crew, and an event production team. The team running *Maritime Mix*, the Cultural Olympiad programme in Dorset and the Jurassic Coast, provided logistical support, particularly around the management and risk assessment of large scale public events. The project benefited considerably from the mentoring Sue was able to access through *Unlimited* Talent: time from Adam Benjamin at Candoco Dance Theatre to support the development of the live performances, focusing on choreography and the quality of the audience experience, and from Norman Lomax, who supported the filming and editing process.

‘The project would have been a fraction of what it was without the production mentoring. I wouldn’t have known about things like tech rehearsals. Adam was passing on skills, networks and encouragement, and he understood the implications of the work.’

*Creating the Spectacle* captured the imagination of the mainstream media, and the images and films which were made during the project have been circulated widely. The project was featured on BBC News, ITV News and Channel 4 News, and the Independent ran a portfolio feature which used a number of Norman Lomax’s images. The project was also covered in the Daily Mail. Images from the project were featured prominently in the promotional literature of the London 2012 Festival and have also become iconic within broader Olympic and Paralympic Games documentation. As a result, there has been widespread international interest in Sue Austin’s work. Her film has had over 400,000 hits on YouTube, she has given a talk at the TED Women conference which has had a further 218,000 online hits, and is now exploring a range of further options for the development of *Creating the Spectacle*, including international collaborations and speaking engagements, and further performances and exhibitions in the South West.
3.4 Ménage a Trois
Artist: Claire Cunningham

Claire Cunningham is a choreographer and performer. She uses crutches, and her work is informed by this experience. *Ménage a Trois* is a piece of dance theatre, exploring Claire’s relationship with her crutches, and the possibility of finding love ‘when there are already three of you in the relationship’. *Unlimited* enabled Claire to make a huge creative leap, developing a technologically ambitious show which was designed to be staged in a large venue. There were significant benefits to the commission: being able to collaborate with a large team, realise ambitions to showcase work on a bigger stage, and develop further her relationship with project partner National Theatre of Scotland.

Claire Cunningham is an emerging artist, with a growing reputation for creating ground-breaking contemporary dance. She has previously toured an acclaimed solo show, *ME (Mobile/Evolution)*, for which she won a Herald Angel Award at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. She is part of National Theatre of Scotland’s Auteur Development Programme.

Claire was involved in two *Unlimited* commissions. She was the commissioned artist on *Ménage a Trois*, leading the creative team in partnership with National Theatre of Scotland, who produced the work, managing finance, contracting and supporting the process of applying for funding. Claire was also one of two choreographers commissioned by Candoco Dance Theatre to create ‘12’, a new work performed by twelve international dancers.

Being involved in two high profile projects in 2012 has had a significant impact on Claire’s career development. She has had access to ongoing mentoring through collaboration with Gail Sneddon, who was her mentor and assistant director on ‘12’ and her co-collaborator on *Ménage a Trois*.

‘Gail has widened my understanding, knowledge and perceptions of performance and prompted me to question my intentions at every turn – in a way that I feel has led to a greater integrity, standard and potential not only in this work but in all work that I make in the future.’

*Unlimited* funding enabled Claire to work with assistant director Janice Parker, who also managed much of the day to day administration and reporting requirements for the project.

The commission offered considerable creative freedom, offering enough funding for a full technical development period. It provided Claire and Gail with the means to experiment creatively with video and sound design, as they were able to access resources at National Theatre of Scotland and the necessary funding and support was available from the start of the research process. Claire was able to develop her skills in leading a creative team, exploring how to move on from working as a solo artist to having a team involved in the realisation of her ideas, and becoming more comfortable with sharing creative control.

The development of *Ménage a Trois* was funded by *Unlimited*, and the costs of presenting the work in 2012 were provided through a match funding arrangement between Creative Scotland and *Unlimited*. This meant that Claire was committed to staging the show in a number of Scottish cities, something that became problematic because of timetabling clashes with both the Paralympics, the *Unlimited* Festival at South Bank and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. The show was eventually staged in London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness and Belfast, with a very positive audience response, although the scheduling clashes did have a negative impact on press coverage.
Claire is confident that the reputation and profile of the Unlimited commissions and the receiving venues where Menage a Trois was staged could potentially lead to new opportunities, and she is currently following up a number of approaches from other companies, as well as exploring how to progress her relationship with National Theatre of Scotland.

3.5 Macropolis
Artist: Joel Simon

Macropolis is an animated short film for children which tells the story of a toy cat and dog, rejected from the factory as defective toys, who journey into the city and eventually find acceptance and a home. It was made by Joel Simon, Creative Director of Flickerpix Animation Studios in Belfast. The making of the film enabled Joel to experiment with a range of new animation techniques, offering a rare opportunity to have full creative control over a project. In addition mentoring provided through Unlimited enabled Joel to build skills in social marketing and push the film out to the widest possible audience. The project has demonstrated the value of offering arts commissioning opportunities to practitioners working in the creative industries.

Joel Simon is the Creative Director of Flickerpix Animation Studios, a small commercial film production company based in Belfast. Flickerpix make animations for a diverse range of clients including CBBC. The Unlimited commission represented a significant opportunity for Joel, as it is rare for a film-maker working in a commercial studio to have full creative control of a project, or to find the time and resources to fund creative experiments. However, working on Macropolis allowed Joel and his team the time and space to develop new animation techniques, and to develop in-house skills in character design and modeling which would usually be outsourced.

Macropolis was devised in response to the opportunity to apply for an Unlimited commission. Joel was passionate about the potential of the film to reach a broad family audience with a positive message about disabled people. The film was written for children and aimed to be accessible in content while offering the highest quality in writing, animation and production.

The funding available enabled Joel to experiment creatively with new approaches to animation – the film blended stop frame animation with time lapse photography. The project also filmed the stop frame sequences outdoors at busy locations around Belfast, allowing members of the public to see the process. Joel describes this process of experimentation as ‘freeing because there was no client…it’s very unusual to get to do a project exactly the way you want to do it’.

Macropolis was the only Unlimited commission awarded to an artist working within a commercial company. All of the financial structures necessary to manage the project and contract freelance practitioners were available within Flickerpix, and the company added a significant in-kind contribution to the project, particularly in providing marketing and PR support to the film. The marketing of the project was also boosted by training in the use of social media to maximise the reach of the films, funded via Unlimited Talent. This mentoring resulted in the development of a distinctive online presence for the film, including a website and blog, as well as using Facebook and Twitter to encourage people to share content and information about the project.

The film has had a positive response across both the disability arts sectors and in the mainstream film community. It was premiered at the BBC Big Screen in Belfast, and was the subject of an exhibition at W5, Belfast’s interactive science and discovery centre, which featured storyboards and models alongside repeated daily screenings. In addition, Macropolis was shown before every feature length film at Queen’s Film Theatre in Belfast during their Animation Week, with an accompanying programme of animation workshops and artist Q and A sessions. The film was screened as part of Dadafest in Liverpool, and was projected onto the external wall of the Royal...
Festival Hall during the *Unlimited* showcase at the South Bank. It is estimated that the film has so far been seen by around 10,000 people, and it will now go on to further screenings at a number of international film festivals.

In February 2013 *Macropolis* won the Irish Film and Television Award for best animated film.

While the commission has not directly led to any further opportunities for Joel or Flickerpix, this innovative film is now part of the company’s filmography and portfolio, with considerable potential to attract new work and clients.

### 3.6 Irresistible

**Artist:** Jez Colborne

Musician and performer Jez Colbourne is fascinated by the sound of warning sirens. Working with theatre company Mind the Gap in Bradford, Jez created a theatrical production, at the heart of which was nine new songs played on traditional and non traditional instruments. The piece was designed for outdoor performance at the Cow and Calf rock formation on Ilkley Moor, and was previewed there in 2011, as well as being performed in Manchester, Bradford and London in 2012. The commission enabled Jez to make a leap forward in the quality of his work, by working closely with mentors - artists he respected and admired. This was his first experience of developing a project from an original idea through to a fully staged performance.

Jez Colborne is an actor, musician and performer. He has worked closely with Mind the Gap for a number of years. Jez has been involved in a number of Mind the Gap productions. During the development of the *Unlimited* commission he played the role of George in *Of Mice and Men*. Mind the Gap make and tour professional theatre with people with learning disabilities.

*Irresistible* was funded through two separate rounds of *Unlimited* commissioning, with the second providing funds to extend the original commission with three new songs. Mind the Gap were also able to draw down funds from the *Unlimited* Talent and Producer Capacity Building Funds, to support mentoring, both for Jez and for their own project managers.

*Irresistible* offered Jez the opportunity to change direction in his career, focusing on composing and directing, in addition to performance. Working with Mind the Gap, Jez recruited mentors, lyricist Mike Kenny and musician Si McGrath. The development time he spent with Si and Mike encouraged him to write more complex and emotionally rich lyrics, and to push himself musically and incorporate new sounds into his work. Jez was also able to draw on the support of actress Jo Anne Haines, and musician Billy Hickling from Stomp, who helped him with ideas about the direction and staging of the work. As a result of this mentoring Jez says that:

> I learnt not to be satisfied with the first thing I write. As an artist you have to push on through, think does this make sense?

In 2011, Jez and a support worker travelled to Beijing to research music, see performances including traditional opera, and to meet and make music with people from a range of different arts organisations. The trip was funded by a development grant from the British Council’s *Connections Through Culture* programme, which supports collaboration between British and international artists and arts organisations. The experience had a direct impact on the development of *Irresistible*, providing Jez with rich inspiration.

For Mind the Gap, *Irresistible* was a huge administrative and technical challenge, bigger and more complex than anything the company had been involved in before, which enabled them to develop
and test their skills in project management. Twenty learning disabled performers from Mind the Gap’s acting company and Making Theatre teams were involved, and the production was staged in larger venues than they were used to. The Ilkley Moor performances had to be cancelled in 2012 due to very poor weather, but contingency arrangements were mobilised and an alternative venue set up at very short notice. In order to support the team, Mind the Gap drew down funding from the Producer Capacity Building Fund to develop relationships with marketing and production staff at the Southbank Centre. This helped them to develop complementary audience strategies for Irresistible, and to develop their own project management skills. While the opportunities for mentoring and shadowing the Southbank team were reduced because of staff changes there, the experience did enable the Mind the Gap team to go into the London dates with confidence, and has encouraged them to be more ambitious in their planning of future productions.

Jez and Mind the Gap are keen to see Irresistible develop. They will be performing at three festivals in Switzerland in June 2013, on the invitation of a festival producer who saw Irresistible at the Southbank, and are currently in discussions with potential partner organisations across Europe and in Australia.

3.7 Bee Detective
Artist: Tin Bath Theatre Company (writer: Sophie Woolley)

Bee Detective, from London based theatre company Tin Bath, was one of the very few commissions for children in the Unlimited programme, and a highly ambitious undertaking, both creatively and technically. This was Tin Bath’s first experience of creating work for children, their first toured production, and the first play they had delivered outside traditional theatre spaces. The company has emerged from the project with greatly enhanced skills and knowledge of the practicalities of touring to festivals and creating and marketing work for disabled and family audiences, a higher profile, and increased confidence. For audiences, the show provided an accessible and very high quality theatre experience which was accessible to families which include members with hearing impairment, something which is rarely on offer, especially outside central London.

Tin Bath Theatre Company is a relatively new company based in London, founded by writer Sophie Woolley and director Gemma Fairlie, who worked on this project with freelance producer Michelle Owoo. Tin Bath creates accessible theatre experiences, in which performances are imaginatively captioned through a mix of text, animation and graphics, adding a rich layer of content for the whole of the audience. Bee Detective used projected animation and graphics as well as signing and choreography to enhance the clarity of the story for the whole audience, and created a multi-sensory environment with a special ‘buzzing’ floor. The play, designed to take place outside in a marquee, was performed in Brighton, Cardiff and at Alnwick Castle as well as the Southbank Centre.

The Unlimited commission enabled Sophie to write for children for the first time. This created a steep learning curve, as Sophie experimented with how to pitch the script so that it was age appropriate, the jokes were accessible, the science was accurate and the scary bits hit the right note, while the production and marketing team developed the contacts and approaches which would attract the right audience for the show at each touring location – Deaf and hearing children aged around six and above. Marketing the show proved to be a significant challenge, requiring a very proactive approach from both Tin Bath and the host venues. The team found that it was much easier to attract schools than to reach individual families, and term time performances were easier to sell.
The creative team included Deaf and hearing members, and Unlimited funding supported the development of the production through provision of BSL and Deaf awareness training where appropriate. This enabled Sophie to build her skills in signing on stage, something she hopes will have a positive long term impact on her versatility as an actress, and strengthened producer Michelle Owoo’s confidence in communicating with the rest of the team. Unlimited Talent and Producer Capacity Building Fund grants were also used to provide Sophie and Michelle with mentors, helping them to work through the technical issues involved in touring such a challenging production, and ensure that the production was right for its target audience. Sophie and Michelle also attended a marketing seminar led by the disability specialist Graeae Theatre Company, which was of value in developing a marketing plan.

This project would not have happened without the funding and additional support provided by the Unlimited commission. The production costs, largely as a result of the technical requirements and expenses associated with moving, setting up and providing overnight security for the marquee, would have been prohibitive without additional funding of some kind.

We were able to experiment in genre, scale and location in a way that would not have been possible a year ago’ (Sophie Woolley)

Being part of Unlimited has proved to be a career high point for the artists involved, and they have strong confidence that this will create momentum in their careers, and those of other disabled artists:

Being part of the Unlimited Festival at the Southbank, particularly during such an important and game changing event as the Paralympics, was an incredibly proud moment for us as a company. We were surrounded by Deaf and disabled artists of the highest calibre, and it was very exciting to be a part of that...The Unlimited commissions have proved that Deaf and disabled led work can be quality, imaginative and mainstream and that audiences are not put off by access requirements but embrace it within the fabric of the piece as an artistic means of communication. (Sophie Woolley)

3.8 The English Flower Garden
Artist: Paul Cummins

Paul Cummins is a ceramicist. He graduated in 2009, and has since focused on developing his practice based in the East Midlands. For English Flower Garden, Paul created six bespoke installations of flowers, made up of many thousands of handmade ceramic blooms, which were shown at historic English locations. Each was designed to evoke aspects of the history of the place where it was exhibited. The project drew on the English love of gardens, the ‘meanings’ of flowers, and the international origins of many garden flowers. The project sought to explore the relationship between traditional English craft methods and fine art. It was a hugely ambitious physical and technical challenge, and the additional support available through the Unlimited programme has enabled Paul to test his capabilities to the limit and could potentially lead his work in new directions.

The English Flower Garden was developed in response to the opportunity to apply for an Unlimited commission. The project involved the creation of bespoke site-specific installations made of thousands of ceramic flowers, exhibited at six famous English locations: the Houses of Parliament, Chiswick House Gardens, Althorp, The Secret Gardens of Sandwich, Castle Howard, and Blenheim Palace. Following the exhibition of these works during the summer of 2012, elements of the work were shown at the Southbank Centre alongside the other Unlimited commissions. Given the high numbers of tourists visiting these locations in the summertime, the
The audience for the commission was very high, and is estimated at over 211,000 people over the course of summer 2012. It is clear that the venues were able to take part in the project because they were funded through this commissioning process, and English Flower Garden could not have been developed on this scale, if at all, without the Cultural Olympiad.

The English Flower Garden commission represented a huge leap for Paul as the scale of the work was much greater than anything he had attempted before.

‘Effectively the project was eight major exhibitions in one year. Usually I would do one or two’ Paul Cummins

The nature of the commission meant that negotiations with the various venues about the design, choice of flowers and the underlying themes of the work were sometimes contentious and required careful diplomacy. For example, the Houses of Parliament required that the colours used in their installation could not be interpreted as party political statements, and the design had to be scrutinised by committee.

The administrative and management elements of the project were complex and difficult. Paul experiences a rare form of dyslexia, and does not communicate by writing. This made communication with all of the various stakeholders in this project particularly challenging, and he worked with Filomena Rodriguez, an artist and freelance producer who mentored him through the process and managed the process of reporting to funders. A publicist also supported the project and dealt with the onerous task of copyediting the information panels and other signage for the venues, and signing off text with the multiple stakeholders.

The additional support offered through the Unlimited programme was of great benefit to Paul, who was able to access training in bronze casting, which he experimented with in these commissions, and can use in the future to make work on a greater scale. The Producer Capacity Building Fund was also accessed by Filomena Rodriguez, who used it for training in social media communications and web development while working on the administration of the commission.

The project has increased Paul’s confidence in planning and managing larger projects, including financial management. He is seeking to take on larger scale commissions, and is considering how to use the knowledge and skills he has developed through the delivery of English Flower Garden to create large scale works of public art. As he notes,

[the making of the pieces was time-consuming and physically demanding], testing the limits of what I can physically do myself. With this project I took it up to the next level. Now I’m expected to take it up a level again, which means public sculpture, which is a lot more expensive.

Paul has made some new contacts and feels that the commission has made an impact on his own profile, and will in the longer term support the growth of his artistic practice. He indicates,

A lot more people know who I am around the world.

In the short term, Paul is considering a part time, self funded PhD course, exploring options for the future display of the English Flower Garden ceramics.
4. *Accentuate* | Cultural Olympiad Regional Programme for the South East

*Accentuate* was the South East’s regional programme for the Cultural Olympiad, attracting 21,084 participants and an audience of over half a million people. The programme aimed to create a cultural shift in the way society views disability, and brought together a wide ranging strategic partnership to explore how to improve accessibility for Deaf and disabled people across arts, sport, heritage and education. Deaf and disabled people participated in the programme at every level, advising on the strategic development of *Accentuate*, working as advocates for disabled people in individual projects, participating in events and workshops, and contributing to projects as commissioned artists, employees and volunteers. The programme has considerably improved organisations’ awareness of disability issues, and improved connections between Deaf and disabled people and arts, sport and heritage services.

*Accentuate* was the South East region’s Cultural Olympiad programme, running from 2009 onwards. Agencies in the South East wanted to work on a unified theme, and chose to focus on disability, inspired by the local Stoke Mandeville Hospital, which has such significance as the birthplace of the Paralympic movement. This was viewed as a unique opportunity to generate lasting change. The vision for *Accentuate* was ‘to create a cultural shift in the way society views disability’. In order to achieve this, the partnership which emerged across the region encompassed a wide range of organisations, across the arts, heritage, sport, tourism and education sectors.

*Accentuate* was hosted by Screen South, who worked with English Heritage, MLA, ACE South East, Tourism South East and Sport England, alongside many other regional and local delivery partners including arts organisations, sports clubs, schools, museums and heritage venues, and health and social care providers. They delivered 15 strategic projects, many of which involved a number of smaller projects, commissions and activities. *Accentuate* used £1.9 million from Legacy Trust to lever £9.4 million in total funding over the course of the programme.

*Accentuate* aimed to place Deaf and disabled people at the heart of the process, and built in disabled representation in each project, as well as within the management structure. The Our View group was a group of disabled people from a variety of disciplines, recruited to ensure that the priorities, views and needs of Deaf and disabled people were considered at a strategic level in the management of the project, and they acted as an advisory group to the partnership. In addition, disabled people were recruited as representatives to support the development of individual projects and advise on access and other issues which may affect participants with disabilities. Funding of £1000 was available from *Accentuate* to support this, but many partners chose to supplement this funding and created part time project development roles for Our View representatives.

*Accentuate* created 356 job opportunities (defined as a contract over 12 months duration), of which 68 went to disabled people. Over half of the shorter term contracts created through *Accentuate* programming were given to disabled applicants (472 out of 879 employment opportunities). In addition, 270 disabled creative, working across a wide variety of artforms, participated in regional and national showcases as a result of *Accentuate*’s programmes. These included an event in Parliament and commissions to celebrate the Paralympic Torch Relay. Around 15% of volunteers across the *Accentuate* programme had a disability.

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1 Accentuate was evaluated in August 2012 by Janice Needham, and this case study draws extensively on her research findings.
Deaf and disabled people were extensively involved as participants in Accentuate projects. While many projects were open to disabled and non-disabled participants, the emphasis in each was on accessibility and promotion of opportunities to Deaf and disabled people. Several of the projects were focused on young audiences, others were broader in their reach. For example:

*uScreen* was led by Screen South and developed ground-breaking technology to create an accessible website which provided young people with opportunities in film-making. The website provided group editing and storyboarding software plus BSL, subtitles, visual captioning and audio description tools. A programme of training, mentoring and workshop opportunities both live and online sat alongside the website, and was designed to be highly accessible to disabled participants. 189 films have been uploaded to the site so far.

In *Gaming*, Deaf and disabled young people created an online game for other young people. The game is based on wheelchair basketball and raises players’ awareness of Paralympian’s physical and psychological strength and the barriers they face. The project aimed to raise awareness of Stoke Mandeville and the Paralympics.

*Campaign!* created opportunities for Deaf and disabled young people to raise awareness of issues that concerned them, through live and online activity. This involved working with artists, and engaging with other young people in the UK and abroad. A number of young people involved in *Campaign!* went on to perform in the Paralympic Opening Ceremony.

*Realise!* supported and developed the entrepreneurial skills of Deaf and disabled young people across the South East through workshops, competitions and placements. The programme made links to the creative industries based in the region, especially music promoters. As a result, young people have been able to access high quality work experience opportunities and have been connected to the national Ways into Work programme.

*Playground to Podium* is a national programme aimed at identifying talented young athletes and providing them with appropriate support. *Accentuate* supported a regional extension of the scheme for disabled young people, offering bursaries (53 athlete bursaries were awarded in total), development grants for clubs, and development funding for coaching and officials including training in disability awareness.

*Creative Landscapes* aimed to make heritage in the South East more accessible. A wide range of venues got involved, and an advisory panel of Deaf and disabled people worked with them to audit the accessibility of the venues, also looking at the themes and stories they told to identify whether they could be more inclusive of disability history and heritage. In order to create a focus for this work, the annual Heritage Open Days programme across the South East was used to test the improved heritage offer, and was promoted extensively. As a result, 400 disabled visitors took part in Heritage Open Days in the South East in 2011.

*Starting Line* was an outdoor performance commissioned to celebrate the arrival of the Paralympic Flame. The project was led by artist Rachel Gadsden, who was received an *Unlimited* commission, and involved disabled and non disabled young people from around the world, including young people with spinal injuries at Stoke Mandeville Hospital.

*Blue Touch Paper Carnival* was led by Horsham District Council, and created opportunities for people with physical and learning disabilities to actively participate in carnival. The project was delivered across a number of day centres and local colleges. The groups, working with facilitators from Cusp Inc in West Sussex and the New Carnival Company on the Isle of Wight, alongside a range of commissioned artists and arts companies, were extensively involved in the design and
development of their St George themed contribution to the Ryde Carnival. Through an exchange with Embaixadores da Alegria in Rio, the only samba school for disabled people in the world, three artists were able to visit Rio to learn about carnival traditions, and the Rio group visited Sussex and the Isle of Wight in April 2012, working on the design of the costumes and float. This was a valuable exchange. The UK artists were impressed with the size and scale of the Rio group, which involves hundreds of disabled people in their projects. The Rio group were interested in how the Blue Touch Paper Carnival emphasised active participation and decision making within the project by people with learning disabilities. Project manager Sarah Pickthall felt that they ‘were wowed...they couldn’t believe that learning disabled people had pulled together the party. They saw that and were very excited by it’.

Disabled people who were part of the project designed costumes and t-shirts, made a carnival float, a samba flag, and composed an ‘enredo’ (theme song) which was performed by an integrated samba band of disabled and non-disabled performers. They subsequently performed at The One Hackney Festival, where they led the parade, and in the Olympic Park during the Paralympic Games. This was a huge opportunity for those involved.

Participants felt part of something bigger than themselves. Going to the Olympic Park for them was massive. (Sarah Pickthall)

A spin-off project, Map Factor, experimented with the creation of accessible maps for carnivals and other outdoor events. Cusp Inc are continuing to develop accessible mapping, using the approaches to working with learning disabled people which were developed through Blue Touch Paper Carnival. The New Carnival Company are exploring ways of continuing their partnership with Rio and creating new work for the 2016 World Cup finals.

In the South East, the hosting of the Paralympic Games in the UK had a strong thematic impact on the delivery of the regional programme. This enabled a partnership to come together and make a commitment to investigating how to improve service provision, and by extension quality of life, for Deaf and disabled people across the region. The work ranged from arts and sport projects as described above, to the improvement of transport hubs and a number of strategic interventions to support disabled artists. This joint working was unprecedented, and it is highly unlikely that there would have been a sustained strategic cross-sector initiative around disability issues without the inspiration and impetus provided by the Games.

As a result of sustained work alongside Deaf and disabled people, at strategic and project levels, throughout the duration of Accentuate, the programme evaluation identified evidence of a shift in the culture of participating organisations, who are now more aware of disability issues and the steps they need to take to open up access to their offer. There was also some anecdotal evidence of a shift in the attitudes of some disabled people towards the Paralympics, as the programme raised awareness of the history of the Paralympic Games and engaged disabled people in dialogue and debate with Paralympic athletes.

There was an ongoing issue in relation to Accentuate’s ability to promote its work through the media. The level of press coverage was considered to be poor and less than expected given the extent of the programme and its links to the Games. Interviewees attributed this to Accentuate being ‘in competition’ with the Games themselves and other Cultural Olympiad programming for media attention. There was also an acknowledgement that the complexity of the programme, delivering 15 different thematic projects across a range of sectors, made it difficult to explain and ‘sell’ as a coherent story. As a result, individual projects were able to secure press coverage of events, but the wider programme was not covered to the same extent.
Accentuate is continuing to operate as an incubator of accessible programmes. Having tested a range of approaches to the inclusion of disabled people within mainstream arts, sport, heritage and learning provision across the South East, Accentuate is in the process of identifying its most successful projects, and those most likely to be able to secure the necessary funding and support to go forward in some form. The uScreen project is continuing, rebranded as Accentuate Young Voices, and accessible heritage work will continue as Accentuate Heritage, looking at representation of Deaf and disability history. There is a focus on sharing the learning from Accentuate for the benefit of other regions, and a number of toolkits have been produced, including one on accessible carnival in partnership with Mencap. Other plans include a series of training days in partnership with English Heritage, and a symposium at University of Brighton to explore legacy one year on from the Paralympics.
London 2012
Cultural Olympiad Evaluation

Appendix 3 | Case Studies

Youth Projects

25 April 2013

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1. Youth overview themes

This section looks at the Cultural Olympiad’s engagement with children and young people, examining what kind of projects developed, and whether any common themes are emerging in relation to changes in practice and outcomes for both young people and partners.

The research is based on six case studies:

- *Stories of the World*, a major national project involving over 60 museums, in which young people created their own exhibitions
- Creative Jobs Programme, a programme for unemployed young people which created 40 traineeships in cultural organisations across London
- *Blaze*, a youth led creative programme based in Lancashire, which resulted in young people delivering their own two-day festival
- *Next Generation*, National Portrait Gallery’s development project for young artists linked to the annual BP Portrait Awards
- *The Itch of the Golden Nit*, a partnership between Tate, BBC and Aardman Animation, in which children created their own feature film
- *Big Concert*, one of the opening events of the London 2012 Festival, which saw children from the Big Noise Orchestra in Raploch perform with Gustavo Dudamel and the Simon Bolivar Orchestra.

The case studies were based on a documentary review of application forms, evaluation reports and reports to funders from each project; face to face and telephone interviews with project managers; and in some cases through focus groups and telephone interviews with participating young people (*Blaze, Stories of the World, Creative Jobs Programme)*.

1.1 Young People and the Cultural Olympiad

Children and young people were enabled to participate in a wide range of creative activities under the umbrella of the Cultural Olympiad. A variety of approaches were taken to programming for children and young people across the country. There were events attractive to children and young people staged across the UK, from children’s opera at Belfast Zoo (*Noye’s Fludde*) to BBC’s *Hackney Weekend 2012*, which was the UK’s largest ticketed free music event, broadcast live across BBC Three and Radio One. Within the *Unlimited* programme, a short film and a new play were commissioned, both written to be accessible to Deaf and disabled children. Many events across the Cultural Olympiad and throughout the London 2012 Festival appealed to people of all ages, including children and young people.

Beyond the programming of accessible events within the Cultural Olympiad, a large number of projects involved children and young people as learners, collaborators and creators. Many of the strands of the Cultural Olympiad and London 2012 Festival had learning and engagement programmes running alongside, such as the World Shakespeare Festival’s *Shakespeare Challenge*, which was linked to Arts Award. The Reading Agency ran *Story Lab Summer Reading Challenge* in 2012, involving 750,000 children and 98% of UK libraries. Children were encouraged to read at least six books over the summer holidays, and also participated in a diverse range of events including storytelling and crafts. *Film Nation Shorts* offered young people aged 14 to 25 the opportunity to make their own short films, and submit them in competition, with the winners being shown at a final awards ceremony at BFI Southbank. *SomewhereToGo* was a national programme which linked creative young people with the spaces they needed to make their ideas happen.
In the North East, the Legacy Trust UK-funded regional programme was strategically focused on young people, investing over £1 million in 15 projects with aims to bring about a shift in the relationship between young people and the region’s cultural institutions. Across the rest of the country, all of the regions included young people in their Legacy Trust UK funded programming. For example in the South West there was a focus on young people volunteering, London ran a dance programme within the capital’s schools, and East Midlands staged World Event Young Artists, a four day festival which brought together 1000 young international artists for a ten-day event in Nottingham.

All of the projects case studied here aimed to involve young people actively in developing their own creative work, and provided platforms for them to show it to others, whether online or at live performances, exhibitions and events. Most experimented with social media as a tool for planning and communication, and as a marketing tool.

Children’s projects were largely concerned with developing new creative skills (such as animation or music) and sharing them with others. When projects focused on young people (typically aged 14 and over) rather than children, there was an emphasis on developing young people as leaders of their own projects, and projects were framed as an equal collaboration between young people and cultural organisations. Progression routes were developed and in some cases paid work opportunities were created within the projects.

1.2 Key Themes

Whilst approaches to project delivery varied widely across the case study cohort, the research has identified some key ways of working which featured in a number of the projects.

Creativity and Showcases

All of the projects placed a strong emphasis on children and young people developing their own high quality creative work and then sharing it with others, whether through live events and exhibitions or online. Interviewees highlighted as a significant feature the fact that children and young people were able to learn and develop their skills through contact with professional artists. Children and young people were able to make work to a very high standard, which was then showcased on high profile platforms, something which would not have been possible without the impetus and funding provided by the Cultural Olympiad.

For example Big Concert, which launched the London 2012 Festival in Scotland, was televised live on BBC Four and shown internationally, and featured extensively in the broadcast and print media. The Itch of the Golden Nit had a cinematic release and Leicester Square premiere, as well as being shown on CBBC, and winning a number of awards, including a Children’s BAFTA for Interactive.

Co-production

A key feature of many projects was the development of teams of young people, often described by project managers as ‘co-producers’ or ‘co-curators’, who worked alongside arts organisations, museums and heritage venues to create events and exhibitions. Stories of the World museums commonly took this approach, as did Blaze. This approach offered young people intensive opportunities to build skills in teamwork, to understand how cultural organisations work, and
to learn about the practicalities of project management. This way of working resulted in strong impacts for both the young people and the organisations. Young people became more confident, more independent and developed skills and knowledge. Organisations gained valuable insight into how to make their work more attractive to new audiences, were open to working in new ways, and in some cases have changed their policies and practices in response.

International projects

A number of projects developed international exchanges and other collaborations. The entire *Stories of the World* project was themed around objects from around the world in British museum collections, and thus most projects involved young people in research and learning about other cultures. For example in Brighton Museum, a project looking at football culture worked with young people in Brighton and Mali. The project also engaged young people from ‘source communities’, living in the UK but with personal connections to some of the objects under consideration. The children who took part in *Big Concert* performed with musicians from the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela, developing strong ties which may lead to further collaboration.

Two case studies explore the benefits of international residencies. Members of Blaze’s festival production team volunteered at Trastock, a well established youth led festival in Sweden, which helped them to think about the practicalities of running their own event. Young people from Luton travelled to Pakistan to learn more about the culture of truck art.

Interviewees described these international contacts as having a profound impact on participating young people, some of whom had a very limited outlook and little previous experience of travel.

Digital technologies

Tate’s film project, developed in partnership with the BBC and Aardman Animations, made extensive use of digital creative technology, and introduced children to a range of ways to draw online, and learn animation techniques through their workshop programme. They also created learning resources to support teachers to use digital creative software at school. The hub of the project was an online forum for children, so that any child in the UK could take part in the project by joining online and posting their pictures to the website. Moderated forums enabled children to have online conversations with each other. However in other projects, staff reported that young people were ambivalent about the use of technology. Museum staff talked about their surprise that young curators were reluctant to use computer based interactives on gallery and were more interested in simpler, hands-on approaches to interpretation.

The research found that projects made varying use of digital technologies, as tools for project management, communication and marketing. Commonly, Facebook was used to communicate with project participants, while Twitter feeds were used to reach audiences and to create networks of stakeholders. Most projects established a webpage or stand-alone website, but often they were not viewed or updated, and Facebook and Twitter enabled projects to become much more dynamic and responsive online. Blaze created a team of bloggers who created an online platform to share content on Facebook, Twitter and You Tube, livestreamed events, and trained other young people in filming and blogging. For some organisations, this was the first time that they had created separate websites or twitter feeds for individual projects. There was a common trend towards using video clips online instead of text.

Interviewees highlighted that working with new technologies was a learning curve, and in longer term projects the pace of change meant that their use of technology was constantly evolving, for example in response to the increased affordability of smartphones.
Leadership development

Projects working with young people aged between 14 and 25 focused on developing young people as leaders, providing a structure for projects, and a programme of training and support, so that they could then take responsibility for shaping the direction of their project and making decisions.

In Leeds Museum, young people were responsible for curating the venue’s summer exhibition, which explored the origins of objects in the museum’s collection and how they had reached Yorkshire. This involved them in considering a range of sensitive ethical issues. Similarly, the Geffrye Museum in London developed a youth panel which worked alongside curatorial and other staff to create an exhibition themed around objects found in the home and their international connections. Blaze offered young people a range of ways to take responsibility in their projects, including shortlisting and interviewing freelance artists and the evaluation consultants.

This had considerable benefits for young people, building their confidence, a wide range of practical skills, and a sense of achievement. Some contrasted the experience positively with the way they are taught at school or college. One practical outcome of this approach was that they could use their experience in applying for university or for jobs.

For organisations, the experience of developing a youth-led approach differed widely depending on the existing culture. Some were starting from scratch, having done no previous youth work, others had done previous one-off projects but using a very different model of participation. For many organisations, enabling genuinely youth-led approaches necessitated a change in management culture, and some projects offered more responsibility to young people than others. This practice has been embedded to varying degrees. The Geffrye Museum stands out as having been particularly successful, and is involving young consultants extensively in the development of a major HLF capital bid.

Paid work and progression

Creative Jobs Programme, led by the Royal Opera House and funded by a consortium of Legacy Trust UK, ACE, and BP, created 40 six month traineeships in cultural organisations across London. The roles ranged widely and trainees were placed in departments including front of house, retail, marketing and design. The programme included masterclasses and a project to enable the trainees to get together as a cohort, with some completing Arts Award alongside their job role.

Other projects developed paid roles as progression opportunities for project participants. In Lancashire, Blaze developed the Ignite programme, which offered seven hour a week ‘alternative Saturday jobs’ in cultural organisations across the county, alongside a mentoring and training programme. Stories of the World museums varied widely in their approach. The Geffrye paid some young people from their Youth Access Panel to carry out further research and planning, and employed a trainee through the Creative Jobs Programme to work specifically on Stories of the World. London Transport Museum also paid young people to be consultants, and is continuing with this model.

Those projects who tried out paid work for young people found that young people responded well to the extra sense of responsibility which came with being paid. The drop-out rate for paid placements was very low. Focus groups with trainees found that the roles boosted the self-esteem and confidence of young people, making them more aware of how to behave in a workplace and improving their skills. They felt more confident that they could perform well in future interview situations.
Hard to reach young people

The projects had taken a variety of approaches to defining and working with hard-to-reach young people.

The *Stories of the World* programme aimed to work with hard-to-reach young people, with individual museums choosing how to define them depending on their local circumstances. This was also the approach taken by Tate, which left individual partners to decide how best to target local activities.

Some organisations took the view that because young people were under-represented in their audience, all young people were by definition hard to reach. Others sought about partners who could link them with young people facing specific challenges, for example Norwich Castle worked with looked-after children and young people on their *Stories of the World project*, and Brighton Museum developed a project with young people experiencing mental health problems.

Across all of the projects, there was a broad agreement that young people were developing content not just for other young people but for everyone. *Blaze Festival* reached a very broad family audience. Museum exhibitions delivered through *Stories of the World* also were designed to appeal to all visitors. At museums in particular, there was a view that it was not realistic to expect *Stories of the World* to make a significant shift in the makeup of the audience, especially where the museum charged entry. However some interviewees felt that there had been an upturn in young people visiting the *Stories of the World* exhibitions, possibly because their friends had been involved and there was a word of mouth effect.

1.3 The Cultural Olympiad

The research identified findings related to the projects being situated within the Cultural Olympiad. These were:

- The Olympic brand was viewed positively by many young people, and in the early stages of some projects it helped to attract participants. Young people assumed that projects connected to the Olympics would be big, high quality and high status, and wanted to get involved. This contrasted with the findings from case study research looking at projects with Deaf and disabled people, where project managers had to address concerns from disabled audiences about the Olympic and Paralympic values and the way disabled people would be represented as a result of the Games.
- The Cultural Olympiad, the sense that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity and that it was time-limited, acted as a powerful driver for bringing partners together, and helped maintain momentum in longer projects as they built towards 2012.
- Participation in the Cultural Olympiad, and the availability of funding, enabled projects to be creatively innovative and ambitious as there was a general expectation that Cultural Olympiad programming would involve a departure from organisations’ standard practice.
- Project managers found it difficult to think and plan strategically because of the complex funding and partnership arrangements set up to deliver their projects, and the ongoing restructuring and funding cuts happening in many partner organisations. The need to report different information to multiple funders, and the negotiations around how partners should be credited and acknowledged given the strict (and changing) branding requirements associated with the Cultural Olympiad, were felt to be time-consuming and stressful.
1.4 Legacies and lessons learned

Through the research process, a number of shared lessons emerged in relation to the development of excellence in youth arts programming. These ranged from the strategic to the practical. Interviewees talked about the importance of consultation with young people and involving them in project planning. This helped to address issues such as the timing of projects around exams and holidays, transport arrangements and the provision of expenses. Many interviews and project evaluations made reference to the importance of keeping young people fed in order to keep them engaged. Direct discussion with young people had helped to deal with tensions within their groups – for example two interviewees made reference to the wide age range of their project teams, with young graduates working on an equal basis alongside those who hadn’t yet done their GCSEs.

In established organisations which had chosen to run projects with young people, there was a general agreement that in order to achieve excellence, the projects had to be delivered as part of a strategic programme of organisational change. Several organisations, notably the museums, were using their Cultural Olympiad youth projects as a way of testing and improving their core visitor offer and training staff in new, more collaborative ways of working with communities.

Those projects which had involved young people as ‘co-producers’ identified that developing youth-led approaches was a very steep learning curve for all of their staff. There was most impact and learning when young people worked directly with curators, designers, marketing and communications and web teams, rather than all contact being buffered by learning and participation staff. However this required a significant cultural shift which had to have buy-in at every level including the senior management team if it was to work successfully. Freelance artists and creatives brought into projects also had to be comfortable with this approach.

The interviews also highlighted the importance of partnership working, which enabled projects to draw on a wider range of professional expertise and skills, and increased opportunities for young people. For example free runners working with Blaze were able to perform at 10 Downing Street through a connection between Blaze and Somewhereto_. All of the projects were developed through partnership working at local, national and sometimes international level, and while this complicated management processes for staff, there was a general acknowledgement that it had enhanced the experience for young people. There were lessons learned around the need for clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each partner, and for agreements to be drawn up in advance, but some project managers also stressed that in long projects, there was a need for flexibility in partnership agreements.

The projects had identified the importance of expecting high quality from young people and trusting them to deliver, as they rose to meet the challenge when they felt a strong sense of ownership and responsibility for their projects. The opportunity to work with professional artists was also highlighted as a significant factor in pushing young people to achieve excellence.

A number of organisations highlighted the importance of the right staff to lead work with young people, and recommended involving young people in selection processes. There were mixed feelings about the value of mentoring. While all of the projects which included mentoring as a development tool could point to examples of relationships between young people and mentors working very well, there were also many mentoring relationships which had petered out, or difficulty in matching young people to appropriate mentors. Provision of training and team building activities was generally considered to be more valuable, especially those which involved a residential stay or intensive process.
Several of the projects are drawing up toolkits and reports as they believe there is a value in disseminating their practice and evaluation findings to others.

Most project managers interviewed felt that it was far too early to assess the legacy of their projects for participating children and young people. They saw the ultimate aim of their projects as the creation of the next generation of artists and cultural producers, and saw legacy as something that would emerge over the next ten or even twenty years, as young people moved on from their first experiences of performing, curating or creating, to the establishment of careers in the arts. They felt that the value of their projects also lay in the creation of a new generation of enthusiasts for culture, and in the development of young people’s confidence, and skills in communication, negotiation, teamworking and attitudes to work. Some could point to examples of young people becoming more entrepreneurial, developing their own constituted groups or small businesses as a next step from the end of their projects.

They also defined legacy in terms of changes to their own organisations’ practice, and to the wider cultural sector. Networking and partnerships between arts organisations had been strengthened, and arts organisations had much improved links to other agencies working with young people, such as local authority youth services, Job Centres and FE colleges. Organisations had changed their policies as a result of the learning from their Cultural Olympiad youth projects, and in some cases were restructuring staff teams to embed new ways of working.

Each of the case study organisations was actively planning for the continuation of their work with children and young people. Some had successfully identified funds to go forward, such as National Portrait Gallery, while others were integrating young people into their core activity, for example London Transport Museum. Blaze is going through a transitional phase, with the support of its current partners, with the longer term aim of creating an independent youth led cultural organisation in Lancashire.
2. Selected case studies

2.1 Big Concert

Summary

Since 2008, Sistema Scotland has been ‘transforming lives through music’ in the community of Raploch in Stirling. Children from across the community have participated in an immersive musical education programme, which involves their families and the wider community. In June 2012, the Simon Bolivar Orchestra, conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, visited Raploch to perform an open air concert, with some of the programme performed alongside 116 children from Raploch’s Big Noise Orchestra, launching the London 2012 Festival. Such an event was unprecedented in the history of the Raploch estate, and the concert was preceded by an extensive community outreach programme. Evidence from audience evaluation of the concert suggests the Big Concert has had a strong impact on local pride and confidence, and on external perceptions of the community, which may have a significant impact on the life chances and aspirations of local children.

The El Sistema approach, pioneered in Venezuela, teaches music through immersion, offering music education for children from a very young age, providing daily tuition and including children in an orchestra from the start so that they can learn together. The system is designed to create social change in the wider community, as well as for individual young people. There is now a growing number of music education programmes worldwide influenced by El Sistema, including in the UK, USA and Portugal. In Raploch, a community in which many residents face social and economic disadvantage, the Big Noise project has been established by Sistema Scotland and aims to transform children’s lives through music and empower the community. The project focuses on the community’s primary schools, but also works with pre-school children and adults living locally. Big Noise Raploch has created a range of musical ensembles, which come together regularly as the Big Noise symphony orchestra. This was the first project in the UK based on El Sistema. There are close links between Sistema Scotland and El Sistema in Venezuela, and Gustavo Dudamel is a patron of Sistema Scotland.

The Big Concert was developed in response to the opportunity provided by the Cultural Olympiad to create once in a lifetime events. Rehearsing alongside the Simon Bolivar Orchestra, and performing with their hero Gustavo Dudamel, was a huge opportunity for the participating children, and potentially a significant turning point for Raploch. The concert was held at a specially constructed venue on an empty site in Raploch. It was broadcast live all over the UK on BBC4, on BBC Radio Scotland, and at Live Sites across the UK, and was the subject of a separate documentary. There was an audience of 7,000 for the event itself, around 2,000 of whom were local residents who had been given free tickets. An audience survey carried out by Sistema Scotland indicated that 23% of audience members attend classical concerts once a year or less, suggesting that the event had succeeded in reaching a new audience for classical music. The Simon Bolivar Orchestra was ‘in residence’ in Raploch for a number of days before the concert, and every child in the community had the opportunity to watch them rehearse.

Sistema Scotland recognised the potential significance of such a high profile event happening in Raploch, and placing the community in the national spotlight. They developed an extensive outreach and communication strategy to build excitement and generate interest locally, including poster campaigns and door to door visits. A wide range of events for Raploch residents took place ahead of the concert, from a ‘mini Olympics’ themed community day to a ‘practice-a-thon’ for orchestra members. The Big Concert was a unique opportunity to turn around public perceptions of Raploch, and to establish its reputation as a place people come to for music. The organisers
were keen to ensure that the community was represented positively in media coverage, and that stories focused on the positive - how music and regeneration were driving change - rather than on the negative, a strategy which was very successful.

This was a project emerged through discussion between LOCOG, Sistema Scotland and Gustavo Dudamel, and would have been very unlikely to have happened without the Cultural Olympiad, although the delivery of some sort of exchange project with Venezuela had long been an aspiration for Sistema Scotland. It was placed very prominently, as one of the London 2012 Festival’s opening events, because it encapsulated many of the key messages about the Cultural Olympiad and the Games – the celebration of world class excellence, the opportunity for young people to develop their skills through mentoring by world class artists, and showcase their creativity and talent on a national and international stage. The event was also significant as its location signalled clearly that the London 2012 Festival was a UK wide celebration. Major funders Creative Scotland and Event Scotland committed to the project once support from LOCOG had been secured.

While interest in the Simon Bolivar Orchestra is high in the UK, it seems clear that the level of national media coverage, particularly on television, was directly linked to the positioning of the concert as an opening event for the London 2012 Festival. While this did not drive ticket sales, the online and TV audience certainly will have included a large number of people who have been introduced to El Sistema as a result of the Cultural Olympiad, and whose first introduction to Raploch has been related to its reputation as a centre of musical excellence.

Organisers are confident from the formal and informal feedback they have received that the event created huge pride, excitement and confidence amongst local residents. This has the potential to create a longer lasting legacy of continuing engagement with music, with all of the positive personal and social impacts that can achieve. Since the concert, Big Noise Raploch have delivered an intensive four week summer school, and are looking at how to develop some of the orchestra members as young leaders in their community.

The other significant legacy of the Big Concert may lie in the organisational development process which Sistema Scotland has undertaken in order to deliver such a big event, and the range of partnerships which are now in place at a national and international level. Relationships with local, national and international music partners are now firmly established and tested through project delivery. The Venezuelan Percussion Ensemble visited Stirling in October 2012, the only UK date on their European tour. There is also a strong likelihood that Sistema Scotland will be able to build on the success of the Big Concert to expand their work to other communities. Funding has now been secured for a new Big Noise programme in Govan Hill, Glasgow.
2.2 Blaze

Summary

Blaze is a youth-led cultural programme for Lancashire, Blackpool and the Fylde Coast which forms part of WE PLAY, the North West Cultural Legacy Programme for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The project has supported young people aged 13-19 to become creative producers, commissioning and collaborating with artists to develop their own events. Blaze has created progression routes for young people, starting with participation in local youth arts projects and leading to paid work placement opportunities. This year, Blaze young producers from all over the North West region came together to create Blaze Festival, a celebration of urban art, music and performance delivered over two days at WE PLAY Expo in Preston. The project has had a significant impact on the young producers, providing an insight into careers in the creative industries and supporting them to become more confident and independent as they prepare for transitions to work, training or further education.

Blaze was established as a partnership between Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council and the Creative Lancashire economic development agency, in order to create a Lancashire-wide response to the cultural opportunity of the Olympic Games. They chose to focus on developing creative opportunities for young people, working in partnership with a host of youth clubs, youth theatres and larger arts organisations across the county. It was the intention from the start of the project that young people would be encouraged and supported to take on a leadership role in the delivery of cultural events and activities for the wider community, and over three summers of active delivery, Blaze has tested a variety of approaches and developed a model for developing young people as cultural leaders.

Early activity was themed around the meeting of arts and sport, and in some cases this thematic link remained significant throughout. Projects included:

- Boom Bike, creation of a pedal bike with a sound system, which developed into the Boom Bike Big Band, offering young musicians their first paid gigs
- Urban Culture Jam, a celebration of free running, BMXs, skateboarding, urban art and music, based in the towns of Clayton-le-Moors and Accrington. Participants have now established a social enterprise, leading their own free running workshops.
- 360 Challenge, a bike ride around Lancashire with a tie-in programme of arts events and creative activities (2011)
- The Big Game (2010 and 2011) in Nelson, a project which blended physical games and performance, with its own creative take on the opening and closing ceremony.

The trajectory of the project, building towards delivery of a showcase festival in 2012, was created of necessity because of the fixed deadline of the Olympic Games, and according to North West Cultural Programmer Debbi Lander, enabled Blaze ‘to do in three years what otherwise would have taken seven’. The situation of Blaze within the Cultural Olympiad gave the project a status which attracted other partners, and ensured that the project withstood the impact of funding cuts and restructuring in youth and cultural services. Young people report that the link between Blaze and the Olympic Games had made them excited and keen to be involved at the start, because they associated the games with high quality and aspiration. Being part of a wider cultural programme also drove audiences towards the Blaze Festival.

Blaze started by working with young people to deliver local events in their own communities. These young producers were supported to develop their own concepts and recruit artists they
wanted to work with, leading to the delivery of a series of community events in 2010, and the first meetings of the Blaze Forum, made up of young people who had taken an active role in local projects. Building on this in 2011, young producers developed a larger scale and more ambitious series of events, and started to document the project using social media, posting to Facebook, Twitter and You Tube regularly and blogging from Blaze events. In 2012, Blaze ran local projects again in preparation for Blaze Festival, a youth led cultural festival which took place at the WE PLAY Expo as part of Preston Guild.

The outcomes for young people, identified through an evaluation process which has run since 2010, have been defined in terms of development of confidence, becoming more independent, broadening young people’s horizons in terms of opportunities to travel and experience culture across the whole region and beyond, enhanced awareness of careers in the creative sector, and practical experience. Young producers felt that Blaze would give them an edge and make them stand out when applying for university places or work.

These outcomes can be attributed to Blaze’s approach to making sure that activity was truly youth-led:

- **Blaze** paid attention to the development of progression routes through the project over time, and steadily increased the amount of responsibility given to young producers. There was a diverse range of roles and activities for young producers, including booking performers, marketing design and distribution, event management, artist liaison and front of house stewarding.
- Festival producers were recruited through a competitive process, and were given real responsibility for decision making and delivery of the festival at WE PLAY Expo, supported by a training and mentoring programme.
- **Blaze** established Ignite, a series of ‘alternative Saturday jobs’: paid work placements in cultural organisations and creative businesses across Lancashire, again supported by a training and mentoring programme.
- Ongoing Forum events allowed young producers to feel involved and consulted about the wider Blaze programme.
- The Blaze Bloggers strand of activity offered young producers an uncensored opportunity to comment and feed back about the project and control the way it was represented to the public.
- Young people were involved in the recruitment of artists, other creatives and the evaluation team.

The Blaze experience has demonstrated the benefits of allowing young people to take the lead. However, the extent to which young people were able to develop and lead their own projects varied widely from project to project depending on the circumstances and abilities of individual young people and the groups. One of the key learning points from Blaze is the importance of being flexible enough to start at a point the group is comfortable with and move them towards more independence and responsibility.

Active plans are now being developed for the future of Blaze, which has strong political backing across Lancashire. While it is too early to say how Blaze will move forward post-Games, the ambition is to continue to deliver a youth-led arts festival annually in Lancashire, with linked local projects offering an entry point for younger participants, and to continue to offer Ignite paid work experience placements. In the longer term, there is an ambition to see Blaze develop into an independent, youth-led cultural organisation for Lancashire.
2.3 BP Portrait Award Next Generation

Summary

The National Portrait Gallery has been running an annual portraiture competition since 1979. Next Generation took the competition as a starting point, and built a project around it with the aim of engaging young people with portraiture and providing them with very high quality opportunities to develop their own artistic talent through a series of workshops and summer schools. Delivering this project has enabled the National Portrait Gallery to enhance its existing programme for young people, building on what had already been successfully tried and tested, and successfully building networks in East London through partnership working with the host boroughs. The project has had demonstrable positive outcomes for the young participants, notably an improvement in creative skills and confidence, and the learning management team at the gallery have been able to embed the project into future programming.

This project emerged from the National Portrait Gallery’s long-standing wish to develop youth engagement activity connected with the BP Portrait Awards. The gallery felt that the Cultural Olympiad was a good fit with the BP Portrait Awards. The competitive nature of the awards meant that they could make a clear thematic connection between the training and dedication needed to win at sport, and the constant practice required to reach a personal best in artistic practice. BP had a strong interest in Next Generation as the sponsor of the Portrait Awards and a Premier Partner of the Cultural Olympiad and London 2012 Festival.

Next Generation was essentially an outreach project, designed to encourage young people to try portraiture, and to reach young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in the Host boroughs who would not ordinarily visit the gallery, or sign up for extra-curricular activities there. Engagement with the Host boroughs was at times very difficult, with the project manager citing the difficulty of maintaining contacts when staff were moving around regularly, and the huge amount of other projects which were also recruiting participants from local communities. However they were able to increase the level of participation by young people in Host boroughs year on year, through an intensive marketing and communications campaign which worked closely with schools and youth organisations in East London.

The project consisted of annual taster workshops and summer school events, held in London and in Scotland. There was a strong emphasis on excellence, as the project sought to support and develop very talented young artists. The gallery recruited workshop leaders whose work had previously been exhibited in the Portrait Awards, to enable young people to find out about professional artistic practice.

The project management team sought to link to the Games wherever possible. Some events were programmed to tie in with Open Weekend. Guest Olympian and Paralympian athletes were used as models during the summer schools, and gave inspiring talks about their sporting experiences which reinforced messages about the importance of consistent practice in achieving excellence. The project manager considers that this helped young people to understand the thematic link with the Olympics, as the link with London 2012 did not appear to have been a factor in young people’s decisions to participate in the project.

Running alongside the events programme, the gallery recruited members of their youth forum to a Next Generation Youth Crew. These young people acted as a sounding board for the development of the project, for example advising on branding design, and took on a specific role in documenting the project and sharing it online. They recorded video interviews with...
participants at the summer schools, and created podcasts about competition entries which were filmed on gallery.

Interim evaluation carried out by the gallery in 2011 suggests that the project was successfully meeting its objectives, inspiring young people to make art, improving their skills, increasing their confidence, and building enthusiastic young audiences for the gallery. Around six or seven summer school attendees have since submitted work to the main competition, and several summer school attendees have joined the Youth Forum and attended other gallery events.

The project built on tried and tested approaches to learning at National Portrait Gallery, but did lead to the implementation of new approaches, particularly in relation to communications, and has proved to be a catalyst for change. For the first time, a learning project has been given prominent display space in the main gallery, rather than in dedicated education spaces. A former slide gallery has now been re-purposed as an editing suite.

Project staff implemented a thorough communications campaign to reach their target audience of young people. This included lots of face-to-face networking and provision of flyers and written marketing material to appropriate organisations and contacts in the host boroughs. For the first time, the gallery provided a project with its own twitter feed and web microsite, allowing them to communicate in a less corporate style and to involve young people in design decisions. This has allowed young people to take control of the website and populate it with content, including portraits by young people which have been uploaded to the site, as well as the podcasts and other content developed by the Youth Crew. As a result of this experimentation, there is now a dedicated post within the learning team for the development of digital participation.

The Next Generation project is clearly viewed as a success by the National Portrait Gallery, and by the sponsors BP, who have committed funding for an additional five years of youth engagement work alongside the Portrait Awards. The gallery will use this to continue with the most successful elements of the project: the digital content development, taster session and summer school structure, and use of competition winning artists to lead workshops. The intention is to build on this foundation, in particular by developing an artists’ network, building on some recent pilot work with schools, and widening out the marketing and outreach strategy to other boroughs.
2.4 Tate Movie

Summary

In 2011, Tate premiered a film, The Itch of the Golden Nit. The film was made by children across the country between 5 and 13 years old, who had written the script, developed characters and storylines, drawn assets and participated in their animation, performed the score, and made the sound effects. This was the culmination of a partnership project between some of Britain’s highest profile cultural brands: led by Tate with Aardman Animations, CBBC and creative agency Fallon. The project was one of Legacy Trust UK’s national programmes, and also secured sponsorship from BP. The project had significant impacts on young people, strengthening their confidence in their own creative aptitude, introducing them to new technical skills, and enthusing them about careers in animation. It has also built the confidence of educators to engage with creative technologies. At the heart of the project was a commitment to making it accessible to the maximum number of children, on TV, online, and through direct face-to-face engagement across the UK. The project won a BAFTA in the interactive category of the 2011 British Academy Children’s Awards.

The concept of using children’s drawings as the basis for animation is not new. There are a number of animated TV programmes for young children which are based on images made by children. However the Tate Movie project is notable for the scale of its ambition, with 1,897 children making contributions which were included in the final film.

The project involved all children who wished to participate, developing a number of ways of reaching and engaging children. Working with partner galleries across the country, Tate ran workshops to create images and animation for the movie. They also went into primary schools, and developed a teacher resource pack which was distributed to 30,000 schools so that teachers and pupils could work on the project independently. A ‘truck tour’ went to a wide variety of locations, including rural areas with no local galleries. A large truck was fitted out as an animation studio, with areas for drawing, a technical suite for animation, and a recording studio for dialogue and sound effects. Children experienced drawing and animation workshops on the truck. Over 9,000 children participated in these hands-on workshops.

At the heart of the project, a specially designed website was created to engage children who could not directly access the workshops. This was an interface between the film’s professional production team and the children, used by the production team to request assets, content and feedback, and by children to upload their images and ideas. It was key to the success of the website that it enabled children to communicate with each other through forums, which were moderated so that parents could have confidence in their safety. All of the children who participated in the project were provided with a log-in for the website so that they could keep up with the progress of the film. The website was also promoted through occasional features on CBBC’s Blue Peter programme, leading to large numbers of children discovering the project independently and engaging with the project online. More than 25,000 children signed up to become members of the Tate Movie website.

The project had a very wide reach, as in addition to the children who were able to engage directly, in workshops or online, many more watched The Itch of the Golden Nit during its cinema release, or on CBBC. It was the first time such a high profile partnership had been formed to deliver a project for children, and this partnership was essential to the project’s success, with each partner bringing expertise in a different aspect – Tate in gallery education with young people, Aardman in animation and film-making, and CBBC who could reach huge numbers of young people, while the individual local gallery partners targeted the project to hard-to-reach
children who would not otherwise participate. Galleries were able to define hard-to-reach in the way which best suited their local circumstances, and as a result were able to fit the project strategically with their own community engagement strategies.

The opportunity provided by the Cultural Olympiad was vital in encouraging the project partners to think very ambitiously about the potential scale and quality of the project in the development stages, in pulling together such a high profile partnership, and in providing the project with a generous budget which enabled its extensive reach and very high production values. However the extent to which the Olympiad acted as a driver for participation is less clear, especially as the project was delivered in 2010 and 2011.

While it is too early to say what the legacy will be, the project has created a model for children’s participation in animation and film-making which could be rolled out in future, and tested a range of approaches to teaching these technical skills with a young age group. The dedicated website is now closed, and children are being directed towards Tate Kids online, and to Aardman’s Animate It! Site. Tate are in the process of adding Tate Movie’s animation software features to Tate Kids so that children can continue to make animation using Tate as a portal. The success of the project is likely to have a significant impact on how Tate work and communicate with children in the future.
London 2012
Cultural Olympiad Evaluation

Appendix 4 | Case Studies

Stories of the World

25 April 2013

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1. Case overview: Stories of the World

Stories of the World was a major contribution to the Cultural Olympiad by the UK museum sector. Museums across the UK developed exhibitions with international themes, intended to ‘welcome the world’ to the UK in 2012. It was one of the original London 2012 cultural bid projects, presented at the time as the ‘International Exhibition programme’, and was also launched as part of the original 10 ‘Major Projects’ for the Cultural Olympiad in 2008.

Stories of the World involved 61 museums, diverse in their size and structure, and including national museums, major partner museums (formerly hub museums), independents and local authority museum services. Over 22,000 young people were involved as participants in Stories of the World programmes, with more attending events and exhibitions. The programme created 130 exhibitions and around 5000 events.

The programme was intended to create change across the sector, testing and embedding new practice in engaging people with collections. Dame Liz Forgan’s vision for the project, published in the call to museums to apply to participate (September 2008) stated that:

The project aims to have three lasting effects: the UK’s treasures will acquire a richer meaning for everyone who sees them in future; new thinking will be applied to traditional museum display; a young generation will connect in a new and deeper way with their own and their neighbours’ heritage.

The programme was therefore designed to push forward progress on two key museum agendas: opening up interpretation of the collections to reflect a range of perspectives; and reaching young people, traditionally a hard-to-engage audience across the sector.

The vision enabled museums to be flexible in the way they chose to interpret Stories of the World for their own venues and audiences. However there were some common elements which were understood by museums to be at the heart of delivering Stories of the World:

- Involving young people as decision makers in museums, and giving them creative control
- Young people (aged 14 to 24) working directly with museum collections
- A focus on international collections
- Partnership working with source and diaspora communities
- Enhancing information held on collections databases
- Staging exhibitions
- Use of digital media and technology
- Staff training and development opportunities
- Revision of organisational policies on learning and access, and collections management.

1.1 Evaluation Methodology

This report explores how museums experienced Stories of the World, and the impacts the programme has had on individual project participants and on participating museums and the wider sector. It includes an overview of Stories of the World, and six case studies illustrating how the programme has impacted on six very different museums.
It is based on the following:

- End of project returns from participating museums, providing quantitative and qualitative data about their *Stories of the World* activity
- A number of project evaluations carried out by participating museums or regional clusters at different stages of the programme
- Telephone or face to face interviews with fifteen staff across six museums, and the project manager at National Youth Agency
- Focus groups with young participants in Leeds City Museum and the Geffrye Museum
- Telephone interviews with two members of the national youth steering group for *Stories of the World*
- Attendance at the *Stories of the World* conference held at Museum of London in October 2012
- Background information provided by ACE, including the programme outline and criteria, evaluation frameworks, and communications guidance.

### 1.2 Headline findings

- The research found that *Stories of the World* had made significant progress towards delivering the original project vision. There were lots of examples of good practice across the programme.
- *Stories of the World* has led to a significant shift in the ambition and quality of museums’ participatory work with young people
- Museums had added interpretative material to their collections databases, and in some cases had enriched their collections with new accessioned material or specifically commissioned work.
- The extensive involvement of young people in exhibition design has pushed museums to innovate in how they display and interpret objects to the benefit of all visitors.
- Young people had been enthused and engaged in exploring collections, including using databases and working in collections stores, far beyond the original expectations of museum staff.
- *Stories of the World* has opened up valuable paid and unpaid work experience opportunities for young people, leading some to re-evaluate their education and career options.
- Participating in *Stories of the World* built the confidence and self belief of young people.
- There was some anecdotal evidence that *Stories of the World* exhibitions were driving increased visits from young people to the participating museums. However there was no evidence which suggested that *Stories of the World* exhibitions had led to increased audiences overall.
- As a result of the project, some museums have worked differently, and in many cases these changes in practice are becoming embedded. There is a commitment to continued co-curation with young people and to widening this work out to other audiences, in some cases backed up by restructuring, rewriting of strategies and policies, and continued facilitation of advisory panels of young people.
- As a result of the programme, museum staff with responsibility for youth and community engagement have been able to work much more closely and effectively with colleagues from other disciplines.
- The programme has led to some skills development through the upskilling of staff in two areas: collections management and youth engagement, as a result of programme wide support commissioned from Collections Trust and National Youth Agency.
1.3 Project Activity

Projects reported delivering a wide variety of activities as part of their *Stories of the World* programming:

*Co-curating*

All of the museums involved young people in co-curating exhibitions with their staff, although they interpreted this differently, and some went further than others in the extent to which they gave young people decision making responsibility and access to the collections. Co-curating involved young people in researching objects and choosing which ones were to be displayed, writing text for exhibition panels, and making and commissioning creative content for the exhibitions. Sometimes in order to do this, young people had to be trained in object handling, security and database management to the same standard as new members of staff. Most museums chose to create temporary exhibitions, but some, including Museums Sheffield and Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, worked with young people to redevelop permanent galleries. Using the Revisiting Collections approach, young people’s responses to objects were recorded within collections databases for future use.

*Advisory panels*

Many museums recruited young people to participate in advisory panels which operated as steering groups for *Stories of the World* activity. The young people who joined these access panels took part in projects, effectively operated as youth steering groups for each museum. Many museums established these groups with the intention that they would continue beyond the end of the 2012 exhibition, and they have carried out a range of activities, including advising on new capital development plans, reviewing museum policies, and auditing the quality of museum interactive materials.

*Internships and paid consultants*

Several museums offered internships or extended work experience opportunities to young people. Many of these were taken up by students on MA courses in Museum Studies, for example the Geffrye Museum, and Ironbridge Gorge Museum. MA students also took up opportunities to participate in projects alongside younger group members, where they were able to lead elements of projects and be positive role models and mentors for other young people.

Some museums offered paid ‘consultant’ roles to young people, in return for them taking on additional responsibility within projects, such as carrying out background research or consulting other young people. This practice has been embedded in some organisations, with both London Transport Museum and the Geffrye Museum identifying new tasks for their paid consultants.

*International exchanges & global theming*

All of the *Stories of the World* projects focused on global themes, and how the collections in UK museums shed light on the UK’s connections to the rest of the world. Museums chose to explore these links in a variety of ways. In Manchester and Luton, residential trips were organised to India and Pakistan respectively. Other museums developed relationships with international museums leading to object loans for *Stories of the World* exhibitions, for example Leicester’s museums service borrowed objects from the China National Silk Museum. Several works were commissioned from international artists and accessioned into museum collections. Other museums worked directly with source communities. For example Brighton Museum delivered a football project which involved filming with young people in Mali. Many more museums engaged
with local diaspora communities. A relatively small number of museums developed projects which involved young people meeting and working directly with local BME communities, for example Durham Oriental Museum’s young people interviewed elders from the Newcastle Chinese community. Other museums indicated that they saw this as a natural progression from their Stories of the World activity, which they intended to explore further.

Creative activities

Young people were involved in a huge variety of creative activities through Stories of the World, including:

- animation
- visual arts
- designing and making digital and hands-on interactives for use on gallery
- graphic design (exhibition panels and marketing material)
- spoken word/poetry
- photography
- flashmobs
- pottery and ceramics
- banner design
- jewellery design
- music composition
- comic books
- film
- audio guides/tours
- tour guiding
- gardening
- event management
- running creative workshops for young people and families

Working with hard-to-reach young people

The initial criteria for inclusion within Stories of the World specified that each partner museum should work with young people aged between 14 and 24, and specified a range of activities they should have the opportunity to take part in, which was based on early consultation carried out by the National Youth Agency (NYA). There was no specific requirement to engage young people from disadvantaged or hard-to-reach groups, and some museum staff interviewed felt that by definition, young people were hard to reach regardless of their background. However some museums did seek to address local needs and work with disadvantaged young people. For example, Norwich Castle Museum worked extensively with young people in the care system, and Brighton Museum worked with young people with mental health issues and a group who lived on a local housing estate and did not engage with the city’s cultural provision.

1.3.1 Impacts on Young People

A range of impacts on young people have been identified, through projects’ own evaluation and monitoring, and through the focus groups and interviews carried out as part of this research. An evaluation framework was devised by Collections Trust in 2009, and a later, simplified version was circulated later. While the intention was to collect data at annual intervals throughout the project, this was not done consistently and only one project wide data collection exercise took place, in August 2012. Not all projects who returned data in 2012 could provide evidence of impact on participants. This reflects a lack of evaluation activity, or in some cases evaluation...
which was still ongoing and not yet available, rather than a lack of impact. Based on the available information, we can confidently describe the impacts of *Stories of the World* on participating young people in the following ways.

Firstly, young people extended their knowledge and understanding of museum collections. They were able to gain in depth knowledge about particular objects and collections, evidenced by their ability to write text for exhibition labels or otherwise respond to them creatively. The project also gave them an understanding of the purpose of museums and how they operate, something many young people had not considered before. They were actively engaged in thinking about the ethics of collecting and display. Several of the projects took comparisons between historical periods and contemporary life, or British and global cultures, as a key theme, for example the Museum of London’s exhibition on Roman London, and Durham Oriental Museum’s Made in China exhibition. Young people were engaged in making connections and considering the relevance of museum objects to their own lives and identities.

Participants described a range of personal impacts resulting from their engagement with *Stories of the World*. They had become more confident in their own abilities, developing self-belief, and were more able to communicate with others in a variety of ways, including learning how to work with other young people in teams, and how to speak in public. Tour guiding seems to have been particularly beneficial as a way of encouraging young people to consolidate their new knowledge and develop their confidence.

Interviewees also referenced specific positive impacts in practical terms. They had been given an insight into how to behave in professional working environments, and learnt basic office skills which they felt would be valuable later on. Some had gained work experience (whether paid or unpaid) specific to their chosen career, mostly in museums, but also through the museum linking them to other organisations. For school and college students, *Stories of the World* provided rich experiences which they could draw on when filling out university application forms.

There were a number of specific anecdotal examples which emerged through the evaluation process:

- a young volunteer at the Geffrye Museum who secured a job at a top London hotel
- a young woman who has completed two engineering placements after London Transport Museum helped her make contacts at Transport for London
- an unemployed volunteer at National Museum of Scotland who is now steward at Lauriston Castle
- a participant at National Museums Scotland who was facing homelessness and severe mental health problems, now making a strong recovery and back at school.

### 1.3.2 Impacts on Museums

Museum staff interviewed for our selected case studies were confident that *Stories of the World* had been a transformational project for their organisations, and would have a long term impact on the day to day practice of their museums. This was resulting from a change in the culture and the attitudes of staff towards public engagement work. Much of the fear around working with young people and opening up collections had been removed, and this way of working was generally seen to be of benefit.

This cultural shift was twofold: firstly, senior managers were engaged in the *Stories of the World* projects and interested in their progress, because of their strategic profile across the sector. *Stories of the World* offered an opportunity to be supported to experiment with new thinking
about how to involve communities in interpreting collections. Secondly, the projects pushed staff from different departments to work together. Typically, community engagement projects are managed via outreach or learning officers and do not extensively involve curators. *Stories of the World* has broken down barriers between museum departments and increased shared understanding. Curators have worked directly with young people, while learning officers have learnt how to use collections databases and access stores.

There is considerable evidence of professional skills development happening formally through *Stories of the World*, as all of the projects accessed NYA Hear By Right training, with eight museums gaining bronze or silver awards for their participatory work, and many also took part in Revisiting Collections training run by the Collections Trust. As most of the staff interviewed expected to work in this way again, and continue to involve young people and local communities in the interpretation of the collections, this training and support programme has clearly been effective in enhancing staff skills and confidence. However it is not clear to what extent this shift has taken place across the programme, and some museums may have moved much further than others towards this new model.

1.3.3 **Success Factors and Lessons Learned**

Members of museum staff interviewed as part of this research highlighted a number of successful methodologies they had adopted which they felt had contributed to the effective delivery of their projects. These were:

- acting immediately on young people’s suggestions – where they were simple to complete, and would improve the visitor experience
- being open-minded about recruitment – projects can have a positive impact on young people regardless of whether they identify themselves as interested in museums, or are aiming towards a related career
- having confidence that the objects and their stories would engage young people
- having high expectations of young people – ‘the more you expect of young people, the more they achieved’
- the importance of having staff with a youth engagement specialism, to recruit participants, facilitate relationships between young people and other museum staff, and develop partnerships in the community
- restructuring project development timetables so that there would always be something for the young people to do
- creating structures and progression routes which enable young people to remain engaged over a long period, but also creating short projects to draw young people in or reach more disadvantaged participants
- allowing young people to shape their projects to meet their own needs in terms of skills development and learning.

1.4 **Programme Structure**

*Stories of the World* was originally led by a project board, chaired by Dame Liz Forgan and including representation from LOCOG and MLA. The board was disbanded in 2010 as the programme was established. Museums were chosen to be part of *Stories of the World* through an application process overseen by the project board, with the final decision resting with LOCOG, who were responsible for allowing projects to use the branding licence. While this designation did not come with funding, successful applicants were allowed to use *Stories of the World* branding on their project publicity, and could access training and support to develop their programmes.
Stories of the World developed two strategic relationships, commissioning agencies to enable organisations to embed new practice rather than running one-off projects. The Collections Trust delivered training on their Revisiting Collections scheme, which works with museums to help them open up their collections to community groups and external experts, building a new understanding of their significance. National Youth Agency delivered training in youth engagement based around their Hear By Right framework, which supports organisations to put young people’s voice at the heart of service delivery. They also facilitated a national youth steering group for the project.

The programme was delivered regionally, with each region adopting a theme which was interpreted flexibly by participating museums. For example in London, each of the four hub museums took a theme (Home, Identity, Journeys, and Place) which they then explored with smaller partner museums. The North West focused on textiles, while Scotland focused on global music.

Funding for Stories of the World came from a variety of sources, with the largest amounts invested by the Renaissance programme and Heritage Lottery Fund. The projects therefore had to align to the strategic priorities of Renaissance and other funders, as well as organisational strategies and the overarching aims of LOCOG and MLA/ACE.

NYA Hear By Right

In order to ensure that Stories of the World was a catalyst for longer term change in museums, NYA were commissioned to deliver training on a regional basis. This was based on their Hear By Right framework, which enables organisations to audit their practice in terms of youth involvement, and to develop appropriate action plans to improve their practice.

The research identified that museum staff valued the Hear By Right training, finding it valuable in shaping their projects in the early stages, and making sure that staff from a range of departments understood the strategic aims. Across the Stories of the World programme, staff from senior management teams, curatorial departments, marketing and design as well as learning, accessed Hear By Right training.

Hear By Right is based on framing young people not as participants but as leaders of their projects, and this happened at all levels of Stories of the World, including individual museum access panels, regional steering groups and fora for young people, and the National Steering Group. This was administered by National Youth Agency, and involved around nine young people (with some fluctuation in membership) in developing events which brought national partners together and raised the profile of the programme. The group organised two conferences, one based in Leeds in 2011, and one in London in October 2012, which explored the good practice which had emerged from the programme and the next steps necessary to secure a lasting legacy. The national steering group also organised a Parliamentary reception for Stories of the World.

For the steering group members, this was a valuable opportunity to find out about other projects and ways of working, to swap ideas and to gain from being part of a major national programme. They felt that the steering group was genuinely youth led. The conferences and the Parliament events had been highlights for the young people who led them. They also spent time working on a manifesto for young people in museums, which sets out a core set of principles for youth led practice, in order to ensure that Stories of the World has a significant nationwide impact. They are still exploring options for rolling out the manifesto, possibly in partnership with Kids in Museums.

However there was some concern amongst staff that the national steering group did not have the impact it could have achieved, because the young people were geographically disparate and
lacked opportunities to get together. There was some confusion about whether they were representing their region as well as their own local museum, and their ability to act as regional representatives depended to a great extent on how effectively their region’s museums were co-ordinating and communicating their activities.

Collections management

One of the key objectives of Stories of the World was to engage a wider range of people in interpreting museum collections: young people, source and diaspora communities, and experts and academics outside the museums sector and outside the UK. Collections Trust training programmes based on their Revisiting Collections framework were rolled out across the programme.

As a result, museum staff reported that there had been significant change in the way objects were researched, and this research was documented, in Stories of the World projects.

Additional information has been added to collections databases, as a result of young people and curators carrying out further research. In some museums, digital versions of young people’s creative responses have been documented and linked to specific objects on the database. For example the Geffrye Museum have young people’s films uploaded onto their collections database. Museums have also collated responses from source and diaspora communities, so that databases now contain interpretative content from varied cultural perspectives.

This material was used extensively in Stories of the World exhibitions, and led to changes in the way museums labelled objects within them. For example Durham’s young curators developed a three tier labelling system which provided traditional curatorial interpretation, young people’s perspectives and Chinese community perspectives for each object, presented on bilingual text panels. This is an approach which Durham Oriental Museum staff are keen to repeat in future exhibitions.

Regional co-ordination

There were mixed reactions to the regional structure of the programme amongst the staff interviewed. There was praise for the regional co-ordinators who had taken responsibility for driving the development of the programme in the early stages, developing curatorial themes, bringing partners together, arranging training and sharing of best practice and commissioning evaluation. Yorkshire and London were highlighted as good examples of effective regional co-ordination. The programme had clearly been extensively affected at local and regional level by the transfer from MLA to ACE which happened in 2011, and the uncertainty which preceded it. In London, the regional project manager post was lost midway through the programme, and while staff in cluster museums stepped in to share the regional co-ordination between them, it is clear that the projects had a stronger evaluation process and higher funding levels from 2009 to 2011 than they did towards the end of the programme. Staff reported that the extent to which the regional themes stayed relevant varied across the country, as projects evolved and were influenced by young people in each individual museum.

Funding was a concern for staff throughout the programme. In most cases interviewees had been able to access adequate funding, often at higher levels than was usually available to their special exhibitions programme. However the mixture of funding sources meant that each project was working towards a complex range of local, regional and national agendas. They highlighted the complexity of working on a programme which was layered with local community and youth organisation partners, a regional partnership programme, and an overarching national structure,
when each of these layers was unstable and subject to changes due to restructuring and shifting political priorities.

This picture was complicated further by the evolution of *Stories of the World* as it developed. While the central theme – engaging young people and communities with world cultures collections – remained a constant throughout the project – other aspects shifted considerably, such as the concept of *Stories of the World* as a ‘Great Exhibition’ for 2012.

### 1.4.1 National programme success factors

The research identified a number of factors which enabled *Stories of the World* to deliver meaningful shifts in attitudes and practice across the museums sector. These were:

- the programme’s insistence that participating museums should set up mechanisms for consultation and engagement of young people at the core of their organisation, and not just to inform specific projects
- the length of the *Stories of the World* programme enabled partnership development and experimentation and embedded new ways of working
- the requirement for staff at all levels and in all departments, to engage with the programme
- flexibility in the model, which allowed museums to exploit the strengths of their collections and meet local strategic priorities and the needs of young people and communities
- strategic support offered on an equitable basis across the country through Hear By Right and Revisiting Collections
- the deadline imposed by each museum’s creation of an exhibition for 2012 sustained momentum throughout the project despite funding and other uncertainties

### 1.4.2 National programme – key challenges

This was a complex programme delivered in a time of uncertainty for the sector, and staff identified a number of challenges which affected the delivery of their projects.

Firstly, the programme had a confusing number of themes and aims, seeking to change museum practice in relation to young people, source and diaspora communities, world collections, interpretation on gallery, digital technologies, regional partnership working, international partnership working, workforce development and so on. One interviewee stated that he would have preferred the programme to be ‘about one big thing’. Staff found projects difficult to deliver when they tried to meet all of these varied priorities, especially when they also tried to factor in other agendas, such as local authority strategies for young people.

Secondly, the nature of the exhibitions created, which were mostly based around objects held in museum stores, and creative interpretation by young people, while high in quality, did not drive significant numbers of visitors. While an estimated 3 million people saw *Stories of the World* exhibitions, individual museums did not report higher visitor numbers against their own benchmarks. However anecdotaly, they did believe that young people were visiting their museums in greater numbers to visit *Stories of the World* exhibitions, possibly as a result of word of mouth recommendations.
Thirdly, the lack of secure funding for the programme was a significant issue, as was the changeover from MLA to ACE. Staff praised the programme managers at MLA and ACE for being approachable, positive and supportive throughout the process. However it was difficult for projects to engage in long term strategic planning in these circumstances, and there was not a smooth build-up of activity, profile and funding as 2012 got closer. There were practical impacts for museums resulting from these changes. Managers were concerned about the amount of time project staff were spending on paperwork as they were reporting to multiple funders. Removing MLA branding from materials created through the project was also an issue.

The evaluation of *Stories of the World* was similarly affected by these changes. The programme was evaluated from the start, but the evaluation framework was amended midway through the project, and data collection activity was not contracted out as anticipated. As a result the quality of evaluation and monitoring is patchy, with some organisations having commissioned extensive evaluation while others have self-evaluated, and some have collected the bare minimum of quantitative data. Regional approaches to evaluation varied, with some regions collating their data into one regional return while others offered venue by venue data.

### 1.5 *Stories of the World* and the Cultural Olympiad

All of the interviewees were confident that the *Stories of the World* would not have happened without the Cultural Olympiad. The situation of *Stories of the World* within the Cultural Olympiad drove project managers to be more ambitious, raised the status and profile of youth engagement and co-curating approaches within their museums, and provided staffing and funding at a time when it would otherwise have been very difficult to secure. They were keen to participate because they knew that the opportunity would not come up again. They noted how participation in the Cultural Olympiad had created strategic buy-in for the project at senior management level and the deadline created by the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games prevented projects from drifting. Museum staff also reported that the link to the Olympic Games was a hook which helped them to engage young people in the projects, because they wanted to be part of a national initiative and assumed that the quality would be high. However in the main, *Stories of the World* did not make direct thematic connections to the Games. The exceptions include Ironbridge Gorge, which themed much of its programming around sport, the Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology, who created a project on the Ancient Greek Olympic Games, and Museums Luton, which ran an object exchange programme through approaches to Olympic and Paralympic committees. Further, the Cultural Olympiad opened doors for museums which were seeking to make new international connections, giving their projects weight and credibility.

There were a number of issues which arose from *Stories of the World* being part of the Cultural Olympiad. Many of these related to the branding and marketing of activity, and examples include:

- The University of Durham’s legal department initially advising Durham Oriental Museum not to participate, because they would have to sign a contract which threatened unlimited fines for breaching the branding regulations.
- Several interviewees felt that the London 2012 Festival, which only included four *Stories of the World* exhibitions, had a negative impact on the profile of the programme. One interviewee stated that ‘the Olympics were so massive that *Stories of the World* never had a chance to compete’.
- It was difficult for museums to acknowledge their local partners because of LOCOG guidelines.
Interviewees did not report the Cultural Olympiad being a significant motivating factor for participating young people after the initial connection had been made, and described the positive and negative aspects of the Cultural Olympiad as finely balanced.

The Cultural Olympiad was a benefit because it was timed. It was a hook for the young people to be part of something big. But you had to start by explaining to young people what the Cultural Olympiad was – they needed to be a bit more savvy about branding it. It was hard for young people to understand why if they were such an important part of the Cultural Olympiad, they couldn’t get involved in other things such as the Torch Relay, difficult to manage their expectations. (Museum project manager)

One young person from the national steering group summed up the role of the Cultural Olympiad thus:

It gave us a platform but we need to make sure we don’t need to wait for another big celebration to make it happen again.

1.6 The Legacy of Stories of the World

Museum staff referenced a range of ways that Stories of the World learning and practice will continue to be implemented across the sector.

Firstly, staff are now trained and experienced in working with communities as co-curators. There is also a cohort of graduates and postgraduates whose earliest experience of working in the sector has involved immersion in these new approaches. However there was some concern at the uncertain future facing many staff who had delivered youth engagement and curatorial roles within Stories of the World, as funding streams from Renaissance come to an end.

Staff referenced a range of ways they would like to build on Stories of the World practice in the future, including: using consultation panels to advise on future strategy; creating projects in which young people and diaspora communities work together to interpret collections; widening out the methodology to other groups including local history societies and community organisations; developing projects with more challenging groups of young people. All of the case study museums were actively seeking funding to create staffing structures to embed the new practice. Some were completing evaluation documents, advocacy materials and toolkits for publication, to share their practice with others. A number of museums referenced practical steps they would be taking to embed Stories of the World practice, for example adding youth engagement to staff forward job plans and involving young people in the recruitment of relevant staff (Horniman Museum), and supporting young people to form their own constituted group (Hackney Museum).

Several interviewees referenced the impact the project had had on partnership working, and were looking for opportunities to continue to work with their regional and local partners. The centenary of the outbreak of the First World War in 2014 is an obvious focus for museums seeking to work together. Museums Sheffield has signed a formal partnership agreement with University of Sheffield for the next four years. At national level, there is potential for the steering group’s work around developing a young people’s manifesto for museums to continue to be rolled out, possibly through engagement with Kids in Museums.
2. Dedicated case studies

2.1 Project: Journeys of Discovery
Museum: Durham Oriental Museum

At Durham Oriental Museum, 289 young people have immersed themselves in the museum’s extensive collection of Eastern art, from Egyptian mummies to Japanese Manga. They have worked on a variety of short term projects, and curated two large scale exhibitions, one on illness and medicine, and another in 2012 which focused on the museum’s Chinese collections. The exhibitions were curated by a core group, made up of local young people working alongside MA students from the University of Durham’s Museum and Artefact Studies course, and involved 36 representatives from the local Chinese community. In addition to the positive impacts of participation for young people, Stories of the World has been a significant learning and development process for staff at the museum.

Durham Oriental Museum is part of the University of Durham. Collecting began at the university in the 1940s in order to support the teaching of the School of Oriental Studies, and there is now a substantial collection of objects representing the art and cultures of the Middle East, India, China and South East Asia, housed in a purpose built museum on campus. The museum has previously run community projects worked with young people, largely run by the learning team, but on a limited basis. Stories of the World offered the museum an opportunity to increase the scale of its engagement with young people, and to test out new approaches which involved the whole staff team.

From the start, the Durham team were committed to placing curatorial practice at the heart of their Stories of the World project. They developed a set of objectives for their Stories of the World projects stating that they would:

- be youth-led, -directed and -curated
- open up collections in their entirety
- be object intensive
- involve source and diaspora communities, and
- think about objects in new ways, including digital.

This focus on curatorial practice influenced decisions about how the projects should work. Firstly, the museum made a decision to train the young people in object handling, and database management, using their staff induction training as a framework. Once the young people had been trained, they were given extensive, supervised access to the museum’s database and the collection stores. The comprehensive nature of this training was of significant benefit as it allowed young people to approach the project as a curator would, leading to less intervention from staff and a greater sense of empowerment and deeper outcomes for the young people. For example, the young people made their own assessments of which items were too fragile to be displayed, and devised alternative solutions such as using photographs and animation on gallery. This approach also had the benefit of freeing up time, as objects were viewed by young people in situ and did not have to be moved for handling purposes.

Training and access to the object database enabled the young curators to develop an overview of all the material which was potentially available to them, and to make informed decisions about the themes they wanted to explore in depth. While curators had concerns that using the database would be perceived as ‘dry’ or ‘boring’ by the young people, it was actually one of the most successful elements of the methodology. Giving young curators extensive access to the database and collections stores meant that exhibition objects were chosen from store, and each...
exhibition enabled the public to see new objects which would not ordinarily be on display. Disruption to the museum’s permanent galleries was minimised.

Young people had a rounded experience of the collections, and experienced best practice approaches to interpreting objects, when they worked directly with the Chinese community to help them curate the Made in China exhibition. Regular meetings were held between the young curators and members of the North East Chinese Association, Teikyo University of Japan, and Chinese Student Association of Durham. Joanna Walker, aged 18, has developed ambitions to travel to China and study its culture as a result of her contact with the Chinese community in Newcastle. Other young people who took part in the project have since applied to the University of Durham for undergraduate study, or have developed ambitions to work in museums.

Staff at the museum are confident that this approach, in which young people have been treated as equal collaborators, has had a significant impact on their development. They have been trusted and given responsibility, and as a result have achieved much more than they thought they were capable of, developing their time-keeping and organizational skills, making new friendships, and learning how to speak in public.

*Stories of the World* has had an equally significant impact on the museum. Firstly, the museum is rethinking its approach to working with young people, and is currently seeking funding for new posts with the learning team in order to embed the *Stories of the World* methodology and enable future projects to be delivered with youth involvement. Secondly, the museum will adopt some of the fresh thinking on interpretation which was developed by the young curators. For example, the young curators devised a triple-layered labelling system for objects, featuring the database description, their own interpretation, and content from the Chinese community. All of the exhibition labelling and publicity was produced in English and Chinese. They also tested and adopted the RNIB penfriend as an alternative to traditional audio guides.

At a more strategic level, the project has been valuable in raising the profile of the museum within the university, something which museum staff credit partly to the Cultural Olympiad, as for some time *Stories of the World* was the university’s only project linked to the London 2012 Games. Over time, the museum has demonstrated clear links to the university’s strategic aims, particularly with reference to attracting more young people from the local area to apply to study there. The North East and Humber region has the lowest levels of participation in higher education in the UK, and it was hoped that the MA students may act as role models for the young participants, many of whom were studying for A levels at the time. The MA students benefited from additional work experience in the museums sector, at a time when competition for entry level posts is fierce. This met the university’s strategic commitment to create ‘opportunities for personal development in our residential College communities, ensuring future success and employability’.
2.2 Project: At Home With the World

Museum: The Geffrye Museum of the Home

The Geffrye Museum in Hackney focuses on the urban homes and gardens of the English middle classes. The galleries are presented as a series of living rooms, each decorated in the typical style of the period, from the 1600s through to the 1990s, complemented by a sequence of period gardens and a walled herb garden. The Geffrye has had a long standing commitment to developing a variety of placements and work experience opportunities for young people, and they used their Stories of the World programme to increase the number of placements they offer, and to open up other development opportunities to young people through a youth access panel and paid consultancy roles. Young people took on a significant advisory role in the development of At Home With the World, the Geffrye’s main temporary exhibition for 2012. Enabled by extensive buy-in from senior management, they are now involved in developing plans for the Geffrye’s new capital development scheme.

The Geffrye Museum was part of London’s Stories of the World programme, and led a cluster of smaller museums who all developed work around the theme of ‘home’. This was seen as a significant opportunity for the Geffrye to make a shift from traditional museum practice towards collaborative working. As such, it had strong support from the Geffrye’s director and senior management team. In the early stages of Stories of the World, the director was involved at regional level, and senior staff from all departments took part in NYA’s Hear By Right training programme. Strategically, the Geffrye had a number of aims for its involvement in Stories of the World. They wanted to create a more audience focused approach to programming, in exhibitions as well as public programmes, moving participation out of the education department and establishing it as practice in all audience facing departments. They also wanted to improve cross-departmental working within the organisation. There were also specific aims relating to the development of their existing programmes for young people: improving their skills; raising their awareness of opportunities in museums; and bringing them into the museum as audiences.

Prior to Stories of the World, the Geffrye had an established programme for young people, mainly structured around projects with youth groups and provision of activities at weekends and holidays. They had also established a team of young tour guides, many of whom were Hackney residents. As a starting point for Stories of the World, they established a youth panel, recruiting through their website, flyer distribution and networking with local youth organisations and agencies. The panel met at the museum regularly, and successfully developed a range of projects. For example, they designed and ran a day of family activities which attracted a high number of visitors. They also worked on a number of digital projects, including the design of gallery interactives, made short films, and collected stories. Many of the project’s digital outputs have now been added to the collections database. In addition to the work of the panel, a number of other creative projects, many based on poetry and film, were developed with local youth organisations.

A smaller number of young consultants was recruited from the pool of young people who had previously engaged with the Geffrye. They were paid to attend additional meetings with staff, to carry out background research and consult with other young people, and to take on a more structured role in delivering the project. There were also three paid internships created for young people who had completed museum related MA courses. The interns took on specific roles in either learning or curatorial departments, working on Stories of the World projects.

It is clear that the process of working with young people so extensively over a long period, supported by a staff training programme which reached across departments, has successfully built trust between museum staff and young people, evidenced by the fact that the young people were allowed to run public tours of the collections stores during the At Home With The World
exhibition. The involvement of young people in shaping *Stories of the World* as advisers and consultants is considered by the museum to be a very effective way of working, and there is a desire to extend this approach to other audiences. The Geffrye is committed to continuing with its provision of training for young people via internships and placements. They have a comprehensive programme of placements for young people from KS4 to post MA level. Currently, they are bidding to the HLF Skills for the Future fund to create four new training posts including roles in learning, collections management and heritage gardening.

However the immediate impact to the museum has been in changing the way in which it carries out strategic planning and development work. Young people who took part in a research focus group were confident that the Geffrye took them seriously, listened to them, and acted on their feedback. They meet regularly with the museum’s director.

> I think to start with not necessarily in the education department but in other parts of the museum that were working with us, to start with they didn’t know what to expect from us, and now I think they really value our opinions, so that shows that by getting involved in the development of the museum, we have made a valuable contribution for the future. (Focus group participant)

The Geffrye is currently developing a major capital project requiring significant external fundraising, and the youth panel has been very involved in that process. They are given access to documentation such as draft funding applications, and encouraged to suggest additions and amendments. They have met the project’s architects to discuss their ideas, and visited the architects’ office to view the model. One focus group participant stated that ‘when we give our opinion or idea they put that idea in’, and it was clear that the group felt they were making valuable contributions to the project. The group are also being consulted about education policy and activity planning.

As a result, Alison Lightbown, Head of Learning and Education at the Geffrye, describes the venue as ‘outward looking and audience focused, because *Stories of the World* has built our confidence’.
2.3 Project: Treasured: Smuggled, Stolen, Saved?
Museum: Leeds City Museum

*Treasured: Smuggled, Stolen, Saved?* was an exhibition curated by young people at Leeds City Museum. It explored how objects in the collections had travelled to Yorkshire, raising questions about the ethics of collecting, and asking visitors to make up their own minds about these contested issues. Through the process of curating the exhibition, staff and young people engaged in detailed discussions about the objects on a case by case basis to decide on the most appropriate way to interpret and display contentious material. This has demonstrated the need for updated collections policies which reflect changes in museum practice and wider society since they were originally written.

Leeds City Museum ran a number of projects under the banner of *Stories of the World*, as part of the Yorkshire region’s programme. Titled *Precious Cargo*, the regional programme sought to explore how objects from around the world have become precious items of Yorkshire heritage. While Leeds had a strong track record in developing outreach and community engagement projects with socially excluded groups, they had done little previous work with young people outside their formal learning programme. This was an opportunity to explore whether they could create an offer young people would want to access.

In 2012, after a number of very successful smaller projects, Leeds City Museum offered its largest temporary exhibition space to a group of 17 young people, recruited through schools, colleges, word of mouth and open days at the museum. They worked closely with the museum’s Learning and Access Officer and curatorial team to explore the collections stores to identify objects with interesting histories, and particularly journey stories. The objects they chose ranged widely and included items from anthropological and natural history collections. They then created an imaginatively presented exhibition, which welcomed visitors into an ‘airport’ themed introductory area before taking them on a journey around the collections. The young people delivered all of the tasks necessary to stage this exhibition, including developing themes and content, writing text, designing marketing and family programmes, and installing the exhibition itself.

Young people were very keen to explore how objects came to be in the museum’s collection, and this became the theme of the exhibition. Having chosen this theme, the objects they wanted to show were inevitably contentious and challenging. For example they included human remains, objects taken from tombs, and objects illicitly traded. The curatorial team did not seek to avoid controversial or difficult subject matter, and instead welcomed the opportunity to open up discussion and work through the issues together with the young people as equal partners in a process.

Two examples serve to illustrate the type of issues which arose through this process:

- The group wanted to use an Ecuadorean shrunken head within the exhibition, in a section which featured human remains. One young member of the team worked closely with the curator and an archaeologist to research the object, and wrote the accompanying text. In a separate project, a group of art students were commissioned to create an animation demonstrating how the head was made and its purpose. Both the group and the marketing professionals working on the exhibition wanted to use the very striking image of the shrunken head on the publicity material for the exhibition. However, museum policy prohibits the use of human remains in an insensitive context, including for promotional purposes.
- Young people wanted to title a section of their exhibition ‘Tomb Raiders’. This was contested by museum staff who felt that the use of such language was inaccurate. However, the
context clearly was that objects in this section had been taken from tombs, and museum staff and young people agreed on a compromise by which the title could be used, if the accompanying text clarified the context.

This process of discussion and negotiation was a huge learning opportunity for both the young people and the museum.

There are artifact human remains that you can put on a poster because they’ve been turned into something else. You can use a mumiform but not a mummy. So we needed to look at the detail of every single object. We weren’t tight enough on policy so we needed to have a dialogue with senior management and some of the curators to decide what to do. The young people came on that journey with us. (Helen Langworthy, Exhibition Curator)

The willingness of the museum to open up dialogue made the exhibition development process much richer and more valuable for the participants. Esther Amis-Hughes, the museum’s access and learning officer, felt that ‘it was valuable that there were problems that we all had to overcome and negotiate. We now have a group of young people that are knowledgeable and really careful and sensitive towards human remains.’

_Treasured_ has led to significant organisational change at Leeds City Museum. Firstly, the visitor welcome for young people has improved significantly, and there is some evidence the numbers of young people visiting this exhibition were higher than other previous exhibitions (although it is difficult to find appropriate figures from previous temporary exhibitions to benchmark against). Museum staff described the young exhibition team as developing a strong sense of ownership of the museum building.

Museum staff across all departments have worked in a completely new way as a result of this project, learning how to let young people take over their job role, and supporting them to be successful without imposing their own views.

People had to step away from something they are trained to do, and love to do, and are paid to do, and let someone else who isn’t trained do it for them. (Helen Langworthy)

They were prepared to make practical changes, such as working evenings and weekends, to meet the requirements of the group. The project laid some fears to rest, particularly assumptions that working with young people, for example on the installation of the exhibition, would create health and safety risks.

When I started the project I had no idea what participation meant, it was a very different way of working for me. Usually I have the creative idea and I call an artist and they make it happen, but this time the young people had the creative idea and I had to make it happen. (Esther Amis-Hughes)

Museum policies and practices have been tested through the process. As a result, it has become apparent that collections policies were not clear enough and did not reflect changes in society, such as the widespread use of the internet. Other policies, such as the museum’s approach to unaccompanied children, have also come under scrutiny, resulting in a ‘more relaxed, commonsense’ approach.

Senior managers within the museum have welcomed the project, and managers have met with the group regularly. They are continuing to meet, and the group is currently working on an audit of interactives across the museum, with recommendations for improvements. They will also be
offered opportunities to work on significant forthcoming programmes: Yorkshire’s response to the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, and a new exhibition about Asia.

2.4  Project: World Stories: Young Voices
Museum: Brighton Museum and Art Gallery

Brighton Museum and Art Gallery chose to use Stories of the World as the catalyst for the full redevelopment of their permanent gallery of world art, including objects from Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Americas. Staff at the museum were concerned that the gallery was too academic in its interpretation and did not engage the majority of visitors. Stories of the World offered an opportunity to reinterpret this gallery in a much more accessible way, using the response of young people and source communities to the objects to open up the collections. The museum recruited a panel of young people to steer the project, and they advised on displays, marketing, and events. The content development was managed through a number of standalone projects, many of which engaged young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The gallery was selected for inclusion in the London 2012 Festival. Evaluation suggests that this led to significant outcomes for the participants. Brighton Museum has now secured a youth engagement officer post until at least 2016 in order to continue this work.

Brighton Museum and Art Gallery is a local authority museum, part of a group of museums across Brighton and Hove operated by Brighton and Hove City Council. For Stories of the World, they focused their attention on their designated world art collection, displayed within the James Green Gallery of World Art. The gallery, which had been redeveloped in 2002, was focused on the visual qualities of the objects, which were spotlit with minimal interpretation. Non user research carried out in 2006 had demonstrated that the gallery was unappealing to young people, and the young people who did visit tended to be art students. Stories of the World offered Brighton Museum an opportunity to revamp this gallery and make it accessible and interesting to a wider audience, and in particular young people. An additional significant consideration was that Brighton and Hove had been identified as an area with particularly high proportions of people not in education, employment or training (NEET), and the City Council’s Employment and Skills Plan had identified this as a priority to be tackled by organisations across the city.

Early audience research carried out for the project suggested that young people and other visitors wanted the same things from the gallery redevelopment – more interactivity, information presented through a range of media and not just text, more contextual information about how the objects came to Brighton, and clearer theming and pathways through the gallery. This meant that the museum could go ahead and involve young people in shaping the gallery, confident that the resulting exhibition would appeal to a wide audience.

The museum developed a core group, the Museums Collective. This group remained constant throughout the project, although some members came and went. They advised on gallery plans, marketing and events. In addition to the work of the collective, a number of projects were developed with groups of young people. These were shorter term projects which resulted in the development of content for display on gallery. These projects sought to work with hard-to-reach young people, including refugees and asylum seekers, and those living in disadvantaged communities.

There are seven ‘stories’ within the gallery, and each one includes interpretation by young people:

• Art in Mind, a group of young people with experience of mental health issues, explored masks and sculpture from Papua New Guinea and made their own sculpture.
• Whitehawk Art Group, based on a housing estate just outside Brighton city centre, investigated a collection of objects from Peru and created a spoken word piece.
• Young people from Albion in the Community, the charitable arm of the local football club, worked on a football themed project which compared their experiences with those of young football fans in Mali.
• Pupils from Year 9 at Patcham High School made a stop-frame animation based on collections from the Arctic.
• A group of young Iranians living in Brighton responded to Iranian objects from the collection and advised on acquisitions of contemporary art from Iran.
• The museum engaged with young people from the Kachin community interviewing young Kachins in Burma and London for a film shown on gallery.
• A group of young refugees and asylum seekers in Brighton worked on photographic projects, and some of their work was featured in the introduction to the gallery.

The gallery development process was evaluated by consultant Nicky Boyd in 2012. She carried out focus groups with young people and interviews with youth workers and key staff (quoted below) which identified the following outcomes for the participants in the projects. The project had successfully changed the attitudes of participants who were not previously museum goers. There was considerable evidence of learning and skills development. Young people were in some cases learning about places and cultures they had never heard of before. They developed a range of practical and creative skills, working with new art forms and learning about how museums work and how exhibitions are developed. They had a sense of pride in their work, and were more comfortable in the museum space, having developed a sense of ownership. Youth workers also felt that they had grown in confidence, become more willing to try new things, and improved their communication skills.

I think they are on some level learning a lot of social skills where they are discussing what has gone on in their lives and how they can cope better with life and their mental health issues and what’s going on there. Again, that’s quite subtle and it’s not necessarily an explicit kind of goal. They are developing those life skills and it’s helping them cope. (Group leader)

Museum staff believe that the project has had a significant impact on their own learning and development which will influence their future practice. The methodology for the project brought learning and curatorial staff together to develop the exhibition, and there has been a growth in understanding across the two disciplines. This was learnt the hard way, and internal evaluation highlighted the need for an open dialogue at the start about the meaning of ‘co-curation’ and clearer agreement about decision making processes. Staff felt that they could have gone further in allowing young people to take the lead and that next time, young people could be more directly involved in choosing objects. In the main, curators chose the themes and objects for inclusion and young people developed the interpretation around them. However one of the most successful mini projects was the football themed section of the gallery, where:

‘the young people had a lot of freedom to decide what went into the galleries and then choose the objects, this was one of our key aims for the whole gallery and it didn’t really happen – but in this one it did, and they really engaged with the subject matter... the subject matter was genuinely relevant to young people’.

The project has demonstrated that involving young people in developing exhibitions and programming can improve the visitor experience for everyone, and that young people’s interests and needs are shared by other visitors. As a result, Brighton Museum and Art Gallery has committed to working with young people in the future, and the post of Youth Engagement Officer has been extended to 2016, enabling the Museums Collective youth panel and further projects.
with disengaged young people to continue. The museum is keen to go further next time, offering young people more decision making power and more responsibility in future programmes, and facilitating joint working between young people and source communities.
2.5 Projects: Truck Art and Vardo Art

2.6 Museums Luton

Museums Luton is part of a cultural trust which also manages Luton’s libraries and arts provision. It comprises Wardown Park Museum and Stockwood Discovery Centre, which boasts an extensive transport collection featuring a large number of cars and carriages. The borough of Luton is very diverse, and includes an urban population, of which around a quarter of residents are Asian. Within the Asian community, about half of these residents are Pakistani. There is also a smaller rural population which lives within the borough, and the history of the local area is rich with rural and traveller community heritage, as well as a more recent industrial heritage linked to manufacturing. However, the diversity of Luton’s population is not reflected in the visitor profile of its museums. Museum staff had long-held aspirations to develop an international profile, and *Stories of the World* offered an opportunity to combine this with a more proactive approach to reaching Luton’s diverse communities. Previous project work had taken place with local young people, but this was not embedded into the organisation’s core activities. The museum staff developed a number of projects which addressed these key opportunities for development, using *Stories of the World* to move forward in delivering their ambitions for the service.

*Truck Art* and *Vardo Art*, two closely connected *Stories of the World* projects, drew parallels between the two folk art traditions. The projects included an extensive international exchange between Haider Ali, a Karachi-based truck artist, and Rory Coxhill, a Bedfordshire-based vardo artist. They combined work with young people, international collaboration in Pakistan, engagement with local Asian communities, and links to the rural and industrial heritage of the borough. They have also enabled the museum to add to its transport collection. For *Truck Art*, the museum sourced a Bedford truck. Bedford trucks were produced in Luton by Vauxhall Motors, and many were exported around the world. In Pakistan, these trucks are still in regular use, often lavishly decorated. As part of the project, six young people went on a residential trip to Lahore and Karachi in Pakistan. The intensive programme of activities included visits to truck yards, usually inaccessible even to local people, workshops at the National College of Art, tours of significant heritage sites, and collecting of objects to bring back to be accessioned into the collection. In Luton, young people worked with Haider Ali and Rory Coxhill to decorate the Bedford truck and the exterior and interior of a vardo, a horse drawn wagon traditionally used by British Romany travellers. Both vehicles are now a permanent part of the museum’s collection. The exhibition was selected for inclusion in the London 2012 Festival.

The young people also curated *Around the World in Eighty Objects*, an exhibition of objects they had selected from the museums’ collections, and developed their own project, *Boater Barter*, in which they swapped traditional English boater hats, manufactured in Luton, for traditional headwear from other countries, through exchanges with their Olympic and Paralympic committees. These hats are now part of the Museums Luton collection.

*Truck Art* involved Luton Museums in the development of a number of new international partnerships. In the UK, staff worked closely with the British Council and the High Commission for Pakistan, with the support of the British Museum, which facilitated introductions to useful contacts. The High Commission sees projects which highlight the strong artistic and cultural heritage of Pakistan as an effective way to promote Pakistan internationally. In Pakistan, with the support of the British Museum, the British Council and the High Commission, staff developed a working relationship with the National College of Art in Lahore, Lahore Museum, and a number of other small arts, heritage and youth organisations. Building these relationships was not an easy process, although the positioning of the project within the Cultural Olympiad was felt to be
helpful in this respect as it gave the project credibility with international partners who were not familiar with Luton Museums.

The residential element of the project was a challenge for museum staff. Staff visited Pakistan on a four-day research trip in order to assess the viability of the young people visiting the country, particularly whether they could ensure their safety. There were considerable risks involved in taking a group of young people to Pakistan, unlike those likely to be encountered in more mainstream destinations, and significant cultural differences between museums in the UK and counterpart organisations in Lahore. Curatorial practice is more traditional in Pakistan, and partners in Lahore initially did not understand why a British museum would be interested in truck decoration as an art form, and were being introduced for the first time to concepts of volunteering and community engagement.

Following the residential, and the completion of the design and decoration element of the project, the museum has displayed the truck and vardo on gallery. A decision has been made not to accession them into the collections, to allow more flexibility in their usage. So far, the truck has been parked outside the British Council’s offices in London, and the vehicles have been displayed at a number of community events in the local area. They have been seen by many people beyond the museum’s core audience.

The project has demonstrated the value of international collaboration to many different aspects of museum practice. As a result of the project, international partnerships are continuing to take shape, and the museum has a network of international contacts which will be a platform for future collaborations. Museums Luton is currently advising the Mansaball Lake Rural Museum project in Shringar, Kashmir.

Closer to home, Stories of the World has had an impact on the way the museum operates. The international dimension to the project, and particularly the opportunity to travel to Pakistan, was a significant draw for young people to participate in museum projects. The truck and vardo have raised the profile of cultural organisations in Luton and created a sustainable platform for future community engagement activity. The project has received significant local press coverage, including features in Asian community media. Strategically, Museums Luton’s support from local funders and stakeholders will increasingly rely on its ability to demonstrate its relevance to the whole community, and the projects have shown how ambitious and international project work can have a strong local impact. Museums Luton have applied for funding to ACE which commits them as an organisation to developing all of their future projects through co-productions, not just with young people, but using the same methodology with Friends groups, local history societies and community organisations. There is an intention to create apprenticeships for young people as part of this new approach. The project’s successful innovations in contemporary collecting have also led to new thinking about what to collect in future to represent the Luton story.
2.7  Project: Mind the Map
Museum: London Transport Museum

London Transport Museum (LTM) is a social history museum which tells the story of London through the growth of its transport system, and engages the public in thinking about the future development of the city. It is situated in the heart of London in Covent Garden. The museum attracts a varied audience of London residents and national and international tourists. However it does not attract an audience of young people from London in significant numbers, as a result of the travel cost into central London and the museum’s entrance charge. Given that these conditions are unlikely to change, LTM’s approach to the Stories of the World programme was to use this opportunity to work with young people to pilot approaches to co-curation and opening up access to the museum which could be appropriate to a much wider range of interest groups and communities. It was therefore considered from its earliest days to be a programme of organisational change.

Prior to Stories of the World, London Transport Museum had run occasional projects with young people, and had an ongoing community programme funded by Renaissance in the Regions, but this was piecemeal and outside the museum’s core activities. In order to embed the work, they designed a project structure which brought young people into the museum as advisors and paid them generous expenses for their time. An initial team of four young consultants was recruited through a structured activity day at the museum, which had been advertised widely through Connexions and in local colleges. Young people were recruited on the basis of their potential to contribute to the project, and according to how much staff felt they would be able to benefit from their involvement. The intention was not to offer opportunities to young people with ambitions to develop a career in the sector.

These consultants then worked with LTM to develop a range of projects. For example, the young consultants devised and delivered family workshops for visitors. For 2012, a team of young people including the young consultants and a wider group of volunteers worked closely with staff to develop Mind the Map, a temporary exhibition which showed maps from the museum’s extensive collection alongside newly commissioned maps by contemporary artists. Young people were extensively involved as the co-curators of the exhibition, researching and choosing maps for display, and designing interpretation and interactives. They were also involved in designing marketing and working with the commissioned artists.

Kway was one of the original team of young consultants, having been told about the recruitment day by a Connexions advisor. She worked on an interactive to capture peoples’ memories and feelings about the London Underground and link them to individual tube stations on a map. At the Mind the Map private view, she performed a spoken word performance with other young people, in front of a large audience. For Kway, who is currently at college on a vocational business course, participation in Stories of the World has been a hugely positive experience, helping her to develop her confidence and learn about how to behave in a working environment with adults. The project has also encouraged her to follow up an emerging interest in engineering as a future career path. Through LTM’s close links to Transport for London, Kway is now being mentored by their Head of Development, and has completed two engineering related work placements. She says that ‘being at the museum opens doors’. Alongside her college course, Kway is continuing her involvement at the museum, working on a project to build partnerships between LTM and youth organisations in West London.

Kway feels that working with the museum has been of great value to her fellow young consultants, who have been able to access useful and interesting opportunities despite having a wide range of interests and future ambitions which at first glance don’t seem to relate directly to museums. Everyone had something to add.
Since the start of the project, twelve consultants have been recruited by London Transport Museum, and over 400 young people have been engaged in the project as participants and volunteers. The project was delivered strategically in order to maximise the chance of its becoming embedded practice, both in terms of ensuring that participation was attractive and of value to young people, and ensuring that it was valued by the museum. The key ways in which this was done were:

- The suggestions of young consultants were acted on quickly. Kway described her surprise at returning to the museum for the first time after her recruitment day, when she found out that her group’s suggested improvements to the lighting of a bus on display had already been implemented. This helped get relations between young people and the museum off to a positive start.
- Staff in the learning team were mindful of the need to support colleagues and young people who were not used to working in this way, and they brokered initial meetings and carefully facilitated activities until everyone felt comfortable.
- Young people worked on projects of strategic significance to the museum, particularly temporary exhibitions and family programmes. The Stories of the World projects were well resourced, which meant that they could be positioned prominently within the museum because the funding allowed for high quality production values.
- Young people worked with curators and got to know the collections, while curatorial staff who were used to teaching had to work with young people in a new, collaborative way, and allow young people to decide on themes and content.
- Mind the Map was experimental in its presentation and content. For example it was LTM’s first experience of engaging with contemporary artists.

Within LTM, participatory projects now have a higher profile. Stories of the World is considered a success, and this has led the board and management team to consider how to take this learning forward to create sustainable organisational change. The board has requested a strategy for young people, which is in development. The learning team has been restructured to create a dedicated management post for schools and young people. Discussions are ongoing about whether this method of collaborative curating could be extended to other audiences and communities.

LTM is now offering a range of opportunities for young people, structured to support their progression. There will be a range of volunteering roles for young people to support the museum’s activities. Some of these volunteers may eventually go on to join the young consultants group. The existing team of young consultants are now being renamed ‘young advisers’, and will lead on developing new projects and partnerships. They will be peer mentors for the new young consultants. The museum is exploring how new participants’ contributions could be accredited through Arts Award. They are also planning to recruit apprentices to develop programming for young people within the museum, and work with the young volunteers. The focus of their activities will shift in comparison to previous interns, as they will be valued for the specific contribution they can make as young people, rather than simply utilised as junior members of staff.
London 2012
Cultural Olympiad Evaluation

Appendix 5 | Case Studies

Creative Jobs Programme

25 April 2013

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1. Introduction and programme overview

The Creative Jobs Programme (CJP) created forty traineeships for young unemployed Londoners, who were hosted by arts organisations across central and East London. These training posts were open to 18-24 year olds who had been on Jobseekers Allowance for at least thirteen weeks, and were targeted at, but not restricted to, residents of the Olympic host boroughs. The intention of the project was to attract young people who were enthusiastic about a career in the arts, willing to learn and had the right attitude, rather than those who had prior experience and/or qualifications.

The core aims of the programme were to:
• Address youth unemployment, particularly in deprived areas of East London
• Improve fair access to entry level jobs in the arts and cultural sector
• Diversify the workforce within the arts and cultural sector.

The project was funded by the London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), Legacy Trust UK, Arts Council England and commercial sponsors BP. It was managed and administered by the Royal Opera House, who drew on previous experience of leading the Cultural Quarter Programme, a Future Jobs Fund training scheme for London based arts organisations.

The scheme was devised with the intention to ensure that the Cultural Olympiad created a long term legacy for young people, especially in East London, and to create a test bed for the future delivery of nationwide programmes of training and apprenticeships for young people in the arts and creative industries. The project was a strategic fit with ACE’s Goal 4: ‘the arts leadership and workforce are diverse and highly skilled’.

All jobs created through the scheme were part time (24 hours per week) six month fixed term contracts and were paid at National Minimum Wage. In addition to the core time spent at their host organisation, the trainees were offered a range of enrichment activities, including a series of compulsory masterclasses, access to a mentor working within the sector, the chance to work on a joint project with other trainees, and the chance to complete a Gold or Silver Arts Award.

1.1 Evaluation Methodology

This case study focuses on the outcomes of the Creative Jobs Programme for trainees, host organisations, and the wider cultural and creative sector. It explores the impact of the scheme’s link to the London 2012 Games and Cultural Olympiad, and draws out success factors and considerations for the development of future arts sector training programmes for young people.

This case study report is based on the following material:
• analysis of data from the job application forms of successful and unsuccessful applicants
• data from a survey and exercises completed by successful applicants on induction day, exploring motivations, hopes and fears, and previous awareness of the Cultural Olympiad
• data from an online survey of trainees at the midpoint of their placement, self assessing their job readiness and confidence, and gathering qualitative feedback on their experiences (completed by 38 trainees)
• data from a further survey of trainees at the end of their placement (completed by 25 trainees)
• a half day focus group with eight trainees, delivered towards the end of their placement, exploring personal outcomes and gathering feedback on the practical elements of the scheme’s delivery
• a half day focus group with seven members of staff from host employer organisations
• telephone and face to face interviews with the project manager and members of the project steering group, representing the programme’s key funders.
1.2 The Creative Jobs Programme (CJP) Legacy – Key Findings

CJP placements were completed in November 2012. In the current job market it is likely that the cohort may take time to find further paid employment, regardless of the quality of the training and mentoring they experienced on the scheme. There is limited information available about where trainees went after the programme finished, based on end of project survey data from 25 trainees. This suggests that half of the trainees had further employment lined up at the time they completed their placement and it is likely that the number of trainees who have gone on to employment will now be higher. Of these, 70% were already working in these roles at the time of their CJP placements, suggesting that some had been offered further work with their CJP placement host while others were continuing to work in part time jobs they had been combining with their CJP placement. One respondent to the survey was returning to education. The remainder had no specific plans at the time they left their CJP placements, most of them stating that they were actively engaged in searching for work.

Based on the interviews carried out with trainees, project managers, host employers, and members of the steering group, the likely legacies of the project beyond the employment statistics can be summarised as:

a) Development of a cohort of 39 young people who are engaged, enthused and job ready, with much improved CVs and access to references from professionals in the sector.

b) A network of arts organisations with growing experience in training young people from diverse backgrounds, leading to improved practice in their own organisations and the potential to share this practice as new apprenticeships schemes roll out. This may have particular benefits in East London, where there is now a network of experienced organisations with a combination of training skills and the ability to reach young people in the local community.

c) Effective partnership working and networks emerging between large and small arts organisations in London, which could lead to a range of new collaborations.

d) Improved communication and links between arts organisations and agencies helping young people to move into work and training, with the potential to build strong partnerships in the future.

e) A strong exemplar of what the arts can do for unemployed young people, which could help arts organisations to advocate for their role in the youth unemployment agenda, drawing down funding from Department of Business, Innovation and Skills and Department for Work and Pensions.

f) Potential to broaden the programme out further, to commercial organisations in the creative industries.

g) An immediate impact in terms of informing the national roll out of 6,500 apprenticeships and other training opportunities via the ACE Creative Employment Programme.
1.3 Creative Jobs Programme and the Cultural Olympiad

Research on this programme indicates that the Cultural Olympiad had influenced both the existence and the structure of the Creative Jobs Programme.

The steering group, management team and employers were all certain that the scheme would not have been able to go ahead without the funding brought to the table via LOCOG and Legacy Trust UK. BP’s support for the scheme was also part of the company’s broader role as a sponsor of activities for young people within the Cultural Olympiad.

The funding available through the programme, including trainee wages, was important in bringing smaller arts organisations on board, and thus it was the positioning of the scheme within the Cultural Olympiad which secured the involvement of East London based arts organisations. This enabled the partnership to grow from its original base of organisations involved in the earlier Cultural Quarter Programme, which had also been led by Royal Opera House. The movement into East London, while previous similar schemes had been focused on central London, was seen a significant and positive development.

Beyond the direct role of the funding drawn down through the link to the Cultural Olympiad, interviewees were confident that the impetus provided by the Games had had other positive impacts on the project. The project was a late development within the wider Cultural Olympiad programme, and the partnership of participating arts organisations under the management of the Royal Opera House was brought together very quickly in order to fit within the timeline for delivery of 2012 programming. Organisations were motivated in part by the opportunity to enhance their engagement with the Cultural Olympiad, especially those in East London which could use the programme to ‘give something back’ to the local community.

While it was not their main motivation, the marketing of the traineeships to young people as part of the Cultural Olympiad also had a small but significant impact on their enthusiasm to participate. The London 2012 brand, coupled with the high profile of many of the participating host organisations, made the project more attractive and visible to potential applicants than it would otherwise have been, and was seen by some as an indicator of quality.

Furthermore, some of the young people involved as trainees in this project worked on other projects directly related to the London 2012 Games and the Cultural Olympiad. For example the traineeship based at the Geffrye Museum was located within a Stories of the World project team.

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1 See dedicated Appendix on the Stories of the World programme, one of the original Major Projects that launched the Cultural Olympiad in 2008, involving work with young people acting as curators in museums across the UK.
2. Quantitative Data

The Applicants and Trainees
Overall, there were 267 applicants to the scheme, coming from across London and in two cases, from Hertfordshire.

Gender
Out of 263 candidates who answered the question on the application form about their gender, 129 (49%) were men and 134 (51%) were women. There was also an even gender split in the cohort of successful applicants.

Ethnicity and Residence
There was a broad mix of candidates from a range of ethnicities. Information on ethnicity is only available for 219 candidates and so it is difficult to report on the ethnicity of the full cohort of applicants with accuracy. However, based on the data collected, 60% of candidates came from a diverse range of BME groups, while 40% were White British. 39 candidates (18%) were Black African, while a further 30 (14%) were Black Caribbean, Mixed Caribbean, Black British or Black African/Caribbean.

There were smaller numbers of Asian candidates. Four described themselves as Asian, seven as Asian Bangladeshi, six as Asian Pakistani, four as Indian or Anglo Indian, and six as Asian Other, making up 27 of the candidates (12%). Three candidates were Chinese. Other candidates described themselves as Turkish, Irish, Moroccon, Greek Cypriot, Filipino, Hispanic, Latin American and North African.

The applicants came from across London. In total, 91 candidates (34%) lived in the Olympic host boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest. Of these around a third came from Newham, suggesting that the effectiveness of relationships with Job Centres and other agencies may have been particularly strong there.

Educational Qualifications and Work Experience
38% of applicants were educated to degree level, with 96 applicants holding a degree and a further five having a postgraduate qualification. Graduates were over-represented amongst successful candidates compared to the wider cohort of applicants, with 22 out of the 40 (55%) holding a degree and one a Masters degree. Only two applicants did not list any qualifications on their application form.

65% of the trainees had already had a job since leaving education, and 80% had undertaken unpaid or voluntary work. Most (73%) felt that their voluntary work had been or would be of benefit in finding future employment. The trainees had been unemployed for an average of seven months prior to joining the Creative Jobs Programme.

The Host Organisations
The cohort of 23 host organisations was a diverse mix of large and small arts organisations, based in central and East London. One host, Hemingway Design, was a private sector design company. The host organisations offered a wide variety of roles, in departments including visitor services, marketing, learning, design, multimedia, retail, IT, collections, and archives.

Several organisations took on more than one trainee, with the majority choosing to place them in separate departments.
3. Programme Impacts

3.1 Impacts on young people

Every respondent to the final trainee survey felt that the Creative Jobs Programme had improved their future career prospects, with 80% thinking it had improved them ‘a lot’ and the remaining 20% ‘a little bit’.

It’s so valuable to have this on your CV when there was nothing there before (CJP trainee)

The programme appears to be highly beneficial to young people, in that they believe that it will have a positive impact on their future employability. They are enjoying the opportunity to work in the arts, meet new people, learn and practise skills, and make contacts with people who could help them to establish a career in the sector. Overall, trainees were strongly convinced that the scheme had enhanced their transferable skills, their confidence, and as a result, their employability.

Most of the trainees were seeking to develop careers in the arts. However others have moved into other fields, including teaching, law, management consultancy and the travel industry.

The midpoint survey indicated that what the trainees most valued about the Creative Jobs Programme was the time they spent working in an arts organisation. This finding was backed up in the focus group discussion, where the young people expressed frustration at the part time hours, and the compulsory masterclasses, because they were taking them away from time in their organisation, which they considered to be the most valuable aspect of the scheme. However in the end survey the trainees were more likely to make positive references to the masterclasses aimed at improving their skills in writing job applications and interviews, and to the impact of having a mentor, suggesting that this became more important to them as they neared the end of their time on the programme. The chance to meet new people and the chance to learn new skills were also rated very highly in the survey. The fact that they were being paid was very important (for their self esteem as much as for practical reasons, as around 80% of the cohort had worked unpaid before), as were the professional contacts they were developing in their chosen field.

In the focus group, trainees made the following list of personal outcomes from the programme:
  • experience in their chosen field
  • growth in confidence
  • generic office/organisational skills/professional practice – job readiness
  • being part of a team
  • working with other people – staff, public, children and vulnerable young people
  • teaching skills
  • archiving/library/database skills
  • networking/contacts
  • strengthened CV
  • use of software
  • communication skills
  • opportunities to try new things and see what they were capable of.

Importantly, the trainees in the focus group could all point to contributions they had made to their host employers, whether these were practical tasks they had completed or fresh perspectives they were able to bring to their work. A small number of trainees left their placements early to take up places in higher education, and one trainee was sacked for misconduct, but on the whole retention across the scheme was very high.
3.2 **Impacts on employers**

Employers were very complementary about the quality of the trainees they had appointed. They felt the benefits to their organisations far outweighed the costs in terms of time spent on training, supervision and administrative tasks relating to the trainees. For most attendees of the employer focus group, the trainees were doing a ‘real’ job, which made a considerable contribution to the running of their department; they were valued and would be missed.

Participating in the programme had a range of impacts on the host employers. Working with the trainees and dealing with their day-to-day pastoral issues had been a learning curve for some organisations, building their confidence to take on young people as employees who may have specific support needs because of difficult personal circumstances.

It is clear that the employers see the hosting of training placements as part of their social responsibility agenda and distinct from any other unpaid internships or informal work experience opportunities. This is because they reach young people who could not access those opportunities due to lack of financial support or social networks. In some cases, the CJP prompted wider organisational thinking around jobs and young people and is likely to lead to longer-term changes in policy and practice. For instance, TATE has already instigated a change in its policy, and will no longer offer unpaid internships. All their interns will be paid the London Living Wage and, during this project, TATE supplemented the wages of their CJP trainee to meet that standard. Other examples include the British Museum, which is considering recruiting apprentices to entry-level jobs in their front of house team. Further, the National Portrait Gallery has paid the fees to enable their trainees to accredit their experience through a NVQ qualification in addition to their participation in the Arts Award.

All of the staff interviewed through the focus group stated that they would be keen for their organisations to take part in a similar scheme again.

3.3 **Impacts on the cultural sector**

The scheme has had a range of benefits for the wider arts sector, with the potential for these to continue beyond the end of the programme.

Firstly, the structure of the programme has provided a tried and tested networking and partnership building opportunity for arts organisations and their staff. As a result of the connections made through CJP and its predecessor scheme, small organisations are building relationships with large organisations based on their mutual interests and their different areas of expertise. There is the potential for this to lead in a number of different directions, and some partners are already looking at developing future joint initiatives.

The project has tested how best to implement training and entry level job schemes in the sector, and feedback from the trainees has provided a useful set of guidelines around how to create recruitment, induction, and training processes which work. These can be implemented in future schemes. The programme’s management team have built their contacts with agencies and job centres across London, enabling them to reach a more diverse pool of applicants, and individual host employers have been impressed by the quality and diversity of applicants available through Job Centres, leading them to consider increasing their use of Job Centres in recruitment for a wider range of posts. This has the potential to lead to ‘a change in the recruitment culture in the sector’ (Andrea Stark, ACE) and widen the diversity of people going into careers in the arts.
On a more strategic level, the scheme has provided a valuable template for arts organisations working together in clusters, which could enable the sector to create traineeships in volume, and demonstrate that the arts is a valuable training ground for developing a wide range of transferable skills. The successful inclusion of Hemingway Design within the programme also highlights the potential for more training and development activity delivered jointly across the subsidised arts sector and commercial creative industries.

Finally, the project has created a pool of experienced, talented and qualified young people who are ready to take on their first professional jobs in the sector.

3.4 Wider impacts

Beyond the arts sector, it is possible to speculate that the scheme could have benefits in the wider community.

The project has started a dialogue between the arts sector and agencies working with unemployed young people, such as Job Centres, booster schemes like START, and the Princes’ Trust. This could be built on to ensure that the arts sector can influence how young people are prepared to apply for jobs, and position creative and cultural organisations as potential employers for a wider range of young people with a diverse range of skills, not just those who self-identify as creative and keen to work in the arts.

The project has employed young people from disadvantaged communities in East London and further afield, and the presence of young advocates for the arts and their local arts venues in those communities may be a benefit.

Finally, the project has created an exemplar which stakeholders can use to talk about the high quality of training in the arts sector, its understanding of young people’s learning needs, and its potential contribution to the issue of youth unemployment. It will be necessary for the arts to engage in policy discussions beyond the sector in order to secure the funding and support necessary to roll out future training and employment schemes. This programme enables the sector to go into those discussions with experience and a strong track record.
4. Programme Management

4.1 Programme Structure

Interviews with members of the steering group and representatives of the host employers suggest that the role played by the project management team at the Royal Opera House was very significant in delivering the project effectively within a tight timeframe, and enabling smaller arts organisations to participate, through the provision of which included communicating with Job Centres, shortlisting applicants, co-ordinating masterclasses, mentoring and group project activity, and managing the Arts Award element of the programme. Individual members of the team were highly praised by interviewees. The need for an organisation to act as a hub and deliver administrative functions for a wider cohort has been picked up by the steering group as an important consideration in the delivery of future jobs programmes. Trainees also made reference to the role of the Royal Opera House team in supporting their placements:

Knowing the CJP leaders were an email away was comforting if extra support was needed.
(Trainee)

However throughout the interviews, especially the focus group with trainees, it appeared that a small number of employers were not fully aware of all of the aspects of the programme, perhaps because they had not been actively involved in its development. Trainees therefore had to negotiate and explain to their employers when they needed time to participate in masterclasses or group project activities.

4.2 The application process

Members of the project steering group were keen to challenge the recruitment culture in arts organisations through the delivery of this project, encouraging employers to think beyond their usual recruitment methods and recruit young people on the basis of their attitude and potential rather than their levels of qualifications and experience.

Focus group interviews with employers suggested that in many organisations this change had taken place.

It’s actually a very different interview process, because you weren’t picking the best candidate for the job in terms of skills levels, we weren’t looking for someone with a level of interest in history and archaeology, we were looking at who would be best at doing this job for six months, and it’s not people who would be quite happy to wander around the departments and have a look at the objects but have no interest in customer services. We thought, you’ve got no skills, you’ve got no qualifications, but you’ve got the right attitude, you look like you want to work with the public.
(Host employer)

The process of shortlisting and choosing trainees pushed host employers beyond their comfort zone. They were keen to ensure that they considered who would most benefit from the opportunity as well as identifying those who were capable of fulfilling the role. The host employers felt that this had been successful. All felt that their trainees would have found it difficult to find their first paid work in the arts because of a lack of contacts, skills and experience, and in some cases qualifications, but that they were capable of developing careers in the sector and were making a strong contribution in their role.

Trainees reported that they had been placed in organisations which were a good fit in terms of their interests and aspirations.
I wasn’t expecting to be put in a role where I would fit so well, or that would suit me so well either. (Trainee)

There was concern expressed by both employers and trainees that Job Centres and other support organisations for unemployed people do not promote such schemes effectively and are not adequately supporting potential candidates. Employers felt that some of the young people they interviewed had been inadequately prepared by Job Centres, and they were not able to respond well enough to interview questions, or have the confidence to ‘be themselves’. There is a need for further information sharing and understanding between Job Centres and employers so that a wider diversity of unemployed young people are in a position to compete for traineeships and entry level jobs in the arts.

4.3 The induction and training process

Employers were clear that trainees needed to go through the same induction process as any member of staff. In addition, staff should be mindful of the fact that trainees may have never spent time in a professional workplace before, and would need things explaining to them which other new starters would take for granted.

We got them immediately on all the training courses, like security management, and the same induction course that all new staff training in that role would get. And we got them straight into uniform. (Host employer)

From the trainee’s perspective, it was clear that how they were introduced to their colleagues could set the tone for much of the rest of their placement:

The level of support I got from my line manager – she sent round an email asking everyone to take me for coffee and tell me stuff, she sorted things out for me, and that made me want to prove that I was as good as she expected me to be. (Trainee)

Every time my manager introduced me to someone she made a point of saying I was only going to be there for six months. I’d started with the enthusiasm that I was going to work really hard to do the best I can to give myself a chance of having a job, and that really killed it. (Trainee)

It was important to trainees that they felt they had a clearly defined role which made a genuine contribution to the running of their department. In this respect, the part time nature of the scheme was problematic for some employers and trainees, preventing trainees from being involved in all aspects of the work of their department due to the constraints of deadlines and timescales.

The reason why I felt more like a trainee wasn’t because I wasn’t given equal job opportunities as what everyone else was in the department, I think it was because technically it can’t be done. If you’re working three days a week and you’re a marketing assistant, you’ve got to make sure that the clients who have booked their shows into your theatre, you have constant communication with them, and me working three days a week, it wouldn’t be advisable to give me that role of keeping check of everything, because I couldn’t keep on top of it. (Trainee)

It’s important that people feel that they’re making a meaningful contribution. They don’t want to feel like they’re just shadowing all the time, they want to do something that will be a legacy when they’ve gone. They can say ‘that’s on the website, I did that’. (Employer)

I’ve done internships before. They treated us like interns at the start, and now they treat us like employees, but I guess it takes a while for them to learn what your skills are. (Trainee)
4.4 Mentoring and masterclasses

All of the respondents to the end of placement survey agreed that they had been adequately supported on the programme, with 65% agreeing with the statement ‘I received lots of support’ and 35% agreeing that they had received ‘adequate support’.

The programme included monthly masterclasses delivered by staff working in various roles within cultural organisations in London.

The focus group and end of placement survey findings suggest that trainees placed more emphasis on the value of mentoring and masterclasses at the end of their placements, when they were considering their next steps and applying for jobs. In the earlier months when trainees were focusing on developing their skills in their job roles, they tended to see masterclasses as an unwelcome distraction. Trainees clearly felt that the best use of masterclasses was to help them with the generic skills which would help them to secure employment: specifically support with CVs and job application forms, interviews and presentation skills.

There was no consensus on the best way to deliver these masterclasses. In the previous Culture Quarter Programme run by the Royal Opera House, classes were weekly and the feedback from trainees was that this was took them out of their organisations for too long. However there was a feeling amongst employers who had experienced both schemes that this time, the trainees had not bonded as effectively as a cohort, because they did not meet often enough.

Experiences of mentoring also varied widely. Two interviewees from the steering group had acted as mentors for trainees on the programme and felt that this had worked well and the process had contributed to the personal development of their mentees. One trainee had had very high quality support:

I’ve got a mentor who’s read through my applications and helped me out, she got me an interview, she’s doing exactly what I wanted. (Trainee)

I was very lucky to have a wonderful line manager and a really inspirational mentor. (Trainee)

However other trainees had not been able to develop good relationships with their mentors and were not sure of the value of mentoring.

4.5 Qualifications

The programme offered trainees the opportunity to complete a Gold or Silver Arts Award through the completion of a group project with other trainees. The provision of Arts Award as part of the scheme was difficult, and several trainees have dropped out. The main reasons for this were that they did not see the benefit as they already had higher level qualifications, and that they were struggling to fit in their Arts Award work because they were already juggling two jobs. The trainee focus group did recognize that Arts Award could be of great value to a trainee without other qualifications.

Employers were also unsure about the value of the Arts Award, with most stating that they would prefer to see candidates with NVQ qualifications as these demonstrated their ability within a workplace.
5. Conclusion: Key success factors

There were a number of elements identified by trainees, employers and the project steering group as being key to the successful delivery of the project. These were:

- Payment of trainees – 67% of trainees stated that they would not have been able to take up their place if the placement was unpaid. A wage is vital to reach young people from a diversity of backgrounds, with travel costs as well as living expenses being a challenge. Further, the trainees held the perception that unpaid internships and placements would not be recognised by the Job Centre, and they would be placed under pressure to take any paid opportunities even if the placement was more appropriate to their chosen career.
- The central funding of the trainees’ wages enabled small arts organisations to benefit from the scheme which otherwise could not have taken part.
- There was a diversity of roles across the programme, widening the potential pool of applicants, and demonstrating the value of training within an arts organisation to young people who intend to develop careers in other fields, such as marketing, IT, finance and event management.
- Young people were referred through a variety of agencies, some particularly focused on working with harder to reach young people and the longer term unemployed. This enhanced the diversity within the applicant cohort.
- Central management and administration of the project by ROH was a significant benefit which enabled smaller arts organisations with limited capacity to participate in the scheme.
- A mixed cohort including those with and without degrees – the programme recognised that even graduates experience barriers to working in the arts, and the opening of the scheme to graduates enabled roles to be created (for example in graphic design) in departments where degree level skills are essential.
- The quality of recruitment, induction and line management processes was high, and as a result, despite the diversity of organisations and applicants, the retention rate for the scheme has been very high.
Appendix 6 | Case Studies

Tourism Development Projects

25 April 2013

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1. **CORE**

**Summary**

Ironbridge Gorge is a World Heritage Site in Shropshire, which celebrates and protects an area of Shropshire vital to the Industrial Revolution. It is also three miles from Much Wenlock, a village with a close affinity to the Olympic Games. Ironbridge Gorge’s management team took a strategic decision in 2008 that they would theme and timetable much of their exhibition and public programming around the London 2012 Games, especially in 2011 and 2012. They exploited opportunities to host high profile events at Ironbridge Gorge, and drew down funding for a range of activities positioned within the Cultural Olympiad, the highest profile being CORE, a digital installation by the US based artist Kurt Hentschlager. As a result, Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust have become more open to innovation in their programming, and better linked to their local communities. The programming proved popular with visitors, attracting new audiences to the site. Furthermore, there is confidence that the unprecedented level of international marketing and communications activity that came from participation in the Cultural Olympiad will have a long term positive impact on Ironbridge Gorge.

Ironbridge Gorge in Shropshire is a World Heritage Site, designated because of its huge importance in the history of the Industrial Revolution, and the quality of its surviving built and natural environment. The site comprises ten museums, the world’s first cast iron bridge, and a recreated Victorian village. It is a family friendly visitor attraction, also very popular with schools. Ironbridge Gorge is only three miles from the village of Much Wenlock, birthplace of Dr William Penny Brookes, the inspiration for the modern Olympic movement.

The Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust made a strategic decision in 2008 that they would embrace the Games and use them as inspiration for their programming. Much of their programming of learning activities, events and exhibitions was Olympic themed in the lead up to 2012, under the banner *Science, Sport, Life*. This strategic focus on the Olympics was intended as a driver for the Trust to innovate, to reach out to new audiences, to highlight the diversity of attractions and scenery within the World Heritage Site, and to strengthen local partnerships.

A wide range of London 2012 linked programming took place at Ironbridge between 2008 and 2012, including:

- hosting the launch of the Cultural Olympiad in the West Midlands;
- annual *Open Weekend* events which encouraged local people to engage with the Games;
- two major exhibitions, *Our Sporting Life: Sporting Heroes* and *Our Sporting Life: Science of Sport*, which sat within the national Stories of the World programme;
- partnership in the delivery of the Shropshire Olympian Festival;
- a family activity programme for half term holidays run in October 2011 and February 2012, *The Games and Me*, which featured challenges such as the chance to run against Usain Bolt using green screen technology; and
- the passing of the Olympic torch relay through Ironbridge, with a crowd of 5000 spectators.

Ironbridge’s highest profile and most challenging Cultural Olympiad project was Kurt Hentschlager’s *CORE*, a spectacular digital art installation, shown on five screens along the 32m length of the site’s Engine Shop. The work used interlinked projections to create a series of ‘virtual aquariums’, in which dynamic bodies in motion interacted to create moving patterns reminiscent of the instinctive movement of shoals of fish, or the choreographed movement of ballet dancers.
The installation was a technical challenge for Ironbridge, especially as Kurt Hentschlager is based in Chicago and production meetings were held via Skype. The project management team received support via an emerging partnership with FACT in Liverpool, and from the Royal National Institute for the Blind, which worked with them on audio description of the installation for the visually impaired which had a very positive reaction from visitors. The Trust are keen to build on these partnership to run future digital projects on the site.

The Cultural Olympiad has also been a driver which has changed the way Ironbridge Gorge develops local partnerships. Ironbridge intend to build on their Young Curators Group, which is still in its infancy but was established through Stories of the World. They will also continue to work with local creative agencies who made films for them as part of the interpretation of CORE.

While there has not been a clear upturn in visitors which can be directly attributed to Ironbridge’s London 2012 Games related programming, visitor figures for Games specific activity at Ironbridge have been high.

74,388 people visited the CORE installation, a considerable increase on Ironbridge’s target of 60,000 visitors.

A further 54,000 visited the Sport, Science, Life exhibitions in 2011 and 2012.

Staff at Ironbridge were confident that CORE, as a result of its positioning and high profile within the London 2012 Festival, attracted a new audience of contemporary art lovers to experience the Ironbridge World Heritage Site for the first time.

32% of visitors to Ironbridge during the period of the CORE installation had come specifically to see CORE, and 23% of visitors over the same period were first time visitors to Ironbridge.

Participation in the London 2012 Festival positioned Ironbridge Gorge within the Cultural Olympiad’s international marketing and communications strategy, and there is hope that this will have raised awareness of the site amongst potential overseas visitors. Proximity to Much Wenlock also attracted international journalists to visit Ironbridge Gorge. There is confidence that the decision to focus on linking to the Games and the Cultural Olympiad across the whole site and the whole visitor programme will have a long term positive impact on visitor figures.

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1 See dedicated Appendix on the Stories of the World programme, one of the original Major Projects that launched the Cultural Olympiad in 2008, involving work with young people acting as curators in museums across the UK.
2. Lakes Alive

Summary

*Lakes Alive* is an outdoor arts programme which ran from 2009 in locations across Cumbria. The programme brought world-class artists to perform at free, accessible and family friendly outdoor events and festivals across Cumbria, both in towns and villages and at spectacular rural locations. The programme was aimed at refreshing the tourist offer for Cumbria, establishing it as a destination for arts and culture. Equally, the programme was concerned with reaching a local audience and encouraging them to participate in the arts. *Lakes Alive* is now an established programme in the Cumbrian calendar, supported by a growing loyal audience.

There is clear evidence that the programme has had a positive economic impact on the area, attracting new visitors and media attention.

*Lakes Alive* is one of three Annual Legacy Programmes commissioned by the Legacy Trust UK for WE PLAY, the North West’s cultural legacy programme for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The programme was led by Kendal Arts International, a locally based arts organization, which at the time of the commission in 2009 was relatively new, but had some track record in the sub-region, particularly through the establishment of *Mintfest*, an annual street arts festival in Kendal, in 2007.

Cumbria is heavily reliant on tourism to sustain its economy, and is known for its spectacular, dramatic landscape and for its rural, literary and artistic heritage – it was the home of Wordsworth and Ruskin, and attractions themed around the children’s author Beatrix Potter remain very popular. Large audiences visit agricultural shows across the county. However the tourist market is changing. The weekend break market is growing, and culture could potentially be a strong attractor of short stay visitors. The desire to change the external image of Cumbria was a strong driver for the local authority and Cumbria Tourism’s support for this project. Equally, stakeholders were interested in the potential of arts and culture to strengthen the sense of community in isolated rural areas, and create new participatory arts provision. The combination of spectacular landscape and world class outdoor arts events had the potential, as Julie Tait of Kendal Arts International describes it, to be ‘cultural dynamite’ for the regional visitor economy.

*Lakes Alive*’s overall audience number, across a range of events delivered in 2012 was 57,000². This was a decrease on 2011, which saw a total audience of 50,000 participate in *Lakes Alive* events alone. As with other large scale outdoor events, poor weather was a significant issue in 2012, and it is likely that the 2011 audience number would have been exceeded in 2012 had one major event not been cancelled due to extreme weather conditions. Audience research carried out by Lakes Alive found that the 2012 programme had been successful in reaching a mix of loyal and new audiences. An estimated 17,000 people attended their first WE PLAY event in 2012. The programme attracted large numbers of family groups, and as a result 25% of the audience were children.

The research also suggests that the *Lakes Alive* team were very successful in reaching both local audiences and visitors to the region. There was a roughly 50:50 split between those who lived within 10 miles of the event and those who lived further away. A third of the audience lived outside Cumbria, around 11% were visiting from outside the North West³. Most significantly, around three-quarters of audiences from outside the North West and two thirds of international

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³ Figures are taken from the Lakes Alive 2012 evaluation report by Helen Corkery.
visitors were in Cumbria specifically because of Lakes Alive. This suggests that the programme met its aims, and has been successful in attracting new visitors to the region.

**Lakes Alive** sat alongside a wider programme of events linked to the Cultural Olympiad and London 2012 Festival, including the *Connecting Light* installation along Hadrian’s Wall and the Torch Relay. These events were put together into a programme which was promoted to tourism based businesses through distribution of posters and wallcharts, so that they could promote events to their customers through word of mouth, an approach which was thought to be considerably more effective than traditional marketing techniques. The events were staged to showcase the landscape, such as the arrival of the Olympic Torch by boat on Bowness by Lake Windermere.

**Lakes Alive** events were free to enter, but estimates suggest that the audience contributed £2.45 million to the local economy in 2012 via related spending on refreshments, accommodation and other shopping. In addition value was created for the local economy through organisational expenditure with local firms, performer and volunteer expenditure and in-kind support. In 2012 therefore, the total net economic impact of Lakes Alive was just over £3.01 million. Equivalent advertising value of Lakes Alive’s media coverage was £200,000. The longer term impact of the Cultural Olympiad on the tourism sector in Cumbria is likely to be felt in increased media interest, resulting from the county’s growing reputation for staging contemporary events, and a change in the look and feel of Cumbria Tourism’s marketing material, thanks to the creation of a new archive of beautiful and striking images from Cultural Olympiad-related events.

Richard Greenwood, Head of Policy and Research at Cumbria Tourism, described the overall impact as ‘impressive’. *Lakes Alive* has been ‘a major impetus’ towards the repositioning of Cumbria as a cultural destination, ‘putting it back on the map in a contemporary way’. Cumbria Tourism and Cumbria County Council defined the legacy of the Cultural Olympiad on the sub-region in a similar way: it had changed external perceptions of Cumbria; and it was leading to a change in the strategic approach to regional development because there was a growing understanding of the value of the arts. The programme had also established Kendal Arts International as a key strategic driver in the cultural infrastructure of the sub-region.

Those interviewed summed up the impacts for Cumbria as:

The Cultural Olympiad has started to change perceptions of Cumbria – both inside and outside the county – as a destination for ‘edgy’ and contemporary events.
The events support the marketing of Cumbria as a family friendly and affordable destination, because street theatre is free, accessible and appropriate for children.
First time visitors have been attracted to Cumbria and are likely to return.
Tourism promoters have tested new approaches to marketing the region and have a deeper understanding of how to promote events and grow audiences.
Positive media attention may lead to a boost in visitor numbers next year.
**Lakes Alive** has ‘improved the political climate for arts events’ at a time when arts budgets are facing significant cuts.

The success factors which enabled **Lakes Alive** to have such a significant impact were varied.

Primarily, the most important factor was the trust in which Julie Tait and Kendal Arts International were held by the key regional stakeholders. Supporting this point, Ian Stewart, who sits on both South Lakeland District Council and Cumbria County Council, described the decision to invest in Lakes Alive as an ‘investment in successful people’. The previous success of Mintfest and the existing positive relationships enabled the local authorities in the region to take a leap of faith in programming international artists which were unknown to them. It is highly
unlikely that a new organisation with no understanding of the region could have achieved this.

Also significant was the ability of Kendal Arts International to produce high quality events on a large scale, and also create smaller and more intimate local projects which ensured that Lakes Alive was embraced by local residents as well as visitors. For local authorities, community engagement and tourism development sat side by side as equally important objectives.

It was also important that Lakes Alive was programmed by an arts organisation rather than a local authority events department, as they placed emphasis on attracting the best possible talent to create world-class art, rather than on economic or social drivers. This meant that the artistic quality of the events was very high and an audience could be built and sustained over time, leading to positive impacts on Cumbria’s reputation, and a commitment to further support from ACE, who were one of the main funders of Lakes Alive alongside Cumbria County Council and Legacy Trust.

While it is too early to say what impact the Cultural Olympiad has had, and there is difficulty in separating out the impacts of the Games from recessionary trends, there is confidence in the direction of travel. Kendal Arts International now have funding to continue to roll out a Lakes Alive programme for 2013, and have NPO status. The strategic focus will be on encouraging international visitors to London to include the Lake District in their visits to the UK, and on continuing to develop the growing weekend break market.
3. Connecting Light

Summary

Hadrian’s Wall is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and forms part of Frontiers of the Roman Empire, the first transnational World Heritage Site. The wall spans 84 miles and is a hugely significant archaeological site. There are nine museums on or near the wall which hold archaeological finds from the area within their collections. As such, the care of the wall involves a complex web of stakeholders, including the Hadrian’s Wall Trust which manages and promotes the site, local authorities, museum services and landowners.

The Hadrian’s Wall, along with other iconic British sites including Stonehenge, Giant’s Causeway and the Forth Bridge, hosted a major commission as part of the London 2012 Festival. This approach contributed to positioning the London 2012 Festival as a truly national culmination to the Cultural Olympiad, the importance of these sites demanding an artistic response which was visually spectacular and yet sensitive to their heritage. LOCOG developed a shortlist of international artists and invited proposals, from which Hadrian’s Wall Trust chose Brooklyn based YesYesNo, a digital arts collective working with lead artist Zachary Lieberman. Technically and artistically, the project would be a first. No other open air heritage site in the UK had done anything like this before, and all of the technology was created bespoke for the commission.

YesYesNo’s concept resonated with the Hadrian’s Wall team for a number of reasons. They proposed creating 400 balloons, which would be positioned at intervals along 73 miles of the wall, and which would change colour in response to digital messages sent by members of the public. The audience consisted of people who made a physical visit to see the lights, some of whom also took part in activity at designated hubs along the wall, and an online audience who watched the livestream and sent messages back to the project. Hadrian’s Wall had run a very successful project in 2010 which illuminated the length of the wall with traditional beacons. Connecting Light offered an opportunity to recreate that experience this time using innovative digital technology, enabling people from all over the world to participate. The theme of the project re-imagined Hadrian’s Wall as a metaphor for borders and boundaries. This theme enthused the Hadrian’s Wall staff, as they were exploring new approaches to the interpretation of the site which focused on it as a place of multicultural meetings and exchanges.

In addition to the core art installation, which was funded by LOCOG, Hadrian’s Wall Trust secured funding from ACE to run public engagement activities linked to the project. This enabled the Trust to explore with the public some of their ideas about re-imagining the Wall, and it allowed them to populate the website in advance with community created content, and test the technology for transmission of messages.

The project encountered huge practical and technical challenges. There were multiple landowners and several project delivery partners, with the various museums along the route acting as activity hubs for visitors on the two nights of the installation. The technical specifications became more and more complex, for example, all of the balloons needed ballast as they couldn’t be anchored into the ground because of the archaeology of the site. The experimental digital technology used did not always work successfully, and providing cabling and power in remote locations was a challenge. The installation was plagued by unseasonally bad weather.

However the installation was delivered very successfully. The Trust estimates that around 30,000 visitors saw the work during the two night installation, and online visits to the Hadrian’s Wall website shot up over the summer, with a 470% increase during the period of the installation.
2000 digital messages were sent to the site over two days. Fourteen artists were involved in the delivery of the workshops, which reached 600 local people, many of whom were having their first experience of participatory arts. This has demonstrated the value of using innovative interpretation approaches to create interest in the Wall. It has enhanced the rebranding and repositioning of the site as a place where there are activities and things to do, as well as being a destination for walkers.

While it is too early to assess the legacy of Connecting Light, Hadrian’s Wall Trust are hopeful that over the longer term, having put the site under a global spotlight, the project will boost their international visitor numbers. Press coverage of the event had an advertising equivalent value of around £1 million, and the marketing campaign is estimated to have reached 4 million people. Organisers put this down to the impact of the project’s association with the Cultural Olympiad and London 2012 Festival, both because it would have been impossible to deliver such ambitious project without the funding and impetus offered by the positioning of the event in relation to the Olympic Games, and because the link was clearly beneficial in securing media interest.

Hadrian’s Wall Trust are now in the process of developing future plans to continue to animate the wall. They want to celebrate Hadrian’s Wall as a multicultural site, using the archaeological record to show how people and goods from all over the Roman Empire have come together in Northern Britain. Current plans include a music festival celebrating traditions of countries in the Roman Empire. Storytelling projects and theatre commissions will look at the meaning of the wall today. Connecting Light has encouraged the Trust to be more ambitious, imaginative and confident in their future development.