National Leadership and Peer Learning Programme

for Local Cultural Education Partnerships

## Final evaluation report

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# Executive Summary

*“We feel more confident, more connected, inspired and keen to keep working together with other LCEPs - we feel very proud of this growing network.”* Programme participant

In 2019 Arts Council England commissioned people make it work to deliver a National Leadership and Peer Learning Programme for Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs).

The idea for LCEPs was developed by Arts Council England in partnership with the Department for Education in 2015, with the aim of improving the alignment of cultural education of children and young people. LCEPs support children and young people to fulfil their creative potential and access high-quality cultural experiences where they live, where they go to school, and where they spend their free time. Partners come together from across sectors, responding to local needs and interests, to drive a more joined-up cultural education offer, share resources, and improve the visibility of cultural education in their local area.

The aim of the programme was to provide a catalyst for the development of LCEPs, helping fast track success through shared learning and leadership development. In particular, the programme aimed to support participating LCEPs to:

* Gain a strong sense of national community
* Develop individual leadership skills
* Share learning more widely with the LCEPs
* Use tools from the programme with LCEP colleagues
* Gain knowledge and skills from shared learning across the national network
* Develop a plan for future sustainability

The programme also aimed to support participants to develop specific areas of knowledge and skills:

* Increased skills in measuring impact, evaluation and theory of change
* Increased knowledge of fundraising, investment opportunities and income generation
* Increased knowledge and awareness of effective communication and advocacy
* Increased awareness of different governance and leadership structures and a clear sense of what best suits their LCEP
* Increased skills in developing strategic local partnerships that will increase and diversify engagement with cultural learning

The programme was co-created with participants and delivered online between September 2020 and June 2021, and worked with 175 individuals from 96 LCEPs. The network of Bridge Organisations, which provide developmental and strategic support for LCEPs, were consulted in relation to the programme design.

The programme comprised 14 workshop sessions, an online community space using Slack and Microsoft Teams and an offer of 1-1 coaching for each participant. Topics included evaluation; fundraising; governance; advocacy; diversity and partnerships.

## Key findings

**Outcomes for participants:** Respondents to the surveys reported positive outcomes from their participation in the programme with positive change recorded for all the programme's stated outcomes. The highest change was for having 'a sense of being part of a national community of LCEPs' which had the lowest starting point and appeared to be a new experience for the majority of respondents.

**Value of the programme:** Respondents rated the overall value of the programme at 4.2 out of 5.0 (where 5=extremely valuable). The safe, inspiring and positive learning environment created by people make it work received the highest rating for individual elements at 4.5. The value of the programme differed in relation to the role of the respondents and the stage of development of the LCEP, with newer LCEPs and Coordinators deriving the greatest benefits.

**Key learning:** The key learning for participants was from and about other LCEPs including the sharing of models, resources, challenges and solutions; and understanding the strength of a shared vision and collective national voice.

**Wider impact on LCEP:** There was good evidence that the learning and tools were being taken back into LCEPs, helping to shape newer LCEPs or refresh and remodel more established partnerships. There was also evidence of growing confidence and impetus to act locally, regionally and nationally.

**Future development of LCEPs:** There was unanimous support for a future peer learning network for LCEPs. Key areas for future development through the proposed network included inclusion and diversity, improving communication around impact, embedding youth voice and co-creating with communities.

In summary, the programme achieved its objectives and was highly valued by participants. The 'peer learning' aspect of the programme was highly successful; the success of the 'leadership' component was more variable with experienced individuals such as LCEP chairs looking for a more strategic level of input and debate, suggesting the need for differentiated pathways or sub-groups in any future network activities.

The headline consideration, therefore, is that a national LCEP peer learning network is maintained. See 10 for details on the recommended characteristics of the network.

# Introduction

Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs) support children and young people to fulfil their creative potential and access high-quality cultural experiences where they live, where they go to school, and where they spend their free time. Partners come together from across sectors, responding to local needs and interests, to drive a more joined-up cultural education offer, share resources, and improve the visibility of cultural education in their local area.

This report presents findings from the evaluation of the Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) National Leadership and Peer Learning Programme. The programme was co-created with participants and delivered online between September 2020 and June 2021, and worked with 175 individuals from 96 LCEPs. The network of Bridge Organisations, which provide developmental and strategic support for LCEPs, were consulted in relation to the programme design.

The evaluation findings are drawn from three surveys: a baseline survey, midpoint survey and final survey, as well as observations of independent Programme Evaluator, Hannah Wilmot, who attended a sample of programme sessions. The considerations are drawn from the above data points as well as workshop discussions with the participants.

# 3. Programme aims and design

The aim of the programme as set out in the original tender from Arts Council England (ACE) was:

To provide a catalyst for the development of LCEPs, helping fast track success through sharing learning and leadership development. The programme will be based on well evidenced interventions with the potential to create change.

* Help a cohort of cultural education leaders to develop the confidence, knowledge and skills to accelerate the work of their partnership.
* Support the cohort to identify and address common challenges, for example governance, sustainability, national brand and identity of the movement.
* Embed a culture of reciprocal learning and a strong, sustainable network of leaders that will share their learning with colleagues.
* Identify and scope future development work that will support local cultural education partnerships to expand their reach and impact.
* Complement the LCEP peer learning support programme provided by Bridge organisations as well as cross-regional Bridge support.

A key element of the proposal submitted by people make it work was to enable LCEPs themselves to contribute to shaping the programme, with a particular focus on the topics explored through the peer learning approach and the areas in which they wanted to develop confidence, knowledge and skills. Mechanisms for consultation and feedback included a Steering Group of LCEP and Arts Council England representatives, regular meetings with Bridge Organisations, surveys to LCEPs and the programme sessions.

## 3.1 The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The roll out of the programme was put on hold once the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Further consultation was carried out with stakeholders to reshape the programme for delivery online. The LCEP steering group in particular felt that in light of the pandemic what was needed was a national symposium to bring people together and gain a sense of collective during what was an incredibly challenging time for all. At this point the suggestion of a LCEP national movement was made (see definitions at 3.7).

In response, the programme was adapted with the key changes in place:

* Increased accessibility and the removal of barriers to taking part
* Open to all LCEPs who would like to take part with no selection process in place
* Delivered solely online through a series of 14 workshops between November 2020 and June 2021
* A National Assembly was held in October 2020 after which LCEPs signed up for the programme

A survey was circulated to all LCEPs in September 2021, and the programme content was developed based on findings from this survey about what areas of knowledge, skills and peer learning the programme should focus on. It was completed by 43 people.

In response to the question ‘Which of these areas would you like to cover as part of the National Leadership programme?’ the areas with most interest were Increasing diversity through partnerships and reach (79%) and Fundraising and investment (74%). See Table 1, Appendix 2, for the full list of responses.

This question also generated some ‘other’ responses, which included:

* Considering how the LCEP Partnership Investment contract can move to a partnership agreement model
* Sharing effective practice
* Young people's career development, internships and developing a creative apprenticeship model etc.
* How we as a sector could respond and lobby politicians e.g. for decent funding for the other art forms in schools aside from music; adoption of a national plan for cultural education; adopting certain causes e.g. campaign around climate emergency.

## 3.2 Final programme

Based on the changes to the programme delivery and design the following outcomes were identified:

The participating LCEPs will have:

* Gained a strong sense of national community
* Increased individual leadership skills
* Shared learning more widely with the LCEPs
* Used tools from the programme with LCEP colleagues
* Gained knowledge and skills from shared learning across the national network
* Developed a plan for future sustainability

The participating LCEPs will have:

* Increased skills in measuring impact, evaluation and theory of change
* Increased knowledge of fundraising, investment opportunities and income generation
* Increased knowledge and awareness of effective communication and advocacy
* Increased awareness of different governance and leadership structures and a clear sense of what best suits their LCEP
* Increased skills in developing strategic local partnerships that will increase and diversify engagement with cultural learning

## 3.3 Design

The final programme design included:

* National Assembly open to all LCEPs on 8 October 2020
* 6 Core programme sessions (2 hours each)
* 8 Action Topic programme sessions (2 hours each)
* Slack and Microsoft Teams digital community spaces
* Recordings of each session plus speaker extracts
* Resources and collated summaries of discussions from each session
* 2 sessions of 1-1 coaching offered to each participant

The core sessions focused on the future development of LCEPs and the future of peer learning. These were designed to be relevant and applicable to all LCEPs. The Action Topic sessions focused more specifically on one area of learning and were designed to be elective depending on the specific needs of the LCEP.

## 3.4 Curriculum

The final curriculum of the programme (Appendix 1) was developed through consultation with LCEPs (survey circulated in September 2020), the National Assembly (discussion and poll), and discussion with Bridge Organisations and LCEP steering group.

## 3.5 Programme iterations

The curriculum topics were reached through the aforementioned consultation methods and shared with the participants for further feedback. A commitment was made to make changes during the programme if new areas of priority came up as a result of peer learning discussions. The key elements that were given more focus or added as a result of ongoing feedback were:

* Programming participants as speakers to share their experiences with each other, in particular on operating models, governance and fundraising
* Increased opportunities for small group conversations captured on Google ‘Jamboards’ for future reference
* A specific focus within some topics, for example, the session on Communication and Advocacy focussed on Communicating with Schools as it was heard through discussion and feedback that this was an area of challenge for many LCEPs.
* Additional ‘small group conversations’ to explore certain topics in more depth
* Additional peer to peer conversations for LCEPs with similar characteristics eg. Cultural organization-led LCEPs or Local Authority-led LCEPs.
* The creation of an ‘online hub’ for LCEPs to access programme recordings, resources and presentations

Additional workshop sessions and ‘small group conversations’ covered the following topics, as guided by the participants:

* Anti-racism and anti-oppression
* Youth voice
* The future of a LCEP National Movement or Network
* LCEP National Manifesto

## 3.6 Coaching

In the original design of the programme each participant was to be offered one coaching session with a professional coach. Due to underspend in other areas, the programme was able to increase this offer to two sessions for a proportion of participants.

## 3.7 Definitions

Throughout the programme a number of ways of describing the future of LCEPs as a national collective were used, including a National movement, National network and National programme. The following definitions help to explain the distinction between these mechanisms, however, they are not mutually exclusive and for some participants they envisage themselves taking part in a national collective that covers all three elements described below.

**National movement:** A collective of LCEPs that coalesce around a set of shared goals and engage with advocacy and campaigning on a national level.

**National network:** A collective of LCEPs attending regular meetings to strengthen national relationships, share learning and receive training.

**National programme:** A timebound offer of training and support to LCEPs across the UK.

# Evaluation methodology

An external evaluator, Hannah Wilmot, was engaged to deliver and analyse the programme surveys and Bridge Organisation focus group.

## 4.1 Data collection and analysis

Participant surveys were employed as the principal data collection tool. The three online surveys combined quantitative and qualitative elements and gathered contextual information about the respondents and the Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs) they were representing; feedback on the programme; outcomes for the respondents; and suggestions for the future of the network and LCEPs in general. The surveys were completed anonymously, but the contextual questions were used to understand who was responding to each survey and compare with the characteristics of the wider cohort. Response rates varied with a good rate of 69% for the baseline, a low rate of 34% for the midpoint, and a lower but acceptable rate of 52% for the final survey. The surveys were administered as follows:

* baseline survey - November 2020 - completed by 120 participants
* midpoint survey - March 2021 - completed by 59 participants
* final survey - June 2021 - completed by 90 participants.

Additional evidence is drawn from the external evaluator's observations at a sample of programme sessions (Core Sessions and Action Topics) and a semi-structured group interview with 15 representatives of the 10 Bridge Organisations in July 2021.

Thematic analysis was undertaken for the open-ended questions. Responses that received a minimum of three mentions are included in the findings presented in this report.

## 4.2 Limitations

There may be a non-response bias in the survey data for the midpoint and final surveys as those participants who were most engaged and experiencing positive outcomes may have been more inclined to make the time to complete the surveys and thus be over-represented in the respondents. Following the low response rate for the midpoint survey, time was allocated in the final Core Session for completion of the final survey to maximise the response rate. Whilst this encouraged those attending this session to complete the survey, attendance levels dropped over the course of the programme with 106 participants (61%) attending the final session.

# Programme participants

A total of 175 people signed up for the programme in October 2020 representing 96 LCEPs.

This was more than anticipated and it was therefore necessary to divide the participants into three cohorts.

Of these, 39% were individuals from Cultural Organisations, 31% from Local Authorities, 15% from School or Higher Education Settings, and less than 1% were freelance. The remaining 14% were from other small community or charity organisations or unknown.

The highest regional representation was from the North West with 21.4%, and all other regions were between 7.2% and 14.3%. A full breakdown of regions represented can be found in Table 2, Appendix 2.

A full list of programme participants can be found in Appendix 3.

## 5.1 Survey respondents

The surveys captured contextual information to ascertain if the samples completing each survey were broadly comparable.

In terms of the lead organisation of the LCEPs represented and the regional breakdown the survey respondents were broadly representative of the programme participants as outlined above.

Across the 3 surveys an average of 45% of respondents were on the Steering Group of their LCEP, 28% were paid coordinators, 19% were the Chair and 6% were unpaid coordinators.

In the final survey, respondents were asked to indicate the stage of development of their LCEP. The question offered three options:

* Emerging, e.g. starting to get people together to talk about options
* Developing, e.g. have an agreement for the LLCEP, steering group established, developing priorities, etc.;
* Established and Delivering, e.g. have steering group, Theory of Change, Terms of Reference, delivering activity.

Just over half were Established and Delivering, approximately a third were Developing with the remaining 10% Emerging.

# 6. Attendance and engagement

The National Assembly in October was attended by 170 people, following which 175 people signed up to the programme.

Across the duration of the programme, attendance levels fluctuated (see Table 3, Appendix 2), and there was a downward trend from Core Session 1 in November 2020 (97% attendance) to the final Core Session in June 2021 (56% attendance). Unlike the Core Sessions, which were advertised as compulsory, the Action Topics were optional. Across the eight Action Topics, attendance ranged from 54 to 89 with a mean of 73 participants per topic. A full list of topics and attendance figures can be found in Table 4, Appendix 2.

In most cases where there were two representatives from one LCEP on the programme, in practice often only one person from each LCEP attended the Action Topic sessions.

In the final survey, participants were asked to rate their level of engagement in the programme (including online sessions, coaching, use of Slack and outside contact). As can be seen in Table 5, approximately half the respondents rated their engagement as average and almost 45% rating this as high or very high. Only six people rated their engagement as low but as mentioned earlier, this is a self-selecting sample of participants, and those with the lowest engagement may not have completed the survey.

The survey asked if anything could have helped participants engage more fully. The principal response, mentioned by 30 of the 77 respondents who answered this question, was 'more time!' Individuals explained that they were forced to miss sessions owing to the demands of their work, with the LCEP often a voluntary and additional commitment undertaken on top of their main job.

It is recognised that engagement in the programme cannot be measured solely by attendance, and there are other ways in which LCEPs might have engaged with and made progress with their own development. We know anecdotally that programme participants contacted each other outside of the programme and accessed resources for use more widely across their LCEP.

## 6.1 Slack

Response to the interim survey and informal conversations with participants suggested that the Slack space was something they were struggling to engage with, partly due to capacity and partly due to not being familiar with it as a platform.

187 people were invited to join the Slack platform of which 163 accepted. Across the duration of the programme 90% of members viewed at least one of the public channels. There were a total of 607 messages posted by members, 405 of which were posted by programme participants.

## 6.2 Coaching

The coaching offer was taken up by a total of 82 participants. A total of 82 participants received one coaching session. Second sessions were booked with coaches either directly or via a central booking system. The booking log shows that 34 participants had a second coaching session, although this may be higher where participants booked directly with their individual coaches.

# 7 Participants' feedback on the programme

## 7.1 Skills, confidence and knowledge

All three surveys asked respondents to rate their skills, confidence and knowledge in relation to the learning outcomes for the programme. From the outcomes articulated in 3.2, seven were identified to be used as markers for change in skills, confidence and knowledge. Positive change was recorded for all seven outcomes.

The highest change in mean rating was for having 'a sense of being part of a national community of LCEPs' which had the lowest starting point and appeared to be a new experience for the majority of respondents. The lowest change in mean rating was for ‘the practices of effective communications and advocacy.’ The mean for these ratings appear in Table 6, Appendix 2.

Mean figures do not show the range of responses, and it is therefore instructive to look at the change in the proportion of respondents rating themselves at high or very high for the outcomes. See Table 7 below.

Outcomes linked to fundraising/income generation and evaluation/theory of change recorded comparatively low levels of change and only 40-50% of respondents rated their skills, confidence, and knowledge as high or very high in these areas in the final survey. The area of second greatest change was ‘awareness of different governance and leadership structures and ‘best fit’ which went from 18% to 60% rating their skills confidence and knowledge as high or very high, suggesting that this was a key area of value gained from the programme and most likely achieved through hearing about other LCEPs.

## 7.2 Key areas of learning

Participants were asked to describe their key areas of learning. The most cited area of key learning with the greatest number of respondents linked to learning from and about other LCEPs. The following quotes illustrate how this was valued by newly established LCEPs and recently appointed coordinators as well as more established LCEPs and personnel:

*“The various topic discussions helped me understand how LCEPs worked. As I was a new employee I had no previous understanding of what a LCEP was or how it functioned.”* Programme Participant

*“Listening to LCEPs ‘ahead’ of us is inspiring and gives us a sense of what is possible.”* Programme Participant

*“A real awareness has developed about the range of LCEPs, their different set-ups, different leads, objectives, ways of working. It has also helped me to view our LCEP with fresh eyes, taking into account important issues such as youth voice, diversity/representation, governance, capacity. As a result we are now reviewing our LCEP, bringing in an external facilitator to do this, using theory/story of change.”* Programme Participant

The final quote highlights how learning about other LCEPs enabled respondents to bring 'fresh eyes' to their own LCEP. It also mentions Theory of Change which was also cited by several respondents as a key area of learning, which is interesting given that this was one of the areas in Table 7 above with the lowest rating of skills, knowledge and understanding.

Another strand to this peer learning was around the recognition of shared challenges, possible solutions and mutual support. For example, one respondent wrote:

*“That we are not alone in the challenges faced and that other organisations are there to really help you develop while you can help advise other LCEPS based on your experience.”* Programme participant

Table 8 below shows the areas of key learning that were commonly mentioned and the no. of mentions as percentages.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 8: What is your key learning from the programme so far? (n=90) | No. mentions (%) |
| Sharing learning about different models of LCEPs - governance, coordination, funding etc/recognising the range/sharing outside the region | 49% |
| Strength in a shared vision in this committed national group/we are not alone | 19% |
| The value of Theory of Change and evaluation and how to develop/clarifying vision | 13% |
| Fresh eyes to reflect on own LCEP journey/affirmation of strengths | 13% |
| Sharing approaches to common challenges e.g. funding, governance etc | 11% |
| LCEPs are unique and designed to meet local circumstances/focus on local priorities | 11% |
| Greater understanding of diversity and inclusion | 7% |
| Importance of communications and advocacy and how to approach | 7% |
| Value of and ways of championing youth voice/sharing power/co-creating | 6% |
| Understanding value of strategic leadership and leadership styles | 6% |
| Importance of true and transparent collaboration and partnership | 6% |
| Differences in Bridge support for LCEPs | 4% |

The second highest number of mentions related to having a shared vision in a committed national group and the potential power of a collective voice. The quotes below are typical:

*“That there is strength in our shared vision, that we are an incredibly committed group and that it feels like the beginning rather than the end!”* Programme participant

*“Understanding the nature of a national movement in building the power to change collective perceptions, thinking, and, ultimately lead to policy reform.”* Programme participant

Other areas of learning related to specific inputs, with the most frequently cited being the Theory of Change and evaluation, followed by diversity and inclusion, youth voice, and strategic leadership and leadership styles.

## 7.3 Impact on the LCEP

Respondents were asked whether their learning and that of colleagues also participating in the programme, had impacted on their LCEP. Many of the responses were individual, but several common areas of impact emerged (see Table 9 below). Two key and related areas of impact illustrate how peer learning about different models for LCEPs and best practice have been taken back to effect change at a local level. Learning has helped people understand the value of identifying strategic priorities and given them the tools to do this and plan their next steps; it has also enabled people to take a step back and recognise the need to review an existing LCEP or help shape an emerging LCEP. The following quotes illustrate these points:

*“It has helped me to step back and consider strategic priorities as we emerge from the worst of the pandemic and start to rebuild programmes.”* Programme participant

*“It inspired a complete review of the way we work, the previous chair stepped down, the membership was reinvigorated and increased and a new steering group established”* Programme participant

*“Given me the impetus to review our terms of engagement - as an established LCEP I think it's time to evaluate our structure and terms of engagement”* Programme participant

*“We have scrapped the existing model and are currently starting again to build a collaborative network that feeds schools, teachers, young people, artists, arts organisations and health. It's been hard but worth it.”* Programme participant

Several people mentioned utilising theory of change or other tools introduced in the programme (such as 'As is; To be') to support change and development. For example, one respondent wrote:

*“Together with a colleague who also attended some of the sessions we held a feedback session to other LCEP members which has prompted us as a LCEP to have a review and theory/story of change process.”* Programme participant

Table 9 shows the areas of impact most commonly cited in the responses and the no, of mentions as percentages.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 9: Impact on LCEP (n=84) | No. mentions (%) |
| Developing new ideas, future plans and strategic priorities | 19% |
| Review, overhaul and streamline existing structure and operation | 18% |
| Feeling confident and connected as part of a national network | 13% |
| Clarifying vision/undertaking Theory of Change | 12% |
| Richer, more informed discussions | 6% |
| Working on youth voice and leadership | 6% |
| Thinking about diversity, inclusion and access | 4% |
| Brought in best practice/colleagues from other LCEPs | 4% |
| Improved personal leadership skills | 4% |

Several respondents reported feeling more confident as an LCEP as a result of being part of a national network and becoming more active as a consequence.

*“We feel more confident, more connected, inspired and keen to keep working together with other LLCEPs - we feel very proud of this growing network.”* Programme participant

Just two of the 84 people who completed this question reported issues with trying to embed learning. Both reported similar resistance from the membership, as one wrote:

*“I've tried on several occasions to bring some of the learning in, but people have their own agendas for the LCEP and there is never enough time in the board meetings.”* Programme participant

Asked about outcomes for the LCEPs in their regions, the Bridges highlighted that the programme has supported the cross-fertilisation of ideas within and between regions. One individual, for example, talked about a LCEP that had invited representatives from other LCEPs (outside their region and which they had met through the programme) to talk about school resources and youth voice to their membership. A second individual reported both positive and negative outcomes they had witnessed:

*“Positive outcome: many LCEPs better networked, learning from others, becoming more independent and seeing a bigger picture.”* Bridge organisation

## 7.4 The value of the programme

In the final survey, participants were asked how valuable they had found each element of the programme where 1=not at all valuable and 5=extremely valuable. The mean ratings are illustrated in Table 10.

The programme as a whole was highly valued with a mean rating of 4.2. Just over 40% of respondents rated the programme as extremely valuable (5/5). In terms of the individual programme elements, the overall environment created by People Make it Work received the highest value rating of 4.5. Several respondents left comments about the 'safe space', with the following quote being typical:

*“People Make it Work cannot be praised enough - they are kind, informed, guiding, encouraging, enabling...”* Programme participant

The majority of elements received a rating of 4 or more, with the exception of Slack and connecting and sharing with colleagues outside the sessions. A small number of respondents reported technical difficulties with Slack, but the majority of comments suggested that the lower rating reflected a lack of time to engage in these elements that were additional to scheduled sessions.

Additional analysis examined how the value that participants placed on the programme related to their LCEP’s stage of development and their role within the LLCEP. All respondents gave the overall programme a rating of over 4.00 irrespective of their role or stage of development. Virtually all elements of the programme were more highly valued by LCEP Coordinators than by steering group members or LCEP Chairs, with the latter group according the least value to the programme overall. In general, the newer and less developed LCEPs found all elements of the programme of greater value than more established LCEPs. The one exception was coaching, which may suggest that respondents from more established LCEPs were more ready to take advantage of the coaching offer.

It may be that the operational and solution-focussed nature of the programme was more useful to Coordinators than Chairs; and those just starting out on their LCEP journey derived great value from learning from their more experienced peers. The sample sizes for Emerging LCEPs and Chairs are small, and these results may therefore less reliable. However, the trends align with comments in other questions on the survey and feedback from the Bridges, increasing confidence in the findings.

## 7.5 Areas for improvement

In the final survey, respondents were asked if they had found anything difficult, confusing or disappointing. Of the 79 responses, 28 replied 'no' (35%). The 51 other comments were diverse, and the majority were cited by just one person. The difficulty cited most frequently (by five individuals) was Slack, with one suggesting 'maybe a different platform might have been more useful for sharing resources/discussion.' Three people expressed disappointment with the diminishing attendance over the programme and the low numbers for certain Action Topics, suggesting this was a reflection of capacity rather than interest. A further three respondents felt the time given in break-out groups was too short, as one wrote:

*“Sometimes it was very challenging to find yourself in a breakout room with strangers and being asked to discuss a topic in a short space of time.”* Programme participant

Although only raised by four respondents, the need to find a balance in presentations between best practice case studies, practical take-aways and challenges is worthy of consideration. Two of the four individuals found the presentations 'intimidating and overwhelming' and 'less about unpacking the challenges and more about showcasing.' One concluded:

*“I would have found it useful to hear from the people who were struggling and how they were overcoming their challenges. As someone struggling myself I felt unable to voice this as it felt like failure.”* Programme participant

Ensuring case studies reflect the breadth of location and LCEP scale and stage of development is also critical. One Bridge reported, for example, *“I had ...an LCEP pulling out because the first examples were of bigger LCEPs like Manchester and didn’t correspond to their experience.”*

The number of people highlighting each concern was small, and greater numbers praised these elements of the programme in response to other questions. Responses to various questions in the final survey also showed positive feedback about how the programme had responded to concerns raised in the midpoint survey about the narrow focus of the diversity and inclusion session, which were addressed by adding a Small Group Conversation focussed on how LCEPs are approaching anti-racism.

The Bridge representatives were asked a similar question, and the principal issue raised across the group was that the programme better met the needs of the newer LCEPs and of Coordinators but was of less value to the more experienced LCEPs and individuals.

# 8 Future LCEP peer learning, training and support

All 90 respondents to the final survey indicated that they would like to remain part of a national network of LCEPs.

Respondents who wanted to see this national network or programme suggested that the aims would be to share practice, resources and training; collaborate; and advocate. A number of specific initiatives were suggested for such a network, including a national youth voice programme, a toolkit for emerging LCEPs and a buddying system for new LCEPs.

Asked what they would like to see from such a network, 83 respondents made comments, the majority of which aligned with the considerations put forward in this report and discussed in the final core session. Many of the comments requested 'continuing' or 'ongoing' support and opportunities, whilst others suggested improvements or new ways of working.

The survey cited the following key areas to continue:

* Sharing experiences, best practice, resources and templates.
* Action Topics with expert input.
* National lobbying and advocacy; possibly working with other relevant national bodies such as ENGAGE and CLA; a manifesto for LCEPs.

Suggestions for new activities included:

* Differentiated sub-groups. For example, a group for more established LCEPs to look at branding, reviewing theory of change and managing transition. *“Many LCEPs are now in the process of re-visiting strategy, coming to the end of funding or starting to apply so support for these areas of change and shift will be important.”* Programme participant
* An emphasis on practical take-aways and problem solving; *“more of the how not just the what”'*. Programme participant
* Presentations from young people.
* Introducing LCEP buddies (pairing LCEPs with common interests or challenges) and mentors (pairing emerging and established LCEPs).
* Working towards 'life beyond Bridges'; with more support on new funding sources, advocacy and communications. A toolkit on advocacy with national messaging on LCEPs and the value of creative and cultural learning, 'Knowing that we're all sharing the same message about the value of LCEPs, on a national level, will strengthen our impact locally, especially with schools and potentially business.' Programme participant
* A central network for ACE to work with.

There was a preference for meeting termly or biannually (with some comments suggesting an annual conference), which corresponds to the views of the Bridges. The Bridges also suggested that a moderated online discussion space could usefully sit alongside live online events. The CPP network was cited as an appropriate model, with the attendant funding requirement.

In the midpoint survey, suggestions were made about such a network collaborating with art form and education strategic bodies, such as the Cultural Learning Alliance.

A small number of respondents suggested ways of sub-dividing the national network into regional or common interest groups such as LCEPs covering rural areas. Explaining the efficacy of such an approach, one individual said, *“National movements can help with the advocacy and elevate conversations with influencers locally, but can also become generic and unwieldy”*. Programme Participant

In the group interview with the Bridges, there was enthusiasm to lead or co-create the programme for the network but there was also an awareness that Bridges are moving into their final stage and cannot therefore offer the continuity required for the long-term. On balance, the group felt that it would be preferable for the network to be facilitated by an independent organisation, working closely with the Bridges and their successors.

## 8.1 Support and training needs

Respondents were asked to outline areas where they would like further support or training. The highest number of requests were for 'more of the same' including:

* Fundraising - sources of funding and bid-writing.
* (Creative forms of) evaluation.
* Advocacy and communications.
* Equality and diversity.
* Leadership.
* Governance and membership models.

Many respondents commented that they wanted to go into more detail in some of these areas, or that they recognise there is more that they can learn.

Other needs identified included:

* How to facilitate 'genuine dialogue about where we are and where we need to get to.'
* Time-management for part-time and freelance workers trying to juggle multiple roles and demands.
* Mental health and wellbeing; and social prescribing.
* Partnership development with non-arts partners, including research partners in higher education.
* Effective ways of engaging schools: CPD for schools; consulting with schools; curriculum enrichment.

# 9 Conclusions

Respondents to the surveys reported positive outcomes from their participation in the LCEP National Leadership and Peer Learning Programme with positive change (from the baseline) recorded for all the programme's stated outcomes. Respondents rated the overall value of the programme at 4.2 out of 5.0 (where 5=extremely valuable) with all but Slack and connecting with peers outside of sessions also receiving ratings above 4.0. The safe, inspiring and positive learning environment created by people make it work received the highest rating for individual elements at 4.5. Further analysis of the data revealed that the value of the programme differed in relation to the role of the respondents and the stage of development of the LCEP, with newer LCEPs and Coordinators deriving the greatest benefits. These findings aligned with the observations of Bridge representatives and suggest the need for differentiated pathways or sub-groups in any future network activities.

The key learning for participants was from and about other LCEPs including the sharing of models, resources, challenges and solutions; and understanding the strength of a shared vision and collective national voice. There was good evidence that the learning and tools (such as theory of change) were being taken back into LCEPs, helping to shape newer LCEPs or refresh and remodel more established partnerships. There was also evidence of growing confidence and impetus to act locally, regionally and nationally.

There was a noticeable drop-off in attendance at the Core Sessions over the duration of the programme. There was strong evidence to suggest that many individuals were constrained by limited capacity, reflecting a constant challenge for organisations that are part of LCEPs to carve out sufficient capacity in the relevant roles to contribute effectively to the LCEP.

There was unanimous enthusiasm from all survey respondents and Bridge representatives for the continuation of a national LCEP network. Suggestions regarding the characteristics of the network are included in the Considerations section on page 20.

Specific areas of support and training were requested from respondents to the survey which included areas already addressed by the programme but where skills or confidence still required further development; this included: fundraising, evaluation, advocacy and communications.

In considering the future of peer learning, further thought should be given to the online platform used to bring members together outside of scheduled meetings and events. The Slack platform used in this programme was the element most commented on as not being used or presenting as a challenge and therefore, an alternative might be considered in future iterations of the programme.

In summary, the programme achieved its objectives and was highly valued by the majority of respondents to the final survey. The 'peer learning' aspect of the programme was highly successful; the success of the 'leadership' component was more variable with experienced individuals such as LCEP Chairs looking for a more strategic level of input and debate, and a differentiated approach may be beneficial for supporting a more relevant level of learning in future activities.

# 10 Considerations

These considerations relate primarily to the continuation of LCEP peer learning and are drawn from feedback from programme participants and stakeholders through the programme evaluation as well as discussions within the programme sessions themselves. Discussions were summarised and played back to the participants at various stages including in the final Core Session, with an opportunity for further reflection and feedback.

The headline consideration is that a national LCEP peer learning network is maintained on an ongoing basis.

It is recommended that the network has the following characteristics:

**Purpose**

* to share opportunities and pool resources
* to enable individual and regional relationships to be cultivated
* to share experiences and learning with each other
* to enable collective fundraising
* to enable collective communication, advocacy and lobbying
* to increase skills, knowledge and understanding
* to enable more effective local and national partnership working
* to develop leadership skills

**Direction**

* a network with outside facilitation and coordination provided by an independent organisation
* co-created with Bridges and LCEPs
* driven by a National Manifesto created collaboratively with LCEPs and young people
* opportunities for LCEPs to co-design and co-lead individual events and training

**Components**

* National networking meetings held 2-3 times per year, both online and in person
* a programme of events and training sessions with speakers and topic experts, including LCEPs themselves with learning to share in specific areas, both online and in person
* opportunities for streamed activity based on LCEP stage of development
* opportunities for small groups to drive forward certain network initiatives such as creating a LCEP manifesto, developing a youth voice network and national advocacy strategies
* meet ups for sharing between LCEP Chairs and Coordinators separately to account for varying needs
* individual coaching for existing LCEPs and Chairs and peer to peer buddying support for newly established LCEPs
* moderated online discussion space
* online resource and information Hub for shared resources, advocacy materials and information about all LCEPs

## 10.1 Other considerations raised by programme participants

Other considerations that featured highly in discussions with LCEPs about their future development relate to their sustainability and ability to operate effectively both individually and as part of a network. The primary consideration is to increase funding to LCEPs with the suggestion that baseline funding is made available to all LCEPs either in the form of grants or the resourcing of a coordinator role.

In addition, and related to fundraising, a suggestion was made that support be made available to all LCEPs in order to fundraise effectively. This could be facilitated through the continuation of a peer learning network or could take the form of financial support for LCEPs, either individually or collectively, to engage a fundraiser for a limited period of time.

It was felt by participants that advocacy for LCEPs should be coordinated nationally. This could be facilitated by the continuation of a peer learning network and if this is the case this should be one of the stated purposes of the network and a role for the network facilitator or coordinator.

Finally, the suggestion of creating a National Manifesto was put forward several times across the duration of the programme and it was felt that this could underpin or inform the direction of a future LCEP network and support collective advocacy.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 – Programme curriculum

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## Appendix 2 – graphs, charts and tables



Table 2

**Table 4**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Action Topic / Core Session** | **No. of registrations** | **No. of Attendees** |
| Core Session 1 – Sharing successes & challenges, hearing from other LCEPs about models and approaches | n/a | 169 |
| Core Session 2 – The future development of CEPs, Local vision, National vision | n/a | 175 |
| Developing a Theory of Change | 82 | 77 |
| Measuring Impact and Evaluation | 103 | 89 |
| Developing Strategic Partnerships | 96 | 78 |
| Diversity and inclusive practice | 108 | 82 |
| Core Session 3 – Individual leadership | n/a | 129 |
| Core Session 4 – Developing and sustaining networks and movements | n/a | 147 |
| Fundraising and income generation | 107 | 68 |
| Governance and Leadership | 104 | 70 |
| Communication and engaging schools  | 105 | 70 |
| Core Session 5 – The future development of LCEPs, individual sustainability plans | n/a | 98 |
| Core Session 6 – Peer learning network, Future considerations | n/a | 106 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Table 6: Rating of skills, confidence and knowledge | Average |
| Outcome | **Baseline (n=120)** | **Final (n=90)** | **Change in average** |
| A sense of being part of a national community of LCEPs  | 2.44 | 4.07 | +1.63 |
| \*Awareness of different governance and leadership structures and clarity on the 'best fit' for your LCEP | 2.75 | 3.61 | +0.86 |
| Skills in developing strategic local partnerships that will increase and diversify engagement with the LCEP and with cultural education in your area | 3.23 | 3.76 | +0.53 |
| Confidence as a local leader for local cultural education partnerships | 3.21 | 3.72 | +0.51 |
| \*Knowledge and skills in fundraising, investment opportunities and income generation | 2.93 | 3.37 | +0.44 |
| Knowledge and skills in evaluation, impact assessment and theory of change | 3.13 | 3.49 | +0.36 |
| \*The practices of effective communications and advocacy | 3.34 | 3.63 | +0.29 |

## Appendix 3 – full list of participants

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **LCEP** | **No. of representatives** |
| 1 | Barnet Cultural Education Partnership | 2 |
| 2 | Bath Cultural Education Partnership | 2 |
| 3 | Bedford Arts & Cultural Education (BACE) | 1 |
| 4 | Bexley LCEP | 1 |
| 5 | Birmingham Creates | 2 |
| 6 | Black Shale, Ambery Valley & Bolsover | 2 |
| 7 | Bolton Cultural Education Partnership | 2 |
| 8 | Bradford LCEP  | 1 |
| 9 | Braintree | 2 |
| 10 | Buckinghamshire LCEP | 2 |
| 11 | Bury | 2 |
| 12 | Calderdale LLCEP | 1 |
| 13 | Camden Spark | 2 |
| 14 | Captivate-Cultural Education Partnership | 2 |
| 15 | Carlisle LLCEP | 1 |
| 16 | LCEP-WEST SUSSEX | 2 |
| 17 | ChalleNGE, Nottingham | 2 |
| 18 | Cheshire LLCEP | 2  |
| 19 | Chesterfield Cultural Education Partnership | 2 |
| 20 | Coventry LCEP (CLCEP) | 1 |
| 21 | Create Sheffield | 2 |
| 22 | Creative Connections - Telford | 2 |
| 23 | Creative Wandsworth | 1 |
| 24 | Croydon | 2 |
| 25 | Cultivate (Halton) | 2 |
| 26 | Cultural Hub, Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole | 1 |
| 27 | Culture Co-op (Lancaster District Cultural Education Partnership) | 2 |
| 28 | Culture Consortium Shropshire (CCS) | 1 |
| 29 | CulturEd - St Helens | 2 |
| 30 | Derby’s LCEP | 2 |
| 31 | Devon & Torbay | 2 |
| 32 | Doncaster Cultural Education Partnership (DLCEP) | 2 |
| 33 | Dorset Children & Young People's Hub | 2 |
| 34 | Ealing Cultural Education Partnership (name not yet decided) | 2  |
| 35 | ELEVATE Education - Lambeth's Cultural Education Partnership | 1 |
| 36 | Enjoy - Great Yarmouth | 1 |
| 37 | FRAME: West Cumbria Cultural Education Partnership | 2  |
| 38 | Fusion, Barnsley | 2  |
| 39 | Future Creators - Brighton and Hove  | 2 |
| 40 | Gateshead | 2 |
| 41 | Generation Hull | 2  |
| 42 | Hampshire LCEP | 3  |
| 43 | Haringey LCEP | 2 |
| 44 | Harlow Cultural Leaders Group | 1 |
| 45 | Hertfordshire Cultural Education Partnership (HLCEP) | 2 |
| 46 | Isle of Sheppey LCEP | 2 |
| 47 | Islington Council 11 by 11 | 2 |
| 48 | IWLCEP (Isle of Wight) | 2 |
| 49 | Knowsley | 2 |
| 50 | LLCEP Liverpool  | 2 |
| 51 | Leeds | 2 |
| 52 | Lowestoft Rising | 1 |
| 53 | Luton Cultural Education Partnership | 2 |
| 54 | MAKE (Milton Keynes LCEP) | 2 |
| 55 | MLCEP | 2  |
| 56 | Medway LCEP | 1 |
| 57 | My Cambridge | 1 |
| 58 | Newcastle upon Tyne | 2 |
| 59 | North Oxon LCEP | 2 |
| 60 | North Tyneside | 2 |
| 61 | Northants LCEP | 2 |
| 62 | Northumberland LLCEP | 2  |
| 63 | Norwich 2040 | 1 |
| 64 | Oldham | 2 |
| 65 | Oxford City LCEP | 1 |
| 66 | PEACH West Norfolk | 2 |
| 67 | Pendle | 2 |
| 68 | PHACE | 2 |
| 69 | Plymouth Cultural Education Partnership | 2 |
| 70 | Portsmouth LCEP | 2 |
| 71 | Preston LLCEP | 2 |
| 72 | Reading LCEP | 2 |
| 73 | Rotherham | 1 |
| 74 | Salford LLCEP | 1 |
| 75 | Sandwell LCEP | 2 |
| 76 | Sefton LLCEP | 2 |
| 77 | Slough LCEP | 2 |
| 78 | Somerset LCEP | 2 |
| 79 | South Tyneside | 2  |
| 80 | Southampton LCEP | 2 |
| 81 | Southend-on-Sea | 2 |
| 82 | Stoke and North Staffordshire LCEP | 2  |
| 83 | Sunderland LCEP | 1 |
| 84 | The City Classroom, Leicester  | 2 |
| 85 | Thurrock Council | 2  |
| 86 | Trafford LCEP | 2 |
| 87 | Wakefield LLCEP | 2 |
| 88 | Walsall LCEP | 1 |
| 89 | Warrington LLCEP | 2 |
| 90 | Warwickshire LCEP | 5  |
| 91 | Wigan and Leigh LLCEP | 2  |
| 92 | WIRRAL | 2  |
| 93 | Wolverhampton Local Education Partnership | 2 |
| 94 | Worcestershire | 2 |
| 95 | Yet to be named  | 2  |
| 96 | Young Fenland Cultural Consortium | 2 |