The Mighty Creatives
Evaluation of the Pilot Stage of Local Learning Investments Programme

Final report from Shared Intelligence

Contents

Executive Summary

Local Learning Investments Programme

1. Local Learning Investments is an investment programme created by The Mighty Creatives to grow the quality of cultural education in the East Midlands and stimulate innovation. The pilot phase, which ran between spring 2014-April 2015, included the cities Derby, Leicester and Nottingham. The Mighty Creatives invested in projects led by arts organisations which would create new and inspiring curriculum in partnership with local schools. The Mighty Creatives also wanted this programme to apply Arts Council England's Quality Principles (for arts relating to children and young people).

2. Shared Intelligence was appointed in October 2014 mid-way through the pilot stage to carry out a developmental evaluation of the programme. The focus was therefore on the effectiveness and impact of the overall programme concept and The Mighty Creatives own leadership and co-ordination of it, rather than evaluating individual projects.

Learning and key messages

3. Understanding schools as buyers and commissioners of cultural offers became an increasingly important theme during the pilot stage. We found that the arts organisations involved had progressed in understanding the schools market, but there is still a long way to go. Some projects were faced with practical challenges around maintaining teacher's active engagement, understanding their expectations, and finding time to solve practical delivery questions. However a lot more work can be done by TMC partners to better understand schools' needs in terms of what do they commission, for what purpose, and who takes those decisions?

4. One of the biggest challenges faced by projects was in balancing the desire for artistic quality and excellence, with the reality of working in highly-pressured school environments. However some projects were extremely creative and innovative in making use of locally sourced resources to create quality learning experiences that integrated with the school curriculum.

Conclusions and where next?

5. The research has shown that there is an appetite from schools for greater cultural content in their mainstream curriculum and alternative provision. And arts organisations, by working in city-based groups can raise the bar significantly in terms of the ambition, clarity, and creativity of what they offer schools.

6. Therefore there is an opportunity now for the Local Learning Partnerships to move from individual projects of significance to a programme of scale. Though it is important that the programme retains the same degree of innovation which will require a lot of detailed support and leadership from TMC.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Local Learning Investments (LLI) Programme was designed by The Mighty Creatives (TMC) as part of fulfilling their role as Arts Council England's Bridge Organisation for the East Midlands. TMC's original aim was to create an investment programme which would drive up the quality of cultural education in the East Midlands and stimulate innovation. They wanted to do this by investing (through grant funding) in projects led by arts organisations which would create new and inspiring curriculum in partnership with local schools.

1.2 The programme design drew heavily on the 'City Classroom' concept; a key element of Leicester's bid to be the 2017 City of Culture. The City Classroom was conceived as a practical implementation of area based curriculum[1] which would leverage investment in the arts, and connect the arts more closely with schools. The expectation was that in a number of locations one arts organisation would take a leadership and co-ordination role and then work with other arts organisations from the same area. Schools would be presented with a rich local cultural offer, by an organised group, which was more than the sum of the parts.

1.3 As TMC have developed and implemented the programme they have also re-assessed and adjusted their aims and objectives. It is our view that the LLI Programme provides a very good example of the way TMC seeks to explore new territory in cultural education, and is able to adapt and respond to new discoveries along the way. TMC also wanted this programme to apply Arts Council England's Quality Principles (for arts relating to children and young people). The rationale for this was strong and one of the biggest challenges faced by organisations that received investment from LLI was in balancing the desire for artistic quality and excellence, with the reality of working in highly-pressured school environments.

1.4 This report deals with the initial pilot phase of the programme which ran from spring 2014 to April 2015 in three city locations; Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. In each city TMC had sought for a lead organisation to create a strategic cultural partnership comprised of other local arts organisations.

1.5 The pilot phase would be an opportunity for each partnership to work closely with a small number of schools in each of their cities to trial activity inside and outside the classroom, and inside and outside the timetabled curriculum. In the longer term the aim was for these partnerships to grow and bring in other partners including universities, councils, local enterprise partnerships, museums, libraries, music hubs and others.

1.6 Shared Intelligence (Si) was appointed in October 2014 mid-way through the pilot stage to carry out a developmental evaluation of the LLI Programme. It was developmental in that we were expected to work with the pilot projects for the remainder of the pilot stage, and also produce lessons to inform TMC's development of LLI from a pilot to a full programme. The focus was therefore on the effectiveness and impact of the overall programme concept and TMC's own leadership and co-ordination of it, rather than individual projects for which there were separate evaluation processes. The aims of this evaluation were to:

- Undertake a process evaluation of how the programme is delivered

- Develop the capacity of the individual projects in each of the three cities, and gather insights, through a series of action learning sessions

- Help TMC decide about programme implementation post March 2015

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1 The concept of area based (or place-based) curriculum in education has a long history but most recently has been championed in the UK by the RSA

1.7 The three LLI projects are shown below;

| Lead LLI partner	Individual projects
New Art Exchange: Nottingham "Bubble" project – action research to stretch partners' understanding of working with schools, involving a small existing group who also reached out to involve new partners	
New Art Exchange	Excluded pupils work on human rights and identity installation at Galleries of Justice
Nottingham Contemporary	Artists working with teachers from two schools focused on boys with low attainment, with a project themed around science, STEM, and metal
Nottingham Playhouse and Bulwell Primary School	Primary school pupils creating and performing stories about their area
Castle Museums and Galleries	After school learning project in which pupils co-design/co-curate gallery space for new display
Lakeside Arts Centre and primary schools	Gallery sessions tied to creative writing sessions
City Arts	"Express Yourself" activities in the city's creative quarter for referred young people with MH illness and led by young producers
The Spark Arts: Leicester "City Classroom" – a collaboration and concept which grew out of the City's bid for the 2017 City of Culture	
The Spark Arts for Children and Mellor School	"Belonging in Belgrave" visual arts and geographic exploration of the Golden Mile
Charnwood Arts and Hope Hamilton CE Primary School	"Janus Project" bringing world class artists into the classroom linked to the school's 'Lights Camera Action!' learning theme
Leicester Print Workshop and Moat Community College	"Moat Town" printmaking sessions in class leading to single collaborative piece
Soft Touch Arts and New College Leicester	"Oracy" project with SEN and mainstream school pupils visiting buildings which represent authority (e.g. Courts)
Attenborough Arts Centre (formerly Embrace) and Ellesmere College	"Pop Up Canal" outdoor (canal side) leaning for SEN pupils from a SEN college
Derby Theatre: Derby "Cultural Campus" – a partnership based on the close proximity of the partners and the opportunity to build schools' awareness of this unique cluster of cultural resources	
Déda (Derby Dance), Derby Theatre and Quad	"Taste, Test, Tell" co-ordinated taster visits for teachers and pupils to explore facilities and equipment at three city centre arts venues
Déda (Derby Dance) and Quad	Social action project to 'make the city better' by building creative skills and employability through arts education

2 Developmental research approach

2.1 We know that the goals of programmes such as LLI are often more complex and nuanced than comes across in project documents and reports. Sometimes different stakeholders (funders, participating organisations, beneficiaries) are motivated by different potential outcomes and benefits. Hence, we began the research by seeking to understand, jointly with TMC, what the goals of the LLI Programme were from their perspective – and crucially, what was the logic behind it? What was the predictive hypothesis? How did TMC anticipate the LLI Programme they had designed would bring about those goals?

2.2 The starting point was to construct an outline theory of change for the LLI Programme. A Theory of Change aims to describe how and why you anticipate change will happen, as opposed to simply describing what happens. It is concerned with causes, effects, and systems. It can also be seen as a predictive hypothesis. The constituent elements include inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impact.

2.3 We hoped this would help TMC achieve more rigour into the delivery of the LLI Programme, and into the programme evaluation. In creating a theory of change we asked "why" and "how" would change happen, as well as finding out "what" TMC thought would happen.

Internal workshop

2.4 We invited those TMC staff involved directly and indirectly in delivering the programme, to an internal workshop in October 2014 to build the theory of change (what they expect will happen as a result of investment in the programme from TMC and partners).

2.5 This was an intuitive exercise conducted in a few hours based on TMC's knowledge of the programme they had designed. During the exercise we sought to describe TMC's hopes for turning the idea, which is based on 'the City as a classroom', into reality and a catalyser for better educational outcomes, the development of new models of formal learning, and a stronger more sustainable cultural sector. A photograph of the result is shown here.
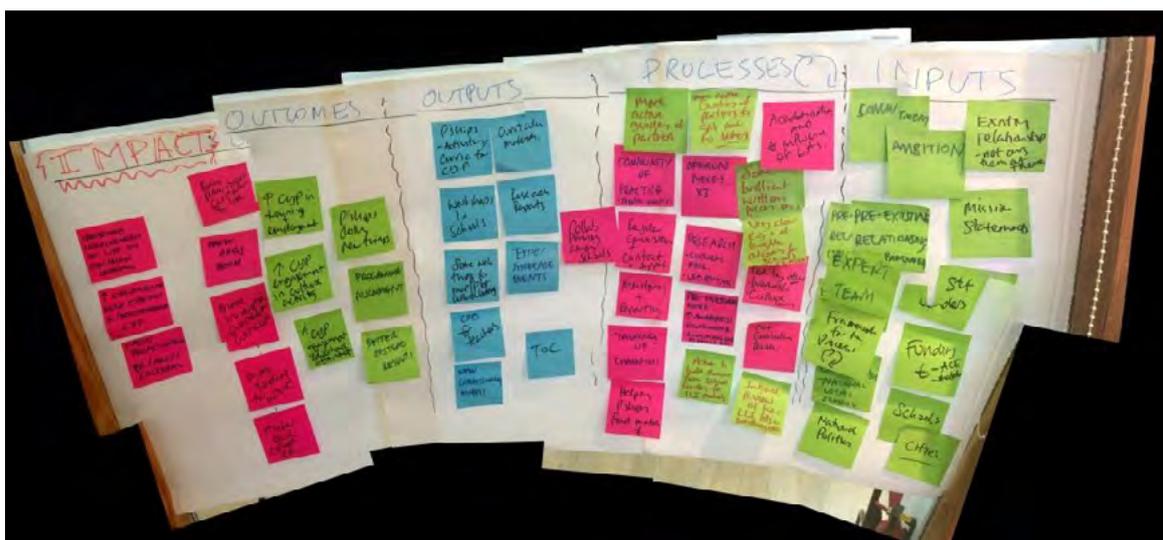
2.6 On the next page is a typed version of the results of this exercise.

Impact	Outcomes	Outputs	Processes	Inputs
Improved involvement of CYP in decision-making

Increased confidence, self-esteem and independence of CYP

New professionalism in arts, education, and culture

Brings places-based curriculum to life

New organisations born

More innovative curriculum

More funding for culture

Higher quality cultural education | Increased CYP in training and employment

Increased CYP engaged in cultural activity

Increased CYP educational attainment

Partnerships doing new things

Programme alignment

Better OFSTED results

Teacher-relevant outcomes tbc | For partnerships – activities and curriculum for CYP

Workshops in schools

Web tool/app to map or plot cultural learning

CPD for teachers Research reports

New commissioning models

Curriculum materials

Report of this research

Expo/showcase events

ToC | More active guiding of partners to get close to teachers

Community of practice

Collaborative planning among schools

Monitoring and reporting

"Talking up" championing

Actions which build demand among school leaders for LLI products

Helping partners find match £££

Research by TMC and internal review to see how LLIU fits

Home

Some brilliant opinion pieces by Richard

More opinion pieces (x3)

Academisation and falling influence of LAs

Regular conversation and support

Very clear examples of useable outcomes for schools (e.g. for OFSTED)

Pre-application - awareness raising, relationship building

Engaging in work led by others (e.g. Warwick Commission) | Commitment

Pre-existing relationships with TMC partners

Expert team

Framework for LLI process

Existing curriculum (national, local, school)

National politics and local drivers

Ambition

Existing networks out there in sector

Mission statements

Strong project leaders

Funding (ACE/ matched)

Schools, Cities |

External workshop

2.7 Following the internal workshops we and TMC invited the LLI partner organisations to a second workshop where we introduced the theory of change produced at the internal workshop and sought to validate and refine it with those delivering the projects. This led to a number of refinements:

- The need for projects to use language which refers to 'influencing curriculum' without implying this was about 'changing curriculum' which schools might interpret as confrontational

- The need for processes which engage teachers in projects so they are relevant to them

- The need to see what happens in 'school' as linked to what happens in, 'community' and 'home'

- The need for arts organisations to have a better understanding of the schools market

2.8 The partner workshop also highlighted the view that while 'the City as a classroom' is a complicated idea, it can already be experienced in reality, so need not be presented as entirely theoretical.

2.9 The partner workshop also came up with a series of programmatic goals seen by partners as important, and which could be measured to test if the theory of change holds true:

- Cultural activities offered through LLI should be 'local' – this could be measured by reviewing activities offered, or teacher perceptions

- If LLI works it should bring benefits for schools – this could be measured by changes in school results or in pupil behaviour

- LLI should lead to increased awareness among schools – this could be measured by perception surveys of teachers

- LLI should help schools become more attractive to parents and students – this could be measured by demand for school places over the timeframe of LLI

2.10 These were not intended to be used during the pilot phase, but could indicate ways of quantifying benefits of the next phase of LLI after the pilot.

Developmental research and data gathering

2.11 As a result of these first two workshops we had a working model of the theory of change for the LLI Programme. We identified specific areas we would investigate which would help us gain insight into the overall strength of the theory of change, and also understand the effectiveness of TMC's leadership role in LLI. We therefore chose to focus on three questions:

- **The extent that schools appeared committed to the programme** – this would help us understand the extent that LLI was strengthening strategic relationships between schools and cultural organisations

- T**he extent that individual projects' activities were taking place within timetabled curriculum lessons** – this would help us understand the extent that LLI projects were contributing to the curriculum as opposed to serving as extra-curricular children's and youth arts projects – and this in turn would indicate whether LLI projects were delivering activities which schools viewed as meeting the core learning needs of pupils

- **The extent that LLI partners understood schools as partners and/or commissioners and purchasers of their cultural offer** – this would help us understand whether LLI has potential to support innovation and support sustainability by enabling arts organisations to build their market

2.12 During November 2014-May 2015 we gathered data for the evaluation through different methods, including: interviewing strategic leads; conducting a survey with both delivery and strategic team members; and running an action learning set with those delivering projects.

Interviews with lead partners

2.13 In between the internal (TMC) theory of change workshop and the external (partner) workshop, Si interviewed the following lead partners from each partnership:

- Skinder Hundal and Sooree Pillay (Leicester)

- Caroline Barth (Derby)

- Adel Al-Salloum (Nottingham)

2.14 These interviews were purposefully scheduled in this way so that Si could start to understand where the partnerships were up to with delivery, what their motivations were for being involved, and what challenges they could foresee at this early stage.

Survey

2.15 In December Si asked both strategic and delivery staff to complete a short three question survey on Survey Monkey based on the three questions arising from the theory of change workshops. The survey was then repeated and the same questions asked again, two months later, in February. The aim of this was to establish a baseline of where projects were at, at the beginning of the delivery phase, and to be able to assess any changes during this time. The exercise also helped TMC and Si get a closer feel for the LLI Programme. The survey asked the following questions which related to our three questions:

- In the school(s) you are working with, is the head teacher fully on board? (this question related to school commitment)

- Are the LLI projects being delivered within the structured class timetables (during lesson time) or during after school activity? (this question related to the place of projects within the curriculum)

- In your view, how does the understanding of arts and cultural provision among your partner school(s) compare to other schools in your area generally? (this question related to knowledge of schools as commissioners)

Action learning set

2.16 The action learning set meetings were the most in-depth part of our developmental research process. They were intended as problem-solving workshops – which is how LLI project staff used them. They were also intended to help build capacity among the LLI partners around evaluation skills and critical thinking.

2.17 From a research perspective they also enabled us to gather a great deal of insight into the operation of the programme, including TMC's own role. We ensured the LLI project staff attending the action learning sets understood the multi-purpose nature of the sessions (problem-solving, capacity development, and insight gathering). This meant for instance that we agreed not to attribute comments from the action learning sets to specific individuals.

2.18 Three action learning set meetings took place between December 2014-March 2015 with project delivery staff from all three partnerships. The purpose of the meetings were:

- to enable participants to seek solutions to practical delivery challenges within a confidential peer setting

- to build shared understanding of what the three partnership projects amount to, at programme level

- for Si to gather evidence for the programme level evaluation

- to enable TMC to begin testing potential for scale-up and further development

- to create a community of practice with potential to grow as a self-facilitated network

- to create a template for other regional peer learning

2.19 At the end of the third meeting the delivery group expressed an interest for one final opportunity to invite the strategic team to a meeting where they could share what they had achieved. This took place on Wednesday 13 May 2015.

2.20 The next section discusses the learning from the pilot phase and the main messages for the future of Local Learning Investments using evidence from all these sources.

Case studies

2.21 In addition to our evaluation report, we used what we learnt during the action research to write a paper on each partnership. These have been published alongside this report and describe the detail of each city's vision for improved cultural education and their offer to schools.

2.22 We have not repeated the detail but assume readers will look to these papers to get an understanding of what some of the projects did in practice.

3 Themes and key messages for TMC and the future of LLI

3.1 In the following section we set out what we believe are the most useful findings and learning points about the overall hypothesis underpinning the LLI Programme, and which will be useful to inform the further development of the programme beyond the pilot phase.

Familiarity with individual schools and with how to get things done in a school setting

3.2 We would argue that the biggest challenge and opportunity for LLI going forward is around understanding schools, by TMC partners, as a market for arts and culture. For instance, what are schools' needs, what do they commission and who takes those decisions, and by what buying process do they commission externally provided activities?

3.3 From the action learning sessions, and our other sources of data we heard in different ways how important it was for LLI partners to have a really good understanding of how schools operate. This included; school line management and how decisions are taken; schools' priorities and how they are set; how budgets and spending are approved; the mechanics of daily and termly timetables and routines (e.g. how many real teaching minutes are available in a 60 minute timetable period); school rules and procedures around basic safety, equipment and off-site activities.

3.4 This type of insight was important in terms of the long term aims of LLI to be a catalyst for creating demand among schools for cultural offers and services. It was also important in the short term for practical delivery. From the evidence we saw, the starting level of familiarity with working in a school environment varied a great deal between projects. In the action learning sessions we also saw how individuals' depth of understanding increased as the projects progressed. For instance in the early discussions project leaders talked in general terms about the potential to market services to schools, but by the final session the discussion was about different levels of Pupil Premium and the difference between dance activities (which can be funded through sports budgets) and other art forms, which cannot.

3.5 The importance of personal networks, human relationships, and 'tacit knowledge' came across strongly from projects in all three city partnerships. Project leaders had mainly chosen to work in schools where contacts were already warm and where there would be a positive reaction to their offer. In this respect they were building on existing relationships and not starting from scratch. However, where say, the chief executive of a LLI partner organisation had agreed a project with a head teacher, but the project was then taken forward by an individual artist working with a subject tutor – those relationships had to be replicated at the project-level. From a programme perspective there is a risk of neglecting the fact that only individuals can build personal working relationships with each other, and 'organisations' of course cannot.

3.6 Along similar lines, while project staff tended to have good understanding of what their own contacts in schools wanted from arts and culture, when we asked about their knowledge of what the schools market wants more generally many indicated that was simply too hard to answer.

"I'm fairly unsure as to what other schools think but I have seen a willingness to try new things [at the school I'm working with] that not all schools are willing to do at the moment"

3.7 Finally, the legacy of Creative Partnerships poses both opportunities and challenges when it comes to partnerships with schools. This is an opportunity because many city level strategic partnerships grew out of Creative Partnerships and that model of working is still the framework within which some individuals work; i.e. personal relationships and knowledge, organisational groups, still exist. But some LLI project staff also felt momentum had been lost since Creative Partnerships; "lots of great work came to a standstill in 2010". Also, some of the examples above about working with schools, and with individual teachers indicates that the sector's familiarity with schools – the vital tacit knowledge – has begun to decay. The question in our mind is, can those who still have that knowledge be helped to share it with the next generation?

Practicalities of working with teachers

3.8 Closely linked to the issue of market knowledge of schools was that of working with individual teachers. Most of the LLI projects envisaged artists delivering activities jointly with teachers either in a classroom, school hall, or off site – rather than being left alone with classes; and in most cases this happened. This was not simply about confidence or maintaining discipline, it was about wanting to deliver activities which were connected with the mainstream curriculum.

3.9 However, school teachers' work in an incredibly regulated and time-pressured environment, and the culture of schools is very different from the culture in most arts organisations. Sometimes, even where teachers were physically present, there were challenges in terms of the level of teamwork with teachers e.g., maintaining their active engagement, understanding their expectations, and finding time to solve practical delivery questions. One strategic lead said;

"We need to have an "in" to teachers – and this is more difficult with secondary schools compared to primary schools (as class time is more precious, as is teacher's time)"

3.10 Pilot projects experienced first-hand the limited amount of time teachers have for anything outside their normal daily routine, and the practical difficulties this brings in terms of helping to organise something additional. This often meant extra effort and resource was required from artists and project staff at the cultural organisation to plan or deliver the activity such as booking classrooms, or hiring minibuses for offsite work.

3.11 However several projects showed that by discovering how schools work, and finding ways to use teachers' precious time wisely, teachers could be engaged. Sometimes this meant simple tactics such as catching teachers in corridors between lessons to check-in and update on progress. Project staff also found that when teachers saw the impact on pupils for themselves they were more likely to make a commitment to the project in terms of resources, and their own engagement.

3.12 This commitment from teachers showed itself in different forms, such as teachers organising teach-ins for other teaching staff so that they could replicate the activity with students (one English teacher did this for an activity involving clay-modelling). Another teacher (in a primary school) repeated a drawing lesson as a training session for other teachers in the school and as a result art lessons were delivered differently from then on.

3.13 In more than one LLI project arts practitioners were surprised by strict approaches in primary schools to 'fairness', meaning teachers would not allow activities which only some students from a year group could take part in, i.e. an 'everyone or no-one' approach. Having to involve larger numbers than planned-for meant that for some LLI activities there was much less contact time between the artist and each child than was hoped – which in turn gave rise to concerns about quality. This was a good example of how much there is to learn about school culture, but it also has broader project design and budget implications for work aimed at primary schools.

Doing something meaningful and quality

3.14 We heard several examples of factors encountered when working in and with schools which project staff found challenging – in terms of creating meaningful and quality artistic experiences for students. These factors included time constraints, fairness ('everyone or no-one') approaches, classroom layouts and equipment.

3.15 Most of these challenges were non-negotiables, and for several projects the shortness of lesson-periods, or hiccups like finding teaching rooms locked or double-booked were a real hindrance. Considering most projects only had three or four 60-minute periods of contact time with pupils, a delay of just half an hour meant a significant proportion of project time had been lost.

3.16 But project staff also found workarounds which in some cases became core to the project. The most striking example of this was when Attenborough Arts Centre decided to experiment with Pop Up Play (the virtual reality platform created by Spark Arts) in response to the realisation that it would be too risky for some SEN students from Ellesmere College to take part in activities at their chosen outdoor location – a canal towpath. So they had to find a way to create a shared group experience with half the group at the canal and the other half in the classroom – and the classroom experience had to be just as rich as the outdoor experience. It was from this challenge that they developed an incredibly sophisticated implementation of Pop Up Play with live video streaming from the canal to virtual reality screens in school, as well as identical objects in both locations (e.g. coir 'sausages' which were being seeded with riverbank plants), and pre-recorded underwater sounds which both groups listened to at once.

3.17 For another project leader the challenge was achieving quality control when not in a role where she was leading the activities personally. They wanted to be sure of the quality of a classroom activity being delivered by an artist jointly with teachers. The project leader wanted to be sure of both the quality of the classroom work of the artist they had commissioned, and also of the work of the teaching staff who were supporting their artist. This suggests there's an opportunity for clearer success measures and a good evaluation framework – so that project leaders can have confidence without being physically present. There might be links in this respect to the measures used by the Artsmark quality framework.

Alternative provision and Pupil Premium

3.18 What became apparent during the course of our research was that while some LLI projects had strong appeal as content for mainstream lessons (e.g. the Belonging in Belgrave art and geography project, Leicester Print Workshop, Derby's Cultural Campus tasters) many of the LLI projects found a more compelling fit and/or stronger demand for their activities when positioned as alternative provision either in-school or off-site.

3.19 TMC's original ambition had been for LLI projects to be integrated into curriculum teaching (and not just in arts subjects) and take place within the mainstream timetable. But for most partners the focus on curriculum learning was less sharp with a mix of curriculum and extra-curricular activities. One strategic lead explained at the outset that they saw the aim as

"Demonstrating the value of the arts be it in school or not, [to show] curriculum learning is vastly enriched by extra-curricular learning".

3.20 This spectrum of views was reflected amongst the projects themselves. All of the projects had some activity which was during timetabled lessons and some were exclusively so. Then there were several projects designed for pupils receiving alternative provision who were not in mainstream lessons because of special educational needs and/or behaviour. Pop Up Canal was exclusively with pupils from Ellesmere College special school and New Art Exchange's human rights and identity project was specifically for permanently excluded students. In addition, around half of the projects delivered some activities outside of timetabled lessons, or outside of school hours, or off-site and outside of hours. In some cases this was with children that had been excluded from school.

3.21 We also heard that some projects which were referral-based rather than whole-class based received their referrals from in-school Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services staff, targeted support staff and SEN teachers – rather than subject or form teachers. Again this points to LLI projects having resonated strongly among specialists in alternative provision and SEN.

3.22 In our view the reasons for this apparent alignment between LLI and SEN and alternative provision are complex and we have not been able to explore them fully. However, we anticipate that several factors contributed to this alignment with alternative provision:

- Nationally, the shortcomings of alternative provision are well recognised and education practitioners (SEN teachers and others) responsible for providing alternative provision, or making referrals face an ongoing challenge to find good quality programmes for their pupils. LLI projects have looked very attractive in this context

- There may be a perception (or stereotype) among both artists and teachers that arts and creative activities are more beneficial for children that do less well in academic subjects – so artists may gravitate towards those children and alternative provision, and teachers may reinforce this

- It is inevitable that the clear social impact mission which underpins all of TMC's work and grant-giving will lead to arts organisations focusing to some extent on children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds. These children tend to be over-represented among those excluded from school or those with special educational needs. So this again tilts the balance away from mainstream provision.

3.23 The reasons for this alignment between LLI and alternative provision may need exploring further, but there are some clear implications and opportunities in terms of how TMC presents further work around LLI or how best to articulate an 'every child' approach that overcomes educational disadvantage.

3.24 One may be the foundation this provides in terms of making an offer to schools which they can purchase using Pupil Premium i.e. the additional funding for publicly funded schools to raise attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers (£1,300 for pupils in reception year to year 6 and £935 for pupils in year 7 to year 11).

3.25 In terms of understanding and building the market for arts activities among schools, there is an opportunity for TMC to generate and disseminate market intelligence on the current state of alternative provision in the East Midlands and also on how much Pupil Premium is received at city or school level. For example how are decisions made about spending Pupil Premium, at what points in the year is funding allocated to specific activities, and how much is delegated to subject teachers, versus leadership team decision?

Young people accessing cultural activities independently

3.26 Two projects which were predicated on young people getting themselves to activities at cultural venues in city centre locations faced challenges around access and travel – especially as both were aimed at young people or excluded pupils who had been referred to them. These projects were deliberately held outside of the school grounds, but project staff discovered that their target groups found it hard to travel to the city centre – to do with factors such as personal confidence, finance, or reliance on parents and carers for transport. In both cases the project staff recognised these barriers and changed the formats to make it easier to take part. But there is a wider lesson for the LLI Programme around travel and distance, and also the benefits of activities which are delivered with the direct assistance of teachers and schools, versus those which young people are expected to access independently.

The value of detailed knowledge sharing

3.27 At the start of the LLI Programme levels of interaction between project staff in each city varied, and individual project leaders who took part in the action learning explained that learning the detail of each other's work was much more useful / useable than the kinds of generic information sharing which they had been used to with other grant-funded projects. Project staff in the action learning sessions listened intently to details about the design and format of individual activities in schools, what size the groups were, the roles teachers had played, and the materials and equipment which had been used.

3.28 So despite strong established relationships between the strategic leads in the three cities, and between the lead organisations and the partner's organisations at chief executive level, this level of familiarity had not tended to be replicated at project staff level, and even less so where projects are led by freelance artists. Reflecting on other programmes, they felt they often met up but did not 'get to grips with the details of what other projects were doing'.

3.29 Yet one of the goals of the LLI Programme had been to build stronger networks between cultural organisations in each city – and with these stronger networks, the organisations within each city would be able to describe and sell the 'city' offer to schools. So for the future of LLI we would highlight the importance and value of supporting the sharing of detailed knowledge (or tacit knowledge) among project staff as well as strategic leads through mechanisms like action learning.

Other noteworthy issues

3.30 **Gathering data and evidence**: although the reaction to our initial evaluation workshops was positive we found that individual projects were only able to gather modest amounts of impact evidence and data during the pilot phase. This was partly due to timescale pressures but perhaps also because project staff found it difficult to think of tangible measurables for complicated outcomes for example, what methods to use to know whether an activity helped a child increase their confidence? Outcomes could be made less complex, for example what impact do schools need to see on pupils and what would help them make decisions about whether to commission arts activities?

3.31 **Cumulative impact of repeated experiences**: several projects were designed so that pupils would have a repeated or cumulative experience. For Lakeside Arts' the LLI project enabled them to take an existing model based on one-off sessions (of a gallery experience followed by a creative writing workshop) and expand this to eight sessions. For Lakeside Arts the impact seemed much greater and enabled them to make the case to the school for their workshops to be seen as something more substantial with greater educational value than a one-off. They report that the head teacher is now more enthused about these workshops and sees the value of children experiencing more than a one-off. However, a challenge remains which is that Lakeside Arts were unable to gather hard evidence of the impact of multiple sessions, and there is also a perception in the school that the sessions must be cheap to run.

3.32 **Moving from significance to scale**: whilst all projects had trialled something new to themselves in terms of the young people and partners they work with or activities delivered, some offered something unique and innovative to the sector too. So in our view there were projects of real sector significance in LLI. For example the Attenborough Arts centre were the first organisation in the country to use Pop Up Play software and equipment to create a synchronised experience in an outdoor and classroom location. It was the first session using this technology in which children at two sites communicated in real-time, it was its first use for curriculum learning and its first use in an outdoor setting. Similarly, the impact on the young people that took part in the Lakeside Literacy project was due to a project (gallery visits and creative writing) being transformed from a one-off model (which is how many arts projects are purchased) to a cumulative experience over several weeks, which is more akin to a mainstream curriculum project. On top of that, head teachers recognised the impact the cumulative impact made.

3.33 Both projects reported that they had successfully stimulated the schools market and introduced something significant. However, these were one-offs, and were not necessarily seen by schools as linked to a city-level cultural offer. So a challenge will be to take projects which are significant but one-off, and increase their scale and integration with a citywide offer.

3.34 **Factoring in time for knowledge sharing (especially for freelance artists)**: whereas individuals that worked for an arts organisation were able to attend the LLI evaluation workshops and action learning as part of their day-jobs, those that worked as freelance artists pointed out that they were attending those sessions in their own, unpaid time. In our view these sessions were very useful, rather than a nicety. So in future TMC and partners may need to consider factoring in the cost of time for knowledge sharing especially for freelance artists.

4 Conclusions and where next?

4.1 From the evidence we have gathered, the first 12 months of the LLI Programme appears to have demonstrated a significant appetite from schools for greater cultural content in their mainstream curriculum and alternative provision. The programme has also shown that arts organisations, by working in city-based groups can raise the bar significantly in terms of the ambition, clarity, and creativity of what they offer schools.

4.2 Projects have demonstrated how locally sourced resources can be used to teach national curriculum in new creative and innovative ways that expose young people to their physical environment, to local art and cultural galleries, to practical facilities (like Déda), to historic buildings of interest, and even ground-breaking software which is locally designed. There have also been some really unique innovations which we consider to be significant to the sector nationally.

4.3 They have also shown the potential of offers like these to meet a need for alternative provision in particular, and to enable schools to inspire pupils who do not thrive in mainstream activities (although this does not at all rule out an important offer for mainstream education too).

4.4 And, taken together we have begun to see the potential cumulative impact both in term of arts organisations co-ordinating efforts and sharing knowledge, and also the cumulative impact on children and young people where activities led by arts organisations are seen less as one-offs and more as programmes.

4.5 But to reach the next level, arts organisations need to keep pushing themselves, with TMC's support, to understand schools as a market, and teachers as partners.

4.6 There is also more value to be captured from the city level combination of cultural offers in the way the City Classroom concept also envisaged.

4.7 So we conclude that the next phase of LLI needs to include a big message about understanding the schools market especially for alternative provision, and moving from individual projects of significance to a programme of scale which retains the same degree of innovation. This of course will require a lot of detailed support and leadership from TMC.

4.8 To do this TMC may need an even more explicit call to action and mobilising goal. This might be for TMC to say that they want to build the closest relationships between schools and the arts in the whole country, and be exemplars for progressive cultural education. Or it might be that TMC have ambitions for cultural education to change the game in how we support those children with the least privileges and the least advantages – linked of course to TMC's core Cultural Life and 'every child' mission…But in our view there is space for a bolder call.

4.9 In terms of the detail of where TMC take this programme next, it might include the following:

- Supporting continued development of the market around alternative provision and SEN activities by engaging with the region's leading SEN and alternative provision educators and thinkers. Get those teachers involved. Be a thought leader in that space.

- Providing practical help to the sector to understand the market better – what schools want to purchase, and how schools operate, amounts of Pupil Premium available to schools or school clusters in the region – and build stronger relationships with individual schools and influential educators.

- Using any further grant-giving under LLI to build on existing relationships – between arts organisations within each city, between arts organisations and individual schools – and begin re-sharing the knowledge and insight from those who were active in Creative Partnerships.

- Make more of TMC's role as an active intermediary between schools and cultural organisations – not just as a convenor of partnerships between cultural organisations on their own. This could be by using all of TMC's own schools contacts and relationships to support LLI, so from their own schools network and also through their Artsmark and Arts Award relationships.

- TMC involving more teachers directly in its oversight and advisory groups for this and other projects.

- Supporting cultural practitioners in delivery roles to meet and exchange insights and detailed knowledge. This has huge potential as it seems many sector discussions do not get down to a sufficient level of detail – but time for partners to engage in knowledge sharing might need to be factored in.

- Measure it and help arts organisations measure it. Not many LLI projects are using impact measures. These should be very simple and link to project logic or theories of change. There is potential to build capacity to identify convincing measures or metrics which can be cheaply gathered but produce compelling evidence which speaks to schools.

- Use language which speaks to schools and to their priorities.
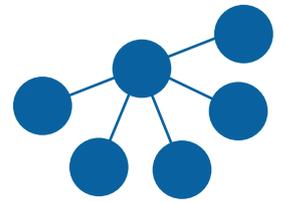
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