

London Youth

# Young Creators

Evaluation Report November 2022



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## Summary

London Youth received funding from UBS to deliver the Young Creators programme, which aimed to engage 120 young Londoners with creative activities to build confidence, improve their mental health and expose them to a range of new creative artforms and industries.

## Reach

Two London Boroughs of Hackney and Barking and Dagenham were selected as the target communities for the programme, due to the focus on reaching ethnic minority and lower socio-economic communities, and limited arts provision in Barking & Dagenham. Of the 10 organisations selected to deliver the programme, 6 were from Hackney and 4 from Barking and Dagenham, and 8 did not have much prior experience of delivering arts programmes. Youth workers were keen to deliver a structured arts-focused programme, as well as connect with professional artists and provide their young people with new opportunities.

A total of 222 young people were involved in the programme, an average of 22 per youth organisation. Most young people were already known to the youth organisation and are involved in other programmes or support; Young Creators provided a structured and focused programme for a small group of young people within the organisation.

Demographic data on the young people engaged shows that the Young Creators programme reached young people from the target groups, in particular a significant proportion living in deprived communities. The data shows:

- An even gender split, with 50% of young people identifying as male and 50% as female
- Mainly young people aged 15 or younger (73%), as shown in the chart below
- Young people who live in lower socio-economic communities; 84% live in the top 30% most deprived communities in England and 67% live in the top 20% most deprived communities.
- Young people from ethnic minority communities; 72% are young people of colour
- Young people with disabilities; 27% of the total

## Delivery

The programme involved a number of elements:

- **Taster sessions** – to expose young people to a range of different art forms, in order for them to have an informed choice over their art project. These worked well to give young people and youth workers an idea of the range of different art forms available to them.
- **Art project** – an 8-week art project working with a professional artist that encouraged young people to work together to achieve a shared goal, learn new skills and express themselves through their chosen artform. The support from a professional artist was an essential element, providing specific expertise, exposing

young people to new people as well as an understanding of potential careers in the sector.

- **Showcase event** – the opportunity at the end of the art project to perform or present their project to the funders, peers and family. Showcase events also helped small organisations to promote what they do and connect with funders and other stakeholders.
- **Residential** – the opportunity to come together in a new environment to work in teams to deliver an art project. The showcase events and the residential provided a range of opportunities for young people to travel to new areas of London and work with people they hadn't met before.
- **Inspire sessions** – opportunities to learn more about career opportunities in the creative industries. These were a challenge to organise, and for some groups working with either very young people, or people with additional needs, were not appropriate.
- **Youth worker training/CPD** – a programme of training and networking opportunities for youth workers to build skills in delivery arts programmes. This was a particular strength of the programme.

Some elements of the programme model worked better than others. However, the flexible approach meant that members felt that their young people were able to benefit from the elements most beneficial and appropriate to them, and were able to shape the programme to meet their needs.

Overall, the programme delivered:

- 112 sessions and 229 hours of support, an average of 11 sessions per organisation. Of these:
  - 69 sessions (62%) were art project sessions, 38 (34%) were taster sessions and only 5 (5%) were Inspire sessions led by the youth organisation.
- A total of 1,251 attendances by young people, who have received a total of 2,495 hours of support. An average of 125 attendances and 250 hours of support per organisation.
- On average, young people took part in 6 sessions and received 11 hours of support over the programme period.
- 68% took part in at least 6 sessions, showing good levels of engagement.
- 125 young people attended the showcase event, 58 attended the residential and 130 attended two additional Inspire sessions organised by London Youth.

In addition to the support delivered to young people, a total of 8 training and networking events were delivered, attended 126 times by 102 individual youth workers.

Satisfaction levels amongst young people taking part were high; 95% of young people enjoying taking part, and 81% felt their views, opinions and ideas were listened to. Young

people enjoyed learning new artforms, the opportunities to express themselves freely, meeting new people and socialising with friends.

## Impact

Overall, the programme has achieved the following outcomes for young people:

- **Increase in opportunities:** 92% of young people agree that they have tried something new, or a new artform as a result of taking part in Young Creators, and 80% of young people agree that their knowledge of different art forms has increased.
- **Young people feeling more positive:** 82% of young people feel more confident and 85% of young people agree that art helps them feel more confident to express their emotions. 89% agree that making art makes them feel better, with young people commenting on how taking part has helped their wellbeing and mental health.
- **Improved understanding of creative careers:** the programme has exposed young people to a variety of creative careers, through the inspire sessions, but also through the contact with professional artists, which demonstrates to young people that it is possible to have paid work in a variety of different artforms. Some young people have reported that they are now keen to explore creative careers, or feel more confident to pursue existing aspirations.
- **Improved life skills:** Young Creators has also helped build life skills that will be essential for employment in later years. 94% of young people agree that they have learnt new skills; as well as specific creative arts-related skills, they also include personal development skills such as communication, team-work and social skills.

In addition to outcomes for young people, the programme has also benefited youth workers and youth organisations:

- Youth workers feel **better equipped to deliver creative activities** in future
- Youth workers have developed **skills and confidence** around delivering creative activities.
- Youth organisations are keen to **continue delivering arts programmes**, due the impact they have seen on the young people and the contacts they have made with the arts sector.
- Youth organisations have **broadened their offer** and can now provide new opportunities for young people,
- Youth organisations have built **partnerships** and contacts with a range of new organisations.
- Organisations have also used the programme as a pilot to **try new activities** with young people and explore opportunities with referral partners.
- Networking opportunities have also helped to **advocate for arts provision** in more deprived boroughs.

## Learning

Key learning from delivering Young Creators which should be considered when designing and delivering future arts programmes is:

- Designing a model that is appropriate for the **target organisations**; for example considering whether inspire events are appropriate for organisations predominantly working with younger children or young people with additional needs. Or conversely, targeting organisations that would be most appropriate for the delivery model.
- Maintaining a balance of **structure and flexibility** to the programme; some elements to be core and others optional, to enable organisations to bespoke the programme to meet their needs whilst still ensuring key elements are delivered
- Ensuring there are sufficient **resources** in-house to support organisations and manage elements of delivery
- Maintain the elements of the programme that were most valuable; namely the **structured arts programme** and support from professional artists

## Introduction

London Youth have received funding from UBS to deliver the Young Creators programme, which aimed to engage 120 young Londoners with creative activities to build confidence, improve their mental health and expose them to a range of new creative artforms and industries. In addition, CPD training and support to youth workers aimed to establish new, meaningful partnerships between youth organisations and the arts sectors.

Shephard & Moyes Ltd supported London Youth to evaluate the impact of the programme. This report provides an overview of what was delivered, who the programme has reached, and what outcomes have been achieved for young people and youth organisations.

## About Young Creators

The Young Creators programme provided grants of up to £3,300 to 10 youth organisations in Hackney and Barking and Dagenham, to deliver a range of arts based taster sessions, an 8-week project supported by an artist/arts organisation, along with opportunities to take part in 'Inspire' events to increase awareness of opportunities within the creative industries sector. In addition to the grant to cover programme running costs, London Youth also provided arts taster days and paid for art partners, totalling an additional £1,900 of support per organisation.

The programme was established in recognition of the:

- Mental health/wellbeing crisis amongst young Londoners
- Lack of opportunities for young people to express themselves through arts
- Lack of access to good quality creative activities
- Lack of information and knowledge on creative careers
- Lack of diversity in creative arts industry
- Lack of information and knowledge for youth organisations to run in-house creative activities
- Lack of confidence in young people to pursue, or youth workers to support young people into creative careers
- Current approaches to engage young people are "top-down" and do not effectively remove barriers

To evaluate the impact of the programme, this report includes:

- Reach and participation/engagement data, taken from registration forms and registers collected by youth workers
- Delivery data, taken from Upshot reports, conversations with youth workers and the reports they have submitted
- Impact data taken from young people's surveys, case studies produced by members and conversations with youth workers

The report provides an overview of what has been achieved, who has been engaged in the programme (members and young people), what has been delivered and the impact of the programme on young people and youth organisations.

## Reach

This section of the report considers how youth organisations and young people were engaged in the programme, who is taking part and the extent to which the programme is reaching the target audiences.

### Engaging youth organisations

Two London Boroughs of Hackney and Barking and Dagenham were selected as the target communities for the programme, due to the focus on reaching ethnic minority and lower socio-economic communities. Barking & Dagenham also has limited arts provision. London Youth opened the programme to all members in these two boroughs, and also carried out some direct communication with members who had not been involved in other programmes before.

Demand was strong, with 25 organisations applying, and shortlisting took place with the London Youth team, members of the Youth Board and UBS staff. The shortlisting criteria was based on the ability of the organisation to reach the target group of young people, a mix of organisations across the two boroughs, and also a desire to fund some organisations that did not offer art as part of their core provision, or who would engage young people who would not traditionally take part in arts activities. The team also considered how well organisations evidenced the need for the programme and how they had consulted communities.

Of the 10 organisations selected, 6 are from Hackney and 4 from Barking and Dagenham, and 8 did not have much prior experience of delivering arts programmes. In addition, two organisations work primarily with young people with disabilities or additional needs, one works with refugees and asylum seekers and two predominantly work with Black or Muslim young people.

Conversations with youth workers identified the reasons why they wanted to take part in the programme. Youth workers were keen to deliver a structured arts-focused programme, as well as connect with professional artists and provide their young people with new opportunities.

***“We mainly run a very structured life skills programme for young people on the autism spectrum. This programme provided opportunities for our young people who enjoy art to take part in something different.” (youth worker)***

***“We wanted to offer new opportunities to our young people. We have an existing thriving cohort, but we need opportunities for them to get involved in throughout the year to keep that engagement going. We wanted to deliver something in the February half term where there's very little going on. We need to offer opportunities at those times when people normally have families that they can go back to and our young people are left in with nothing.” (youth worker)***

***“We do arts and crafts activities with our young people, but we’ve never delivered an arts programme before” (youth worker)***

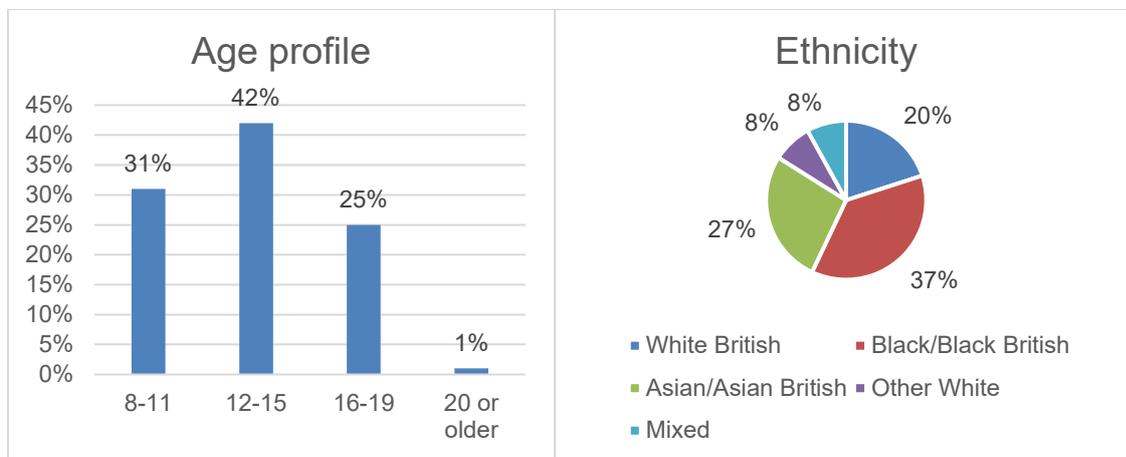
### **Engaging young people**

Overall, a total of 222 young people were involved in the programme, an average of 22 per youth organisation. Most young people were already known to the youth organisation and are involved in other programmes or support; Young Creators provided a structured and focused programme for a small group of young people within the organisation.

#### ***Young people profile***

Registration forms collected by members provide useful data on the demographic profile of young people, helping to understand who is involved in the programme and what groups of young people are being reached. The data shows that the programme has engaged:

- An even gender split, with 50% of young people identifying as male and 50% as female
- Mainly young people aged 15 or younger (73%), as shown in the chart below
- Young people who live in lower socio-economic communities; 84% live in the top 30% most deprived communities in England and 67% live in the top 20% most deprived communities.
- Young people from ethnic minority communities; 72% are young people of colour
- Young people with disabilities; 27% of the total



The data shows that the Young Creators programme reached young people from the target groups, in particular a significant proportion living in deprived communities.

Reports and conversations with youth workers provides insight into why programmes like Young Creators are important for the young people they support, in terms of providing positive activities for disadvantaged or at risk young people.

***“The Young Creator’s Programme enabled [youth organisation] to offer young people a weekly safe space to take part in dance and movement. We took them off the***

***streets and provided a tailored provision for those from lower social economic groups who are often at risk of county lines and criminal exploitation. We use the power of dance and visual art to deliver engaging workshops to help young people know the risks and dangers of getting involved in unhealthy relationships and how to look out for concerning signs of antisocial activity. We offered a wraparound service that is complementary to our local authority to provide preventative advice to keep young people away from criminal activity.” (youth worker)***

***“We believe that the arts is a great tool to learn transferable skills. And we also believe that our young people have additional barriers to accessing the arts. So this was really like a first steps of sharing or encouraging them into the art scene or the arts world” (youth worker)***

***“A surprising amount of them want to be actors or are interested in acting and performing. Some people come for the skills that they’re going to learn and some people come for the sense of belonging and the activity that it provides” (youth worker)***

## Delivery

This section of the report considers what has been delivered, what has worked well and the challenges experienced by members and London Youth.

### Programme elements

The Young Creators programme incorporates a number of different elements:

- Taster sessions – to expose young people to a range of different art forms, in order for them to have an informed choice over their art project.
- Art project – an 8-week art project working with a professional artist that encourages young people to work together to achieve a shared goal
- Showcase event – the opportunity at the end of the art project to perform or present their project to the funders, peers and family
- Residential – the opportunity to come together in a new environment to work in teams to deliver an art project
- Inspire sessions – opportunities to learn more about career opportunities in the creative industries
- Youth worker training/CPD – a programme of training and networking opportunities for youth workers to build skills in delivery arts programmes

#### *Taster sessions*

The taster sessions were delivered centrally by London Youth, in order to provide a range of opportunities for young people to try different art forms, as well as travel to different parts of London and meet other groups. The taster sessions were important in helping young people to understand the range of different artforms available to them, try things out to see what they liked and didn't like, and help inform what project they wanted to deliver.

***“The young people had a fantastic time at the taster day. They enjoyed the activities and loved being filmed by the BBC. They liked trying the different activities out and meeting other young people” (youth worker)***

By keeping the delivery of the taster sessions in-house, London Youth were able to ensure that young people were fully involved in deciding what project would be right for them.

Youth workers agreed that the taster sessions were effective and that young people enjoyed trying new things and being exposed to new artforms.

***“We found that offering a variety of different creative arts in a carousel taster session was beneficial in allowing our members to broaden their choice” (youth worker)***

***“Our young people chose drumming, but they had so many other options to choose from. I wouldn't have been able to present all those options to them, so for us the approach worked really well” (youth worker)***

### **Art project**

Through the taster sessions and conversations with youth workers at the induction sessions, along with existing contacts, London Youth were able to create a large bank of artforms and professional artists that they could connect with youth organisations. Following the taster sessions, the young people were asked to decide what project they wanted to deliver (with many using voting systems), and London Youth matched the organisation with an appropriate artist. The matching process ensured that artists had experience of working with young people and were the right 'fit' for the youth organisation.

Having a professional artist working with the young people was a particular strength of the programme and an important element, both in terms of additional delivery capacity, but also the professional expertise that the artists brought.

***“There’s just no way I could have done it myself! Ok, so I could get them doing some basic arts and crafts, but that wasn’t really the point. It’s more the way the artist developed their ideas and how they could apply that in different ways, opening up their imagination, what they could do at home. I could sit a group down and say ‘here’s some ink, let’s create something’, but in terms of making a meaningful session beyond what they’re actually doing, and help them think about being more creative in their own lives, you need a professional to do that” (youth worker)***

For some organisations, the support that London Youth provided to find an artist was essential, as they did not have lots of experience of delivering arts programmes so lacked contacts.

***“We just don’t have those contacts. I’d have just been googling ‘artists in Barking and Dagenham’ I wouldn’t even know where to start” (youth worker)***

For others, this was less important, as they already had the experience and contacts. However, London Youth’s flexible approach meant that those organisations who already had contacts with a professional artist could contract and manage them directly.

***“I had mixed feelings, if I’m honest, I couldn’t work out why the fund didn’t come directly to arts organisations and why they went to London Youth. We ended up finding our own artist, because what we wanted to do was quite specific. But they were open to that conversation and they paid us to pay our own artist, which was brilliant” (youth worker)***

Although sourcing the artist centrally was a benefit to some organisations, given the complexities of differing young people’s needs and locations, the team feel that in future it may be better to pass on the responsibility of sourcing artists to the youth organisation, and providing support where needed.

Youth workers we spoke to agreed that the art project was the most valuable element of the programme; rather than just taking part in a series of art activities the young people had a

shared goal to work towards, professional expertise and support, and a huge sense of achievement at the end.

### **Showcase event**

The showcase event was delivered at the end of the art project, and provided young people with an opportunity to perform, or display their artwork. It was delivered in person to enable a sense of excitement and ease of engagement, and the location was chosen for ease of access. Young people, youth workers and guests attended; for example parents and siblings, as well as the programme funders, London Youth Trustees and other stakeholders. As well as showcasing the young people's achievements, the event was also an opportunity to advocate for more arts based programmes, and to promote programmes like Young Creators to influential organisations. A total of 9 out of the 10 youth organisations were able to attend, and youth workers agreed that it was a successful experience.

***"It was really good, there were lots of snacks on offer, which they enjoyed. They got to go up on stage, and show their video, and one of them volunteered to say a few words about what the project meant to them, and how much they enjoyed it. So they felt fully included, they felt it was for them. It was a chance to show off what they had created and to meet some other young people from the other groups who are involved in the project."*** (youth worker)

For some young people, performing in front of an audience was not something new, however for others this was a totally new experience.

***"It was amazing. I've never seen them do anything like that before. We were just so proud"*** (youth worker)

### **Residential**

The residential, funded by ACE, was initially targeted at members in outer boroughs, but despite targeted calls demand was not high. It was subsequently opened up to other members in order to fill the places. As with all London Youth residentials, the purpose was to provide opportunities for young people to come together and make new friends. The residential mirrored the programme model, with taster sessions in a carousel style, with young people then put into groups to deliver an art project. Despite the short time period, the young people managed to create a number of artworks, including a film using their phones which was then edited by the theatre (residential venue), with the storyline created by the young people.

Residentials are always a logistical challenge for both London Youth and member organisations; finding a time and venue that works for everyone is impossible, and many smaller organisations lack the capacity to enable enough staff to attend.

***"[Residentials] are a lot more tricky for our young people with their needs - they could only allow two of our staff and we would need a minimum of six or seven."*** (youth worker)

Although residentials don't work for all organisations in the programme, they still provide valuable experiences for young people, by exposing them to new opportunities, places and people.

### **Inspire sessions**

The inspire sessions were designed to expose young people to a range of creative careers. Originally, these were intended to be delivered over Zoom, but given the relatively young age of young people taking part, and other additional needs many had, these were not feasible. The plan was changed to offer visits to creative industry workplaces, however London Youth found it extremely challenging to arrange these, given ongoing Covid-19 restrictions on tours or backstage experiences, many workplaces not being fully re-opened after the pandemic, or some venues not being accessible for the young people.

Some youth organisations also felt that the inspire element of the project was not a priority for them, because they were working with younger children, or with children with significant disabilities or additional needs that this would not be appropriate.

***“I know there's a very important element of the Young Creators programme, which is aspirational around careers in the future. I'll be honest, that wasn't really our main motivation - the youngest in our group was 10, and they're not even thinking about what they're doing career wise at the moment” (youth worker)***

Rather than visits to workplaces, the team instead arranged a series of cultural experiences for young people, for example trips to see Wicked the musical, or supported youth organisations to deliver their own. These were very popular with the young people, exposed them to new cultural experiences, and for some provided considerable insight into opportunities in the cultural industries.

***“For some people, they don't really know what acting is, what drama is or theatre is. And it seems like quite a bizarre concept to be on a stage in front of a group of people. We went to see Wicked, the musical and they were like 'where's the screen?', 'it this the cinema?' That idea of performance was quite new to a few people” (youth worker)***

### **Youth worker training/CPD**

In addition to the support delivered to young people, a total of 8 training and networking events were delivered, attended 126 times by 102 individual youth workers. The table below details the sessions and attendances.

| Session   | Total attendances |
|---|-------------------|
| Delivering Creative Arts - Reflections and Actions              | 8                 |
| Creative Arts Tools for Wellbeing and running Creative Sessions | 21                |
| Inclusion and the arts  | 7                 |
| Fundraising for creative arts part 1                            | 8                 |

| Session                                       | Total attendances |
|---|-------------------|
| Fundraising for creative arts part 2          | 8                 |
| Arts and creativity network 1                 | 41                |
| Supporting young people into creative careers | 14                |
| Arts and Creativity network 2                 | 19                |
| Total   | 126               |

The majority of training sessions were delivered online, however attendance and levels of engagement were high. Some sessions were more effective than others for particular organisations; for example some really valued the fundraising session, whereas others felt the ideas around fundraising in extremely deprived communities were not really appropriate.

Some youth organisations have also struggled to be able to attend, due to the timing of the training sessions or not having enough capacity. This is extremely common for many of London Youth’s members, who are often extremely small organisations. The extension of the programme’s timescales for delivering additional training has also been a capacity issue for some small organisations.

That said, those that attended the sessions found them useful.

***“We attended some of the sessions but have struggled with the last couple – I’m just not available on the dates and there’s not really anyone else. One of the sessions was around bid writing and that was really useful. It’s nice to be offered some CPD training, it’s always good” (youth worker)***

In addition to the training, additional funding from the Arts Council enabled London Youth to run an arts network event, as well as additional training at the residential. The arts network event took place at the V&A museum and enabled youth workers to network and make connections with other members as well as professional artists.

Overall, feedback from members and learning captured by the team suggests that the overall programme design worked well for most organisations; and the flexible approach meant that elements that were not appropriate could be seen as optional rather than being too prescriptive. The London Youth team worked hard to ensure that all elements of the programme were accessible for all groups; for example by running a dedicated taster session for two organisations working with disabled young people in Barking & Dagenham, and the ability to bespoke the programme to meet the individual needs of each organisation and their young people was highly valued.

The most effective elements were the art project, with the taster sessions being an important introduction and the showcase event a valuable end to the project. Support from the professional artist was a critical component of the project, even for experienced arts organisations.

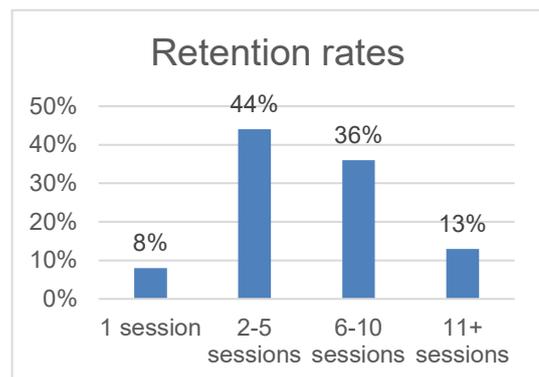
In future similar programmes, the inspire element needs more thought in terms of providing a range of suitable activities for the age groups and additional needs of young people involved. The approach taken by London Youth of centrally leading on a large proportion of the programme has also worked well, however youth workers appreciated the flexible approach to finding artists, scheduling and attending events.

For future similar programmes, youth workers were keen to see the focus of the programme being the artist supported project. Additional suggestions were around having more of a focus on social media; both in terms of content creation, but also its use as a campaigning tool and potential career opportunities.

### What was delivered

Overall, the 10 youth organisations have delivered a total of 112 sessions and 229 hours of support, an average of 11 sessions per organisation. Of these, 69 sessions (62%) were art project sessions, 38 (34%) were taster sessions and only 5 (5%) were Inspire sessions led by the youth organisation. This has resulted in a total of 1,251 attendances by young people, who have received a total of 2,495 hours of support. This is an average of 125 attendances and 250 hours of support per organisation.

On average, each young person took part in 6 sessions and received 11 hours of support over the programme period. There are also good levels of sustained engagement, with nearly half (48%) attending 6 or more sessions. 68% have taken part in at least 6 sessions, as shown in the chart to the right.



In addition, 125 young people attended the showcase event, 58 attended the residential and 130 attended two additional Inspire sessions organised by London Youth.

### Satisfaction

The survey completed by young people explores the extent to which participants enjoyed taking part in the programme, along with the extent to which they were involved in co-producing their experiences. The results are extremely high, with 95% of young people enjoying taking part, and 81% felt their views, opinions and ideas were listened to.

***“[I enjoyed] speaking my ideas because something actually happened about it” (young person)***

Young people enjoyed learning new artforms, the opportunities to express themselves freely, meeting new people and socialising with friends.

***“[I liked] that we could draw anything we liked or enjoyed.” (young person)***

***“[I enjoyed] meeting new people because their art told me more about them.” (young person)***

***“The chance to socialise because I don’t often.” (young person)***

## Impact

This chapter considers what difference the programme has made to young people and youth organisations. It is taken from the young people's outcome survey, which was completed by 83 young people (a response rate of 37%), as well as case studies and insight captured from youth workers and the London Youth team at events.

### Increase in opportunities

92% of young people agree that they have tried something new, or a new artform as a result of taking part in Young Creators, and 80% of young people agree that their knowledge of different art forms has increased.

***“It has made me realise art comes in many forms” (young person)***

***“It's has made me more knowledgeable of the arts” (young person)***

***“The 8 week art project was the core of the programme for us. It gave the young people the opportunity to try out lots of different art forms and use their imagination. It really opened their eyes to what they could use to make art. It was simple stuff, but they were thinking about art in a different way.” (youth worker)***

***“The chance to do a structured arts and crafts type session over eight weeks with a professional artist is something they wouldn't normally get the opportunity to do” (youth worker)***

### Young people feeling more positive

As a result of taking part in the programme, 82% of young people feel more confident.

***“It has helped me with my confidence and creativity” (young person)***

“This young person was the only young male in the dance group and when he first joined he was hesitant to be involved because of this. He told his mum, he didn’t want to go as he was the only boy. His mum and I had conversations with him and asked did you enjoy doing the actual dance and he said yes so we encouraged him to stay and he did. He started off very shy and quiet, but over the duration of the programme definitely became more confident in himself. He had built a really great rapport with the dance teacher and although he remained quite quiet both had a really great sense of humour together. The young person worked incredibly well with the others in the group and really did improve his dance skills. The group would often have to perform in front of one another and over time he became a lot more confident in this. He was one of the older ones too, and so he often was very supportive to the younger ones. Unfortunately towards to last few sessions he hurt his foot and could not participate, but he did get involved in the end of programme celebration and did go to one of the inspire events. This young man I was so incredibly proud of. His determination to keep trying and not give up even when he got things wrong. The dance teacher really pushed all the students and despite this young man often being out of his comfort zone he participated in all. We are really proud of him and are so happy he stuck the whole programme out.”

85% of young people agree that art helps them feel more confident to express their emotions.

***“It’s helped me to express my thoughts and feelings on different ways.” (young person)***

***“[I enjoyed] creating shoes because I felt like I could wear my emotions” (young person)***

As a result of this, 89% agree that making art makes them feel better, with young people commenting on how taking part has helped their wellbeing and mental health.

***“[I enjoyed] the colouring, it makes me relaxed and less stressed as I’m just focused on the art.” (young person)***

***“I feel that I have improved my mental health and well-being as part of the project, which I think is important to take care of ourselves with our mental health” (young person)***

The case study below demonstrates how the programme has helped one young person to use art as a way of exploring his sexuality in a safe space.

L comes to art on Thursday which is interesting because at his school they do art on the same day but he chooses to travel to us. He's made really strong friendships as a result. We have seen through his artwork that he has been able to develop his expression and creatively put down what is going on for him. To explore his sexuality in a safe space and through creative means. He's been really consistent which is a massive change, coming out of himself and now even comes on trips with us. You can see the turmoil inside and that art is helping, and he wouldn't have done this at the beginning of the programme. It has finally led to him being able to speak about his sexuality also. This is a huge step for him and powerful for the rest of the young people. It was really non-judgemental which the programme has allowed us to create as a space.

### **Teamworking**

One of the biggest impacts reported by youth workers has been the opportunities the programme has provided to bring young people together and work as a team to achieve a shared goal. The peer support and strong connections made have been a significant impact for many young people.

***“As a group it has given them a shared goal to achieve the best performance and has meant they have grown as a group, supporting each other along the way.” (youth worker)***

***The young people encouraged, surprised and inspired each other. They were challenged to perform and learnt about their creative talents and capabilities. The young people felt a sense of belonging in the group. Friendships were formed and a social network developed. This has been continued on the group WhatsApp chat.” (youth worker)***

***“One of the biggest things was that they learned about each other. They learned what skills other people had. We have young people who don't cross paths in school, because they're on such different levels at school. So it was a nice time for those that are perhaps in the top set and those that kind of struggle a little bit more to actually work together and supporting each other.” (youth worker)***

### **Improved understanding of creative careers**

The Young Creators programme has exposed young people to a variety of creative careers, through the inspire sessions, but also through the contact with professional artists, which demonstrates to young people that it is possible to have paid work in a variety of different artforms.

Some young people have reported that they are now keen to explore creative careers, or feel more confident to pursue existing aspirations.

***“Throughout the process I feel that I have a greater insight into creative careers because that is what I aspired to do in the future” (young person)***

***“I enjoyed the filmmaking the most as I got to be in front of the camera which is one of my dreams for future.” (young person)***

The case study below demonstrates how taking part in the programme has helped raise the aspirations of one young person (who is also an asylum seeker), and provide the opportunity to pursue their goals to become a film-maker.

N has been on a journey throughout the Young Creators programme over the past six months. It was his first project with our youth organisation and has since led him to be involved in many different opportunities, both internally within our organisation and externally with other organisations. At first, N was quiet and shy. He was concerned about his level of English and therefore found it hard to contribute and get involved. However, within the first day, he felt safe and welcomed into the group, and we noticed a change occur by the end of the session, where he spoke about how much he had enjoyed the day and was looking forward to future sessions. N took part in 3 masterclasses in acting, music and creative writing. He then joined the devising and rehearsal process, enjoying creating scenes and taking a director role when working in groups. His confidence grew, and he became a leader and role model in the room - the project culminated in a performance filmed on the final day. N was keen to assist with filming and enjoyed learning how to use a camera.

Over the course of the project, N developed an interest in music production and film. This has since led him to be involved in collaboration with Music Action International, where he joined a music project, working alongside a group to write and record two songs at the Promised Lands Studios in London. He took part in a 4-day Masterclass in Film Making and is now participating in a 4 Month 'Step into Work' Film and employment training course with Creative Sparkworks. N has faced multiple challenges in the last months, including a rejected age claim. He was dispersed to a new location, his support was stopped, and he currently lives in a hostel, sharing a room with four older men. N has struggled with this difficult transition, and these projects have given him structure, community and a creative outlet in challenging times.

### ***Improved life skills***

In addition to exposing young people to a range of career opportunities, Young Creators has also helped build life skills that will be essential for employment in later years. 94% of young people agree that they have learnt new skills; as well as specific creative arts-related skills, they also include personal development skills such as communication, team-work and social skills.

***“To be honest, the link to creative careers wasn’t a big motivator for us, as our young people are very young. But the programme has helped to build transferable skills***

***such as social communication and teamwork, and these skills are really important for them now at school, as well as in the future” (youth worker)***

***“It has helped me to become less shy and more sociable.” (young person)***

***“The young people learnt skills around the design process, the ability to communicate their ideas as well as work with professional artists.” (youth worker)***

***“[I learnt] to talk to people with more confidence.” (young person)***

***“The Young Creators Programme saw Young Person A gain the confidence and self esteem that they will use as they transition to adulthood. Our activity gave them the opportunity to make new friends, build better relationships with authority figures, release their learning potential and help them to understand their self-worth. This, in turn, has enabled them to make better life decisions that will see them create positive life pathways into better understanding the creative art industry.” (youth worker)***

## **Youth workers feel better equipped to deliver creative activities in future**

The programme delivery, support from professional artists and CPD activities have helped youth workers build skills and confidence around delivering creative activities.

***“The training around fundraising for the arts was incredibly insightful and useful. [We] learnt a lot from the two day training and were able to pass on the notes to our fundraising manager who does most our bids for us. This training gave me a bit more confidence in looking at what I would need to put in to an application” (youth worker)***

Many are keen to continue delivering arts focused programmes, due the impact they have seen on the young people and the contacts they have made with the arts sector.

***“We don’t often run creative arts sessions at our regular youth groups as these focus on the young people working through life-skills modules. It has been great to be able to offer those young people who were interested in creative arts, something of this type in a one-off project. We will look at the potential for running similar creative arts projects in the future as this project has been both fun and proved a good way for the participants to increase their self-confidence in their creative ability. Many of the training opportunities offered have been useful to.” (youth worker)***

In addition to building the capacity of youth workers to deliver similar programmes in future, taking part in Young Creators has also benefitted the wider youth organisation. It is helping youth organisations to broaden their offer and provide new opportunities for young people, build partnerships and contacts with a range of new organisations and learn more about the interests of the young people they support.

***“Without this project the young people would never have access to opportunities such as this. This project has opened up possibilities for the young people to explore***

***their creative skillset and be open minded to new opportunities as they present themselves. As an organisation we will be seeking to find more opportunities, collaborations and funding pots for creative delivery now we know this is a keen interest of theirs.”***

***“Taking part in the Young Creators Programme enabled us to build a stronger relationship with London Youth and with our partner organisation, as well as connecting and introducing us to many other incredible organisations and artists doing brilliant youth work.”***

Organisations have also used the programme as a pilot to try new activities with young people and explore opportunities with referral partners.

***“The Young Creators programme was a bit of a pilot for us. We do quite a lot of work with the local authority with children in care and so we are exploring how social workers refer young people to arts organisations. The local authority asked us to run a workshop on the trainer art concept with their social workers, helping them to see how they can use the trainer as a way of getting them to open up and express themselves. We are creating a toolkit for how you can use arts programmes to get young people to express themselves. So it’s been good for our organisational development” (youth worker)***

The networking opportunities for youth workers have also helped to advocate for arts provision in more deprived boroughs.

***“We did some training with the Roundhouse and it was a really nice space to challenge them around what they do further afield from just Camden. It triggered some conversations around art still being quite elitist, and not very reachable for our young people who, in Barking & Dagenham are going to be the most deprived around fuel and food. But we’re also quite a deprived area for arts and culture, we have no galleries in the borough, we have one Theatre which is mainly based around tribute acts, so not really for young people. So it was a good space to be able to say, look, we need this. We’re all the way in East London, and we would like to be involved a little bit more. How can we be involved? It was a nice networking space” (youth worker)***

## Conclusions

The Young Creators project has successfully reached 10 youth organisations and over 200 young people, and provided a range of opportunities for disadvantaged groups of young people to engage in a wide-range of different art forms. Through taster events young people were exposed to new activities and this enabled them to make informed choices about what artform they would choose for their project. The art project itself encouraged young people to work together to achieve a shared goal, learn new skills and express themselves through their chosen artform. The support from a professional artist was an essential element, providing specific expertise, exposing young people to new people as well as an understanding of potential careers in the sector.

Taster and showcase events and the residential provided a range of opportunities for young people to travel to new areas of London and work with people they hadn't met before, and the inspire events helped expose young people to new creative experiences as well as increase their knowledge about potential careers in the creative industries. Showcase events also help small organisations to promote what they do and connect with funders and other stakeholders.

Some elements of the programme model worked better than others; in particular the inspire events were a challenge to organise, and for some groups working with either very young people, or people with additional needs, were not appropriate. However, the flexible approach of the programme meant that members felt that their young people were able to benefit from the elements most beneficial and appropriate to them, and were able to shape the programme to meet their needs.

The investment in youth worker training and support in delivery was a particular strength of the programme. By maintaining control of some elements of delivery, London Youth were able to ensure that youth organisations with less experience of delivering arts programmes were exposed to a range of different artforms and matched with an appropriate artist. The support provided by the team to bespoke elements of the programme to meet individual organisation's needs was appreciated. And the training has helped build skills and provide opportunities for youth workers to network and advocate for more investment in arts activities in deprived boroughs. All this support is considerable added value to the relatively small grant provided to members, and sufficient resources are needed within London Youth to enable this support to happen.

The impact of the programme on both young people and youth organisations has been significant. The programme has exposed young people to a range of new opportunities and increased their awareness of new artforms. It has built their skills, increased their confidence and helped support young people's wellbeing through the ability to express themselves through art. For some young people, the programme has inspired them to seek a career in the creative sector, but more importantly it has helped improve core life skills that will be invaluable in the future, whatever career young people choose.

The programme has also benefited youth organisations, both in terms of building skills, but also increasing awareness of the impact of structured arts programmes and the benefits they bring young people. Through the programme the members have created a stronger network of contacts within the creative industries sector and many are keen to continue delivering structured arts programmes in future.

Going forwards, London Youth should consider the following when designing arts programmes:

- Designing a model that is appropriate for the **target organisations**; for example considering whether inspire events are appropriate for organisations predominantly working with younger children or young people with additional needs. Or conversely, targeting organisations that would be most appropriate for the delivery model.
- Maintaining a balance of **structure and flexibility** to the programme; some elements to be core and others optional, to enable organisations to bespoke the programme to meet their needs whilst still ensuring key elements are delivered
- Ensuring there are sufficient **resources** in-house to support organisations and manage elements of delivery
- Maintain the elements of the programme that were most valuable; namely the **structured arts programme** and support from professional artists