



Foot in the Door Evaluation Executive Summary



Evaluation report by Dr Annette Naudin and Dr Nathalie Hart
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FOREWORD

The 'Foot in the Door' evaluation was commissioned by Creative Alliance to learn from the experience and inform further iterations of this pilot project. I am grateful for the investment risk that Arts Connect took. As the evaluation conducted by Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research at Birmingham City University has shown, it was an ambitious and challenging pilot project. To the best of our knowledge, nothing of a similar scale had been attempted before. It achieved some of what it set out to do and we have identified how to do things differently next time, to achieve more of what Foot in the Door intends. The learning from this will inform conversations:

- Within partner organisations about how they adapt their policies, more effectively link different strategies and priorities funding opportunities;
- With policy making agencies at regional level about how to address market failures in skills development and delivery within the creative & cultural industries;
- Within Creative Alliance and plans are well developed to attract further investment to its work based learning programme.

Creative Alliance is a social enterprise with the purpose to make access to learning, training and working in creative, digital and marketing roles fairer for all talented people, irrespective of background, education or experience. The learning from this report is informing how we become more effective at achieving that. Thank you to Dr. Annette Naudin and Dr. Natalie Hart for their contribution and for this report.

Noel Dunne

Director of Creative Alliance

9th July 2018

INTRODUCTION

Foot in the Door (FITD) is an ambitious pilot project devised and managed by Creative Alliance to address inequalities within the cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) workforce. By focusing on young people, who tend to face barriers accessing creative and cultural work, Creative Alliance offer a 'foot in the door' of creative and cultural organisations.

Nine partner organisations were commissioned to design and deliver a minimum thirty-hour work based learning programme, centred on a role in their organisation or area of operation that has entry level opportunities. The eight partners and roles / areas were:

Organisation	Role / Area
Beatfreaks	Marketing
Birmingham Royal Ballet	Company Management
Blue Whale	Event / Gig Management
City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra	Venue Management
DanceXchange	Festival Management
Desi Blitz	On Line Journalism / Digital Marketing
mac	Front of House & role of Volunteers
The Rep	Off Stage Theatre
Urban Hax	Design

Creative Alliance worked with marketing agency Beyond 400 to target young people aged 16-24 from the areas of highest multiple deprivation across Birmingham and the Black Country. 60 young people were accepted onto the programme following an application process. They were asked to select an initial two courses at a launch event at The Rep in June 2017 that were being delivered in the six months between July and December. These were supported by an accompanying programme of advice and guidance sessions and specific training events on Networking, Presentation Skills and Well Being.

Creative Alliance is a work based learning and apprenticeship training provider. Part of the service offered to employers is a free recruitment service if they are looking to recruit a new apprentice as opposed to convert an existing member of the team onto an apprenticeship programme. Therefore, the company receives hundreds of applications a month to the new vacancies employers are looking to recruit to in creative, digital and marketing roles.

Many of the job descriptions it receives from employers seek a breadth of knowledge, skills and experiences. Many of the applications it receives from young people of diverse backgrounds, experiences and abilities do not demonstrate that breadth that employers are looking for. This makes it difficult for some young people with talent and potential to demonstrate on paper and in person that they can learn how to do these roles effectively. This is coupled with a lack of confidence in their ability and a lack of awareness about how to behave in situations they are unfamiliar with.

Foot in the Door's intention was to provide some of that knowledge, skills and experience so that some young people were better able to compete for entry level positions.

There was also an opportunity to work with organisations to explore how to develop the bridge between the excellent education and engagement work many of them do with schools and communities across the city and the employment opportunities they have.

Creative Alliance was successful in 2016 in securing Erasmus + funding from Ecorys to work with six other partners across Europe to develop an online training platform about Work Based Learning for professionals who work with young people. This created the opportunity to seek investment from Arts Connect to test how creative & cultural organisations might develop a work based learning programme. It also created the opportunity to seek investment from Creative Skillset to design and deliver a similar programme for film and TV with The Producers' Forum.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on our findings, FITD has achieved its objectives of testing a project design and a programme of activities to address inequalities in young people's access to the creative and cultural industries workforce. The success stories demonstrate evidence of change in the collaborating organisations and the young people who took part. There is also evidence of reflexivity on the part of the creative and cultural organisations suggesting that this project has begun, or encouraged those involved, to rethink their practice and explore the management of apprentices as an aspect of staff recruitment and development. For some this will be a welcome challenge for others there are difficulties in adjusting their practice and committing to the development of young talent from diverse backgrounds.

DESIGN OF THE PROGRAMME

The scope of this project was relatively large in scale considering it was a pilot project. This meant there were logistical pressure on Creative Alliance to recruit the targeted demographic of young people, recruit and liaise with organisations to design courses, and support the participants and organisations throughout the process. Once young people were recruited, ensuring the retention of the participants had multiple challenges.

RECOMMENDATION

Where courses were structured as an intensive over a week programme, retention seemed to have been better than when they were structured over several weeks. The longer young people had to wait after the initial signup, the higher the dropout rate.

- It is likely that a focus on making them as practical as possible and offering an apprentice style, hands on experience, rather than replicating a college style experience, will be most effective for the participants.
- Scheduling the courses with careful consideration of organisational schedule and commitments could enhance the experience for individuals and make the courses easier to manage for organisations.

Recommendation to design within the programme an opportunity for following up individuals who drop out or who do not engage.

RETENTION & COMMUNICATION

There is clearly an issue of retention across the FITD courses, however this has been more of an issue on some of the courses.

Where young people never started the course, there was some evidence that communication may have been an issue. Communication between Creative Alliance, the organisations and the participants.

RECOMMENDATION

The scheduling of the courses in terms of longevity and time of the year appears to have contributed to how successful they were in retaining as many participants as possible.

- Scheduling courses to run over an intensive week could be more effective in maintaining motivation and retention
- Scheduling courses to take place fairly soon after the sign-up period could help reduce the dropout rate.
- Belonging and ownership – who owns that from the perspective of the young people and therefore what are the communication channels? It is important to make that clear for the participants' perspective.
- What and when are the best forms of communication? CCI organisations may have to adapt and accommodate.

INEQUALITIES IN THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

The creative and cultural Industries is a diverse sector of organisations of varying sizes and creative focus. Designing courses which offer a breadth of experience whilst being meaningful for individual participants requires a tailored approach which will never be a 'one size fits all' solution. Bespoke programmes with some flexibility to adapt according to needs of the participants might be necessary. Inequalities in access to the CCI's begins at the start of the talent pipeline and is affected by societal, cultural and educational factors, many of which are beyond the reach of the sector to change. However, the sector does have its part to play in acknowledging, challenging these barriers and advocating for change in the areas outside of its immediate reach.

RECOMMENDATION

It is important to consider how much support is given to address barriers that young people may be facing. For example: getting child care, having enough money to get the bus into town, feeling 'out of place' in an organisation, health issues.

- Staff training: Cultural organisations might have to consider training their staff and provide such as unconscious bias courses.
- Representation and role models are important: Organisations might consider offering the young person an appropriate mentor, based on their background and development needs. Encourage access professional development networks outside of the organisation may also offer general support.
- Change management: Addressing inequalities in the cultural workforce may require changes in cultural values. This might challenge the status quo and the implicit principles and/or values which govern everyday working practices. In seeking to diversify the cultural workforce, organisations may have to question, adjust and modify current practices.