

Arts Council England

Research into Local Cultural Education Partnerships

Final Report
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BOP
Consulting



Credits

Written and prepared by

BOP Consulting - Douglas Lonie, Yvonne Lo and Joshua Dedman

With associate consultant David Parker

Photo credits

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Contents

Executive summary	3
1. Introduction	5
1.1 Who this report is for.....	5
1.2 Aims of this research and methodology	5
1.3 Structure of the report.....	7
2. Survey findings	8
2.1 Cultural education offer before LCEP was established	9
2.2 Current and future LCEP collaborations	10
2.3 Use of data to inform strategy and planning.....	11
2.4 Priorities	12
2.5 Strategic direction – policy agenda and funding.....	16
2.6 Enabling and disabling factors.....	17
4. Operational overview of LCEPs	19
2.7 Governance models.....	19
2.8 Delivery	19
2.9 Funding	20
2.10 Children and Young People involvement	21
2.11 Geographical challenges	23
2.12 Data	23
3. Strategic overview	24
3.1 Children and Young People.....	24
3.2 Local Cultural Education Partnerships	24
3.3 Bridge Organisations	25
3.4 Arts Council England	25
3.5 National Portfolio Organisations	26
3.6 Schools and Local Authorities	26

3.7 Data and Impact.....	27
5. Conclusions	28
6. Appendices	30

Table of Figures

Figure 1 Summary of the research methodology	6
Figure 2 Survey responses	8
Figure 3 Perceived effectiveness of cultural education offer prior to the establishment of LCEP	9
Figure 4 Sectors that (always, often and sometimes) collaborated with cultural education prior to the establishment of LCEP	9
Figure 5 Education organisations LCEP is working with.....	10
Figure 6 Types of out-of-school setting organisations LCEP hopes to work with, by status of LCEP	11
Figure 7 Summary of four types of data used by LCEP	11
Figure 8 Priorities of LCEP partnership’s ambitions and plans (5 being the top priority).....	13
Figure 9 LCEP priorities by artform.....	15
Figure 10 The extent to which LCEP is linking or planning to link with other policy agendas	16
Figure 11 Source of funding targeted by LCEP	16
Figure 12 Funding LCEP targeted to leverage	17
Figure 13 Factors that are enabling or disabling progress of LCEPs	17
Figure 14 Enabling and disabling factors reported by LCEPs in rural Vs urban areas.....	18

Executive summary

Arts Council England commissioned BOP Consulting to conduct research into the operation of Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs). This was following up on 'baseline' research conducted by David Parker in late 2016.

The Local Cultural Education Partnerships is Arts Council England's key priority to meet the Cultural Education Challenge and the aims of its 10-year strategy. This research comes at a pivotal time for the Cultural Education Challenge and the development of Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs), as Arts Council England considers its future strategy and the National Portfolio Organisation funding has become active for the period up to 2022.

This research explores the operational and strategic development of LCEPs in order that Arts Council England and Bridge Organisations can explore how best to support their work from national and local perspectives in the coming years.

Findings from the LCEP survey

- Of 97 Active LCEPs, 68 responded to survey (i.e. 70% - a strong response rate)
- Overall, a very strong indication of national coverage and huge amount of activity taking place under the 'LCEP' banner
- Based on their own perceptions; 35% were established and delivering, 22% were established but not delivering, and 43% were emerging.
- 53% of partnerships have terms of reference or other formal documentation, 84% have used data in their discussions and planning so far
- 14% are using a quality framework, 64% not at the moment, but plan to – questions around what quality means (quality of provision, quality of experience, quality of governance – all overlap)
- 3% have an Equality and Diversity Action plan, 71% plan to, 21% do not plan to

- Large proportions of respondents didn't know what proportion of schools in the locality they are targeting (21%) or non-school cultural organisations they are targeting (42%).
- Most LCEPs (78%) are already working with arts and cultural organisations, but much fewer are currently working with other organisations in out-of-school setting: youth centres (22%), healthcare centres (5%), faith centres (3%), or sports clubs (2%)
- Nationally, partnership building, identifying disadvantaged children and young people, and inter-departmental collaboration are the top three enabling factors for LCEPs, while transport links to cultural venues, clarity of progression routes for young people and levels of funding and resources have been disabling LCEP's work.

Operational findings

- Operational and governance models are very different across LCEPs, although diversity of membership, particularly beyond 'usual suspects' was seen to be more successful
- Working and task-focused 'sub-groups' are very effective at activating strategies, (i.e. no need to wait for full group consensus).
- A need for clarity on what the LCEPs are trying to achieve before moving into 'delivery' phase. No need to try to deliver too soon and be seen to be active. Better to have a strong strategy (responsibilities to accept this at all levels, including Bridge and ACE)
- Consistent funding from a range of sources is required and ACE funding via the Bridge Organisations should be maintained.
- A need to tackle the structural barrier of transport costs in both rural and urban areas.
- There has been little data sharing or sharing of practice regarding data use between LCEPs, this could add value

Strategic findings

- Not a clear indication that children and young people are being involved in decision making or consulted about their local offer across the board
- A need for ongoing financial support for leadership and operational roles across LCEPs (from a variety of sources and combinations)
- A need for partnerships to establish where their offers are complementary and where they are competitive and plan accordingly
- How can LCEPs be supported to grow and mature to local opportunities and priorities (i.e. not treated as a 'programme' by Bridge Organisations or ACE with associated KPIs, monitoring etc.)?
- Need for professional development, peer-learning and mentoring, but unclear how best to initiate this and achieve needed reach across LCEPs
- Arts Council England should appreciate this is a 'slow-burn' initiative, clarify objectives, celebrate and advocate for achievements and continue to support the devolved and distributed strategy for Bridges and LCEPs

Conclusions

Overall, the research suggests there is a clear and concerted effort being made by individuals and organisations across England to engage more children, young people, and their families in creative activities as audiences and participants.

More could potentially be done to involve children and young people in the decisions being made about their local cultural offers and how they can be supported to progress.

The infrastructure expected to meet the Cultural Education Challenge (i.e. cultural organisations and venues, cultural education providers, schools and local authorities) is also being acutely affected by squeezes in funding across the board, with consequent precarity in workforce and strategy. All of which affects the rate of progress.

It was also made clear from various sources within the survey and interviews that there is a need to be more radical in how the Cultural Education Challenge is refreshed and positioned to support the work of the LCEPs. There is a need for something different from business as usual and more 'bums on seats', towards something that is truly representative and celebratory of the great cultural diversity across the country, particularly that being invented and reinvented by the country's young people.

Arts Council England, Bridge Organisations and LCEP members themselves should be encouraged to think about next steps for the initiative that make the most of this variety and the energy young people are bringing to their local cultural infrastructure. On some level this is about making the work as interesting and exciting as possible, at all levels. Energy can quickly get lost in convening meetings, partnership agreements, monitoring reports, and strategy emails, therefore focus also must remain on achieving this balance.

1. Introduction

In October 2017 Arts Council England commissioned BOP Consulting to conduct research into the operation of Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs). This was following up on some 'baseline' research conducted by David Parker in late 2016.

This research explores the operational and strategic development of LCEPs in order that Arts Council England and Bridge Organisations can explore how best to support their work from national and local perspectives.

The LCEPs are currently operating in a fluid space. There is a great deal of difference between and within local contexts, and a range of challenges and opportunities linked to national, regional and local policy and funding.

Partnerships between cultural providers, schools, and a broad range of other service providers for young people will be central to achieving a co-ordinated cultural offer to all children and young people across English communities and enabling Arts Council England to achieve the goals set out in Great Art and Culture for Everyone, and the aims of Goal 5.

Schools remain key to LCEPs if the ambition and scale of the Cultural Education Challenge is to be realised, but the cramping effects of the Ebacc and Progress 8, and cuts to cultural funding in schools continue to be felt. Recent research from the Education Policy Institute shows the number of young people studying creative subjects is at its lowest for a decade. This context implies that LCEPs must confront how they are engaging with the curriculum directly, as well as considering their extra-curricular offers and venue-based offer to best appeal to young people in their own time. Either way, it is arguable that the Cultural Education Challenge remains challenging in the current educational policy context.

1.1 Who this report is for

It is because of these issues that Arts Council England wishes to explore the various approaches taking place across the LCEPs through this research and apply this learning to their children and young people strategy.

For organisations who are members of LCEPs the research can provide insight that allows them to improve their practice and think more broadly about the types of partners they can engage with, and how to broaden and deepen their practice.

At a local level this can enable LCEPs to engage with decision makers, including schools, and by engaging directly with the Bridge Organisations we can hope to influence those responsible for cultural strategies at a regional level.

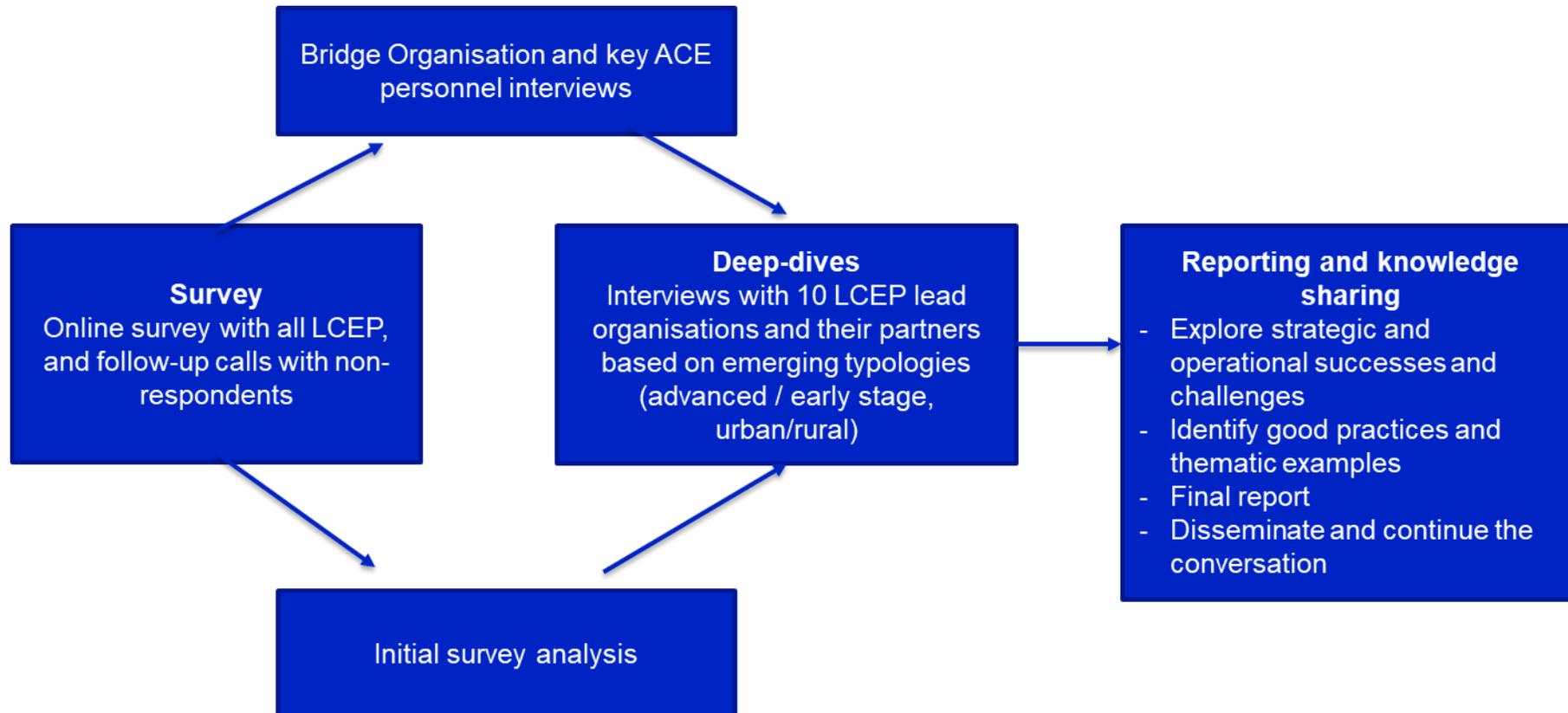
1.2 Aims of this research and methodology

Previous research indicated around 70 LCEPs were up and running, and there are now around 100 LCEPs active around the country – indicating the initiative is taking hold. Recognising that there are a number of new LCEPs since the previous research and that existing LCEPs will likely have become more established, this research provides an update on progress since the launch of the Challenge in 2015, as well as provide tangible learning to inform policy and practice in this shifting landscape.

Key objectives of the research are:

- to portray the current position of LCEPs individually and as a cohort.
- to develop knowledge of how LCEPs have changed since the baseline research in 2016
- update our understanding of the landscape in which LCEPs are operating
- to identify examples of best practice and learning from LCEPs work so far
- to offer suggestions and priorities for ACE support to LCEPs

Figure 1 Summary of the research methodology



1.3 Structure of the report

This report highlights findings that respond to the objectives of the research. Additional, based on broader issues in cultural education policy this report also explores some further questions:

- How different LCEPs are engaging with partners based on the types of activities taking place?
- How are LCEPs linking with local agendas to do with education, health, social care, or regional development? What impact does this have on the shape and content of their offer?
- What are the most innovative practice models apparent? What makes them so?
- How are LCEPs engaging with the hardest to reach young people in their communities?
- How are LCEPs using local (or broader) data to improve or refine their strategies and offer?

This report first summarises analysis from the survey. This section provides an overview of the current landscape of LCEPs nationally and by types of LCEPs, focusing on analysis in relation to LCEP collaborations, management, priorities, challenges and aspirations.

The next session explores the operations of LCEPs, distilling insights from the interviews on governance models, delivery and funding, involving children and young people, and use of data.

The section that follows gives the strategic overview of LCEPs based on the various constituent groups involved in the initiative, including children and young people, partnerships, bridge organisations, ACE and NPOs, schools and local authorities, as well as considering the strategic issues around data and impact. The concluding section considers the overall progress in relation to the Cultural Education Challenge and outlines some final overarching questions to be explored in relation to this.

We appreciate that LCEPs are all at different stages of development and that they are, by their nature, locally specific. While this limits the extent to which we can generalise from the findings, we gathered lots of examples of key learning that can be shared more broadly and improve the functioning of established LCEPs, as well as inspire newer ones, or those yet to be formed. We have therefore included innovative and good practice examples throughout this report, but also understand that there is a need to engage more people in the findings and seek to solve any problems that are limiting the work currently.

2. Survey findings

The survey received a very strong response overall from 63 LCEPs. Representation from the South West (2) and North West (4) was slightly weaker, but otherwise the survey sample closely reflects LCEP activity across the country.

Figure 2 Survey responses

Region	Percentage of responses
East Midlands (EM)	10%
East of England (EE)	17%
London (Lon)	8%
North East (NE)	10%
North West (NW)	6%
South East (SE)	16%
South West (SW)	3%
West Midlands (WM)	11%
Yorkshire and the Humber	19%

Top-line statistics and findings:

- **Status of LCEPs:** based on LCEP lead partners' own perceptions, 35% were established and delivering, 22% were established but not delivering, and 43% were emerging. The proportion of established LCEPs were lower than the baseline study but there was bias towards those still forming and likely some cautiousness about claims to be delivering. We also noted differences in partners' perceived status of the LCEP – in a few LCEPs with more than one response (chair /co-chair/ lead partners) they described the LCEP development differently.

- **LCEPs work is highly localised, reflected through the diverse priorities and challenges LCEPs face across different regions and settings.**

London and the North West regions both share similar priority in narrowing social, education and economic gaps through cultural education. LCEPs working in urban settings face more competition on funding and resources and maintaining demand from schools for cultural activities; while LCEPs in rural setting face bigger challenges around transport links to cultural venues and progression of young people.

Governance:

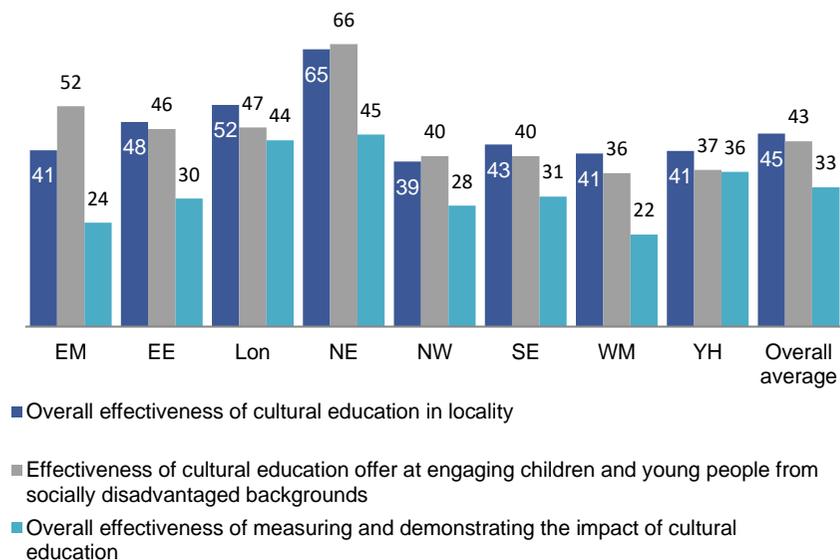
- 53% of partnerships have terms of reference or other formal documentation, 84% have used data in their discussions and planning so far.
- 14% of LCEPs are using a quality framework, 64% not at the moment, but plan to – there are questions around what quality means (in relation to provision, experience, or governance, they are different but all overlap)

Strategy and priorities:

- 3% have an Equality and Diversity Action plan, 71% plan to, 21% do not plan to – for this fifth it may sound overburdening and bureaucratic, rather than a strategic way to set priorities and ensure their offer is inclusive
- Large proportions of respondents didn't know roughly what proportion of schools in the locality they are targeting (21%) or non-school cultural organisations they are targeting (40%). Indicating that many LCEPs have not yet fully developed and communicated their strategies
- Increased priority placed on collaborating with health and wellbeing agenda (52% identify strong link), and plans to diversify cultural education provision in out-of-school settings (59% plan to work with youth centres; 46% with healthcare centre)

2.1 Cultural education offer before LCEP was established

Figure 3 Perceived effectiveness of cultural education offer prior to the establishment of LCEP



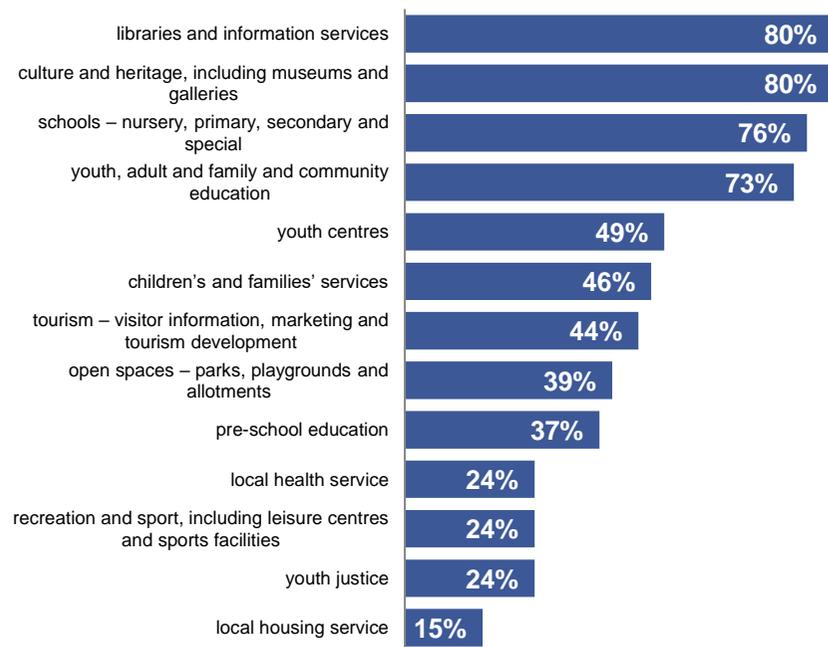
Source: BOP Consulting (2018)

Scores out of 100. N=63

Perceived effectiveness of cultural education in local areas prior to the establishments of LCEP was relatively low, with clearest weakness reported in relation to demonstrating and measuring the impact of cultural engagement in local areas.

Regional result suggests that cultural education in London and North East were the only two regions scoring themselves above national average across the three areas asked.

Figure 4 Sectors that (always, often and sometimes) collaborated with cultural education prior to the establishment of LCEP



Source: BOP Consulting (2018)

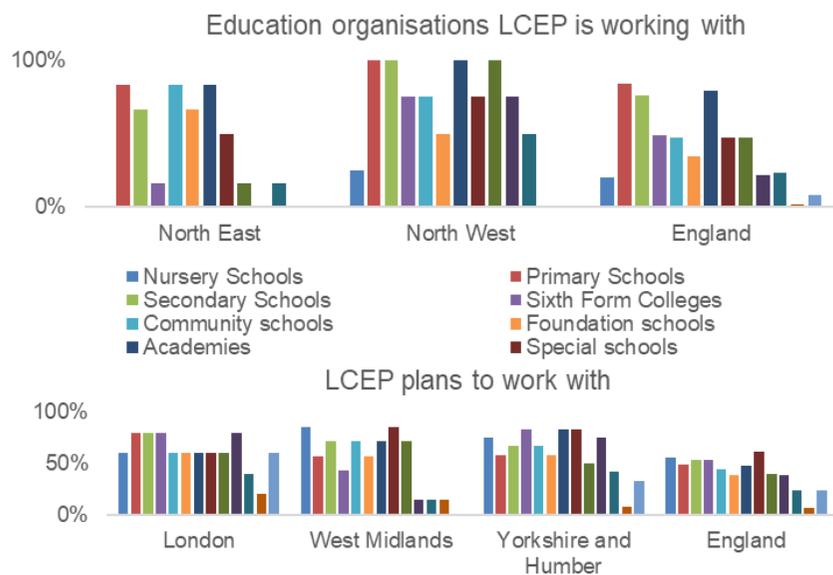
N=41

Libraries and information services, cultural and heritage and formal school settings were the sectors that LCEP partners collaborated most often with prior to the LCEP.

On average, members had collaborated with around six other sectors. The North West region and London reported themselves to be the most collaborative –with an average 8 and 7 sectors respectively. East of England was the least collaborative, working with an average of five other sectors prior to the LCEP initiative.

2.2 Current and future LCEP collaborations

Figure 5 Education organisations LCEP is working with



Source: BOP Consulting (2018)

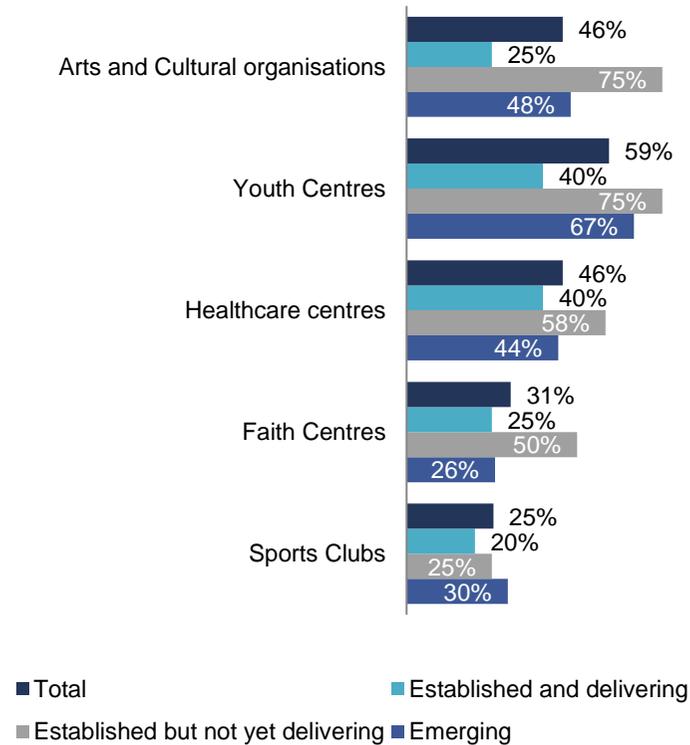
N: 63

Consistent with the strong collaboration with schools prior to LCEP establishment, the majority of LCEPs currently work with primary schools (84%), academies (79%) and secondary schools (76%). However, fewer are working with nurseries (21%) and special schools (48%)

Special schools are strongly targeted by LCEPs for their future collaborations - 62% of LCEPs have plans to work with Special schools. Secondary schools will continue to be key focus of LCEP's work (56% LCEP have plans to work with them and sixth form schools).

Regionally, Yorkshire and Humber, London and the West Midlands appear to be more focused in developing collaborations with education organisations in the future.

Figure 6 Types of out-of-school setting organisations LCEP hopes to work with, by status of LCEP



Source: BOP Consulting (2018)

N= 59 (Total), 20 (Established and delivering), 12 (Established but not yet delivering), 27 (Emerging)

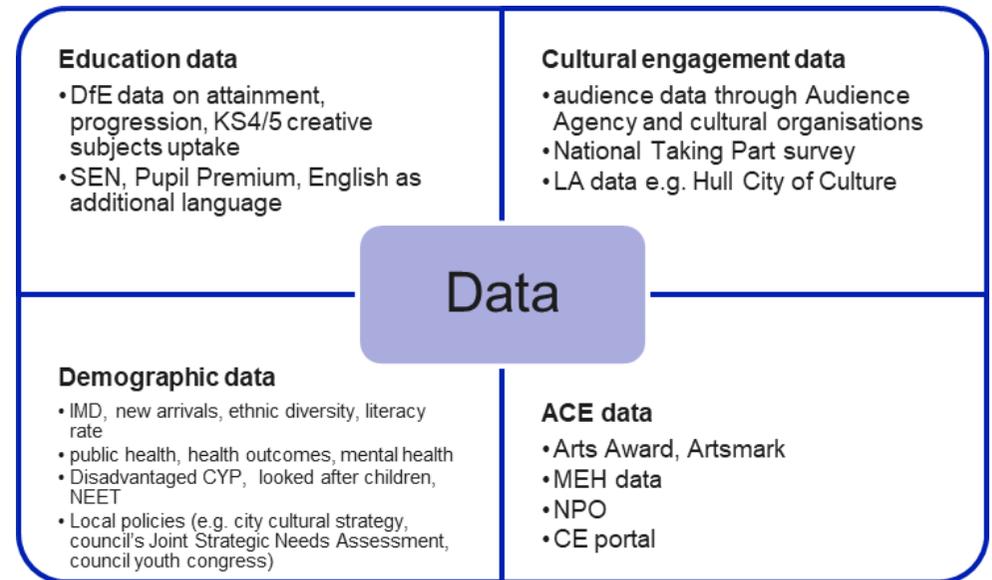
Most LCEPs (78%) are already working with arts and cultural organisations, but much fewer of them are currently working with other organisations in out-of-school setting: youth centres (22%), healthcare centres (5%), faith centres (3%), sports clubs (2%).

Interestingly, established and delivering LCEPs seem to have a more conservative approach in working in out-of-school setting compared to LCEPs which are not yet delivering. Other than arts and cultural organisations, emerging and not-yet-delivering LCEPs are targeting youth centres and healthcare centres. This echoes the increased interests in health and wellbeing agendas, and also points to a more diversified local approach to cultural education in out-of-school settings in the future.

2.3 Use of data to inform strategy and planning

83% of LCEPs use data to inform strategy and planning, there is a bias towards established and delivering LCEPs (96% using data vs 67% of emerging LCEPs).

Figure 7 Summary of four types of data used by LCEP



Source: BOP Consulting (2018)

In addition to the above four types of data, LCEPs have also used or commissioned research – examples include cultural sector and children and young people consultation, research on school engagement and provision, schools and teachers consultation, skills and capacity of LCEP partners.

Despite the active use of data by LCEPs, there are many reports of challenges around getting hold of local data.

“Data available tends to refer to the whole of the region so cannot be used alone as it gives an overall picture of a very large county rather than enabling us to fully understand the nuances of geography. The LCEP has looked at ACE’s cultural education data portal but further work is needed to break this down and to examine patterns of engagement both geographically and socioeconomically.”

2.4 Priorities

LCEPs work is highly localised, reflected through a diverse priorities and challenges LCEPs face across different regions and settings.

Increasing reach of children and young people cultural engagement is the top priority of LCEPs nationally, and of all regions except northern regions. Relationship building between schools and cultural providers is another key priority, particularly in East of England and North East.

LCEPs from the North West and London regions have much stronger focus on reducing inequalities through their offer, perhaps reflecting the issues of high inequalities and strong growth in both regions.

When comparing LCEPs from rural and urban areas, LCEPs based in rural regions focus more heavily on increasing the number of children and young

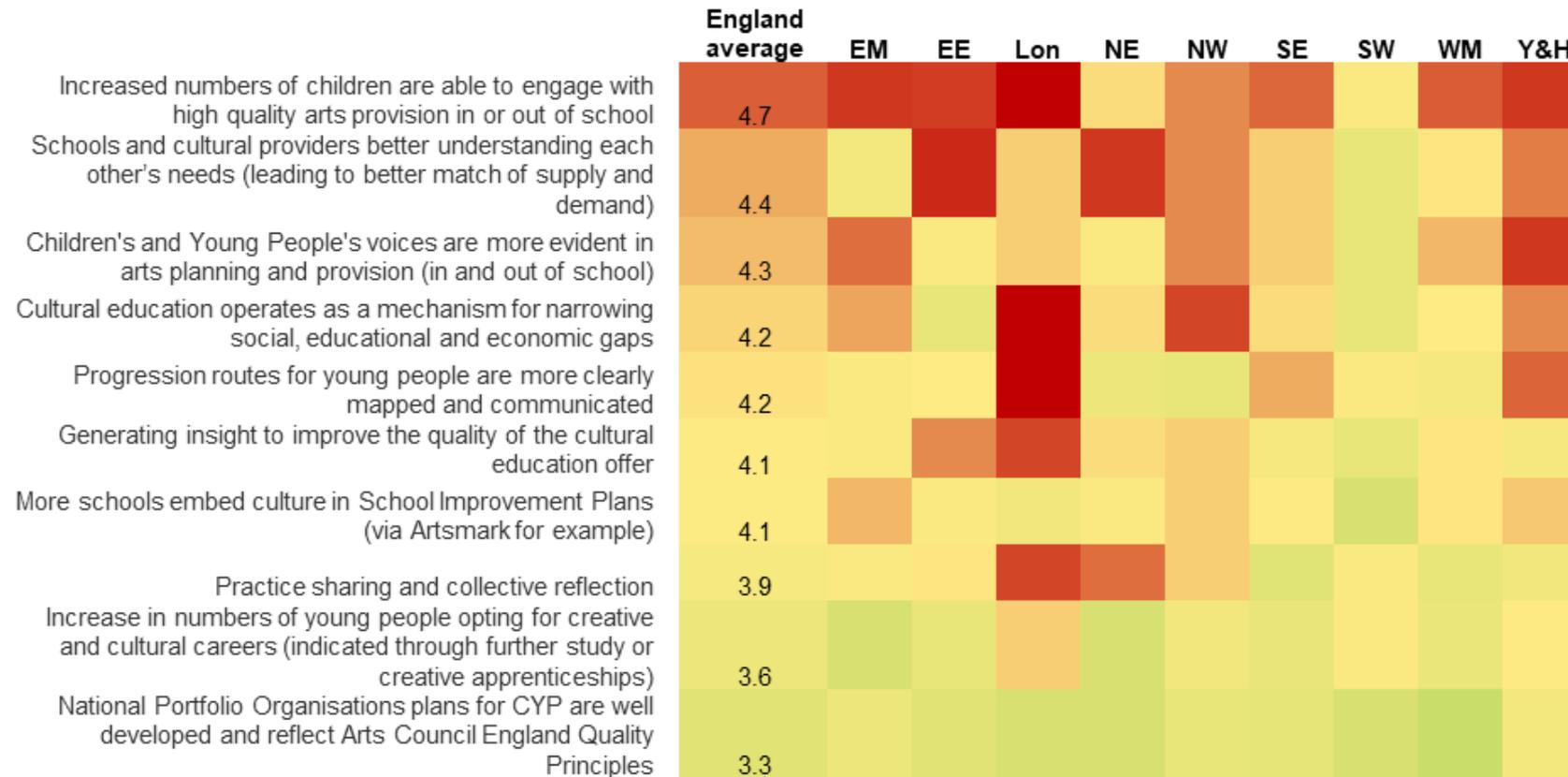
people engaging in arts; whereas LCEPs in urban areas attach higher priorities in providing clearer progression routes for young people. LCEPs which *cover both urban and rural areas* see narrowing social, education and economic gaps as the top priority of their work. This again highlights the diverse but localised approach of LCEP.

Children and young people, schools and teachers, the cultural sector, local authorities and venues are identified to have medium and high likelihood of benefitting from LCEP’s work. It is surprising local authorities are not thought to be more likely to benefit given many local authorities are engaged with LCEPs.

London again reported differently compared to other regions, which may be reflective of their LCEP’s interests in increasing children and young people opting for creative careers.

In terms of preference relating to artforms, music and theatres are the top priorities. However, London and North West exhibits similar preferences, particularly around dance, and literature. East of England and Yorkshire both place relatively high priorities on libraries and museums. West Midlands places highest priority on media - film and moving image.

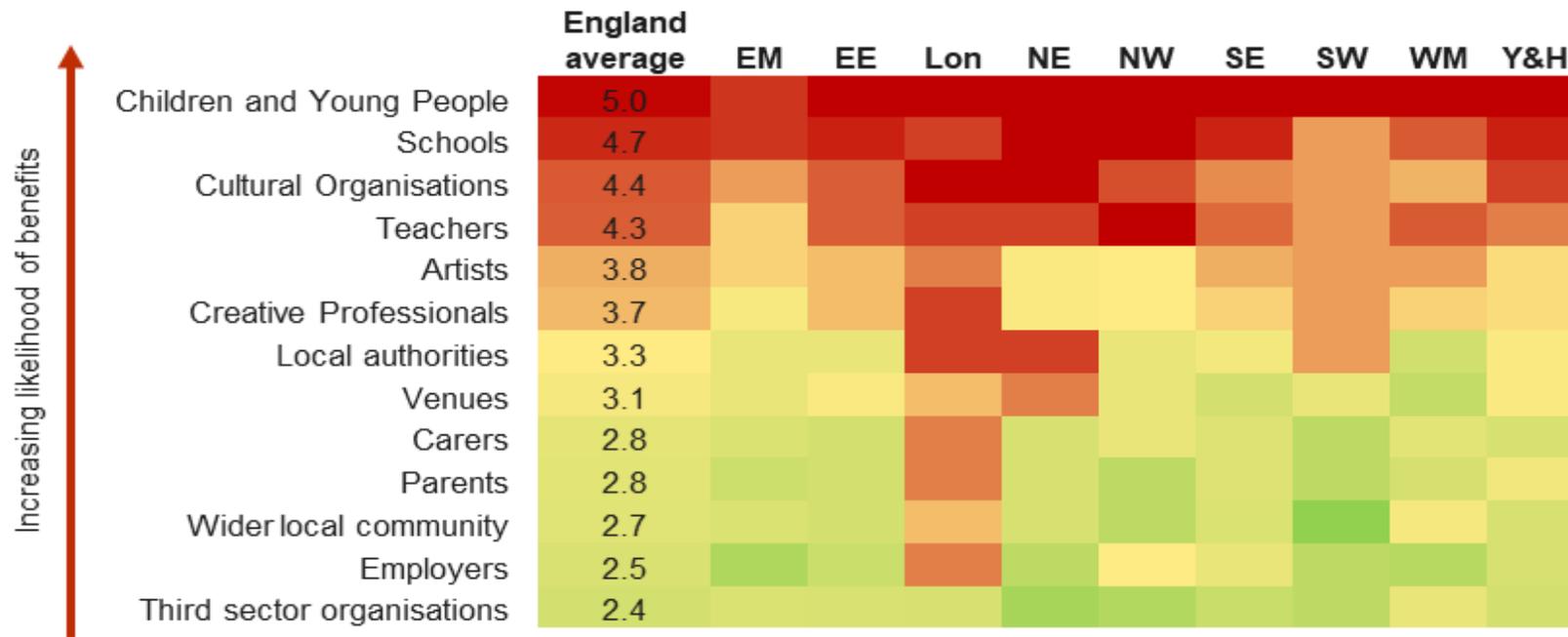
Figure 8 Priorities of LCEP partnership's ambitions and plans (5 being the top priority)



Source: BOP Consulting (2018)

N=60

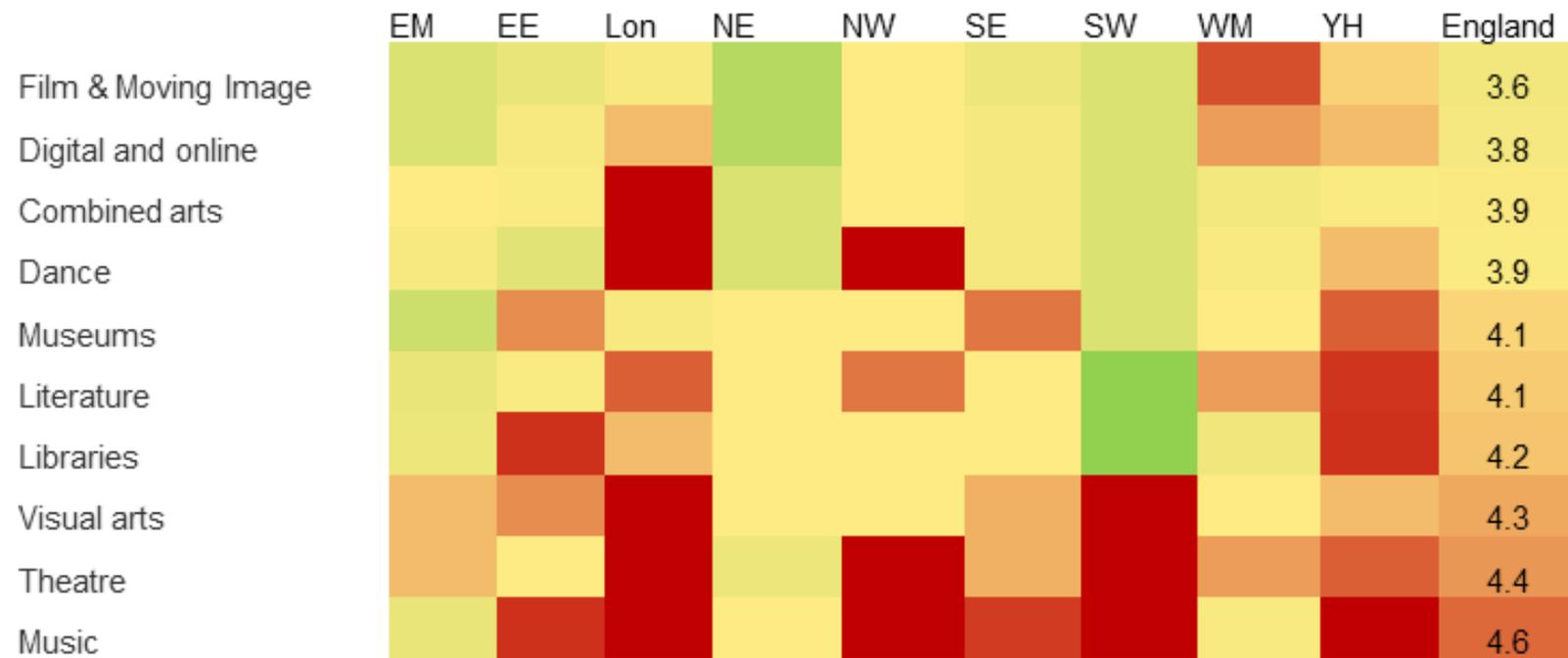
Figure 8 Stakeholder groups expected to benefit from LCEP's work (5 being high likelihood of benefitting)



Source: BOP Consulting (2018)

N=59

Figure 9 LCEP priorities by artform

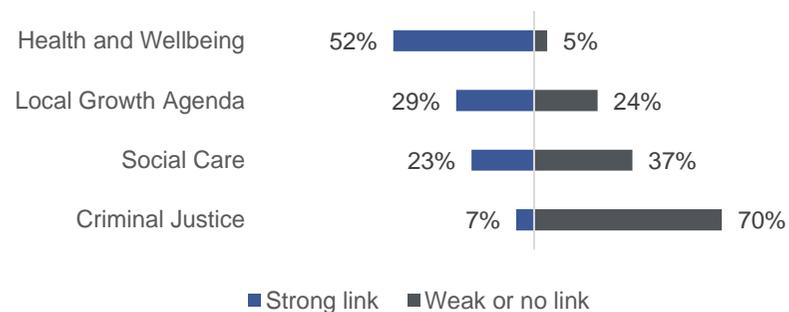


Source: BOP Consulting (2018)

N=59

2.5 Strategic direction – policy agenda and funding

Figure 10 The extent to which LCEP is linking or planning to link with other policy agendas



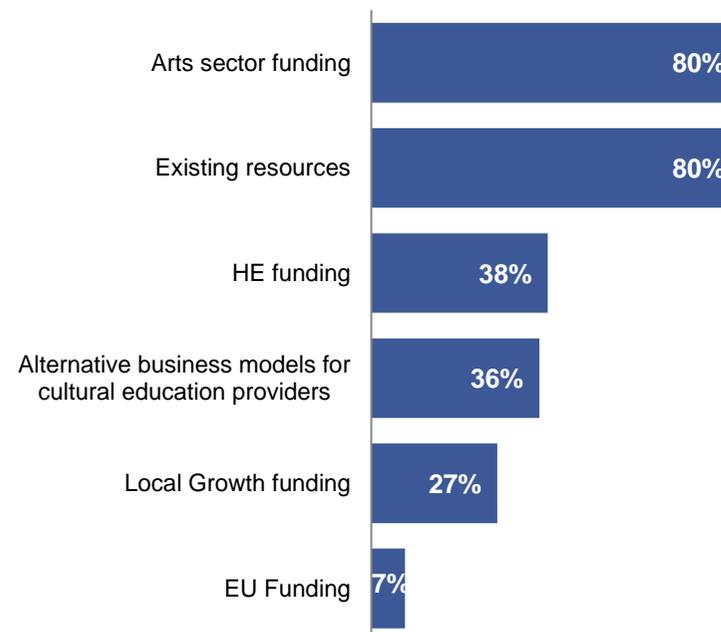
Source: BOP Consulting (2018)

N=60

Health and wellbeing agendas seem to have increased in importance over the past 18 months. More LCEPs identify strong links with this strand compared to the previous research (52% vs around 40%); 5% identify a weak or no link (vs around 12% from the previous research). However, there is greater uncertainty about the Local Growth Agenda (30% strong link and 24% weak or no link) compared to the previous research (30% strong link and about 12% weak or no link).

70% LCEPs have a weak or no link with the Criminal Justice sector and only 7% identify strong links – these LCEPs are from North West, London, South East and Yorkshire. Arguably more could be done to support LCEPs to work across public policy sectors that feel more 'distant'.

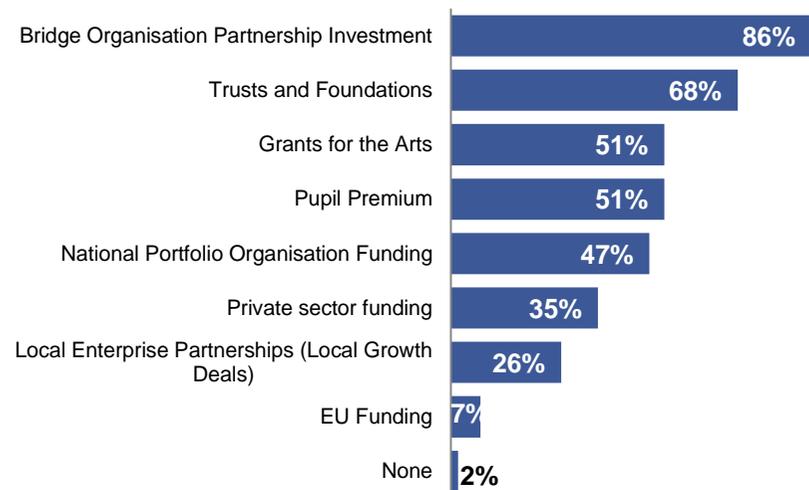
Figure 11 Source of funding targeted by LCEP



Source: BOP Consulting (2018)

N=55

Figure 12 Funding LCEP targeted to leverage



Source: BOP Consulting (2018)

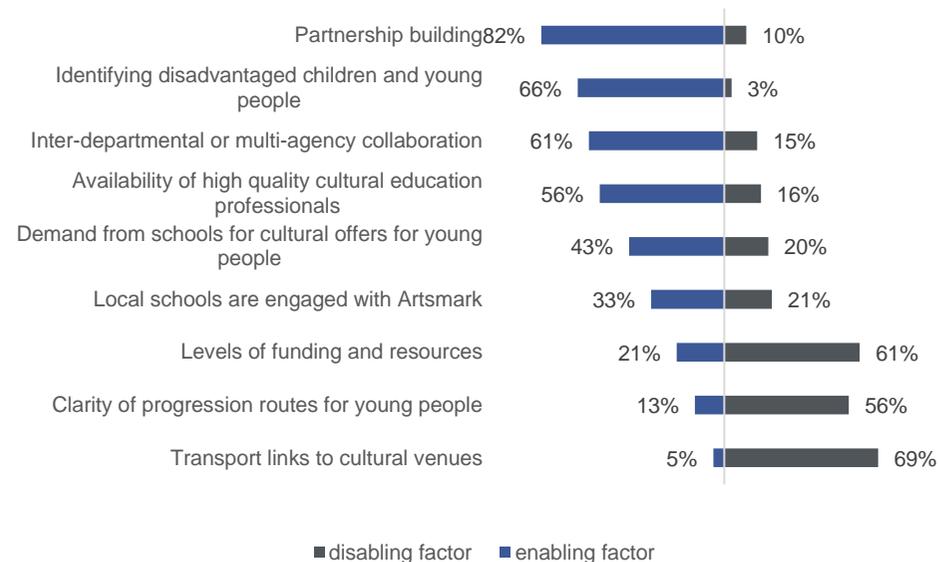
N=57

Arts sector funding and existing resources (interview findings suggested to be mainly local authority and Bridge investment) remain as the most popular sources of funding in the long term. Only about one third of the LCEP are thinking about alternative business models.

Other than Bridge Partnership Investment, 68% of LCEPs are looking to leverage funding from trusts and foundations, and about half are considering ACE funding (Grants for the Arts and NPO). This indicates that most of the funding plans for LCEP activity are relatively traditional in approach, although some more idiosyncratic approaches were discussed in our qualitative interviews.

2.6 Enabling and disabling factors

Figure 13 Factors that are enabling or disabling progress of LCEPs



Source: BOP Consulting (2018)

N=61

Nationally, partnership building, identifying disadvantaged children and young people, and inter-departmental collaboration are the top three enabling factors for LCEPs, while transport links to cultural venues, clarity of progression routes for young people and levels of funding and resources have been disabling LCEP's work.

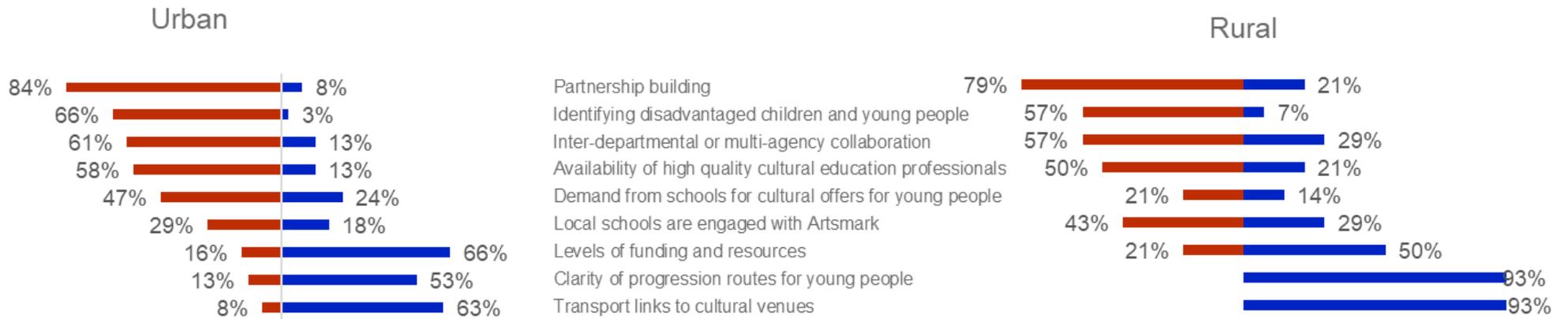
LCEPs working in rural and urban setting faces different challenges. The level of funding and resources, and demand from schools of cultural offers for young people seem to be more of a challenge for LCEPs working in urban setting,

perhaps because urban spaces are more saturated with cultural offers and activities.

Working in rural settings appear to be much more challenging in all fronts. Transport links and clarity of progression routes are particularly strong disabling

factors. Moreover, partnership building and inter-departmental collaboration are also more challenging than working in urban setting.

Figure 14 Enabling and disabling factors reported by LCEPs in rural Vs urban areas



Source: BOP Consulting (2018)

N= 38 (Urban), 14 (rural)

4. Operational overview of LCEPs

2.7 Governance models

2.7.1 Structure and composition

The governance models are very different across LCEPs, both in who make up the lead partners, how they are structured, as well as the type of organisations who are involved more widely.

Composition ranges from local authorities, cultural organisations, to schools/academies and public health bodies. The majority have at least one NPO partner, which often works closely with the Bridge to provide strategic focus (e.g. Croydon: within the LCEP board, representation comes from schools, councils, hubs and arts group based in Croydon).

Steering groups were a common approach for bringing a larger group of stakeholders together to discuss priorities and progress. These were mostly through monthly meetings and tend to feed into the strategic board members. The strategic boards themselves tend to be made up of Bridge representative and elected LCEP leads – who are typically an experienced individual from a cultural organisation.

Within this governance structure many LCEPs have set up or are setting up working or task groups. These are typically focused on specific outcomes (e.g. health & wellbeing; attainment, skills), with members volunteering to lead, based on their own expertise and resources.

2.7.2 Requirements

It was noted by numerous LCEPs that diversity of organisational representation in the composition of the membership was key to success. Not only will different stakeholders bring their own perspectives and expertise, they will be able to provide additional/new types of networks. For many this meant ensuring that schools are engaged either on their strategic or steering group, so they are able to have direct access to current challenges and needs for working with pupils and to avoid being too normative or prescriptive.

Having someone local leading or co-leading the LCEP was seen as essential – someone with authority and respect, and a level of autonomy. However, this was also noted as a contested issue. In most cases the Bridge is in a central role or larger NPOs, which demands balancing the support they can provide through their involvement (from connections and funding credibility), with being contextualised to the local needs.

2.8 Delivery

Not all of the LCEPs interviewed described themselves as delivering, with around half at either the planning or emerging stages of their development. For some this delay in delivery was a purposeful move; wishing to only deliver a service when they are ready, without duplications across the partnership and with a clear focus on what outcomes they wish to achieve and matching which local priorities.

The uptake and progress of delivery is also dependant on the existing infrastructure (see geographical challenges), with a strong urban bias where organisations and funding is focused. Overall, many we spoke to felt that there is not enough new thinking and innovation in what these partnerships can achieve:



There have to be alternative routes through music and art – going through schools is not really what's required. LCEPs have to be able to offer alternative progression routes, not just give schools more arts opportunities. We need to challenge the 'Hard to Reach' discourse. There needs to be more of a national conversation and strategy around routes into and through arts education. Creating a new model, not fixing a broken model. (LCEP member)

Examples of how **Nottingham LCEP** is engaging with schools includes:

1. Culture news – a basic newsletter email with dates and times on opportunities available, amassed by the LCEP co-ordinator from membership to tie in with just before holidays (teachers tend to have more planning time). One-line description, link and email. Quite a basic format but schools report that they like this. They want something really straightforward.

2. Cultural champions in schools – go-to people in schools who understand all the policy and are engaged in LCEP strategy – these champions can then be prioritised for events/CPD etc. They are in-school advocates. Tends to be head teachers or senior management so there will be some influence. Building up the list and building momentum and impact over time. Small-scale funding from the Bridge has enabled this background work to take place (i.e. invisible impact). Resourcing for time and conversations has been essential.

3. Creative Culture Badge – asks ‘what would you want a pupil to have done before leaving primary school?’ – whittled down to about 30 things that would be useful to have done (e.g. going for a walk and discovering something new, trying dance or singing). Working from where the schools are already doing a lot of work and therefore not going in as critical, but supportive and encouraging. Essentially, it’s a spreadsheet that teachers can add a tick over the academic year once they have done something to track when things have been done. Sharing this with the LCEP creates a much better sense of what is happening in schools, which year groups are better or worse. Everyone is then better able to review what is and isn’t happening, where there are gaps – and take this to NPOs and cultural orgs to show them what needs to be remedied. One school is doing it as an actual badge for children, others as a classroom level badge, or school-level badge. Cutting up the tasks in different ways based on existing and aspirational activities across year groups. This is also a great way to focus and energise school trips and associated activities.

2.9 Funding

Funding is less explicit in most LCEP operational models. This is partly due to the fact they are not yet at the delivery stage, so financing has not yet become a key concern – instead attention has been on focusing on target groups, governance structures and the ‘shape’ of delivery.

The organisations we spoke to were aware that this programme did not come with guaranteed funding from ACE. Their motivations were more to extend their existing delivery and offer – geographically, demographically and artistically. Much of the initial resourcing would therefore be delivered as part of their existing individual learning and participation programmes.

Despite this initial intention to complement existing work, the strongest reported barrier for sustained growth and upscaling of LCEP work was future funding – nationally or locally. There was a strong recognition that in time additional funding will be needed to pay for the resources required for this sort of programming, as well as budgets for putting on events. It was suggested that Arts Council England should consider what its future role may be in terms of providing funding or helping to generate further income for the work.

When prompted, some organisations noted that future cross-LCEP collaboration may be valuable in funding applications – either in leveraging new partners or encouraging match-funding for specific projects. It was also mentioned that alternative funding sources and models are likely better suited to LCEP work:

“ Public bodies are too slow. If procuring new funds in this area, there needs to be something around community investment that holds people to account. Held very closely to the real needs and cultural assets of the country, which are complex and not easy to model. (LCEP Member)

Through Partnership Investment **Artswork** supports the development of innovative models of delivery, for example:

- **Clinical Commissioning Groups.** Partnership Investment (PI) with the NHS Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group 'Reducing Health Inequalities Fund'. Artswork investment significantly raised the profile of high quality arts and culture as an effective driver for meeting the outcomes of this scheme for children and young people. It led to the first-time involvement in the fund of 22 schools and FE providers, the majority of whom are situated in the DfE Opportunity Area of Hastings.
- **Child Adolescent and Mental Health Services.** The ICE Programme was developed and led by Hampshire Cultural Trust's Better Life Chances team and Hampshire CAMHS. ICE: Inspire // Create // Exchange is addressing and exploring important mental health issues with young people using high-quality arts and culture; to measure impact, share positive outcomes and in doing so seek to influence organisational change.
- **Housing Trusts.** Partnership Investment with Thames Valley Housing Association to support the Slough Cultural Education Partnership priorities to address:-
 - Lack of support to find career paths into the creative sector;
 - Lack of opportunities to support children and young people that suffer from mental health issues.
- Additionally, and prompted by an existing PI between Norfolk and Norwich Festival and Clarion Housing (CH) a number of Bridges are in early discussions with CH about a potential national PI. In summary, the PI would look to deliver a national arts/culture orientated version of Clarion's Community Ambassador Programme (CAP) aligned to Cultural Education Partnership areas in which CH has a strong presence.
- **Police and Crime Commissioners.** The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Hampshire & Isle of Wight developed a new strategic relationship with Artswork through a co-investment programme in the arts and youth justice. The programme aimed to realise a number of objectives of the OPCC including reducing antisocial behaviour and youth offending rates through sustainable high quality arts and cultural programmes.

2.10 Children and Young People involvement

There was a shared understanding that children and young people need to be involved, not just as passive recipients of LCEP work but also within the initial planning and operating models. It was recognised that this needs to take place at the very early stages. Although this hasn't been done by the majority of the LCEPs spoken to or represented in the survey, some examples are included below to help LCEPs think through some of the different approaches they could take:

The **Croydon Cultural Education Partnership** was formerly consolidated in 2016 following extensive consultation with children and young people. This research and development phase was integral to the establishment of this CEP, laying the groundwork upon which important work could develop.

The first stage of the consultation began with a call out across the borough, working with over 100 young people both in person and online to find out about their views on Croydon's youth arts provision and what they want. A report was produced based on these findings and a group of 10 young people self-selected themselves to continue this work and function as a youth voice mechanism through which youth voice could be represented in decision-making. This group of young people formalised themselves as the Croydon Youth Arts Collective (CYAC) with support from Croydon Council and began a second stage of consultation: designing and delivering youth focus groups in seven very different settings to explore barriers to youth arts participation. From this, a second report was produced.

This research phase enabled an evidence base that an adult strategy group could begin finding solutions to, and so the CEP was brought together. With the formation of CYAC, this also meant that youth voice could be present both around the table at meetings and in the themes and findings that were being reviewed and responded to.

Cheshire West and Chester LCEP – are attempting to avoid 'token roles' for children and young people on their steering group, they instead want to take a

place-based approach. Rather than one person representing all children and young people, they go to the areas and speak with them there. Much of this is through ensuring local cultural organisations within the LCEP engage children and young people in the decision-making process – i.e. devolved to organisations and members but supported by the LCEP.

Nonesuch Theatre Company/Nottingham LCEP - Commissioned youth engagement trends research conducted this year; listening to young people about what they consider as cultural engagement. The top ten activities did not include music or reading, but did include drama, dance, youtubing and other traditionally 'cultural' things. Most activity was aligned to opportunities already available to schools and non-formal settings. Young people also seemed to place great emphasis on skills. They want products and platforms, the process side is less visible to them. There was also a big emphasis on careers. Young people want a decent salary and a clear trajectory. In this sense they question whether art is a nice thing to do or good job to have. Also a recognition of likelihood of portfolio careers and their needs in this regard – they were aware of the fracturing job market and the threats of automation. How is a local cultural offer being made in relation to this? To what extent are these conversations taking place within LCEPs?

Artswork have run a programme of Youth Engagement across six LCEPs so far, called Future Views. They worked with Norfolk and Norwich Festival and Royal Opera House Bridges to develop the programme run by Flow associates. Future Views is a forward-thinking research project imagining the future of cultural learning. The workshop invites young people to work alongside local cultural leaders to draw out shared concerns, insights and dreams. The collaboration of CYP and adults encouraged adults to be more open-minded and playful, while young participants are supported to explore positive and constructive paths. Imagination is an essential skill for thinking about the future, so the workshop draws on techniques developed in the design world to open up ideas, focus on impact, develop future scenarios, and define possible actions. It takes the form of a game, with three levels that go forward in time, based on the questions of the Future Views enquiry. The workshops end with the participants re-arranging themselves into two groups with shared concerns, most often

adults vs young people. Each group writes a message to send back through time to the other, with a request for action towards a positive future.

Rotherham LCEP (RCEP) - In the summer of 2017, Grimm & Co (lead partner in Rotherham LCEP) launched the Embassy for Reimagining Rotherham (or ERR, for short). This project has so far seen 30 local children and young people creating a manifesto that outlines their vision for Rotherham – the town, the culture, and education. As part of Rotherham Culture Education Partnership's (RCEP) desire to consult with local young people about their cultural education, and inspired by the Ministry of Stories' Children's Republic of Shoreditch project, Grimm & Co ran an intensive three weeks of participatory, child-led workshops during August 2017. These workshops saw young people drafting, debating and refining their vision for Rotherham's future, focusing on children's needs with regards to arts and culture, education, personal growth, and place and space; creating a model town that illustrated their ideas for Rotherham; and designing the brand and identity of ERR, in collaboration with design studio Side By Side. Side By Side then transformed a vacant shop in Rotherham town centre into the Embassy – a base from which the young participants consulted with local people about their views on the town, before presenting their finalised manifesto to an invited group of VIPs, including town councillors, members of RCEP, and other key change makers from Rotherham and beyond. The ERR manifesto was published as a high-quality booklet at the end of September 2017, when it was debuted at a special evening event. At this event the young people who participated in the project introduced both the manifesto and a short "making of" film about the project, before answering questions from invited VIPs. The manifesto is now feeding into RCEP's plans – and they hope will impact on the town councillors, architects, key local retail figures, and other contacts who have attended ERR events. They also hope to continue the ERR project with further participatory, consultative writing workshops.

One interviewee from another LCEP commented on the shift in thinking that needs to take place:



We need to think about ways in which Cultural Organisations are engaging with young people as

creative leaders, as entrepreneurs, as performers, as audiences. How are cultural organisations moving from access to full engagement and how is the LCEP enabling or inhibiting this? What is this work doing for their education and careers more broadly?

2.11 Geographical challenges

The delivery model for the LCEPs needs to be adaptable, as a key issue for nearly all LCEPs is that they cover diverse geographical or demographic areas.

There is also the suggestion of an urban bias across LCEPs, where the infrastructure, networks and political influence are strongest. Particularly for those closely linked to non-touring venue-based organisations.

These barriers are both physical and psychological. A significant number of LCEPs work across urban and rural areas. While engagement is high in the city, the same level is not possible when engaging more marginal communities where there is poor or costly transport links.

Similarly, the stigma or reputation an area has can affect engagement. Many that we spoke to indicated that there is a sustained perception among some potential partners and participants that the local cultural offer is not very strong and that there is a need to engage with different or larger towns and cities to establish meaningful cultural engagement.

2.12 Data

The collection, manipulation and analysis of data is recognised as a method to both understand their impact and develop their audiences. To this end, data has been used for audience mapping and reach, marketing, socio-economic mapping, isolating local demands and gaps, as well as evidence for evaluations.

Artswork developed profiles for each LCEP using publicly available data on children and young people in the locality. Information such as numbers of CYP in different age groups, numbers of looked after children, CYP with special

educational needs, free school meals, attainment at primary and secondary level. Artswork translated this data into infographics for each CEP to inform priorities and decision-making which CEPs then complemented by drawing on their own locally-available data E.g. Slough CEP have worked with public health to target particular communities, such as the Roma community, which the public health team were also interested in working with. Public Health have also shared their evaluation techniques. These have been embedded by arts and cultural organisations commissioned by Slough CEP, in their work with schools and children's centres to support improved wellbeing

Despite approaches like these being reported, there has been little data-sharing across the LCEPs at this stage. Though seen as a desirable practice to enable a joined-up response to their remits and avoiding duplication, there have also been some objections to collaborating. Part of this is that audience data (both for the individual organisation and data they've gathered for the audience and locality) is a valuable asset which has commercial implications if shared with competing organisations.

3. Strategic overview

This section presents findings from interviews with each of the Bridge Organisations and 10 'deep-dives' with current LCEP partners across England (interviewees are listed in the appendices at the end of the report). Each section highlights the main issues, successes and challenges across each of the groups involved in LCEP work. We have also outlined some reflective questions for further discussion by those involved in LCEP work to help develop solutions to some of the challenges reported in the research.

3.1 Children and Young People

The direct perspectives of children and young people are not well represented in most of the work and examples we explored.

There is a recognition of a need for greater involvement of young people and increased *participation* in opportunities available (i.e. not just being provided increased access to arts experiences as audience), but few examples of this being done consistently, effectively and at the higher ends of the 'participation ladder' (i.e. co-creation and taking the lead in project or programme design).

Consensus building workshops can be useful for establishing this as an aim and priority for LCEPs and initiating some discussion of effective involvement methods. However, this is not always followed through into action based on the discussions we had.

Some examples of where approaches have been tried to various levels of success are provided in Section 4 below.

3.2 Local Cultural Education Partnerships

Coverage of England is good (around 100 active LCEPs). There is no identified need for a larger number, although there will likely be some new LCEPs developed and a consolidation of existing partnerships over time.

On one hand strong leadership is essential, but this tends to mean that a leader is supported by a single organisation; usually a Local Authority or NPO, or a

combination of these sources. This restricts some of the more innovative or experimental models that can extend to and include all the cultural providers in a given locality in an egalitarian partnership model (i.e. it is well resourced, but 'loaded' leadership).

In other circumstances, LCEP work can feel voluntary or additional to existing roles and functions. There is a positive energy to increase and strengthen partnerships, but the lack of additional funding means that progress can be slow. This needs to be recognised in any monitoring or measuring of LCEP impact.

There is also an issue around organisations being expected to work in partnership when they are also in competition for audiences and funding locally and nationally. LCEP work needs to be strategic and coalesce around core aims, but this also needs to respect the needs and strategies of individual organisations. This tension also means that 'progress' and 'impact' can't be easily measured using quantitative indicators (e.g. the depth of a new and innovative partnership, versus reporting how many partners you are working with).

Tied to this is an observation that discussion of 'innovative and sustainable funding models', 'business planning' and 'key performance indicators' is not really 'partnership-friendly' language and may scare-off those who most need to be included in discussions.

More broadly it needs to be made clear at regional and national levels that LCEPs are not being compared to one another, or in competition with each other. It has been stated frequently throughout this research that the operating conditions (and needs) within regions and across England are very different. Understanding these conditions, needs and solutions should be left to the partnerships and their communities, not 'railroaded' at a regional or national level. For example; Brighton and Hove is a great example for the infrastructure and opportunities of Brighton and Hove, but it's unlikely that it could be replicated wholesale anywhere else and shouldn't therefore be presented as an example of 'best' practice nationally.

LCEPs need to be supported to embrace diverse models and approaches (i.e. not 'off the shelf' programme guidelines or a restrictive framework). Ideally by engaging with local communities and those not traditionally included in cultural strategy conversations. There is a need to listen to and learn from their local communities rather than be guided by the aspirations of Arts Council England (although of course these should be acknowledged and celebrated where shared).

This is also linked to monitoring and research of LCEP progress. Some light-touch, qualitative-based 'check-ins' with Bridge Organisations feels appropriate (i.e. a few open ended questions by email or telephone conversations). Attempts at regular quantitative monitoring (whether via Arts Award achievements, number of partners, audience figures etc.) will not convey the value being created or where challenges are being experienced and the additional support needed.

3.3 Bridge Organisations

Bridge Organisations have done a huge amount of work to develop the number and scale of LCEPs. Feeling that they can now take more of a 'noses in, fingers out' role.

This should be replicated in their relationship with Arts Council England in relation to LCEPs. Bridge organisations and Arts Council England should feel like trusted partners in the initiative rather than supervised grantees. This is also linked to the monitoring requirements set by Arts Council England. How can this be shifted into something more qualitative based (conversations, catch-ups and meetings, not forms)?

As a partner to LCEPs, Bridge Organisations can still catalyse funding from other sources, network LCEPs (and individual LCEP partners) and co-ordinate regional opportunities. However it is up to LCEP members and leaders to be proactive in seeking information, guidance, and support from Bridge Organisations. Establishing and maintaining fraternal rather than paternal relationships.

In this way, Bridges also have a role in highlighting and supporting innovative and high-impact practice across the huge variety of LCEP work taking place. They need to set the bar for what can be achieved and share where new and interesting approaches are having positive impact.

There is also a role for Bridges in supporting peer-learning across LCEPs. At the moment this is taking place at a regional level (mostly), but there is scope, potentially with greater ACE involvement or subsidy, to co-ordinate more peer learning and sharing nationally. E.g. it might make more sense for a rural LCEP in Northumbria to share learning and ideas with Fenland than Gateshead. This will likely have greater impact if properly and additionally resourced rather than just encouraged.

Bridge Organisations can also have a useful role in plugging in the LCEP agendas into regional forums and platforms. This is particularly required in relation to regional development agendas and devolution arrangements. Children and young people's cultural needs should be considered as part of place-based development at local and regional levels and the Bridge Organisations have a strong vantage point from which to represent these needs based on their knowledge of the work of LCEPs and their partners.

This may also help LCEPs to engage in cross-policy agendas. While there is some degree of cross-policy work reported (largely in health and wellbeing), few LCEPs are confident in understanding how their work directly links with broader community agendas (e.g. health, housing, justice, development). Bridges could more explicitly focus on enabling these conversations and ties where possible and appropriate.

3.4 Arts Council England

It's widely held that both 'Local Cultural Education Partnerships' and the 'Cultural Education Challenge' are not strong titles for the work, despite the principles being sound. They are both quite clunky, and the latter suggests that organisations are beginning from a point of failure rather than success (and years of hard work).

It's also widely held that there is a need for Arts Council England to advocate strongly for this work nationally and at high-levels; acknowledging the huge efforts taking place at a very large scale across the country. Also advocating across Government departments and ministerial briefs; making the case for creative and cultural learning (as a human right and end in itself) as well as a way of future-proofing the UK economy (i.e. the broader value of creative skills rather than getting more young people to go to museums – important though this is).

It was suggested that now is the time to refresh the objectives of the Cultural Education Challenge; recognising the strong achievements and energy thus far, but also acknowledging the increasingly difficult structural factors that limit progress (e.g. Ebacc, DfE not being supportive of creative learning, austerity and cuts in Local Authority funding, increasing need and dwindling local infrastructure).

There is a need to understand that this is a slow-burning initiative and any measures of success or impact should bear this in mind. Not only are there acute resource challenges for most of the LCEP partners, the governance and funding arrangements for many schools are changing rapidly and constantly, as are the arrangements in local authorities where arts and culture teams are disappearing or being combined into other briefs. All of these factors imply that expectations for 'progress and impact' should be set on a case by case basis and be as realistic as possible.

There is a 'spectrum' of Goal 5 KPIs across LCEP activity. NPOs and other arts organisations are fixated on widening access metrics, audience figures, and in some cases Arts Award and Artsmark rates. This can limit innovation and close-down partnership ideas and identification of what is most needed in some areas. A spirit of disrupting the norm and handing over control to the LCEPs to innovate and take forward ideas and plans outside of Arts Council England KPIs would likely lead to greater innovation and impact.

Linked to this observation is a need to recognise the scale of 'invisible' cultures not currently identified by LCEPs or Bridge Organisations across the country. This can include lower level and 'off the radar' creative and cultural activities taking place in minority groups or emerging from a cross-pollination of artforms

(often enabled by new and more accessible technology). For example; consuming and making YouTube videos is very popular among many young people, but extending this interest and activity into film, music, or visual literacy skill development is less common. How can cultural organisations better start from what children and young people are currently doing?

3.5 National Portfolio Organisations

There was a recognised need to include NPOs in LCEP activity wherever it will add value on both sides. However, it was also identified that some NPOs feel they should be involved, but don't necessarily recognise how they can contribute or what the value of this involvement might be. It's clear that including NPOs in LCEP activity will be most effective where roles and anticipated mutual value is negotiated, clear and specific.

In some LCEPs there was a sense that NPOs can 'absorb' the role of co-ordinating the LCEP, which in some cases is a useful situation given ongoing resourcing restraints. However this was also tempered by the fact that this also means the LCEP activity is likely to be very closely aligned to that of the NPO which may not be representative of the full breadth of art and culture activity in a locality.

3.6 Schools and Local Authorities

While there was overall support from schools reported by many of the LCEP partners we spoke to, relationships with schools are still quite supply-focused; 'delivering to', rather than 'delivering with'. Schools are often considered as customers rather than partners and aren't comprehensively represented in LCEP membership. More could potentially be done to change the approach to relationships in this sense.

Schools are also experiencing acute challenges which can make progress slower than anyone would hope. There are ongoing issues with school financing and shifting management structures and staffing. This can create problems for maintaining relationships and planning over time. It was suggested that LCEPs

should prioritise maintaining and growing any strong links they have with teachers and schools, recognising that this trend is likely to continue.

Artsmark can be useful for opening conversations and enabling schools to focus their cultural offer. However, some schools (particularly outside of the bigger cities), are not necessarily ready to begin the Artsmark process and can be put off by approaches that seem resource intensive or overly formal. There is a need to engage with schools based on where they currently are and their local priorities.

It was widely acknowledged that having an advocate working in the local authority enabled partnerships across departments and agendas. It was suggested that other departmental budgets (e.g. public health) could be accessed where there is a strong understanding of the opportunities of cultural partners represented within councils.

3.7 Data and Impact

There was a general lack of confidence in accessing and using data for understanding need, and a general resistance to establishing data-based impact measurement or evaluation.

There are lots of individual research projects taking place, often scoping of provision, or in some cases, exploring current levels and types of cultural participation. This is useful at a local level, but more could potentially be done to share these methodologies and findings nationally, to increase value.

An overarching issue relating to evaluation also concerns the extent to which LCEPs can be considered as a nationally coherent programme of activities (i.e. constituted groups with aims, agendas, and action plans), or, as some Bridge Organisations suggest, a way of working (i.e. identifying and supporting strong partnership working to improve the cultural offer for young people wherever possible). The way in which data can be used and collected will be very different based on which of these models is more dominant, and that hasn't been fully reconciled at local or national levels.

5. Conclusions

This research has sought to explore the experiences of LCEPs across England, including some of the opportunities and barriers they are experiencing in seeking to bring about the aim of the Cultural Education Challenge, which is as follows:

“ Through the Cultural Education Challenge, we want to make sure that more children and young people can create, compose, and perform. We want every child to have the chance to visit, experience and participate in extraordinary work, and be able to know more, understand more, and review the experiences they've had...

While Cultural Education Partnerships develop in different ways according to local partners and provision, there are five essential stages to success:

- Convening
- Evidence and intelligence gathering
- Partnerships and governance
- Building the offer: ensuring quality
- Resourcing

(Arts Council England)

Our research indicates that there is a strong level of activity taking place right across the country; with a general ethos of being locally responsive which is absolutely required in order for LCEPs to make positive change.

The identified factors (i.e. 'essential stages to success') remain relevant and are reflected in our research on the basis that many LCEPs are still in the first two stages (i.e. 'convening' and 'evidence and intelligence gathering'). However, this is also necessary to ensure that once partnerships are becoming more formalised, these are based on a well-established understanding of need and offer.

Resourcing outside Arts Council England funds requires further support and attention, as does cross-sector working. That said, it is also important to note that the LCEP initiative is not a centrally-funded programme, therefore how progress and impact is measured should remain mindful of the broad range of pace at which change is taking place.

Overall, the research suggests there is a clear and concerted effort being made by individuals and organisations across England to engage more children, young people, and their families in creative activities as audiences and participants.

More could potentially be done to involve children and young people in the decisions being made about their local cultural offers and how they can be supported to progress.

The infrastructure expected to meet the cultural education challenge (i.e. cultural organisations and venues, cultural education providers, schools and local authorities) is also being acutely affected by squeezes in funding across the board, with consequent precarity in workforce and strategy. All of which affects the rate of progress.

It was also made clear from various sources within the survey and interviews that there is a need to be more radical in how the Cultural Education Challenge is refreshed and positioned to support the work of the LCEPs. There is a need for something different from business as usual and more 'bums on seats', towards something that is truly representative and celebratory of the great

cultural diversity across the country, particularly that being invented and reinvented by the country's young people.

Arts Council England, Bridge Organisations and LCEP members themselves should be encouraged to think about next steps for the initiative that make the most of this variety and the energy young people are bringing to their local cultural infrastructure. On some level this is about making the work as interesting and exciting as possible, at all levels. Energy can quickly get lost in convening meetings, partnership agreements, monitoring reports, and strategy emails, therefore focus also must remain on achieving this balance.

6. Appendices

Bridge interviews

Name	Role	Organisation
Hannah Baldwin	Senior Manager for Partnership & Place	Curious Minds
Elvie Thompson	Programme Manager	Culture Bridge North East
Eileen Atkins	Area Manager, Tees Valley and County Durham	Culture Bridge North East
Pepita Hanna	Associate Director, Partnerships and Investment	Arts Connect
Michael Corley	Head of Bridge	Norfolk and Norwich Festival
Roxie Curry	Bridge Programme Manager for Essex and Southend	ROH
Michele Gregson	Bridge Programme Manager for North Kent	ROH
Hannah Brownlow	Bridge Programme Manager (Maternity Cover)	ROH
Sarah Mumford	Cultural Education Director	IVE
Laura Bates	Manager of Cultural Education Partnerships and Cultural Life Fund	The Mighty Creatives
Laurie Parsons	Support on Cultural Education Partnerships and Cultural Life Fund	The Mighty Creatives
Lindsey Hall	Chief Executive	RIO
Ruth Taylor	Strategic Manager	Artswork
Jane Bryant	Chief Executive	Artswork
Corrine Bass	Senior Partnerships Manager	A New Direction

LCEP interviews

Name	Role	Organisation
Shona Powell	Director	Lakeside Arts
Marisa Blissett	Nottingham City Council Arts Education Service	Nottingham City Council
Pete Bevington	Executive Administrator	Shine Multi Academy Trust
Steve Ball	Associate Director	Birmingham Rep
Monique Deletant	Deputy CEO	Culture Central
Ammo Talwar	CEO	Punch Records
Kirsten Bennett	Chief Executive	Cambridgeshire ACRE
Katherine Nightingale	Director	20twenty productions
Kate Argyle	Local Heritage Education Manager	Historic England
Graeme Smith	Head of Service	Croydon Music and Arts
Tamzyn French	Manager	Kinetika Bloco
Gemma Coldicott	Co-founder	Slide Dance
Rosemara Mather-Lupton	Strategic Partnerships Officer	Barbican
Rob Elkington	Director	Arts Connect
Vicky Sturrs	Head of Learning & Civic Engagement	BALTIC Centre for Contemporary
Wendy Smith	Director of Learning and Participation	Sage Gateshead
Nick Ponsillo	Director	Philip Baker Centre for Creative Learning at The University of Chester
Jess Egan-Simon	Project Manager	Action Transport Theatre
Adam Holloway	Director	Cheshire Dance
Jayne Young	Education Officer	National Coal Mining Museum of England

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London

3 – 5 St John Street, London, EC1M 4AA

Edinburgh

16 Young Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4JB

Shanghai

213 – 214, No. 585 Fuxing Middle Road, Shanghai 200025, China

Web

www.bop.co.uk

Twitter

@BOP_Consulting

Blog

www.bop.co.uk/articles