

Creative Scotland

Youth Arts Fund 2021 Evaluation

Final Report

14 November 2022

—
BOP
Consulting



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Cover image: Access Fund project, Hospitalfield Young Artist Club, ©Rachel Simpson, Associate Artist

1. Introduction

This section provides an introduction to the Youth Arts Fund, the context and process in which the fund was created, and its structure.

It goes on to provide an overview of the evaluation, with a focus on the key aims of the evaluation and the approach undertaken to deliver the evaluation, including an in-depth evaluation framework.

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1.1 The Youth Arts Fund

Context and aims of the fund

In August 2020, the Scottish Government announced that the culture and heritage sectors in Scotland would benefit from a £59 million funding package to protect jobs and help the industry weather the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this funding package, £4.25m¹ was allocated to support organisations in the youth arts sector and to ensure the ongoing existence of creative opportunities for children and young people in Scotland. In order to distribute this allocation, the Youth Arts Fund was created in 2020 as an emergency response to support the youth arts sector. A full timeline of the COVID-19 emergency funding administered by Creative Scotland between March 2020 and September 2021, including the grants distributed through the Youth Arts Fund, can be found [here](#).

To respond quickly and coherently to the challenge of creating a major new funding programme, Creative Scotland established the funding processes for the Youth Arts Fund based on the well-established Youth Music Initiative programme. For 2021/22, the two funding programmes were designed to run in parallel, by merging some of YMI's funding strands into the Youth Arts Fund and making them accessible to the wider youth arts sector (see Figure 1), while focusing the funding on the same priority areas and target groups as YMI does.

As such, beyond the overall aim of the Youth Arts Fund to ensure opportunities for youth participation in creative activities, the Youth Arts Fund shares with YMI the aims to make such opportunities available to all children and young people; and to enhance the strength of the sector. It thus included three core elements:

Participation: To tackle inequality through getting project activity to targeted priority groups of children and young people across a range of settings, in particular those who are already experiencing deprivation and other additional challenges. In doing so, the fund is explicit about supporting young people's

empowerment, particularly through creative expression and supporting youth voice as a core aspect of programme delivery.

Provision: To help the youth arts sector retain and enhance its current capacity and infrastructure. In this, projects are particularly encouraged to work in partnership with other providers and services within communities.

Progression: To support employment and the maintenance of work for freelance artists and creative and cultural practitioners, thereby enabling a thriving youth arts workforce and tackling inequalities.

In being built on these three intertwining elements, the fund supported the ambition and work of Scotland's national youth arts strategy, *Time to Shine*², which aimed to create and develop mechanisms to nurture and celebrate ambition, enthusiasm, and talent; create and develop infrastructure for the children and young people's arts sector and ensure continuous quality improvement. Crucially, the pandemic further raised the importance of these aims, not only by creating huge sustainability challenges for the sector, but in many cases by further raising the barriers some children and young people face in accessing such provision. Indeed, several recent studies have suggested that the pandemic has increased social inequality, with the more socially disadvantaged being harder hit by the pandemic's effects across a range of factors (e.g., employment, health, education).

To target the opportunities supported through the Youth Arts Fund where they are needed most, the Fund – aligned with YMI – broadly sought to prioritise engagement with children and young people who are:

- living in poverty or residing in areas of social and economic deprivation
- experiencing or at risk of experiencing harm and neglect
- looked after and care leavers
- in the early years (0-5) of their life

¹ An initial £3m was allocated on the initial announcement in August 2020, followed by an additional £1m announced in January 2021, and a further £250k from the Scottish Government's Economic Recovery team around February 2021.

² Launched in 2013, *Time to Shine* set out a 10-year vision for youth arts in Scotland. The strategy is coming to an end in 2023.

- from Black and/or Minority Ethnic backgrounds
- have a disability and/or additional support needs
- at risk of offending or have previously offended
- young carers and/or young parents
- experiencing or at risk of homelessness, or who have been homeless
- experiencing mental ill health.

The original 10-year *Time to Shine* youth arts strategy is now coming to an end in 2023. In response, Creative Scotland is currently undertaking development work – including reviewing its policies and future funding plans – around how it will respond to its duty as a public body to support children and young people’s empowerment and wellbeing in line with the UNCRC³.

Creative Scotland recently refreshed its Creative Learning Plan, which aims to support the development and application of creativity in learning by embedding creativity into the curriculum design; improving learners’ mental health and wellbeing; helping learners apply their own creative skills; influencing learners’ creative learning and providing quality cultural experiences to all learners. This is supported by a new Action Plan published jointly by Creative Scotland and Education Scotland in November 2021, which aims to embed creativity at the centre of Scottish education “*to empower more learners to grow skills and confidence through creative activity*”.

Notably, since the allocation of the *Time to Shine* implementation budget (2013-16) and the end of the *CashBack for Creativity* programme (2010-2020)⁴, the Youth Arts Fund represented the first allocation of *multi-artform* funding for the youth arts, in a bid to support the *whole* sector in the wake of the COVID pandemic. While the Scottish Government’s Programme for Government for 2021 includes a pledge to continue its support of the Youth Music Initiative, “*expanding it to other art forms*”, it is not yet known which shape exactly this will

take and whether it spells a continuation of the Youth Arts Fund as set up in 2020.

In this context, Youth Arts Fund came at a timely moment, making it all the more relevant to understand the impact it has had on its young participants as well as the wider youth arts sector, in order to inform decisions on future funding.

Fund set-up

Taking existing funds such as the Youth Music Initiative’s Access to Music Making and the Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes as a basis, Creative Scotland created six funding strands under which the funding set aside for the Youth Arts Fund was distributed (see Figure 1 below for an overview). Together, these addressed the three guiding elements of the fund to support participation, provision and progression. The funding strands included:

1. **Targeted Fund:** Building out from Youth Music Initiative’s infrastructure-support strand, Strengthening Youth Music, this fund was designed to **support the youth arts (and music) sector infrastructure, project delivery, recovery and renewal** following COVID-19 restrictions. 20 targeted national and regional arts organisations were invited to apply; applicants had to demonstrate how their proposed project would tackle inequality, enhance current sector capacity and/or increase the commissioning and employment of freelance artists/ creative practitioners.
2. **Access Fund:** Based on Youth Music Initiative’s Access to Music Making strand but broadened in reach to be available to the wider youth arts sector, grants between £5k and £30k **supported individuals and organisations to run youth arts programmes and deliver activity**.
3. **Small Grants Scheme:** This fund was designed to support organisations to take **ownership over distributing funds to meet local sector needs**. Organisations and local authorities were able to apply for funding pots of up to £50k to distribute small grants **directly to freelance artists/ creative practitioners** to deliver artist-led youth arts activities (i.e., with artists taking the lead in designing and delivering collaborative projects). Applicants were

³ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

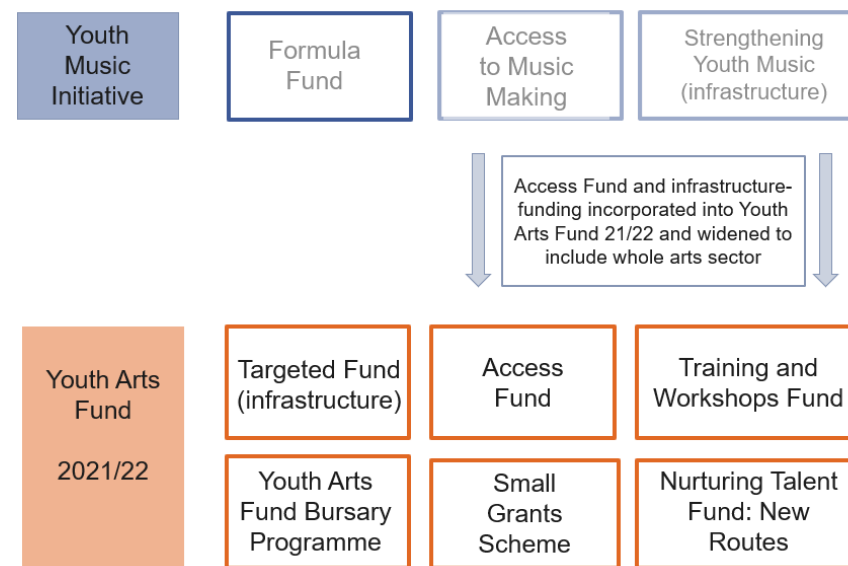
⁴ This offered young people aged 10-24 across Scotland the opportunity to engage in creative and cultural activity.

required to have capacity and a track record in distributing grants and supporting youth arts activity; be networked with sector practitioners; and be able to provide support and monitoring of the grants.

4. **Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes:** An extension to the existing Nurturing Talent Fund originally established through *Time to Shine*, this strand was created to provide **opportunities directly to children and young people to undertake creative projects**. A minimum of three organisations were sought to each manage a Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes, which provided direct support for young people undertaking self-directed creative/artistic projects, based on a youth-led decision-making process. Applicants were asked to focus on artists from care-experienced backgrounds, rural communities and those with disabilities or additional support needs.
5. **Youth Arts Fund Bursary Programme:** This fund offered funding to provide organisations with the opportunity to host up to five **bursaries for early-career artists and creative practitioners** aged 18 to 24 who have a lack of accessible support to develop their creative careers. Host organisations were required to support the young artists/ practitioners with building contacts, creating ambitious work, identifying opportunities for future development and other progression activities.
6. **Training & Workshops Fund:** Funding to support learning across two key strands, 1) **organisational policy-based work**, and 2) sessions which **explore best practice in working with children and young people**. Eight organisations were invited to apply to the fund, proposing activity which responded to a suggested list of 15 themes, including anti-racism, child protection, community engagement, environment, and sustainability, fundraising and mental health.

Alongside these six Youth Arts Fund strands, funds were also allocated in 2020-21 via the **Youth Music Initiative's Formula Fund**, which allocates funding to **all Scottish Local Authorities for the provision of school-based music making**.

Figure 1 Youth Arts Fund set-up and relationship between Youth Arts Fund and Youth Music Initiative



Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

In distributing the available funding via these strands, Creative Scotland created a range of different avenues to provide children and young people with opportunities (Access Fund, Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes, Small Grants) and support the sector through helping to build sector infrastructure (Targeted Fund), offering targeted training (Training & Workshops) supporting freelance practitioners (Small Grants) and creating progression routes (Bursary Programme).

Across strands, the fund includes a number of innovative elements around i) providing local umbrella organisations with the opportunity to distribute grants to respond to local needs (Small Grants); ii) allocating funds specifically for artists/creative practitioners (Small Grants, Bursary Programme) and funding young people directly (Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes).

Applicants were able to bid for and receive funding from multiple strands.

1.1.2 Overview of the funded projects

The Youth Arts Fund was largely distributed through the Access Fund strand, with 87 projects together receiving £2,015,313, just under half of the overall Youth Arts Fund (£4,202,953), excluding Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund. This was followed by the Targeted Fund and Small Grants Scheme, both of which funded 18 projects at a value of £1,053,393 and £690,363 respectively.

Throughout, the term ‘projects’ refers to the number of grants awarded by Creative Scotland under each of the Youth Arts Fund strands. Through the Small Grants Scheme, Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes and Youth Arts Fund Bursary Programme strands, a further 490 smaller-scale, individual projects were supported through the devolved funding, which are not included in this total.

Figure 2 Total funding distributed across the Youth Arts Fund strands

| Strand | Total no of projects | Total £ granted |
|---|--|--------------------|
| Access Fund | 87 | £2,015,313 |
| Small Grants Scheme | 18 (220 small grants/ freelance artists supported) | £690,363 |
| Targeted Fund | 18 | £1,053,393 |
| Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes | 5 (235 awards made) | £100,000 |
| Youth Arts Fund Bursary Programme | 12 (35 bursaries supported) | £294,884 |
| Youth Arts Fund Training & Workshops | 7 | £49,000 |
| TOTAL Youth Arts Fund | 147 | £4,202,953 |
| Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund | 33 | £6,182,086 |
| TOTAL Youth Arts Fund + Formula Fund | 180 | £10,385,039 |

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)/ Creative Scotland (2021)

Funding was directly allocated in all Local Authorities in Scotland (with one exception), with a large proportion of grants working across multiple Local Authority areas and nationally. The areas that received the three highest portions of funding across the strands were Edinburgh (£842,062), Glasgow (£663,950), and National, i.e., taking place across Scotland (£475,253).

Music (48) was the most commonly noted artform of focus for funded projects, closely followed by multi-artform (or wider artform) projects (41). Smaller numbers of projects focused on Theatre (11), Visual Arts (10), Dance (5) and Film (5).

The three priority groups most commonly referenced by projects at application specification were children and young people who:

- Are living in poverty or residing in areas of social and economic deprivation
- Have a disability and/or additional support needs
- Are experiencing mental ill health.

Across each of the five strands (not including the Training and Workshops Fund), ‘children and young people who are living in poverty or residing in areas of social and economic deprivation’ was consistently the most commonly referenced priority group.

Figure 3 Priority groups referenced by projects across the strands at application stage

| Priority group | Number of projects which referenced the priority group at application stage |
|---|---|
| Living in poverty or residing in areas of social and economic deprivation | 121 |
| Disability and/or additional support needs | 73 |
| Experiencing mental ill health | 60 |
| Looked after and care leavers | 54 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Black and/or Minority Ethnic backgrounds | 52 |
| Risk of experiencing harm and neglect | 45 |
| Young carers and/or young parents | 44 |
| Risk of offending or have previously offended | 38 |
| Early years (0-5) | 32 |
| Risk of homelessness, or who have been homeless | 22 |

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)/ Creative Scotland (2021)

1.2 Aims and approach of the evaluation

Requirements of the evaluation

BOP was commissioned in June 2021 to undertake the evaluation of the first year of the Youth Arts Fund, with the evaluation timescale running from June 2021 to June 2022. Alongside the six strands of the Youth Arts Fund, the evaluation covers the Youth Music Initiative's Formula Fund during this period.

This is a new fund, set up in response to an emergency, but with considerable interest, enthusiasm and backing to transition to a more permanent funding provision for the wider youth arts sector (as has already been the case for many years for the youth music sector). Given this, the evaluation needed to respond to a number of aims, looking both at the fund's impact and current process/ set-up to:

- understand the extent to which the overarching aims of the programme are met through the approaches featured in projects and thereby the impact which the distributed funds had on participants, practitioners, and the wider sector; and to
- learn from fund recipients how well-matched the fund is to their evolving needs and challenges, and whether the fund mechanisms are fit for purpose.

These aims needed to be met using a range of qualitative and quantitative sources, making the most of existing monitoring (e.g., through Creative Scotland's end of project reports), but building from this in order to ensure that

output numbers could be reported in a compelling way that contextualises the data.

Methodology

Based on the above requirements and the stipulations included in the brief, BOP developed a methodology based on a 'co-construction' approach between us as the evaluators and the funded projects themselves, to ensure that the evaluation was critical and representative. This was based on the premise that while BOP provided a critical external perspective, the funded projects themselves held the knowledge, experience and learning that needed to be summarised and shared in the reporting process. Ultimately, the aim of this approach was to enable the evaluation to communicate the impact that the Youth Arts Fund had in this period in a compelling way, which not only 'brought to life' the data presented, but that the grantees themselves would identify with. This explorative approach was particularly important given the fund was in its first year: it enabled us to explore the variety and richness of the impact achieved through funded activity by being representative of projects' practice and experience, and at the avoidance of making premature assumptions around outcomes.

To ensure this co-construction approach was present throughout, the evaluation centred on BOP's collaboration with three programme participant cohorts across the length of the evaluation period:

- **Cohort 1:** The first cohort provided insight and feedback to the evaluation framework and BOP's proposed approach to collect data.
- **Cohort 2:** The second cohort provided representative longitudinal case studies (8).
- **Cohort 3:** The third cohort provided feedback on the administration and process of the Youth Arts Fund.

Importantly, the selection of the cohorts was based on self-nomination by the projects in response to an invitation to all projects by BOP/Creative Scotland. This was followed by a selection by BOP and Creative Scotland based on: type and size of grant, geography, art or form and/ or type of organisation, in order to

ensure representativeness. The participants in each cohort are listed in the Appendix.

BOP would like to thank all cohort participants for their enthusiasm, time and contributions to this evaluation.

Based on this set-up, the evaluation methodology included four key steps:

1. Development of the evaluation framework and qualitative data collection tool with input from cohort 1

BOP drafted an initial version of the evaluation framework, including eight fund-level outcomes and respective indicators. Based on this, BOP ran an online workshop with cohort 1, which focused on three discussion points:

- Participants' views on the suggested outcomes
- Existing approaches to evaluation material collection
- Ways for BOP to collect supplementary data/ evaluation material.

Based on the cohort's feedback, the evaluation framework was finalised (see Section 1.2.2) and a programme-level online qualitative data collection tool developed (on the online survey platform Qualtrics) to supplement Creative Scotland's end of project reports. The designed qualitative data collection tool was circulated to all participants with requests to complete this and/or the end of project reports in order to evidence impact against any of the eight fund-level outcomes, which were relevant to their projects.

Based on feedback from cohort 1, the online tool provided projects with the opportunity of presenting evidence of their impact in more creative ways, to align with the spirit of the Fund and to allow for contributions and buy-in from the young project participants. Projects were able to upload a range of media including photos, images, or videos, and were asked to provide their views on why and how the presented documentation provided evidence.

44 projects chose to report impact against the seven outcomes using the Qualtrics tool.

2. Creation of eight longitudinal case studies with support from cohort 2 and focus group with Youth Music Initiative lead officers

Based on self-nomination and a representative selection, eight projects were chosen to provide insightful, longitudinal case studies for the evaluation. The case studies aimed to provide insight both into impact as well as projects' processes, practices and learning resulting from their activity. It was felt that it was important to understand different impacts created by the variety of projects funded by the Youth Arts Fund. To this end, the selection approach did not specifically seek out 'best practice' projects. Instead, it was based on creating a representative selection of case studies across the programme strands, art forms, geography and priority groups worked with. See Appendix for full list of case studies.

Set-up calls were undertaken with all case studies at the beginning of the project to gain first insight into the projects, their aims, activities and target groups, and discuss how best to work together to capture the impact and learning of the project. The results were captured in initial case studies included in the interim report. Follow-up interviews were held with all projects in early 2022 to understand more about project impact. Based on this, the case studies were finalised. A key aim was for the case studies to incorporate a range of media alongside descriptive text to reflect the creative character of the projects.

The case studies can be accessed via the following links:

[Passion4Fusion](#)

[National Galleries of Scotland](#)

[Engage Scotland](#)

[Clifftop Projects](#)

[Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival](#)

[Media Education](#)

[Falkirk Community Trust](#)

[Scottish Youth Theatre](#)

In addition, BOP undertook a focus group to discuss a number of key themes with a cohort of Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund lead officers (six participants from five Local Authorities, see Appendix).

3. Undertaking the process review in consultation with cohort 3

Nine participants for cohort 3 were chosen based on self-nomination and a representative selection (see Appendix). An initial workshop on 22 November 2021 focused on the set-up and structure of the Youth Arts Fund strands; the administration of the Fund; Creative Scotland’s role as sector development agency; and how coherent YAF funding is alongside other Creative Scotland and third sector funding.

This was followed up with a final session in May 2022. In addition, BOP led a workshop with key Creative Scotland team members to review the Youth Arts Fund process, in order to gain an internal perspective. The results of these final two workshops are included in Section 6.

4. Qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis

First, we undertook an analysis of the application data received from Creative Scotland to understand the breadth of what was funded under the Youth Arts Fund in its first year. This in particular looked at geographical spread, the priority groups worked with, and the breadth of art forms included. Insights from this data analysis were presented in the Interim Report and are briefly summarised here in Section 1.1.2.

At the end of their project, all Youth Arts Fund projects were required to complete:

- key mandatory parts of Creative Scotland’s end of project reports focusing on retrieving monitoring data (as highlighted), and
- either the qualitative questions contained in the end of project reports OR the qualitative online tool circulated by BOP.

BOP undertook the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative information provided through these two avenues for inclusion in the final report. Monitoring data included in the report is based on data from the following number of end of project reports:

| Youth Arts Fund strand | Total no. of projects | No. of end of project reports included in the evaluation |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Access Fund | 87 | 76 (data for 11 projects missing) |
| Small Grants Scheme | 18 | 16 (data for 2 projects missing) |
| Targeted Fund | 18 | 15 (data for 3 projects missing) |
| Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes | 5 | 5 |
| Training & Workshops | 7 | 6 (data for 1 project missing) |
| Youth Arts Fund Bursaries | 12 | <i>As the Bursaries Fund is still ongoing, it is not included within this evaluation.</i> |
| TOTAL | 147 | 118 |
| Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund | 33 | 33 |
| TOTAL Youth Arts Fund + Formula Fund | 180 | 151 |

5. Reporting

The findings were then brought together in a series of separate reporting documents:

- a main report which summarises and analyses the evidence gained through the research with regard to the achievement of the Youth Art Fund’s outcomes. This includes evidence in the form of the quantitative and qualitative data from the end of project report forms as well as from the case studies.
- eight stand-alone case studies in Microsoft Sway to allow for the embedding of digital files
- a standalone Executive Summary report.

Throughout the report, projects have been anonymised and referenced with the funding strand they received funding under, only. Only projects that provided a case study are references by the name of the lead delivery organisation.

Although acronyms are avoided throughout the report, data tables refer to children and young people as CYPs and to end of project reports as EOPs for brevity.

1.2.2 Evaluation framework

To ensure that outcomes were developed based on the activity undertaken by the projects, BOP identified seven fund-level outcomes and long-term impacts on the basis of a review of the Youth Arts Fund application guidance and the application forms provided by the applicants. These were then presented to cohort 1 and finalised based on their comments. The resulting final outcomes and impacts are presented in Figure 4. Four of these outcomes focus on the impact of the programme on the young participants (highlighted in light blue in Figure 4); while a further three focus on the programme’s impact on the sector and sector workforce (highlighted in grey in Figure 4).

Figure 4 Youth Arts Fund Evaluation Framework: outcomes and impacts (light blue: outcomes on children and young people (CYP); grey: sector outcomes)

| Outcomes | Long-term impacts |
|---|---|
| 1/ CYP living in poverty or residing in areas of social and economic deprivation have equal opportunities to access artistic and creative activities | CYP reach their potential, have access to a broader range of cultural resources in their lives and contribute to Scotland’s cultural future |
| 2/ CYP develop wider transferable skills through taking part in youth arts provision | |
| 3/ CYP are empowered through their involvement in youth-led activities and their voices are amplified . | |
| 4/ The mental health and wellbeing of CYP is improved through their participation in artistic and creative activities | |
| 5/ Artists and creative practitioners benefit from being able to access more paid employment opportunities in the sector | |

6/ Scotland’s artistic and creative sectors are strengthened through **increased cross-sector partnership working and sharing of knowledge**

7/ People undertaking creative and artistic projects with children and young people are **trained and upskilled**

The Youth Arts sector in Scotland is stable and sustainable

Source: BOP Consulting, 2021

Importantly, not all of the Youth Arts Fund strands were set up to address all of the seven outcomes: as a guiding principle, these are fund-level rather than strand-level outcomes, with different strands contributing in different ways to the achievement of the fund-level outcomes. Figure 5 provides an overview of which Youth Arts Fund strands focus on achieving which of the seven outcomes. Likewise, individual projects are not expected to be working towards all outcomes. As such, the seven outcomes resulted from the work *across all strands and projects funded through the fund*. To achieve this programme-level outcome analysis, projects were asked to identify which outcomes aligned with/ were relevant to their projects; and then to report against these selected outcomes. Similarly, reporting requirements for individual outcomes within a project were not expected to be represented equally, but to the extent that they were relevant to the project.

Figure 5 Outcome areas focused on by the individual Youth Arts Fund strands (blue: primary focus, white: secondary focus/ not focused on this area; CYP = children and young people)

| Youth Arts Fund Strand | Youth Arts Fund Outcomes | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|
| | CYP Access | CYP Skills | CYP Voice | CYP Wellbeing | Sector Access | Sector Connected | Sector Skilled |
| Access Fund | Primary | Secondary | Secondary | Secondary | Secondary | Secondary | Secondary |
| Targeted Fund | Primary | Secondary | Secondary | Secondary | Secondary | Secondary | Secondary |
| Nurturing Talent | Primary | Primary | Primary | Primary | Primary | Primary | Primary |

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Fund: New Routes | | | | | |
| Small Grants Scheme | | | | | |
| Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund | | | | | |
| Training & Workshops | | | | | |
| Youth Arts Fund Bursaries | | | | | |

Source: BOP Consulting, 2021

In addition, a number of qualitative and quantitative reporting indicators were then identified for each of the eight outcomes as basis on which to identify relevant evidence (see Figure 6). However, the quantitative indicators are primarily for guidance and aspirational to a certain extent, as the monitoring data primarily draws on Creative Scotland's end of project report forms for the Youth Arts Fund projects, which were developed prior to the start of the evaluation.

Figure 6 Youth Arts Fund Evaluation Framework: top-level quantitative and qualitative indicators (CYP = children and young people)

| YAF outcomes | Indicators |
|--|--|
| 1/ CYP living in poverty or residing in areas of social and economic deprivation have equal opportunities to access artistic and creative activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of CYPs engaged No./% of CYPs from deprived areas engaged No./% of CYPs who had not taken part in similar activity previously Projects evidence interesting and innovative approaches to reach and engage new young people' |

| | |
|---|---|
| 2/ Children and young people are empowered through their involvement in youth-led activities and their voices are amplified | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of activities / projects that were either youth-led or co-created with CYPs CYPs report feeling more confident CYPs feel they are being heard |
| 3/ Children and young people develop wider transferable skills through taking part in youth arts provision | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of opportunities provided to develop wider transferable skills No./% of participants who demonstrated wider skills development CYPs report learning new skills through activities |
| 4/ The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people is improved through their participation in artistic and creative activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CYPs reporting improved creative self-efficacy CYPs describe feeling better able to express themselves CYPs report feeling more connected to their peers and communities |
| 5/ Artists and creative practitioners benefit from being able to access more paid employment opportunities in the sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of paid project employees No. of new paid employment opportunities made available through project work |
| 6/ Scotland's artistic and creative sectors are strengthened through increased cross-sector partnership working and sharing of knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of new partnerships developed No. of new cross-sector partnerships formed Projects share knowledge and learnings across the sector |
| 7/ People undertaking creative and artistic projects with children and young people are trained and upskilled | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of artists and creative practitioners trained No. of teachers and/or setting support staff trained No. of training opportunities made available |

Source: BOP Consulting, 2021

2. Outcomes for children and young people

This section sets out the evidence gained through the research with regard to the achievement of the Youth Art Fund's outcomes for children and young people. It includes evidence in the form of the quantitative and qualitative data from the end of project report forms and qualitative online tool as well as from the case studies.

| | |
|--|----|
| 2.1 Children and young people living in poverty or residing in areas of social and economic deprivation have equal opportunities to access artistic and creative activities (O1) | 13 |
| 2.2 Children and young people are empowered through their involvement in youth-led activities and their voices are amplified (O2) | 22 |
| 2.3 Children and young people develop wider transferable skills through taking part in youth arts provision (O3) | 29 |
| 2.4 The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people is improved through their participation in artistic and creative activities (O4) | 34 |
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Links to the case studies

The eight case studies developed for the report and referenced throughout this section can be accessed via the following links:

[Passion4Fusion](#)

[National Galleries of Scotland](#)

[Engage Scotland](#)

[Clifftop Projects](#)

[Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival](#)

[Media Education](#)

[Falkirk Community Trust](#)

[Scottish Youth Theatre](#)

2.1 Children and young people living in poverty or residing in areas of social and economic deprivation have equal opportunities to access artistic and creative activities (O1)

Key findings

- Projects were delivered to over 160k children and young people, with balance across age ranges and gender and geography
- Projects were largely successful in reaching intended priority groups, with most engaging young people living in poverty, although slightly fewer reported doing so than intended.
- Projects engaged children and young people who have not taken part in similar activity previously. Existing barriers for engagement were identified as:
 - Lack of opportunities in the areas in which the participants live
 - Lack of transport options to travel to available opportunities
 - Financial barriers to accessing activities and material
- Projects used a range of approaches to reach and maintain engagement with new young people, including:
 - Working with education establishments/ other partners in areas of deprivation
 - Working with other referral partners
 - Going into community spaces, where the children and young people feel comfortable
 - Taking activities out of school (even where partnered with schools)
 - Providing financial support for children and young people's supplementary needs (e.g., transport, sustenance)

- Asking children and young people what they are interested in/ want in their local area
- Offering options for different levels of engagement to suit different tastes or allow participation around commitments
- Offering online project elements
- Beginning by building trust and rapport with and among participants
- Providing support in the face of environmental barriers

Projects were delivered to over 160,000 children and young people, with a fairly balanced picture across age ranges and gender

Based on the received end of project reports from projects across all YAF programme strands which primarily focused on working with children and young people, the YAF programme engaged 167,738 children and young people over the delivery period in a variety of ways. When calculating the likely number across *all* funded projects by multiplying project averages by the number of projects that did not submit an end of project report and adding this to the previous total, this number increases to slightly over 170,000. However, this should be considered as indicative only (see Figure 7).

Figure 7 Number of children and young people engaged across the YAF strands directly working with participants

| | Total no. of CYP engaged (based on EOPs received) | Average no. of CYP engaged per project | Calculated total of all projects ⁵ |
|--|--|--|---|
| Access Fund (87 projects, 76 EOPs) | 8,741 (including 1,464 through one project) | 115 (97 without the 1,464 project) | 8,741 + 1,067 = 9,808 |
| Small Grants (18 projects, 16 EOPs) | 6,978 (including two projects at 1,072 and 1,251) | 436 | 6,978 + 872 = 7,850 |
| Targeted Fund (18 projects, 15 EOPs) | 6,313 (including one project at 2,341) | 421 (284 without the 2,341 project) | 6,313 + 852 = 7,165 |
| NTF New Routes (5 projects, 5 EOPs) | 22 involved in decision-making + 235 grants awarded = 257 ⁶ | | 257 |
| YMI Formula Fund (33 projects, 33 EOPs) | 145,449 (with great variations between Local Authorities from 111 to 40,000) | 4,643 | 145,449 |
| Total | 167,738 | | 170,529 |

Source: Creative Scotland (2022), BOP Consulting (2022)

Data from two of the programme strands that engaged that largest number of children and young people, the Access and Targeted Funds, suggests that the fund achieved a relatively balanced picture of participants across age groups and gender.⁷ The largest number of participants were aged between 10 and 12 - i.e. towards the end of their primary education or in the early stages of secondary education (see Figure 8 and

Figure 9).

Figure 8 Number of children and young people engaged in different age ranges across the YAF strands

| | 0-4 | 5-9 | 10-12 | 13-17 | 18-25 |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Access Fund (info from 75 project EOPs) | 730 | 2,901 | 2,389 | 1,616 | 1,055 |
| Targeted Fund (info from 13 project EOPs) | 1,008 | 811 | 2,800 | 866 | 164 |
| Total | 1,738 | 3,712 | 5,189 | 2,482 | 1,219 |

Source: Creative Scotland (2022), BOP Consulting (2022)

Figure 9 Number of children and young people engaged by gender across the YAF strands

| | Male | Female | Other | Unknown/ prefer not to say |
|---|--------------|--------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Access Fund (info from 75 project EOPs) | 3,398 | 3,320 | 58 | 2,122 |
| Targeted Fund (info from 13 project EOPs) | 2,764 | 2,088 | 39 | 613 |
| Total | 6,162 | 5,408 | 97 | 2,735 |

Source: Creative Scotland (2022), BOP Consulting (2022)

⁵ Calculated by multiplying the average (using the average without outlier projects in the case of the Access and Targeted Funds) by the number of missing End of Project reports and adding these to the total

⁶ This is a minimum number as some grants will have been handed out to small groups of young people as opposed to individual applicants

⁷ This information was not available for the NTF New Routes, Small Grants and YMI FF strands

Projects were available to children and young people across Scotland

Analysis of project location based on project application forms at interim report stage demonstrated that opportunities were available to children and young people across Scotland. Project allocations were made in all Local Authorities in Scotland (with one exception), with a large proportion of grants working across multiple Local Authority areas and nationally.

Nevertheless, there were clear hubs which played host to a collection of projects: the two areas which received the highest portions of funding across funding strands were Edinburgh (£842,062) and Glasgow (£663,950) – the areas of highest population density in the country. This was followed by projects that provided their location as ‘national’, i.e., taking place across Scotland (£475,253).

Projects were mostly successful in reaching their intended priority groups

The monitoring data available through the end of project reports does not allow us to calculate the number or proportion of individual children and young people reached who fit into the priority group of ‘children and young people living in poverty/ areas of social and economic deprivation’.⁸ However, projects across several strands were asked to identify summarily each priority group from which they managed to engaged children. This provides us with high-level information on in how far the programme managed to reach out to children and young people in each priority group.

It shows us that the pattern of which priority groups projects *intended* to reach at application stage remained very similar to the pattern of which priority groups *were* ultimately reached, suggesting that projects were mostly successful in reaching their intended priority groups. The three most commonly referenced priority groups both at application stage as well as reported has having engaged

with at end of project report stage (see Figure 10) were children and young people who:

- Are living in poverty/ residing in areas of social and economic deprivation
- Have a disability and/or additional support needs
- Are experiencing mental ill health.

Most Youth Art Fund projects engaged young people living in poverty, although slightly fewer reported doing so than intended

Of the priority groups, by far the largest number of projects both intended to and managed to engage children and young people living in poverty/ areas of social and economic deprivation. Application data suggested that of the 140 grants allocated to the five Youth Arts Fund strands (excluding Workshops & Training), 121 planned to reach out to children and young people living in poverty/ areas of social and economic deprivation.

The 107 received end of project reports from Youth Arts Fund programme strands that provided this data in turn show us that 89 projects managed to engage young people from this priority group; 83% of all the included projects. In addition, review of the qualitative information provided in the five Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes end of project reports suggest that at least a further four of these projects also engaged young people from this priority group, including some experiencing living in care. While this still adds up to fewer projects than those who *intended* to work with this priority group (121), it needs to be noted that this included information from the Youth Arts Fund Bursaries (12 projects), for which there are no end of project reports available yet. A further 19 Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund programmes delivered projects which targeted this priority group.

⁸ There are a number of reasons for why projects were not asked to provide numbers of individual CYP reached across the target groups: firstly, this data is very difficult to obtain, presenting ethical issues around having to ask young people to categorise themselves, or having to categorise them based on available information and i.e.,

subjective decisions; secondly, many of the categories overlap, i.e., in many cases young people would fall into more than one priority group.

Figure 10 No of project who worked with different priority groups (grey highlights: largest number of projects; CYP = children and young people)

| Priority groups | Access Fund (of 76 EOPs) | Small Grants ⁹ (of 16 EOPs) | Targeted Fund (of 15 EOPs) | YAF Total (% of total YAF EOPs) | YMI FF (of 33 EOPs) | Total (of 140 projects) |
|--|--------------------------|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| CYP living in poverty/ areas of social and economic deprivation | 58 | 16 | 15 | 89 (83%) | 19 | 108 (77% of projects) |
| CYP experiencing or at risk of experiencing harm and neglect | 20 | 13 | 6 | 39 (36%) | 5 | 44 (31% of projects) |
| CYP who are looked after/ care leavers | 24 | 13 | 5 | 42 (39%) | 9 | 51 (36% of projects) |
| CYP from Black or Minority Ethnic background | 24 | 15 | 8 | 47 (44%) | 2 | 49 (35% of projects) |
| CYP who have a disability/ additional support needs | 38 | 16 | 8 | 62 (58%) | 23 | 85 (61% of projects) |
| CYP at risk of offending/ previously offended | 19 | 9 | 1 | 29 (27%) | 3 | 32 (23% of projects) |
| CYP who are young carers/ parents | 20 | 14 | 4 | 38 (36%) | 5 | 43 (31% of projects) |
| CYP who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness/ been homeless | 10 | 10 | 1 | 21 (20%) | 1 | 22 (16% of projects) |

⁹ Small Grants end of project reports provided finer-grained information on the number of individual project strands which worked with the priority groups. However, to allow data to be brought together across the programme strands, this table provides information on the number of projects which worked with the priority groups, only.

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|----|---|-----------------|----|-----------------------------|
| CYP experiencing mental ill health | 37 | 14 | 7 | 58 (54%) | 7 | 65 (46% of projects) |
| In early years of life (0-5) | 10 | 14 | 5 | 29 (27%) | 16 | 45 (32% of projects) |

Source: Creative Scotland (2022), BOP Consulting (2022)

Analysis of the qualitative information provided by projects further supports the insight that many projects engaged with children and young people living in poverty/ areas of social and economic deprivation. As an indication, 32 out of 44 projects which used the online Qualtrics forms responded with information or evidence against Outcome 1.

Alongside engaging children and young people from areas of poverty, several projects' qualitative responses alongside the monitoring data also particularly referenced working with participants in other priority groups. This included projects which reported working with young people with care experience or living in care situations, young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, as well as projects working with children with additional support needs (such as autism) and with young people identifying as LGBTQI+. This was similarly reflected in most of the case studies. Importantly, projects highlighted the fact that these categories are not mutually exclusive but, in many cases, overlap.

Projects successfully engaged children and young people who had not taken part in similar activity previously

Noticeably, many of the projects responding to Outcome 1 mentioned working with children and young people *“who have not previously had access to similar opportunities”* (Targeted Fund project) or *“had not had a previous opportunity to get involved in creative programmes”* (Access Fund project). Further Access Fund projects for example reported that their project *“was 100% of young people’s first experience of contemporary dance”* and that *“many participants*

were first time visitors to [the venue] and would not have been able to attend without this option.” A Small Grants project in turn reported that “for a lot of the children and young people it was a first chance experience working directly with an artist/ creative practitioner”.

“ We have an existing relationship with this school and know that the majority of the pupils do not gain access to artistic or creative activities. A teacher mentioned: ‘none of my pupils do any extra-curricular arts activities, this is supported by evidence we have gathered within the school’. (Access Fund project)

Projects referred to different reasons for why the children and young people they worked with had not previously been able to access cultural or artistic opportunities, and which they were able to help overcome. Alongside obvious, and more temporary, COVID restrictions, identified systemic barriers included:

— Lack of opportunities in the areas in which the participants live

“Children and young people often tell us that they have nothing to do in the community and they get bored.” (Bursary Fund project)

“Every child was a resident of greater Govan, an area of multiple deprivation in the city. There was previously no creative activity offered on the holiday programme other than colouring. The [programme] provided creative activity every day of every holiday programme for more than a year.” (Access Fund project)

“When asked what she wanted to change about Cumnock, she said she wanted ‘more art places.’” (Access Fund project, citing a participant)

“It makes me look forward for after school on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Because on Mondays, and Thursdays, and Fridays, there’s nothing really to do at home.” (Access Fund project participant)

This was also referenced by some of the case studies – Clifftop Projects for example highlighted their awareness of the perceived lack of opportunities to engage in the arts in the areas they set their work in, while National Galleries

of Scotland focused on areas “underserved by the cultural infrastructure of cities”.

— Lack of transport options to travel to available opportunities

“We were made aware of a group of young people that were part of the LGBTQ+ group at Wick High School who were interested in participating but unable due to lack of transport. (Access Fund project)

“The Borders, and Hawick in-particular, has several areas of multiple deprivation, poor transport links, limited access to cultural opportunity, and high rates of rural and social isolation.” (Access Fund project)

— Financial barriers to accessing activities and material

“It is clear that the young people residing in Angus who received these funds had the momentum to take a project further because material costs were covered and it [allowed] them to make choices and enact on an idea. An opportunity to access that they would not have had otherwise.” (Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes project)

“Art materials can be very expensive and for many they are too costly to be worth buying especially as a new skill which will not immediately produce amazing results [...], this excludes many from trying new things [...]. This is important to young creatives because access to art and creating art should not be restricted to more wealthy people but should be available to all.” (Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes participant)

“Through our collaborative class exercises and individual recording sessions young people have access to equipment, facilities and expertise that they would have not been able to afford otherwise. [...] In the two class projects, [...] both [tutors] take two very different approaches to music making using professional analogue hardware and electronics that would otherwise be inaccessible due to expense.” (Access Fund project)

“This course has been a complete life changer. I couldn’t afford to study a MA, this course has given me by far the best education I’ve ever had.” (Access Fund project participant)

“It gave me the opportunity to access equipment that I would otherwise not be able to afford and gave me the chance to work with others in a live studio setting which is something I hadn’t done before.” (Access Fund project participant)

Projects used a range of approaches to reach and maintain engagement with new young people

The information provided by projects responding to Outcome 1 in the online Qualtrics form suggests that projects largely engaged with the priority group of ‘children and young people living in poverty’ through locating the projects within, or particularly targeting, certain geographic areas of deprivation; many referenced working in particular *“areas of economic deprivation”*.

Again, this was also reflected in several of the case studies: one of Engage Scotland’s projects was based in an area of high multiple deprivation, while another specifically targeted young people from a specific geographic area that has a high level of poverty; Falkirk Community Trust meanwhile recruited project participants by working together with a school based in an area of high multiple deprivation. Similarly, the National Galleries of Scotland identified a number of geographical priority areas underserved by cultural infrastructure and with high levels of deprivation, while Clifftop Projects located their arts youth clubs in two deprived Local Authorities.

In addition, projects highlighted a number of approaches used to reach out to and engage new young participants:

— Working within education establishments or other partners set in areas of deprivation

“By working with every class P1 - 7 in Broomhouse Primary School during the school day during this project, we were able to ensure that all pupils living in this area of economic and social deprivation were able to access artistic and creative activities, with no barriers to participation.” (Access Fund project)

“The stats demonstrate that six of our nine partner nurseries are either in areas of high multiple deprivation or areas of poor geographic access. It is

therefore very likely that they serve higher number of children facing socio-economic disadvantage or poverty, or rural isolation and/or rural deprivation.” (Access Fund project)

“120 children attended the Govan Youth Information Project (partner) holiday programmes each day of each school holiday. Every child was a resident of greater Govan, an area of multiple deprivation in the city.” (Access Fund project)

Some of the case studies highlight similar approaches: Falkirk Community Trust for example collaborated with two schools, including one located in an area of high multiple deprivation; while Media Education connected with youth organisations across Edinburgh to share the opportunity to participate in the project. Some projects highlighted the value of speaking with teachers who closely know their pupils and their circumstances in advising them.

Working with education partners: “By working with every class in the school during the school day, we were able to ensure that all pupils living in this area were able to access artistic and creative activities, with no barriers to participation.” (Access Fund project, ©The Big Project)



— **Working with referral partners including community organisations and Council departments**

“We have multiple referral partnerships with DWP Job Centres and social work teams to help us to recruit under-represented young people.” (Access Fund project)

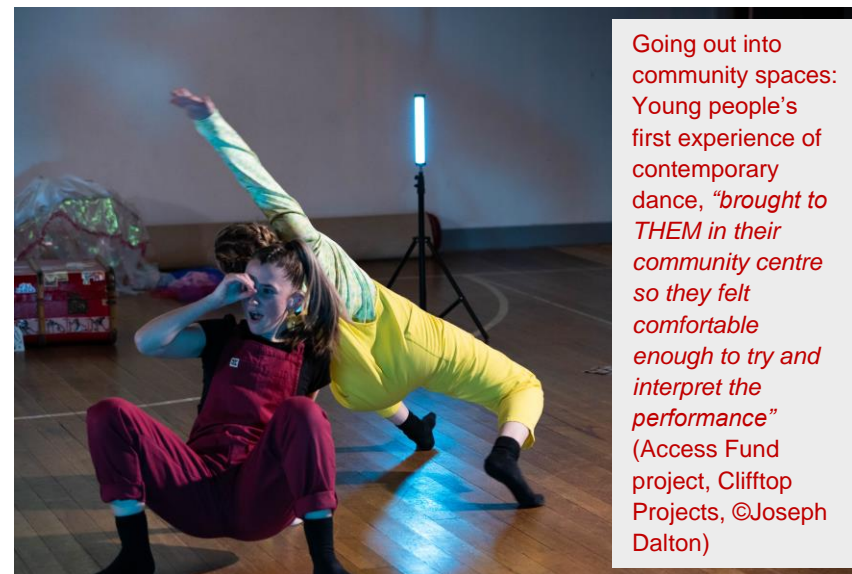
Another project for example reported working in association with Glasgow Association for Mental Health. Reflecting the value of this, one project highlighted how they were able to recruit young people that are already ‘plugged into the network’, *“connected and supported by educational institutions, social workers or charities”* – but that it would be harder to connect with the many young people living in care who may not have these networks.

Similarly, Falkirk Community Trust, one of the case studies, initially developed the project together with Falkirk Council’s Fairer Falkirk Team, who are delivering the Council’s strategy to mitigate the impact of poverty on local people. One of the projects funded through Engage Scotland which targeted young people with mental health issues worked with school-based referral units, while Media Education reported on the development of referral routes for those young people with additional support needs.

— **Going out into the communities, into spaces where the children and young people feel comfortable**

“The performance was brought to THEM in their community centre, so they felt comfortable enough to try and interpret the performance [...]” (Access Fund project)

Among the case studies, Clifftop Projects for example located their activity in existing youth clubs that had not previously offered arts activities, but which were known to the participants, and also located performances in spaces familiar to the participants, which was felt to have the benefit of making the experience less intimidating and more relaxing for the young people.



Going out into community spaces: Young people’s first experience of contemporary dance, *“brought to THEM in their community centre so they felt comfortable enough to try and interpret the performance”* (Access Fund project, Clifftop Projects, ©Joseph Dalton)

— **Taking activities out of school (even where partnered with schools)**

“In a school setting school behaviours prevailed (e.g., putting hand up and calling the facilitator ‘miss’). When in a community setting these barriers came down and participants relaxed into the role of artist, reviewer, researcher far more readily started to own the space more. Changing the atmosphere from a school environment to a workshop one is key to the success.” (Access Fund project)

Among the case studies, Falkirk Community Trust for example started their activity outside of a school setting, in part worried that this may initially hamper engagement and enthusiasm. Activities were later moved back into school once the activities and participants were firmly established (due in part to reasons of practicality and lack of other facilities).

— **Providing financial support for children and young people’s supplementary needs, in particularly paying for transport**

“The workshops are provided free and we offer accommodation, and meals. We operate on a pan Scotland basis and have funded travel to and from all

workshops from across Scotland including the Islands - this has been possible using additional funding from The Life Changes Trust.” (Access Fund project)

“All activity was free of charge, and taxis were provided to young people that needed support with travelling to and from sessions.” (Targeted Fund project)

“This is one example where we were successful in reaching young people from areas of multiple deprivation by taking away the barriers of cost and lack of transport. [...] Many participants were first time visitors and would not have been able to attend without this option.” (Access Fund project)

In the same vein, Falkirk Community Trust’s case study references the Trust budgeting for bus passes for the participants and providing participants with a meal so that they could attend directly after school. One of Engage Scotland’s projects in turn specifically targeted young people living in Orkney’s outer islands, many of whom live in poverty and for whom *“attending project sessions involved early morning ferry journeys, long bus trips and overnight stays away from home for the young people. The project supported their travel and accommodation costs.”*

— Asking children and young people what they are interested in/ want in their local area

“[We conducted] early peer exchange sessions [for] group members [to] discuss their hopes, dreams and ambitions for project activity. Invited to consider what they wanted from the arts centre and activity on a Friday night, the group responded with lots of ideas and suggestions.” (Access Fund project)

Many projects began their project with focus groups, workshops or surveys in order to understand first what kind of activity young people would be interested in.

Among the case studies, National Gallery of Scotland took this further, focusing the whole project around letting young people contribute to a vision of what their area could look like.



Giving the participants agency in what they would like to do: “The images taken throughout the project demonstrate the range of artistic activities undertaken by the participants living in areas of socio-economic deprivation.” (Access Fund Project, Hospitalfield Young Artist Club, ©Kristina Aburrow, Associate Artist)

— Offering options for different levels of engagement to suit different tastes or allow participation around commitments

“The project has offered a range of creative opportunities to young people and offered different levels of participation. Weekly after school drama, community-based youth theatre style provision and intensive summer holiday performance projects have allowed young people to take part as much or as little as they like, in line with how much time they want and are able to commit.” (Targeted Fund project)

A similar approach was referred to by several of the case studies, who referred to taking a ‘drop-in’ approach, letting young people attend when they could but not mandating continued participation. This ensured that participants could fit participation around other commitments.

— Offering online project elements

“Probably the biggest effect is that our online programme has continued to flourish even now that all restrictions have been lifted. This has vastly increased the amount of opportunities we are able to offer and has also made it available to a broader range of participants both geographically or for any other reason that might prevent them from coming face to face.”

(Targeted Fund project)

A few projects mentioned the opportunities for broadening access provided through continued opportunities for young people to engage online, pointing to benefits in reaching out to young people living in rural areas, as well as engaging young people with mental health issues who may feel anxious about travelling or being in a group.

— Beginning by building trust and rapport with and among the participants

“The file highlights an icebreaker for the group to get to know each other and to build trust and rapport. The activities took young people out of their comfort zones to develop listening skills and build their confidence and self-esteem.” (Access Fund project)

The importance of spending time to build trust and rapport was a key point mentioned by many of the case studies, contributing to a positive, enthusiastic environment which the participants would feel comfortable and confident in.

— Providing encouragement and support in the face of environmental barriers

One project highlighted the fact that many young people who fall into the priority group of ‘children and young people living in poverty’ are further hampered by additional environmental factors. In this particular case working with young people experiencing care, the project highlighted the need to help young people navigate the wealth of information and opportunities put their way, to support them writing applications and to be flexible when *“unexpected challenges in their life got in the way”*.

Among the case studies, Falkirk Community Trust likewise highlighted the vulnerability of some of the young participants, pointing to the additional support provided to ensure young people who might be *“tripped up by practical challenges”* would continue to attend. Focusing on a different form of potential barrier which required additional commitment, Passion4Fusion pointed to the high level of influence parents want to have over their children’s actions in some of the communities they targeted; leading to the organisation engaging parents in deciding on the activities that took place during the project and providing parents with regular newsletters.

2.1.1 Insights from the YMI Formula Fund focus group: Parental involvement supported by blended learning to encourage engagement

Conversations with a cohort of representatives delivering Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund programmes highlighted another important aspect that can support maintaining engagement among young people: forming closer connections with their families. Among Youth Arts fund projects, case study Passion4Fusion for example found that providing regular information on the project to parents helped get parents on board in supporting their children to attend. This was echoed by some of the Formula Fund focus group participants.

Participants in particular spoke of this as a consequence of Covid-induced lockdowns, which led to sessions moving online, with young people taking part from home. This meant that parents were able to watch the process of learning rather than simply attending a final performance. One participant reported how this helped parents to better understand what their children were learning, breaking down barriers between home and school in the process. This was reiterated by another participant who felt that *“families are supportive because they see the opportunities”*. Alongside increasing accessibility in remote areas, they saw this as a key benefit of online sessions, which the service is planning to continue in a blended model. The participant further expressed hope that even where activities are now returning to school, *“hopefully now that [parents] got a glimpse of what it’s about, there will be more engagement”*. In part to support this, the service is now more visible than previously on social media and

internal school news bulletins, creating interaction “*that the families can see*” and share with parents “*current content as to what the pupils are doing in YMI*”. Indeed, there was some sense among the focus group participants that parental expectations have increased in this area, following the experiences they had during lockdown.

However, participants were careful to highlight that while a blended learning approach is hugely beneficial in increasing access (including to families) and is likely to continue in many areas, not all services were able to roll it out as successfully as others. Online sessions are not accessible to all families, with some struggling with poverty having only limited or no access to online devices at home.

2.2 Children and young people are empowered through their involvement in youth-led activities and their voices are amplified (O2)

Key findings

- At a minimum, most projects engaged with participants to identify the themes or focus of the activity and spoke of CYP creating ‘in collaboration’ with artists, in contrast to more ‘directed’ school-based creative activity.
- Some projects described more ‘ambitious’ co-creation approaches, for example, with participants having a key role in project implementation and/ or taking on leadership positions.
- Evidence suggests that successful youth-led activity requires a certain level of confidence and interaction, which projects sought to encourage. Projects created a framework in which to some extent, opportunities and impact supported each other. The more participants gained confidence, the more likely they were to participate or perform, thereby further boosting their confidence. Key in raising confidence levels was:
 - Supporting children and young people in getting to know each other and building relationships with each other and the artists/ facilitators /practitioners.
 - Providing opportunity to participate in inherently valued creative activity, where participants’ work is not judged.
 - demonstrating to participants that they were being heard, taking seriously and their interests and suggestions were being taken on board

Most projects described engaging with participants to identify the themes or focus of the activity

Indicatively, all case studies reported elements of youth-led activity as part of their projects. While the level to which activities were led by the young participants varied between projects; at the most basic level, all case studies reported providing fora through which to hear children and young people's thoughts on the kind of activities they wanted to engage in. This took place both at the beginning of the programme period as well as along the way, with many projects describing adapting along the way to react to participants' needs and interests. Existence of this type of interaction among most projects was further confirmed by the review of projects' qualitative responses to the Qualtrics tool.

At a minimum, the evidence suggests that projects engaged in activities such as focus groups, group discussions or reflective workshops to gain insight and feedback from children and young people to understand what they wanted the YAF project to focus on. This included art forms as well as topical themes.

Among the case studies, Passion4Fusion ran early workshops to discuss with young people what kind of art activity they would like to engage in during the programme period.

Many projects described similar approaches, with one Access project describing it as a “*session zero*” discussion that involved conversations about how young people had so far been taught in music classes and developing ideas for new methods.

“ 95% of children at St Alberts Primary are non-white with 85% having English as an additional language. On discussion with the pupils, it became apparent that many of them had experienced racism. P6/P7 wished to explore this, and so we aided them in creating [a] very powerful short dance film which explores being judged for what you are not who you are. (Access project)

“ [We are] always working to ensure that children and young people feel heard, valued and respected. We invited children and young people to tell us about their interests and what they wanted to do, and we worked with them to realise those ideas as closely as possible. (Youth Arts Fund Bursary project)

“ Youth voice is integral to [our] work and is built into all areas of our provision. We actively listen to young people and work hard to ensure their needs and interests are being met. Regular 'Have Your Say' sessions were held during the project, as well as specific evaluations after [the] projects. (Targeted Fund project)

Further projects reported running planning sessions in which participants discussed and selected the content and plans for a concert (Access Fund project), or consulting with participants to gather feedback and identify goals to ensure they are influencing the long-term direction and focus of the activity (Access Fund project).

There is some evidence that this seems to have happened both at group level as well as individual level. One project mentioned a mentor programme for the young participants which was “*fully based around the needs and requests of the young people involved...I had long discussions with them around what it is they were looking for, [...] listening to feedback and finding out exactly what would be the best direction for them.*” (Access Fund project)

Projects spoke of children and young people creating ‘in collaboration’ with artists, in contrast to the more ‘directed’ creative activity at schools

Connected to the notion of ‘letting young people have a say’ in the focus and themes of the activity was the notion of children and young people creating pieces ‘in collaboration’ with artists. This included artists listening to and being guided by the participants, and in turn being there to support the participants in creating their own ideas – rather than simply instructing children and young

people in undertaking a directed piece. This helped to create a sense of 'ownership' of the experience and its outcome.

This approach was indicated across all case studies. Falkirk Community Trust for example highlighted how young people were guided by musicians to create their own pieces of music rather than learning a set tune, with tutors there to facilitate participants' ideas and help them to "[jointly] navigate their way [out of dead ends]". Scottish Youth Theatre in turn reported how the participants directed the creation and curation of a series of art works "with full agency in the artistic concept, process and outcome".

Examples of similar approaches were mentioned across all artforms and different age groups.

“ The creative practitioners led the sessions with varying levels of facilitation and structure, **allowing the children to take more control** over their creative explorations/play as the weeks progressed (Access Fund project)

“ The Young Creatives cohort and musicians and programmers are **working collaboratively** to devise, develop and deliver a full side-by-side orchestral concert in June 2022 (Access Fund project)

“ The children were able to contribute at all stages of the project and were encouraged to input ideas and **steer the direction** it took. The project centred on a story created by the children using their own ideas. The identification of characters was left to the children and the course of the story **followed their lead**. This process was collaborative but included opportunities for individual expression (Access Fund project)

This was described by some as going hand-in-hand with creating a space where children and young people's work is not judged, but where new ideas,

open-mindedness and innovation are encouraged. One project (Access Fund project) described this approach in contrast to the arts activities that young people experience at school, being able to engage in "playful exploration" of their work, "in a positive atmosphere which allows them to choose their activities, collaborate and perform together". The project quoted one participant as saying: "[...] at school I have a specific thing to do, it feels more open to the things you can do here... You always listen to me and talk to me about things I'm interested in."

As a number of projects further pointed out, such an approach at times **led to projects taking on a new shape**, where arts activities were adapted in collaboration between the artists, children and young people in order to respond to the participants' interests. One project funded under Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival's Youth Arts Fund programme moved from a focus on dance to a focus on spoken word around the theme of discrimination, reflecting on participants' experiences. In another example Media Education reported how their Film Club operated with a co-production method, which allowed the Club to develop its offer as new people arrived, bringing new or different interests.

Some projects described more 'ambitious' co-creation approaches with participants involved in implementation

Along such elements of incorporating youth voice, a few projects described more 'ambitious' co-creation approaches, which went beyond engaging children and young people in choosing subjects, to participants having a key role in **project implementation** and/ or **taking on leadership positions**. Examples included:

- One of Engage Scotland's funded projects supported the young participants in running the commissioning process to identify the artists that they subsequently wanted to work together with. This included setting up a call out and inviting shortlisted artists to a trial. In the same project, the original participants have now become a Youth Cohort recruiting for and supporting the next round of participants.
- Case study Clifftop Projects in turn created a Youth Advisory Board which designed an initial application process for the project, ran 'how to apply'

sessions and sat on the decision-making panel in the process of allocating Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes grants.

- Similarly, another Access project encouraged the original group of participants – who *“devised and trialled this method and [...] created a concept brand”* to become mentors for young participant groups.
- One project developed group guidelines in collaboration with the young people, which *“allowed the group to set their own ‘rules’, sharing their own needs and together taking ownership of the space”* (Access Fund project)
- Several projects reported including opportunities for young people to lead sessions both within the project, as well as supporting them in leading opportunities to be heard in the wider community. Such approaches were visible in projects targeted at all ages. One project spoke of providing children with opportunities to lead and conduct parts of the workshop sessions, describing one game in which a participant would sit in the middle of a circle, *“using body movements to control the rhythm of the group”* (Access Fund project, aimed at 3–5-year-olds)

“ YP were at the heart of the project and drove it forward together. This happened through a combination of opportunities to take the lead the direction of the project, and more spontaneous responsive open ‘what shall we do today?’ style interactions. Throughout the year young people took part in ‘takeover’ sessions and skill shares where they led their peers through creative workshops. Furthermore, young people were supported to take up external opportunities to have their voices heard: *“they get us involved in planning and leading the stuff we’ve suggested”*. (Access Fund project)

Youth-led activity requires a certain level of confidence and interaction at the outset, which projects sought to encourage

One of the quotes above highlights how creative practitioners adapted their levels of facilitation and session structure, with children and young people taking

more control ‘as the weeks progressed’ – suggesting that the more young children and people were used to their surroundings, knew their peers, understood the activity, the more decisions could be transferred to them. The project that let young people develop their own group guidelines, in turn, highlighted that this in part was done *“to address some anxieties that participants had around this”*, supported by participants being able to set their own ‘rules’. Again, this suggests some necessary groundwork in building participants’ confidence and sense of feeling comfortable within the group, before being able to embark on more ambitious youth-led approaches.

Indeed, several projects mentioned actively creating an **environment within the projects designed to raise children and young people’s confidence**. As one project reported, *“we placed a high emphasis on creating the right environment and space for the children to express themselves and feel empowered”* (Access project with primary school children). This included incorporating specific approaches or activities designed to raise confidence, for example using art forms or approaches that focus on process rather than outcome and are thus not reliant on children and young people’s talent, but instead *“promote chance, spontaneity and excitement”*. This reduced the pressure to create the ‘right’ drawing and **avoided “self-judging and ‘talent’ appraisal involved in artist-led or school curriculum approaches.”** (Access Fund project, also Small Grants Scheme project).

A range of projects highlighted the **importance of supporting children and young people in getting to know each other** and building relationships with each other, as a basis for working collaboratively with each other, the artists and group leads.

- “ Using music as a ‘hook,’ the [...] courses encouraged participants to build their self-confidence and self-esteem, get the young people working well together and equip them with the confidence [...] (Access Fund project)
- “ This was an incredible opportunity for the steering group to work together for the first time and get to know each other. They were

able to shape the steering group into what they want it to be, to share their thoughts and have their voices heard. Creating this manifesto helped to develop a relaxed but confident steering group who were then able to meet regularly and confidently share their views while respecting each other and listening to other members. (Access Fund project)

Providing participants with a **sense of being heard, and their opinions being taken seriously** – for example in seeing how projects adapted to cater for their interests - was also seen as contributing to children and young people's confidence levels. One project adapted their drama club approach to include more improvisation in response to the participants' interests. A submitted audio file featured participants discussing how much they had enjoyed the approach compared to previous experiences: they were conscious of this change in the project focus, and highlighted how this was a *"clear indicator of youth voice being listened to and ideas actioned"*:

“ I liked a lot more the improv stuff that we've done in the past year, because I remember in the drama club before we did loads of acting but not nearly as much improv and I love improv. (Targeted Fund project participant)

A smaller number of projects went further, reporting examples where they provided young people with an **opportunity to have their voices heard within their wider communities**:

- One Access project supported their participants in writing their own words about climate change which were incorporated into a performance piece: *"[they] were keen to perform this, in their own time, at a local community event. Their voices were amplified and heard in the local community as well as online"*.
- One YAF Bursary project reported creating an opportunity for participants of a film-making group to *"voice their experiences and work to influence change for young people across Scotland through a 'Changemakers Group',*

enhancing collaboration and listening while amplifying their voices beyond their community"

- National Galleries of Scotland placed a high importance on young people identifying with the core aim of the project *"without feeling their views were overlooked"* and creating a platform through which they could see how their ideas could support their environment. The idea was for the young people to use creative and artistic processes to redefine the identity of the town and shape opportunities for the town's young people to engage in more creative activities. This included creating their own 'youth brand' to complement the more conventional regeneration work taking place in the town, as well as staging a 'town take over' event to share their work with others. The original participants went on to become group leads and mentors for younger members of the local youth centre in a process which has *"promoted communal ownership over the [...] project. This is also what encourages the young people to have the confidence to feel they can share these skills with the whole town. We are encouraging them to be vocal leaders for the young people in the town, offering them a platform to invent and project how an environment could be transformed by young people's creativity"*. This was directly reflected in one participant's feedback, who said she wanted people to see her artwork:

“ Yeah, because then I can show them how talented people are. And they can see our ideas. Our ideas for a happy town. (National Galleries of Scotland project participant)

Projects created a framework in which opportunities and impact supported each other in increasing children and young people's confidence-levels *throughout* the project

Many projects reported seeing their participants' **confidence-levels increase throughout the course of the project**, and connected this to projects which provide:

- space for non-judged and inherently valued creative activity;

- opportunities for children and young people to voice their opinions and see them being heard;
- activities that support like-minded children and young people to get to know each other, form relationships and friendships; and
- activities that ‘push’ children and young people out of their comfort zone within a nurturing environment, for example to perform in front of an audience.

One Small Grants Scheme project called this *“a journey of firstly finding courage of attending and then slowly growing in confidence to take part, [then] taking this confidence back into all other areas of their lives”*. One participating artist here highlighted the value of the non-prescriptive and long-term nature of the project, making it easier to respond to and build relationships with the participants (Targeted Fund project).

Projects in turn identified increased confidence levels in how children and young people became **increasingly willing to participate in activity**; speak and voice their thoughts among leaders and peers; participate in public events or perform among peers or wider audiences; as well as how they showed increased confidence in their creative activity. This suggests that to a certain extent, **opportunities and impact support each other**: e.g., the more participants gained confidence, the more likely they were to vocally participate or perform, further boosting their confidence.

Such examples of increased confidence in participating and engaging among peers and in public were similarly present among the project reports received. One Targeted project reported that *“78% of participants reported an increase in confidence following the project”*, while another spoke of a *“progression of [participants] confidence in performing”*. An Access Fund project meanwhile noted how children’s confidence grew as their musical ability grew, becoming increasingly keen to perform in a live setting.

“ [We] encourage them to voice their thoughts and speak in front of peers. The value the artists placed on the children’s individual creativity saw their confidence and self-esteem increase. The

children began to take the lead more as the sessions went on and they gained more confidence. (Access Fund project)

- “ The development of confidence, both creatively and socially, has been vast and is represented through the success of these films and their participation in a public-facing screening. (Access Fund project)
- “ The children were able to improvise and perform in front of their peers, further empowering them and building their confidence. [...] Staff often commented on how pleasantly surprised they were to see certain children volunteering to lead certain parts of the session, some who previously they thought would not have done so. (Access Fund project)
- “ Through shadowing [the artists], the young people have been able to pick up skills, gain more confidence, be confident enough to take the lead, and lead on sessions. (Access Fund project)



Working with intuitive techniques that avoid self-judging and equalises talent to support confidence levels (Access Fund project, Printing in Progress, ©National Galleries of Scotland and Town Take-over)



“Children were given opportunities to lead and conduct part of the sessions. The children were able to improvise and perform, empowering them and building their confidence. Staff commented on certain children volunteering to lead, some who previously they thought would not have done so” (Access Fund project, Happyness Drum Circles LTD, Let’s Drum, ©Yann McAuley)

MANIFESTO 27

1. To create an inclusive and safe space without pressure for everyone and anyone, somewhere everyone can come together and not be judged. Art for the sake of art.
2. We want to create a space in which social issues like racism, gay rights and climate change can be openly discussed to educate ourselves and others through creativity.
3. Art can be used to familiarise people towards issues and to generate social change.
4. There should be more opportunity in school for all ages when it comes to theatre and art.
5. We believe art should be valued in itself as well as a viable career option and a means to change.
6. Art allows us to extend the expression of what is and isn't usual – and so can change people's perceptions.
7. We need somewhere to be able to showcase the art we make, somewhere people can be proud of what they've done and find encouragement through feedback and support from others.
8. We love art because it is a source of enjoyment!

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Caithness Young Creatives Steering Group

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“The manifesto was created during their first session. They were able to shape the steering group into what they want it to be, to share their thoughts and have their voices heard. It cemented them as a group and set the tone for how the [project] would develop” (Access Fund project, Lyth Arts Centre, Caithness Youth Creatives)

2.3 Children and young people develop wider transferable skills through taking part in youth arts provision (O3)

Key findings

- Projects supported participants in gaining transferable skills, with many highlighting interpersonal and communication skills, alongside project management and technical skills
- Children and young people improved their creative skills, including being encouraged to explore and more widely apply their creativity
- Some projects for young children reported supporting motor skill development
- There was some evidence of projects signposting or leading participants to onward education or employment

Projects did not provide quantitative data on the number of opportunities provided to develop transferable skills (i.e., skills and abilities which can be applied to a wide range of situations and in a variety of jobs and industries), or the number of participants who demonstrated skills development. However, all case studies and the majority of end of projects reports received reported that children and young people not only developed their skills in the creative activities undertaken, but that they learned a range of transferable skills through their participation. Such transferable skills are commonly listed as including interpersonal skills such as listening and communication; organisational skills such as time management; and technical skills such as computer skills.

Projects supported participants in gaining transferable skills, with many highlighting interpersonal and communication skills, alongside project management and technical skills

The skills most commonly mentioned in project reports were interpersonal skills such as team working, listening and relationship building, as well as (and often connected with) communication skills, leading to improved social skills.

— Interpersonal and social skills

Many projects reported how children and young people were encouraged to engage in teamwork, learn to collaborate/ work together, share and listen to others. Empathy, respect and learning to relate to others were cited as key aspects of this type of development.

“ These sessions led to the young people increasing their ability to talk openly and respectfully to each other and I saw these skills grow as the sessions progressed. [...] The main social skill gained through these workshops I would say would be the ability to listen. which isn't something a lot of the participants were great at from the beginning of the workshops. (Access Fund project)

Several case studies likewise noted how activities were designed to support such impacts, with Falkirk Community Trust for example noting how young people learned to organise themselves into interest groups. One of Passion4Fusion's activities focused on getting young people to debate a sensitive topic and encouraged them to put themselves in the others' position, listen and “*give other people a chance*”. Meanwhile, one of the projects supported by Engage Scotland included workshops in which young people took it in turns to facilitate and articulate one another's reflections of the activity, with participants learning how to collaborate, listen and communicate. Similarly, Media Education noted how participants in their Film Club improved their “*ability to listen and react, their communication skills and their confidence*”.

Other projects reported similar impacts:

“[The four participants] share how participating in drama has made them more empathetic and better at relating to people and resolving conflict in relationship. [...] They also list making friends, being themselves, and not being judged.” (Targeted Fund project)

“All participated in this fully, openly, and confidently. The warm-up exercise demonstrated strong collaboration skills within the group. The artist [noted] that this contributes to the wider transferable skill of 'young people building good relationships and collaborating well'”. (Access Fund project)

“A lot of what was mentioned touches on skills that have developed around film and media specifically, but also mentioned were things like working together and sharing ideas - transferable social skills reflecting learning about collaboration and teamwork.” (Access Fund project)

“ I have learned working with others to develop ideas. (Access Fund project participant)

“The young people who were making music in the context of an employability course were encouraged to develop related skills such as communication and groupwork skills including compromise” (Access Fund project)

“Young people discussing the key things they learned from taking part in the project mention things like [...] democratically deciding what to go ahead with. They also discuss how they found a way to work together despite differences in opinion, indicating that they have learned how to work well with each other, listen, debate and make informed decisions”. (Access Fund project)

Such impact was noted across different age groups. One Access Fund project working with younger children noted:

“The children were given the opportunity to develop many transferable skills during our sessions. It was clearest to see the impact we had on the confidence and social skills of the children. We noticed children becoming more outgoing and sociable in their groups as playing music together brought them closer together. It was clear they also became more socially aware of each other: sharing instruments, taking turns at playing and giving praise for each other's

performances. The children's' improved social skills were commented on by staff on numerous occasions.” (Access Fund project)

— Spoken and written communication skills

Related to the above, some projects highlighted how children and young people had improved their oral communication skills, both in terms of talking with each other, as well as in terms of presenting their ideas or work, often in connection with increased confidence. As outlined above, many of the projects included activities which required children and young people to talk about their interests, reflect on sessions as well as to take part in showcases and performances, which helped them improve their oral communication skills. Passion4Fusion for example ran an end of term performance for families at which young people had to take to the stage; as well as a debating club at which young people had to formulate and argue their opinion.

Others reported how participants learned to debate; *“creatively express thoughts and feelings, which can help improve communication”* (Youth Arts Fund Bursary Programme project); and *“learned about different ways to communicate, using gestures and body language in addition to their voice”* (Access Fund project).

“ By allowing young people to take part in the initial process of deciding the activities they would like to see, it allowed them to develop upon their communication and be comfortable with expressing their ideas and encouraged participation. (Youth Arts Fund Bursary Programme project)

In a few cases, projects also reported supporting young people's written communication skills. All three of Engage Scotland's funded projects for example included creating regular blog posts about the projects, which were led by chosen youth trainees. In one case, the youth trainee *“created her own concept design; this equipped her with transferable skills in communication”.*

— Organisational skills/ project management

Some projects also spoke of providing participants with organisational or management experience and skills, for example in connection with the youth-led elements of the activities. Among the case studies, one of Engage Scotland's projects for example supported young people in running an artist recruitment campaign, from the initial call-out to the selection process. Following this, the young people devised the full workshop programme together with the artist.

Other projects highlighted similar impacts, referring to related skills such as problem-solving and decision-making:

“By giving them leadership responsibilities and the opportunity to learn from staff and guest facilitators, the project is helping participants to build a portfolio of transferable skills: teamworking, project management, problem-solving, [...]” (Access Fund project)

“Young people developed their decision-making skills by taking the lead in creative sessions and voicing what direction they wanted to take the film, choosing locations and voicing their opinions on casting and other artistic decisions.” (Youth Arts Fund Bursary Programme project)

— Technical skills

In addition, many projects spoke of equipping young people with a range of technical skills as part of their project activity. This ranged from computer-based management and communication tools to web design tools and social media management, to more specific technical tools supporting creative activity. One Access Fund project for example used a technology-based approach to making sound, by connecting cables to fruit that makes unique sounds. Another described young people learning to use sound recording technology. This was echoed by one of the case studies, Falkirk Community Trust, who undertook several visits to a music studio with their participants. Meanwhile, other projects spoke of participants using technology used in film making and script writing (Youth Arts Fund Bursary Programme project) and passing on knowledge in framing shots, audio recording and filming to pupils (Access Fund project).

- “ Getting access to equipment that I wouldn't otherwise have access to, working with different formats that I would have real difficulty accessing anywhere else. It's been wonderful. It's basically like a film school set up almost. [...] I've been given a learning experience and I'm walking away with more technical knowledge than I had beforehand. (Access Fund project participant)
- “ The participants improved their musical understanding, awareness and technical skills development (learning how to use/control professional DJ equipment and producing their own track using sounds recorded around the building). They also learned the fundamentals of mixing including the skill of beat matching and different techniques of controlling the mixer, including blend mixing and cut mixes. (Access Fund project)



Young people attending a Mic-Camera-Action workshop led by filmmaker Regina Mosch (Access Fund project, Lyth Arts Centre, Caithness Young Creatives, ©Lyth Arts Centre)

Children and Young people improved their creative skills, including being encouraged to explore and more widely apply their creativity

Most projects highlighted how they supported children and young people in gaining new or improving existing creative skills, across a wide range of art forms as well as learning more about the art forms themselves. A key element mentioned repeatedly here was the opportunity to connect with professional artists and cultural institutions.

“ All young people developed a wide range of creative skills. The workshops included drawing exercises, understanding different materials, practical making skills, such as using drills, screws and saws and using design software. Young people also learned about different artists and designers through the workshops, including the Bauhaus School. The designer Enzo Mari was a big influence on the designs the young people produced. (Access Fund project)

In some cases, this impact focused predominantly on enabling young people to engage in and thereby **improve their creative craft**: several Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes projects for example spoke of providing funds to young people to buy art material they were previously unable to afford.

“ The support from Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes gave Erica the time and space to think about the form and structure of her work and build a kiln that will [...] hopefully be sustainable: *“I bought materials that I could never have dreamed of being able to afford and I’m excited to hopefully collaborate with Hospitalfield and others and connect with roots of craft within the arts centre.”* (Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes project participant)

Some projects furthermore pointed to **encouraging curiosity, imagination and creativity** by letting children and young people explore and encouraging them to apply such creativity to a variety of areas (see also Section 2.4 on creative self-efficacy). Related key words included innovation, imagination – here, both the notion of creating within a non-judgemental forum (i.e., not graded) as well as working in collaboration came into play.

“ Due to the collaborative nature of the workshops people were encouraged to develop new relationships and new ways of working to broaden their skills base which could then be used outwith the course. *“It was just good to talk to people about their processes to help me think about different ways to approach stuff and experimenting with things I usually wouldn’t think to do.”* (Access Fund project participant)

“ The questions and ideas that followed the visit showed that the children’s minds had been opened to a whole new world of imagination. (Small Grants Scheme project, teacher feedback)

Again, reports suggest that this happened in projects working across all age ranges. One Access project working with young children noted how children learned to explore their own creativity, for example by engaging in imaginative play that was led by the children.

Some projects for young children reported supporting motor skill development

A few projects working with very young children also noted how engagement in creative activity supported participants motor skills. One Access Fund project for example taught young children a Japanese hand clapping song: *“children were able to learn these tricky hand actions with ease and enjoyment; this improved their concentration, rhythm and motor skills”*. Another Access Fund project meanwhile noted how sensory and creative play sessions helped those under five to develop fine and gross motor skills as well as increasing social interaction and exploration.

There was some evidence of projects signposting leading participants to onward education or employment

Several projects listed transferrable skills they thought their participants had gained, reflecting (in the words of one Access Fund project) how these *“equipped them with the confidence for interviews, presentations and day-to-day scenarios in the workplace”*. This suggests that these projects felt that some of the activities they undertook resulted in impacts which may support young people in their further education or career progression.

Among the case studies, for example, Falkirk Community Trust several times arranged for participants to visit a music studio located within a higher education facility, thus allowing participants to *“pick up a lot of information about further and higher education, that got some of them excited”*. Similarly, Media Education developed a relationship with Edinburgh College to explore opportunities for their participants who may not engage with further education. In this way, Media Education may act as a signpost towards named contacts who can support them in their journey. A Small Grants Scheme project reported how they were able to bring actors and creative professionals into a school in an area of high deprivation. This provided young people with an opportunity to meet and talk to them and in so doing, they were able to *“raise aspirations and start a conversation about careers in the creative industries”*.

Further reflecting this, one Access Fund project reported how participation helped a young person to identify work in the sector as a viable career path. One participant completed a week-long work experience with their organisation, his first experience of working in an office with others. *“His placement was a great success, and the participant is now seeing employment in the film and media sector as something that they can realistically work towards.”*

Taking this further, a small number of projects reported cases of individuals who were able to take the next step in their education or career as a result of their involvement in the project – or were encouraged to do so:

- One Access Fund project focusing on visual arts mentioned one participant who was able to build up their drawing portfolio, which supported a successful art college application. Another who encouraged to attend a

moving image course following the workshops and has now been accepted into Stirling University to study Film and Media.

- One of case study Engage Scotland’s projects included a youth trainee who had previously graduated in Graphic Design but had had difficulties finding employment in the wake of the pandemic and *“was exhausted, couldn’t face doing anything, couldn’t face being creative”*. The young person felt that her traineeship *“brought back her creativity”* and helped her gain her first graduate job in the Creative Industries Sector.
- Another Access Fund project worked with young people who had left school and focused on drawing and wood construction. It saw all eight participants achieve Health and Safety SCQFs and go on to gain employment, with three training as joiners, suggesting a role in the project in achieving this result.

2.4 The mental health and wellbeing of children and young people is improved through their participation in artistic and creative activities (O4)

Key findings

- Projects identified a number of characteristics as key to positively impacting wellbeing, with some actively including elements designed to support mental health. These characteristics included:
 - included creating ‘safe’, non-judgemental environments. Children and young people experience relaxation and happiness through being in an unpressured, safe, environments, away from their everyday life
 - supporting positive social interaction. Projects helped to address issues of loneliness and social anxiety by providing a safe forum to socialise, interact and make friends
 - providing new ways to communicate thoughts/ feelings. Some projects suggested that creative approaches can help children and young people express and process their emotions and what is affecting them, by expressing feelings through writing, acting out emotions, etc.
 - raising children and young people’s motivation to be creative. Some participants reported being motivated and inspired in their creative activity in a sign of improved belief in their abilities (self-efficacy). Indicators included motivation to continue their art form post project and wanting others to see what they had created

Some projects reported actively including elements designed to support mental health and wellbeing

As already identified as impacting other development areas above, the characteristics key to impacting on wellbeing appear to include:

- creating non-judgemental, ‘informal’, safe environments supporting creative exploration and providing children and young people with a space away from the challenges of their usual life
- supporting positive, supportive interaction among children and young people
- projects providing children and young people with new ways to communicate their thoughts and feelings
- Improving children and young people’s motivation to be creative.

Inevitably, many highlighted the strain put on children and young people following the period of “*uncertainty and isolation*” during the height of the Covid pandemic, increasing the need to provide support in this area. Particular value was placed on the need for stability and social interaction. This required time and resource on behalf of the projects.

“ We have noticed that the mental health and general emotional wellbeing of many of our face-to-face participants is noticeably worse than before the pandemic. It’s very hard to quantify this in any way but a lot more time and energy is now taken up with helping people who are struggling to manage in sessions than in previous times. The feedback from participants is that our activities help with this. (Targeted Fund project)

Several projects reported **actively including elements designed to support participant’s mental health and wellbeing**, such as periods for reflection, activities designed to relax and unwind. One Access Fund project reported including yoga sessions which provided “*opportunities for participants to destress and connect with themselves and each other*”. Case study Passion4Fusion brought in an expert to run wellbeing workshops after

witnessing the impact of the Covid pandemic and resulting isolation on their participants' health and wellbeing.

Project feedback suggests that together, these characteristics resulted in a range of impacts which contributed to participants' improved mental health and wellbeing, including:

- joy and relaxation;
- confidence in their own ability (self-efficacy);
- improved social interaction; and
- children and young people becoming better able to voice their feelings.

Increased confidence (as discussed in Section 2.2) was seen by projects as key to contributing to participants' mental wellbeing.

Children and young people experience relaxation and happiness through being in an unpressured, safe, environments

At the most immediate level, several projects reported how their project provided children and young people with a relaxing, joyful environment in which they could be themselves and follow their interests without being judged or graded, with opportunities to “*express themselves in safe and nurturing ways*” (Small Grants Scheme project). In this context, several projects pointed to the challenging home lives of some of their participants, with **projects providing a welcome break**. As an indication of impact, children and young people were reported as seeming visibly happy, ‘having fun’, showing “*high levels of excitement and happiness*” (Small Grants Scheme project); as well as being ‘focused’ on the activity without signs of self-consciousness or embarrassment.

“ [They] make reference to drama being '**relaxing**', '**a break**' and '**a breath of fresh air**'. Some of the young people involved in this conversation have complicated home lives, and it is clear that participation in the project has given them some **space to**

be themselves and relax, while doing something that they enjoy. (Targeted Fund project)

“ The mental health improvement of the participants is harder to prove but the feedback is consistent in three areas - making friends at the workshop sessions, **having fun enjoying themselves** and contrasting their art experience with that in school. [The participants] emphasised that many of the young people have made friends in the group and feel 'safe' there with each other doing something that makes them feel good. [...] [It] was a great moment to see them **totally involved in their 'playful' exploration** of the world they had created Their willingness to get involved in all the activities and deciding on new things to do and avenues to go down, seems to represent the positive atmosphere which allows them to choose their activities, collaborate and perform together: “*I can do whatever I want here and at school I have a specific thing to do. It feels more open to the things you can do here. It just feels like a good place to be in.*” (Access Fund project/ participant)

A further Targeted Fund project provided a recording of young people discussing the project. Fun, relaxation and a break from their usual lives were key features:

“ You get to **have fun and relax** a bit. Do what you want! / It gives me a **break from my house**. I'm always so busy doing chores! It gives me a break, relaxation time. / It puts a smile on your face after a long day. It's like a **breath of fresh air**. (Targeted Fund project participants)

Again, such impacts appear to have been visible across age groups. Two Access Fund projects working with younger children reported how “*the class seemed visibly happy and contented throughout the session - spontaneously*

squealing and having fun” and “the feedback was so positive and excitable I really feel the workshops inspired the children to be positive and joyful with music and they were in a happy place whilst we were working”.

“ The video shows an older age class participating with brilliant focus on this gentle and mindful song **with no embarrassment of sentiment but only focus and joy**. This is a clear example of the benefit to their mental health and wellbeing. (Access Fund project for age group 0 - 10)

“ We worked hard together over the course of the project, but the children were having fun too. The **joy in some faces** was incredibly heart-warming at times. (Access Fund project, primary school based)

Some projects highlighted attendance as a further indicator of this sense of enjoyment and happiness. They remarked on how young people who were struggling in school regularly attended the project; or on how attendance was maintained throughout the course of the project even if young people struggled to attend all sessions due to other commitments. In one example, a project for example highlighted that all participants attended daily sessions with none dropping out; this was reported to be highly unusual by their youth organisation partners (Access).

Projects helped to address issues of loneliness and social anxiety by providing a safe forum to socialise and make friends

Projects also reported on the joy and wellbeing that they witnessed children and young people derive from the **opportunity to socialise and connect with likeminded peers and make friends** during the projects. In some cases, this was specifically connected with the isolation children and young people had experienced during the pandemic. Some projects for example reported young people experiencing social anxiety as a consequence of isolation and having to be gently and gradually reintroduced to being among people. Reflecting this,

many case studies included **opportunities that allowed young people to come together**, discuss and exchange with peers, artists, leaders, or purposefully aimed for activities to support peer interaction and socialising.

“ One-to-one sessions were created to accommodate these [anxious] young people. However, more gradual peer interactions were introduced to help build their confidence long-term. (Access Fund project)

One of Engage Scotland’s projects for example focused on jointly preparing and eating food as a basis for social interaction, while Media Education expressly sought to create *“a place [young people] can come to at the end of the week to decompress and build friendships”*. Another Access Fund project strongly incorporated team working, which led to lasting friendships being formed in a group which was previously reported as including ‘divisions’.

Many projects described how this was a challenge for young people at first, but that they became better at expressing themselves, voicing their opinions and thoughts in front of others as the projects progressed. In one specific example (Access Fund project), a young participant who struggled with anxiety exacerbated by lockdown worked with project staff to ensure he felt safe and supported within the project environment. His suggestion of initially working in small groups *“as a transition to help build up confidence before working with a bigger group”* was taken on board and *“others also fed back that this helped them with this transition after working so long online”*. Equally exemplifying this **need to ‘tread carefully’**, one project noted how an original smaller group of participants was *“left adrift”* and unsettled once more participants joined and began to disengage. The project felt that *“a lesson has been learnt in terms of trusting in mixing groups so quickly”* (Access Fund project).

Passion4Fusion similarly reported that many of their participants struggled with isolation due to the Covid-induced lockdowns. This was a bigger issue than expected, so in consequence, the project brought in an expert to run wellbeing workshops to help young people *“understand their mental health, and what they mean when they speak about anxiety and loneliness”*. For the project director, a

key to how the activities supported the project's wellbeing goals was simply **"having somewhere to go and make friends"**. This theme of projects addressing issues of isolation or loneliness were also picked up by one of Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival's funded projects. Here the root cause given for young people's loneliness was not just Covid, but simply being different from those around them: *"it can be very lonely being a young black person in Edinburgh"*. The project *"allowed [participants] to meet and socialise with peers [...] and feel more grounded in their own identity and place"*. Having a **'safe space' in which to discuss feelings and experiences with peers** – including in relation to the Covid pandemic – made a huge difference to participants. Another project pointed to the rural area they were working in as contributing to isolation that the project helped to combat:

“ The project has had a positive effect on young people's mental health, particularly after the difficulty of lockdown and spending so much time isolated from their friends. The Hillfoots area of Clackmannanshire is rural, with limited public transport and **places for young people to socialise**. This project has been vital in offering free, accessible, creative activities to young people, at a time when they really needed it. (Targeted Fund project)

This was reflected in some of the comments received from the young participants. When asked what they 'got' from coming to the sessions, **'human interaction'** was the first thing that came to their minds:

“ **Human interaction!** Yeah, I don't talk to many people. We don't have many friends. It's cool to have a place where **we can talk to people**. (Targeted Fund project participants)

Parents asked by the same project about the impact on their children again spoke of children and young people spending time with friends and being in a 'face-to-face environment' after lockdown. Similarly, other projects reported how the projects *"encouraged the development of **friendships and relationships**"*

(Access Fund project), and of how participants who did not all know each other prior to the project became *"a new group of friends"*, with the project *"helping to build social capital among the group"* (Access Fund project). Feedback pointed to *"making friends at the workshop sessions"* as key to mental health improvements (Access Fund project).

A few projects pointed specifically to the nature of the project activities – **being creative together** and fostering communication skills among peers – in helping children and young people to bond and create friendships. This in turn provided a sense of belonging, confidence and wellbeing. Indeed, being able to open up and talk to others was seen as key in supporting increased connections among children and young people, thereby resulting in wellbeing benefits:

“ It was clearest to see the impact we had on the confidence and social skills of the children. We noticed children becoming more outgoing and sociable in their **groups as playing music together brought them closer together** (Access Fund project)

“ Storytelling and drama sessions allowed children and young people to build upon their confidence but also be able to creatively express thoughts and feelings which then can help **improve communication to build stronger relationships** (Youth Arts Fund Bursary Programme project)

“ Our workshops allow children to lose their inhibitions and **express themselves through rhythm and music**. We know how to **encourage as much laughter** and noise as possible without disrupting the sessions, meaning that the children can express their emotions in a way that feels natural. It was clear how much the children loved our workshops, and this was reaffirmed by parents and staff when they spoke about how much our sessions impacted their children's overall well-being. We received feedback saying we uplifted the children's well-being and boosted their confidence as well as **bringing the**

groups closer together, making it easier for the children to socialise together (Access Fund project targeting 3-5 year olds)

In evidence of this impact, projects highlighted the visible joy children and young people showed in being together, communicating animatedly with each other and acting as a *supportive* group of friends, e.g.:

- “ The class were really **supporting each other** and a great audience, whooping and cheering for each other’s drum playing. [They] visibly enjoyed the session today. (Access Fund project)
- “ The project provided them with an opportunity to be with their friends, make new friends and have 'human interaction'. The clip includes a lot of **joking and laughter**, which [...] demonstrates the **positive energy and 'buzz'** that the young people feel when they are together. (Targeted Fund project)
- “ We witnessed **friendships formed** through projects. Young people connecting with peers they might not normally and taking that beyond our sessions. (Access Fund project)

Relatedly, a few projects highlighted how the activities not only supported friendly interaction among peers, but also between participants and their families, impacting the wellbeing of the whole family:

- “ We saw the confidence grow in not only the children and young people, but in their families. Activities helped bring families together and strengthen their relationships, which we know supports **improved family wellbeing**. Families did not have to worry about the costs which allowed them to focus on their child, strengthening connections and supporting them to foster stronger relationships. (Access Fund project)

Another Access Fund project reported creating activity resources for families, which allowed parents to take part in enjoyable activities with their children during lockdown. It was noted that this had a positive impact on parents’ own sense of isolation and anxiety: *“seeing their children enjoy themselves lifted their spirits”*.

There was some suggestion that creative approaches can help children and young people talk about and process their emotions and what is affecting them

As seen above, some projects drew a connection between children and young people’s communication skills, ability to socialise or make friends, and resulting mental wellbeing. Relatedly, projects also made the point that creative activity can help participants think about, process and to talk about difficult subjects, helping them to understand and express their emotions.

This was identified as highly valuable to young people’s mental health by Passion4Fusion’s project manager, who found that creative approaches can provide an *“easy way”* to *“play around with subjects”* and help young people deal with real-life issues: *“[the creative approaches made it easier to talk about difficult subjects]”*. In a specific example, a young male participant created a spoken word piece about gang culture. This resulted in conversations about where the inspiration had come from, and how he could turn the work around positively. In a similar example from the case studies, one of the projects funded by Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival through a Small Grants Scheme grant saw young Asian girls develop spoken word pieces around their experiences of going to school in Glasgow, being ‘different’, experiencing discrimination. As summarised by Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival’s project manager in reflecting across the funded projects: *“so often young people feel out of ‘control of’; are not given space to speak and tell. If young people from diverse backgrounds feel more **confident to voice their experience and realities through creativity**, that is to me is success”*.

Other projects identified similar impacts:

- “ Over the course of a year, young carers between the ages of 5 to 18 have been taking part in sound creative sound recording and song writing sessions. The young people have been learning to **express their feelings through the writing of lyrics and crafting of songs**, to imagine and write stories and create soundscapes which interpret these stories. (Access Fund project)
- “ Young children were **able to "act out" their emotions** and address the impact of the pandemic on their mental health through art and storytelling in this Drama project. (Small Grants Scheme project)
- “ Many of [the pupils] had experienced racism. P6/P7 wished to explore this, and so we aided them in creating [a] very powerful **short dance film which explores being judged for what you are** not who you are. As well as devising dance and filming this, the pupils recorded themselves sharing times in their lives when they had experienced racism and about their hopes for a more equal and compassionate society (Access Fund project set in a primary school)
- “ The young people were given space to express their opinions, **to talk about how they felt, using drama, writing and discussion**. Some teachers expressed shock at what some of the young people contributed, having known them for some years (Small Grants Scheme project)

Some participants reported being motivated and inspired in their creative activity in a sign of improved belief in their abilities (self-efficacy)

Finally, a few projects also suggested mental health benefits through helping children and young people improve their 'creative self-efficacy', their belief in their own creative ability. Self-efficacy is considered as impacting wellbeing in a range of ways, with an impact on *"how people think, behave and feel"* about themselves through for example improving motivation, interest in and commitment to activities.¹⁰ Indicatively, all case studies highlighted how young people were supported and guided in creating creative pieces and, in doing so, gained new insight into and gaining new creative skills.

Beyond 'simply' acquiring skills, some projects however pointed to how this impacted young people's confidence in a particular art form. This again was connected both to **giving young people agency and choice** in *"doing things they had always wanted to do"* (Falkirk Community Trust case study) and in the opportunity of being creative in an environment that does not judge or grade outputs.

- “ I enjoyed the free nature of working as we were **completely left to create what we wanted** (Access Fund project participant)

Several projects pointed out providing ways of working that *"focused on process rather than outcome"*, **reducing the pressure to produce a "'right' drawing or painting"** (Small Grants Scheme project). As one Access Fund project participant noted, working in a non-judgemental environment makes you less judgemental of your own work and, in consequence, empowers you to be more imaginative:

- “ [...] not being pressured, but seeing other images, like [expands the] imagination a bit and **makes you not judgy** about your own art, knowing that not everything's going to be perfect, seeing

¹⁰ <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-self-efficacy-2795954>

other people's art not perfect, but put up on display makes you think, 'Oh, they don't really care that it's not perfect. They just showed what they can do'. It's **made the imagination wider**. Not everything's going to be perfect, so **don't get worked up over one tiny little mistake** when doing art. (Access Fund project participant)



"Create your own boundaries. Free yourself from art jail. The doing is what makes it". (Access Fund project, Hospitalfield Young Artist Club, ©Kristina Aburrow, Associate Artist)

Other participants pointed to increased or renewed motivation and ideas in being creative and about how the projects increased their confidence in their abilities and re-fired their excitement at taking part in creative activity. Though not directly linking it to their wellbeing, the comments point to clear indicators of

self-efficacy such as **motivation to create under their own volition** and **commitment to wanting to continue** their artistic activities going forward and/or seeing themselves as creatives:

- “ Matilda absolutely loved this workshop. She was on Cloud 9 afterwards. [...] A lot of it was the fun of doing all the art in different mediums, and she was excited to meet the artist and create artworks inspired by the exhibition. **She's done several canvas art paintings at home since.** (Access Fund project, parent)
- “ Before I didn't really have any inspiration and barely drew due to art block/complete lack of motivation. **Now I want to be more creative and draw more as I have more ideas and motivations.** I only knew a few people on the first day and now I know everyone 😊. I feel more confident speaking about art. I learned about funding, printing techniques and gained a more thorough knowledge of art in general. (Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes project participant)
- “ The money has helped me discover and try new styles of art which has further **inspired me** to develop these more deeply as well as try and research other styles and **motivated me to keep improving and creating** my art. (Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes project participant)
- “ For me the course was a safe space to rediscover how much I missed making music and being in a studio environment! I fell out of love with doing that for a while but through the course I was able to be myself, experiment the entire time as well as tick things off a list that I always wanted to try but was scared to! I think it has **taught me not to be too hard on myself, get**

caught up on getting things perfect (Access Fund project participant)

Other participants of the same Access Fund project as above spoke about how it allowed them to *“follow their instincts in terms of writing and music production”*, and *“feeling more confident and excited to keep making music”*. Similarly, participants of another Access Fund project spoke about plans to continue the work they had started, having been inspired and motivated to build on what they had begun during the project.

Alongside the notion of feeling inspired to continue their artistic explorations, a few projects evidenced this impact by highlighting how children and young people were keen to let others see their projects, proud of what they had achieved. Two of Engage Scotland’s funded projects for example noted how young people overcame shyness to attend public showcasing of their art works because they were **keen for others to see what they had achieved**. Similarly reflected in other project reports, this also included seeing young people being increasingly confident in and keen to perform their music in a live setting.

“ There were children that started with their guardians attending as they were too shy that ended up basically running into class without a goodbye, ones that did not believe that they were “good” at art but then were **proudly showing off their work** at the end of a session. (Access Fund project)

“ The young people have also requested to take home the prototype chairs and benches they produced during the workshops, showing the **pride they have in their work**. (Access Fund project)



"Young people performing their posters in the workshop: a great moment to see them totally involved in their 'playful' exploration of the world they had created" (Access Fund Project, Take-Over Protesters © National Galleries of Scotland and Town Take-over participants, 2022)



"The yoga session is just one way in which the project has tried to bolster young people's mental health, providing opportunities for participants to destress and connect with themselves and each other." (Access Fund project, RSNO Young Creatives 2021/22, © Brianna Berman)



Providing young people with an opportunity to reconnect with their peers, preparing food together – it was felt that this helped in reducing social isolation caused by Covid. (Targeted Fund project, Engage ART evolution, ©Rumpus Room)

2.5 Connection between the impacts on children and young people

Consideration of the above sections focusing on impact on children and young people highlights not only how a range of different project characteristics all play their part in impacting on different outcomes connected to children and young people's feelings of empowerment, skills development and wellbeing; but also, how interconnected these outcomes are.

To gain a clearer understanding of this, the infographic below (Figure 11) visualises this interconnectedness between project characteristics and outcomes. The infographic identifies and suggests a number of key points:

First, the review of the evidence suggests that **projects tended to have a number of key characteristics**, beyond the requirements for creative activity and 'youth-led' elements, which jointly served to reach the desired outcomes. This included providing a forum in which children and young people feel safe and valued; opportunities for children and young people to participate in inherently valued activity where their work is not judged; providing space for social interaction and collaborative activity; etc. In Figure 11, these identified key characteristics form the left-hand column of the infographic.

Second, the graph then **identifies the many outcomes that projects mentioned**, colour-coding for the three outcome areas targeted by the Youth Arts Fund (central column in the infographic) and shows how these outcomes flowed out from the different project characteristics (see coloured lines).

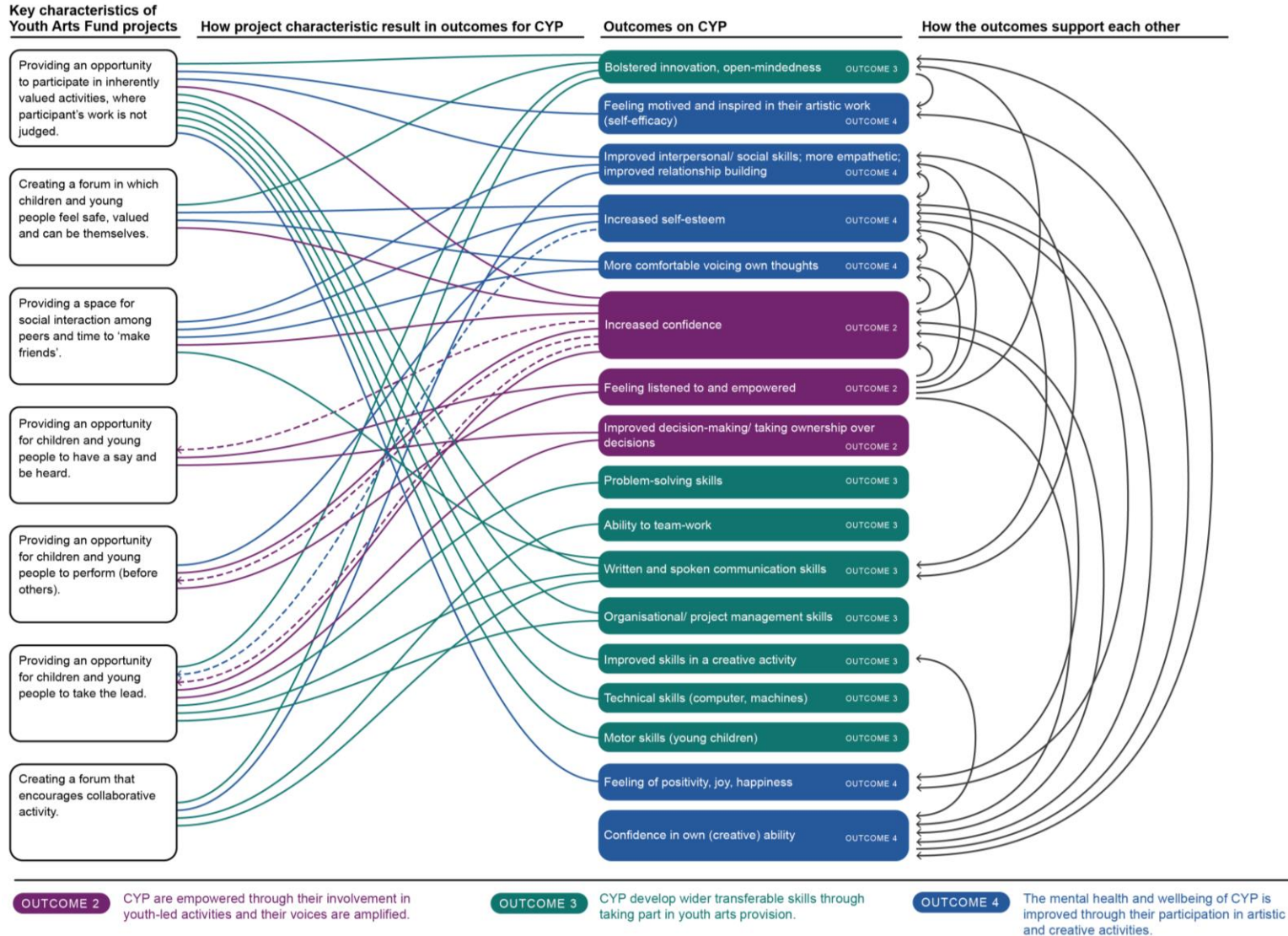
Third, as the infographic shows, in some cases **outcomes also lead back to strengthen project characteristics**, which in turn further improved their impact, in a **circle of cause and effect** (see dotted lines). For example, opportunities for 'having a say' increased confidence, which in turn made children and young people more likely to perform or take the lead, further boosting confidence.

Fourth, the infographic visualises where projects have reported on **interconnected impact from one outcome to another or of outcomes**

supporting each other (see black lines). This highlights just how interconnected outcomes were and how projects were able to achieve such a wide variety of outcomes through creating this '**system**' of **mutual support between outcomes and project characteristics**. In one example, the notion of feeling listened to led to increased confidence, with young people becoming more comfortable voicing their own thoughts. This in turn supported self-esteem, interpersonal skills (which were also supported by improved communication skills) as well as innovation and creative self-efficacy. This again led to feelings of motivation as well as of joy and happiness: many such journeys could be drawn.

Lastly, it is important to note that in creating this infographic, all outcomes mentioned by projects were included; no weighting was added to reflect which outcomes were mentioned more than others. This is due to projects formulating their outcomes in very different ways or selectively, making a more quantitative depiction based on qualitative feedback impossible. Nevertheless, the visual shows how some outcomes were linked to more project characteristics or interconnected outcomes than others, with more arrows leading to some outcomes than others. Taken together, this may indicate that **some outcomes** – notably increased confidence, communication skills, interpersonal skills and ability to be creative, innovative, open-minded – **may be more likely than others to occur in projects with the identified characteristics**.

Figure 11 Key project characteristics and connections between CYP impacts (BOP Consulting, 2022)



3. Outcomes for the sector

This section sets out the evidence gained through the research with regard to the achievement of the Youth Art Fund's outcomes for the sector and sector members. It includes evidence in the form of the quantitative and qualitative data from the end of project report forms and qualitative online tool as well as from the case studies.

- 3.1 Artists and creative practitioners benefit from being able to access more paid employment opportunities in the sector (O5)46
- 3.2 Scotland's artistic and creative sectors are strengthened through increased cross-sector partnership working and sharing of knowledge (O6).....50
- 3.3 People undertaking creative and artistic projects with children and young people are trained and upskilled (O7)55

Links to the case studies

The eight case studies developed for the report and referenced throughout this section can be accessed via the following links:

[Passion4Fusion](#)

[National Galleries of Scotland](#)

[Engage Scotland](#)

[Clifftop Projects](#)

[Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival](#)

[Media Education](#)

[Falkirk Community Trust](#)

[Scottish Youth Theatre](#)

3.1 Artists and creative practitioners benefit from being able to access more paid employment opportunities in the sector (O5)

Key findings

- The Youth Arts Fund provided employment to staff and freelancer artists and practitioners, helping to secure fairly paid work – with some pointing out the value of this in the context of Covid
- Such employment moreover helped staff and freelancers to identify further avenues of work. These included:
 - Further collaborations beyond the Youth Arts Fund project
 - Strengthening connections and partnerships between artists and the host organisations and expanding networks
 - Providing a springboard to finding other paid work or venues to host them, ‘opening doors’ in their career
 - Providing staff, freelancers or trainees involved in the project with professional learning

The Youth Arts Fund provided employment to staff and freelance artists and practitioners, helping to secure fairly paid work and to identify further avenues of work

Across the Youth Arts Fund programme strands, the fund supported 307 members of permanent staff, fairly equally split between project management/ co-ordination/ admin staff (133) and youth work staff (174). The Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund supported a further 31 members of staff.

The number of freelance artists or creative practitioners supported was considerably higher, highlighting the high level of freelance work in the sector: the Youth Arts Fund strands supported 979 freelancers for over 8,000 hours, with a further 592 freelancers supported through the Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund.¹¹

Figure 12 Number of posts funded/ part-funded across the programme strands

| | Project Management/ co-ordination/ admin staff | Youth work staff/ staff supporting CYP | Freelance artists/ creative practitioners | No days funded for freelance artists/ creative practitioners |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Access Fund (info from 76 EOPs) | 87 | 94 | 391 | 3,594 |
| Small Grants Scheme (info from 16 EOPs) | | | 263 | unknown |
| Targeted Fund (info from 15 EOPs) | 37 | 80 | 308 | 4,742 (with one outlier at 1,290) |
| Training & Workshop Fund (info from 6 EOPs) | 9 | | 17 | unknown |
| Total (YAF) | 133 | 174 | 979 | |
| YMI Formula Fund | 30 | 1 | 592 | unknown |
| Total (YAF + YMI FF) | 163 | 175 | 1,571 | |

Source: Creative Scotland (2022), BOP Consulting (2022)

There is no monitoring data available on how many of these opportunities were *new* paid employment opportunities made available through the project work

number of days funded for freelancers supported under Small Grants, Training & Workshops and YMI FF. In addition, some EOP’s are missing from across all strands as noted earlier.

¹¹ Note that actual numbers are likely to be higher, as this data includes no information from NTF New Routes (unavailable) or YAF Bursary Fund (not included in the evaluation); additionally, there was no information on the

supported by the Youth Arts Fund. However, review of the qualitative information provided by projects shows that many indicated a positive impact of the programme in this area, either by:

- helping with securing paid work, or by
- helping with identifying new avenues of work/ ways of working which had not been considered or accessed previously.

A few projects referenced the particular value of providing artists with an opportunity to **access paid work during or in the aftermath of the COVID pandemic** and the resulting lockdowns.

“The programme began during lockdown at a time when many artists had work cancelled, exhibitions, shows residencies cancelled or postponed. Since [our venue] had closed its door in March 2020, we had begun working with local artists and other community organisations creating and developing projects which linked them together. The lack of work and lack of travel allowed at this time meant that many more local artists were available to [our venue] than before and through these projects we were able to create paid opportunities for them during a difficult time.” (Access Fund project)

“We were keen to work with and support local artists, investing in our local arts community who were also significantly affected by the pandemic.” (Youth Arts Fund Bursary Programme project)

A few projects moreover highlighted the importance of **paying fair wages** to the artists and creative practitioners they employed. Among the case studies, Engage Scotland’s projects based their artist fees on Scottish Artist Union Rates, while Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival took the more radical approach of letting artists determine their own wage levels (as part of a certain project budget they were allocated for all project costs). This gave artists the opportunity to consider and be paid what they felt they were worth at that particular point in their career, as well as supporting artists in learning to budget for projects.

“ As a creative practitioner, I felt valued, respected and supported throughout the project. It was amazing to be paid fairly for the work that I do, and to be given creative freedom to design workshops around particular techniques that I’m passionate about (Access Fund project artist)



Artist director and dance artists delivering a workshop at a school with pupils with additional support needs. (Access Fund project, Barrowland Ballet, Dance for Camera, ©Isobel Mair School)

In addition to the project providing paid work opportunities in itself, projects referenced helping artists and practitioners **identify further avenues of work or ways of working**, which they had not previously considered or accessed. This included:

- **Going on to do further work with the same organisation/ partners that ran the YAF project they were involved in**

“The [YAF-funded] programme created more opportunities for local artists to work with us and often one workshop [as part of the YAF-funded project] led to other opportunities and the development of new projects.” (Access Fund project)

“Working with local artists has allowed us to build connections and partnerships that will extend beyond the funding period.” (Access Fund project)

“I also got to know the other teaching artists and have their contact details. I’m sure they wouldn’t mind me getting in touch in the future also.” (Targeted Fund project artist)

“Both artists [we worked with on this project] are now doing other freelance work [for us] as well.” (Access Fund project)

“One of the freelance artists from the project was offered an additional paid opportunity to present a live practical dance / movement workshop for a wider audience at the Bookbug conference in March 2022. One of the creative practitioners was also given a further paid employment opportunity to present a webinar at the online Bookbug conference.” (Targeted Fund project project)

“A number of awardees have established further employment through their partnership; this has included some of the project partners finding funding to continue to work with the creative practitioners.” (Small Grants Scheme project)

This was also reflected in some of the case studies: one of Engage Scotland’s funded projects took on one of the artists involved in their Youth Arts Fund project on a permanent basis and the Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival is continuing to work with some of the artists engaged as part of their Youth Arts Fund project. Clifftop Projects developed a lasting working relationship with a local artist they had not collaborated with previously, which led them to jointly apply for further funding and engage in new collaborations.

- **Strengthening connections and partnerships** between the artist and the host organisations as well as making new connections/ expanding their network through the project that may lead to new opportunities (see more on this in Section 3.2)

“I got to work with a mentor who I had never worked with before. She is super approachable and so I feel comfortable to drop her a message if I need anything in the future when this project is complete.” (Targeted Fund project artist)

“I have met a number of amazing connections through this project who I will take with me into my further career. From working with the other dance artists, our mentors, prop artists and the teachers I have expanded my network in an invaluable way.” (Targeted Fund project artist)

This was also highlighted as a benefit to the lead organisations themselves, with several highlighting that the project expanded their networks. As one Access project reported: *“the process of hiring a trainee allowed us to meet new artists and working with the trainee connected us with an exciting emerging visual artist”*.

- **Projects providing a springboard to finding other paid work** or venues to host them, ‘opening doors’ in their career

“Our Learning and Engagement trainee has gone on to not only secure future freelance work with [us], but also with [another organisation] as a result of the learning, skills development and experience gained working on this project.” (Access Fund project)

“As well as providing approximately 75 days paid work for those delivering the course, participants have gone on to find paid work and residencies both performing live and developing their compositional practice.” (Access Fund project)

“I am currently working on my second solo album and going to play a bunch of festivals with my band in the summer!” (Access Fund project artist)

“I’m playing a live set as part of an exhibition on the 06.05.22. Going on a music and sound residency in August in Germany. Have been working on sound scores for some short films and have been helping friends and musicians out recording vocals and bits. I’m also working on a tape release.” (Access Fund project artist)

— **Projects providing staff, freelancers or trainees involved in the project with professional learning**

See Section 3.3 on this professional learning and training.

3.1.1 Insights from the Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund focus group: *Inclusion of freelancers within Formula Fund delivery varies considerably. Freelancers can create a more flexible service, but barriers in working with schools need to be considered.*

Discussion among the Youth Music Initiative Formal Fund focus group highlighted a range of approaches in engaging and contracting tutors. At one end of the spectrum, one service reported that all their activity *“is pretty much delivered by freelancers”*. At the other end, a participant reported that they did not engage freelancers in their Youth Music Initiative activity at all, but rather historically engaged tutors on permanent contracts, with static funds¹² meaning that there was little room to bring on additional freelancers.

Participants saw benefits in engaging temporary or freelance staff. Many freelance staff have had a relationship with their local authority over a number of years, allowing the local authority to be confident in *“what they can and can’t deliver”* and feeding into the need to ensure specificity in what is delivered as part of the service. But they also felt that working with freelancers is beneficial in *“[giving the service] more flexibility”* and the ability to potentially change projects. In this context, one participant remarked on the more flexible approach of Youth Arts Fund funding, which *“gave them a chance to do something we have wanted to do for a long time but couldn’t refocus the Youth Music Initiative [activity] in that direction”*.

This conversation sparked some questions around job security issues for freelancers/ part-time workers, with comments from the focus group participants highlighting that Local Authorities take a range of different approaches to support the freelancers in their service.

However, one participant highlighted the *“subtle barriers you don’t think about”* in working with schools where a service is delivered by freelancers. It was suggested that getting freelancers who are not employed by the Local Authority engaged in particular in a school context requires additional processes, for example to get freelancers added to online school delivery tools such as GLOW. One participant here remarked how all their YMI instructors (both freelance and permanent) are issued with YMI laptops for their work, *“but that is not the case everywhere”*.

¹² The Youth Music Initiative award to Local Authorities slightly reduced in 2016/17 and then effectively remained at a standstill in recent years, whilst the cost of staff and overheads has increased.

3.2 Scotland’s artistic and creative sectors are strengthened through increased cross-sector partnership working and sharing of knowledge (O6)

Key findings

- Projects worked with existing as well as new partners, with a relatively even distribution between both. This suggests that the ‘newness’ of the fund may have contributed to the creation of new partnerships.
- Projects reported successful and valued engagement with partners from other sectors, with many cross-sector partners from the education, youth and community sectors. Lead organisations built their networks and gained learning from their partners, which they hoped to build on in future projects. Some projected indicated that they felt their project benefited from partnership working.
- There are indications that partners:
 - increased their awareness and enthusiasm for creative youth work, and
 - felt better positioned to offer creative activities to CYP themselves going forwards.
- Only a small number of projects reported actively sharing knowledge and learning across the sector.

Projects worked with existing and new partners; the ‘newness’ of the fund may have contributed to the creation of new partnerships

Available monitoring data from three of the Youth Arts Fund strands shows that together, projects engaged with 406 partners; adding Youth Music Initiative

Formula Fund, this came to 512 partners (see Figure 5 and Figure 13). Actual figures are likely to be higher, as the data does not include data from the NTF New Routes, Small Grants and YAF Bursary strands.¹³

Data suggests a slight variation in the number of partners that projects from the different strands worked with. The largest number of average partners (6) was among Targeted Fund projects. However, figures between different strands were not wildly different, ranging from an average of 3 to 6 partners.

Numbers are relatively evenly distributed between *existing* partners that delivery organisations engaged with (212 among Youth Arts Fund strands, 274 in total) and partners *new* to the delivery organisation prior to the project (194 among YAF strands, 238 in total). This suggests that projects appear to have been a vehicle for delivery organisations to work with new partners. Interestingly, the proportion of new partners is higher among Youth Arts Fund strands, and particularly the Access Fund, than among the Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund.

While the data alone does not provide sufficient evidence to draw any firm conclusions, this may suggest that the ‘newness’ of the Youth Arts Fund’s support to the youth arts sector may have led to a higher creation of new partnerships than among the long-lasting Formula Fund. For example, it was the first time that the Access Fund funded projects outside of the youth music sector.

Figure 13 Number of existing and new partners engaged to deliver the activity with across the strands

| | No of existing partners prior to applications | No of new partners prior to application | TOTAL partners engaged with |
|---------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| Access Fund (info from 76 EOPs) | 145 | 154 | 299 (around 4 partners per project) |

¹³ This data was not requested in the EOPs for NTF and Small Grants; YAF Bursary Fund data is not yet available.

| | | | |
|--|------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| Targeted Fund (info from 15 EOPs) | 56 | 33 | 89 (around 6 partners per project) |
| Training & Workshops Fund (info from 6 EOPs) | 11 | 7 | 18 (around 3 partners per project) |
| Total Youth Arts Fund | 212 | 194 | 406 |
| Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund | 62 | 44 | 106 (around 3 partners per project) |
| Total Youth Arts Fund + Formula Fund | 274 | 238 | 512 |

Source: Creative Scotland (2022), BOP Consulting (2022)

Projects engaged in partnerships with organisations from a range of other sectors, including many partners from the education, youth and community sectors

Whilst the monitoring data indicates that all projects worked with existing and new partners, data on the type of partners projects worked with, and in how far these were partners from other sectors, was available only for some funding strands. The fact that the fund supported youth arts work with a key aim to reach out to priority target groups, coupled with the relatively high number of new partners project engaged with, raises the assumption that many of the partners that projects worked with are likely to have been from different sectors. In order to meet the programme aims for the Youth Arts Fund, organisations or workers from the arts sector would have been likely to look for collaborations with those in the youth, education or community service sectors, or vice versa.

And indeed, this assumption is supported both by the project partners listed by Access and Targeted Funds in their end of project reports as well as by many of the case studies and the qualitative feedback received from organisations

across all funding strands. Cross-sector partnerships were listed with partners from education, community organisations, social support services, local authority, arts organisations, youth organisations and charities, **with partners from education and community/ youth organisations or services not surprisingly featuring strongly**. A snapshot review of end of project report data from a smaller number of Access and Targeted Funds shows that projects funded by both strands worked with more existing than new partners, although amongst Access Fund projects, the number was almost equal. The data furthermore indicates that projects worked with a range of both existing and new partners from other sectors including from education, community organisations, social support services, local authority, arts organisations, youth organisations and charities. Interestingly, it however shows that the number of education partners was higher among new than existing partners (see Figure 14), suggesting that many projects sought out new partnerships with schools in order to reach out to children and young people (as supported by the findings in Section 3.1 on new approaches adopted to overcome engagement barriers faced by children and young people).

Figure 14 Number of existing and new partners engaged to deliver the activity with across the strands

| | No of EOPs reviewed | No of partners listed (new / existing) | No of education partners listed (new / existing) |
|---------------|---------------------|--|---|
| Access Fund | 21 | 81 partners listed, including — 44 existing — 37 new | 21 <i>education</i> partners listed ¹⁴ , including — 6 existing — 15 new |
| Targeted Fund | 10 | 78 partners listed, including — 50 existing — 28 new | 28 <i>education</i> partners listed, including — 15 existing — 13 new |

Source: Creative Scotland (2022), BOP Consulting (2022)

¹⁴ Including two further education partners

Among the case studies, cross-sector partners from the education and youth sectors were also particularly visible:

- One of Engage Scotland’s projects saw artists collaborate with local schools and a university for the first time
- Falkirk Community Trust collaborated with Fairer Falkirk as well as local schools to develop the project and recruit participants and partnered with a local Further Education college to allow participants to experience their music studio.
- Several of Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival’s projects were run by youth organisations. In another of the Festival’s projects, one artist worked within a children’s’ hospital; in a third, a youth organisation connected with a large local arts organisation to arrange visits for the participants.
- National Galleries of Scotland worked with a range of local partners as part of the project, including community groups, foundations, schools and colleges as well as community activists
- Media Education developed a relationship with Edinburgh College and connected with Screen Education Edinburgh to identify progression routes for its participants.

Projects reported successful and valued engagement with their partners

In several cases, partners reported feeling impressed with the level of support, interest or dedication provided by partners. One Access project for example highlighted the *“level of support provided by the school”*, which allowed one teacher to work one day per week on the project to help cope with the challenges presented by Covid. Projects also spoke of how the **partnership had benefited the lead organisations**, by helping them build and expand their networks, gain learning by working with their cross-sector partners and **create more impactful projects**. One Access Fund project lead in the arts/ heritage sector who teamed up with a children’s charity and creative design experts reported that the Youth Arts Fund allowed them to *“work with two organisations that we have long admired but never collaborated with before [...] We gained*

huge amounts from working with them”. Learning included barriers to engagement faced by hard-to-reach children and young people and how these could be removed in future projects.

Several projects moreover highlighted gaining insights and establishing approaches that they hope will lead to similar work in the future. One Small Grants Scheme project for example reported that the project *“sign-posted future possibilities for both curricular context and strategic planning”* and that they had gained a *“more robust framework by which we can cement future collaborations between schools and artists.”*

“ As a new organisation, we **made many new connections** and developed meaningful partnerships with several local organisations. (Access Fund project)

“ Partnership working is at the heart of our project, and we strongly feel that developing positive relationships with other organisations and involving them in project delivery **results in better projects and additional outcomes** for young people. (Access Fund project)

“ Delivering this project has been very educational for us as an organisation as this is the first time that we have expanded our reach to working [...] in school. We feel [...] working alongside other educational practitioners has helped us to deliver a **higher level of professionalism** in our work, which we intend to carry forward for future projects. (Access Fund project)

Likewise, some projects also provided feedback from partners in other sectors. Promisingly, these showed how **partners from other sectors valued the opportunity to engage in creative work** with children and young people and how keen they were to build on and continue this work. This suggests that where cross-partnerships existed:

- **this raised awareness, understanding and enthusiasm for creative youth work among partners** (with potential follow-up opportunities for the creative sector where partners may actively seek to engage in similar work again)

One Access Fund project highlighted how sharing the skills of the two partner organisations (one offering art sessions and the other working in the youth sector providing holiday activities to children and young people) led to a better creative offering for the children attending the holiday sessions than previously, which was highly popular among the participants. The youth organisation's lead reported that this had a clear impact on them, raising their aim to undertake similar work in the future: *"We aren't very creative. Having [the arts organisation] there with young people being trained, allowed us to have staff time for other sessions. [...] It's become really popular [with the young people], so we would be keen to take part in anything else that we could do with [the organisation] because it was such a popular activity and young people wish to be trained further."* (Access Fund project partner)

A second Access Fund project, run by an arts organisation, reported working with a wide range of community, education and community service organisations. They noted how one of these partnerships led to representatives of a local community organisation, *"who have fought for their communities all their lives, [being] able - through discussion of aims, approaches and motivations - to see how an art project could help to make the connection between a divisive and traumatic past, and empowering the young people's futures in the town."* Highlighting the significant value of dedicated individuals to making such cross-partnerships work, the lead organisation referred to one community volunteer and activist, who *"connected us with all the organisations in town [...], the project would not be embedded as it is without her."*

- **non-arts partners may feel better positioned to offer creative activities to CYP themselves going forwards**

One Access Fund project for example highlighted providing training not only to creative practitioners, but also to professional nursery staff, in order to help them embed creative play into nursery life beyond the run of the project.

Nursery staff involved in the training reported that they were keen to embed what they had learned into their future activities:

"The follow-on sessions were all really helpful and really accessible. They gave us some great ideas on how we could easily incorporate activities into our day. [...] The session also helped me to reflect and look at the activities I myself offer, to help the children explore their curiosity and creativity."

"The fun and excitement on return from the session always sparked great conversation (...). On occasion the learning would transfer into the nursery play and activities."

A further Access Fund project reported providing training or insight through collaboration to youth workers at a Youth Centre as well as staff from other organisations supporting civil society, including one supporting those living in poverty and another supporting those with learning disabilities. *"Through our work we made a big impact [on these partners] by offering an alternative creative example of engaging young people - which could be achieved by non-arts professionals if they were given the confidence and support - by using these simple and dramatic art techniques. [Some of the partners] acknowledged the influence the project's approach has had on them."*

A small number of projects reported actively sharing knowledge and learning across the sector

Similarly, there was very little evidence of projects engaging in active sharing of knowledge or learning across the sector (here defined as active, organised exchange among organisations, as opposed to training of individuals – see Section 3.3).

As one of a few examples, one of the case studies, Engage Scotland, pointed to two approaches taken to enable learning across the projects and the wider sector. An initial research report, funded to understand the needs of the visual arts sector in working with young people, was used to design the projects and was subsequently published. Following completion of the funded projects, Engage Scotland also had plans for an event in summer 2022 at which projects were invited to attend and talk about their experience with other sector

representatives. There had also been plans to bring projects together for knowledge sharing sessions; however, these did not ultimately take place.

In another example, case study Scottish Youth Theatre established a group of sector professionals, who met regularly to *“identify tools for institutional changemaking and build a new collective language around access, equity and inclusion”*. Given the challenging period members found themselves in, the collective also functioned as a *“therapeutic talking space”*. It was felt that this approach created new networks within the sector that will outlast the project. In addition, the project created a series of free workshops and training sessions made publicly available online as learning provision for the freelance community in Scotland, to address issues of access to training and professional development.

3.2.1 Insights from the YMI Formula Fund focus group: *While the aim for universal provision limits work with partners, cross-over among Local Authority departments may be increasing and strong links to schools considered important*

There was an interesting discussion among participants about working with partners to deliver the Youth Music Initiative’s Formula Fund. While some reported a move to more partnership working in particular in order to reach out to young people in priority groups, participants also highlighted the Formula Fund’s support to the Scottish Government’s commitment to offer every school pupil in Scotland a year of free music tuition by the time they leave primary school. This *“has meant less focus on targeted activity”* and limited ‘wiggle room’ in working with external delivery bodies.

Examples of partnership work that were mentioned included links with other departments within the Council as well as with external organisations. It was suggested that an increasing need to work across sectors was recognised during the pandemic. One participant reported *“big changes”* in their local authority, with increasing crossover between the music service and community arts services. With schools’ increasing focus on health and wellbeing, they found that *“we could do a lot more together with community arts”*. This

participant felt that the pandemic had made the music service more aware of what other departments within the local authority offer.

This was echoed by another participant who reported improved relationships with arts officers as well as community arts and child mental health services. They felt that a new realisation of the value of working together was mutual, with other Council services becoming more aware of what music services do and the benefits for young people of participating in music, including mental health and wellbeing. This in turn was increasing opportunities to develop relationships.

Another participant in turn reported working with an external organisation to help bring in specialist knowledge to work with children with special educational needs. This was a departure from existing delivery models where *“historically [there was] not a lot of external delivery”*.

While recognising that *“funding is always difficult”*, one participant suggested that cross-sector working opened up potential further funds *“that are not available just to the music sector”*.

“ Maybe coming out of the pandemic, more cross-sector working [will happen] that maybe was not quite there before.

While not a ‘new partner’ for Formula Fund delivery services as such, participants also highlighted the importance of close working relationships with their schools, in order understand what is needed in the area, and where. One participant noted the value of the service in providing research and insight to schools on the benefits of good quality music activity to young people, *“to support head teachers in making the case for music in their settings”*.

“ My post is funded by the Youth Music Initiative and I do a lot of resources to support primary class teachers, so we are lacing that health and wellbeing message, the wider benefits, through all of that.

This participant further noted a conversation with a head teacher of a school located in an area in the middle deciles of the Scottish Indices of Multiple

Deprivation¹⁵. This head teacher reported having “children [in her school] who never go anywhere or experience anything”, but not being able to access funds designed for ‘deprived areas’ in order to support these children. This reflected the ongoing balance participants felt was needed between trying to reach specific targets and achieving universal provision that reaches all children and young people: “if you go too niche, you take away from other areas, so it affects provision. You need to get the balance right”.

3.3 People undertaking creative and artistic projects with children and young people are trained and upskilled (O7)

Key findings

- The Youth Arts Fund and Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund provided a range of different types of training to staff, freelancers and partners
- Many projects provided support to emerging artists or those aspiring to work in the sector, indicating that this led to increased confidence in their work and in pursuing this path.
- Qualitative evidence suggests mentoring as a popular mode of training, in particular for trainees and creative practitioners.
- Organised training provision covered creative, technical as well as people-skills, including around mental health issues. However, organisations highlighted time and resource challenges in attending training.
- Project participants at all levels benefited from ‘learning by doing’ in a collaborative environment.

¹⁵ With the lowest deciles including the poorest areas in Scotland and the highest deciles including the wealthiest areas in Scotland.

¹⁶ Data does not include any potential training that might have happened through NTF New Routes.

- Training in all forms led to learning across many areas, including advanced artistic skills, technical skills, project management and ability to teach art to children and young people. This in turn improved confidence levels for staff.

The Youth Arts Fund and Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund provided a range of different types of training to staff, freelancers and partners

Across the Youth Arts Fund, training or professional learning in some form was provided to almost 2,000 people.¹⁶ In addition to this, the Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund provided training to slightly over 5,000 people, meaning that the Formula Fund provided training to by far the largest number of people. This is also broadly reflective of the budget size by strand, with around £4m going to all Youth Arts Fund strands compared to £6m to the Formula Fund. It may also be a result of the long-standing nature of the Formula Fund, which has been funded consistently for many years.

Figure 15 Number of people benefiting from training and professional learning through the Youth Arts Fund and Formula Fund

| | No of people benefiting from training/ professional learning (including trainees) ¹⁷ |
|--------------------------|---|
| Access Fund | 462 |
| Small Grants | 223 |
| Targeted Fund | 599 |
| Training & Workshop Fund | 602, via 47 training sessions across six projects ¹⁸ |

¹⁷ Note that it is not in all cases clear whether this includes number of those booked or number of attendees and data for one project is interim only.

¹⁸ Note that it is not in all cases clear whether this includes number of those booked or number of attendees and data for one project is interim only.

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Total Youth Arts Fund | 1,886 |
| Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund | 3,236 |
| Total Youth Arts Fund + Formula Fund | 5,122 |

Source: Creative Scotland (2022), BOP Consulting (2022)

Qualitative reporting points to a range of different stakeholders benefiting from training in various forms, including staff, freelancers and external staff from partner organisations. Examples included training sessions, mentoring, learning workshops as well as work shadowing for trainees, staff, artists, creative practitioners and partners.

Many projects provided professional support to emerging artists or those aspiring to work in the sector, indicating that this led to increased confidence among recipients

Data furthermore provides insight into the professional support provided to those not yet working in the field. Across the Youth Arts Fund, the strands provided support to 214 trainees and 335 volunteers.¹⁹ Interestingly, here, the numbers were considerably higher among the Youth Arts Fund strands than among the Formula Fund, with only a further 7 volunteers supported under the latter.

Figure 16 No of volunteers and trainees supported across the programme strands

| | No of volunteers | No of trainees |
|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Access Fund | 303 | 143 |
| Small Grants | 2 | 3 |
| Targeted Fund | 30 | 68 |
| Total YAF | 335 | 214 |

¹⁹ Data does not include number of volunteers or trainees might have been supported through the NTF New Routes or Training & Workshop strand.

| | | |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|
| YMI Formula Fund | 7 | 0 |
| Total YAF + YMI FF | 342 | 214 |

Source: Creative Scotland (2022), BOP Consulting (2022)

This was further reflected by the review of qualitative responses. As well as working with young people interested in a career in the opportunity through providing paid **traineeships and apprenticeship positions**, projects highlighted that YAF enabled them to provide paid work – and thus work experience and the resulting benefits – to artists **in the early stages of their career**. The level of trainees varied, from emerging or aspiring artists to recent graduates, to young people not dissimilar to the participants, who were aspiring to a career in the sector. Among the case studies, Engage Scotland asked all funded projects to build in paid traineeships for young people interested in a career in the sector. Projects highlighted providing experience to emerging practitioners to design, budget as well as lead their own projects.

“ Only four out of 11 projects had led their own venture before, so it’s been brilliant for us to reach out to capable artists to encourage them to go for it! (Small Grants scheme project)

One Access Fund project for example reported that 50% of those engaged were freelance artists under the age of 30 and suggested that the opportunity may have had a positive impact on their income trajectory. Meanwhile, a Targeted Fund project highlighted how the project increased the learning and artistic practice of their trainee dance artists (as reported by the trainees), which “*will support them in their future career*”.

Feedback from some of these emerging sector workers suggests that this **increased not only their skills base and connections, but also increased — their confidence in their own abilities**, including in working with children and young people

“My discussions with [my mentor] really helped develop my project ideas and introduced me to new ways of delivering. He gave me confidence and reassurance that what I had planned was appropriate and sounded good. He also made me understand that a lot of the work is trial and error and to have the confidence to accept that some stuff would not work.” (Targeted Fund project)

“This is always a learning process, but I feel more comfortable with what I know and don’t know! Having a plan is good but it is always subject to change. I am more confident that I know enough to be able to work with the young people in a way that they direct, rather than the outcome of my plan!” (Targeted Fund project)

“This traineeship allowed me space and time to further develop existing skills and practices, as well as offering opportunities for growth in new areas and introducing a base of practical knowledge which I will take into my work. I am leaving my traineeship feeling more confident in working creatively with early years and primary aged children, and with a deeper understanding of the practical and logistical considerations that go into developing artistic work with and for community settings.” (Access Fund project trainee artist)

— **their confidence in deciding to pursue a career in the arts sector or youth arts sector.**

“My confidence in pursuing art as a career expanded massively.” (Access Fund project trainee artist)

“Not only have I developed confidence in my craft but my confidence working with young people as well. Watching them grow more comfortable with me over the year has been so rewarding and just secured my plans to work with children in the community in future.” (Access Fund project trainee artist)

Qualitative evidence suggests mentoring as a popular mode of training, in particular for trainees and creative practitioners

A review of the qualitative evidence submitted via the Qualtrics form suggests that mentoring was used by many projects to support in particular trainees. One Targeted Fund project for example ran a training and mentoring programme for

their trainees as part of their project. Similarly, an Access project reported providing one-to-one mentoring for the trainees by their Artistic Director. Another organised a series of mentoring sessions between their trainee and Associate Director for Learning and Engagement as well as arranging two mentoring sessions for the trainee with freelance artists, *“who balance community engagement work with their acting careers, and their perspectives were hugely useful to the trainee”* (Access Fund project). A further Access Fund project reported providing mentoring between a freelance artist and the organisation’s experienced Creative Producer. Similarly, a Targeted Fund project reported running a mentoring programme for their creative practitioners.

Projects reported that **mentoring covered a wide range of aspects**, from a focus on working with young people, to the more creative skills or management aspects of running youth arts work. As the above referenced project stated: *“[Our Creative Producer has] 28 years of experience and [is] an experienced project manager and creative producer, so was able to train and mentor [our freelance artist] through the whole project, in whatever aspect he needed”*. (Access Fund project). Another Access Fund project reported providing a *“bespoke mentoring programme tailored to [the trainees] own interests and learning goals [...] to engage in observation, practical involvement and dialogue with the creative team. [She] was also supported in a conversation with the two lead artists to explore next steps for her practice.”*

Feedback from the mentoring recipients, where provided, was very positive. Recipients highlighted the **insight, knowledge and feedback they received from their mentors**, and again pointing to this resulting in increased confidence.

“ It’s been good to see my journey and progression. Before I started the mentoring program I would share stories, but I didn’t enjoy it. I wasn’t confident because of my language difficulties. Now I feel much more confident, and I am enjoying it a lot more. (Targeted Fund project creative practitioner)

“ I am planning to lead bigger sessions within the nursery, and I feel my confidence has just soared with this mentoring programme. This has been a very positive experience and I really couldn't have asked for a better mentor. (Targeted Fund project creative practitioner)

“ Seeing the mentor in the school environment for the shadowing was really great for seeing how she ran and organised the sessions and gave me lots of good ideas both in terms of individual activities I could do and in how to structure them both in the individual sessions and [...] over the school term/year. (Targeted Fund project trainee)

“ Having someone to talk through my ideas with made me feel confident when delivering. (Targeted Fund project trainee)

Organised training provision covered creative, technical as well as people-skills

Alongside such 'personalised' training, many projects also reported taking the opportunity to allocate some of the Youth Arts Fund funding to provide **training sessions to their trainees, creative practitioners and staff at all levels**.

These appear to have covered a wide range of areas, including creative skills, technical skills, project management skills. Examples also included providing training around working with (young) people, with a **particular focus around mental health and safety**. As an indication of this latter focus, the Training and Workshop strand funded sessions around themes of online child safety, trauma, neurodiversity, anti-racism, trauma and working with children and young people with emotional or behavioural needs.

Several projects reported creating early training opportunities for all project participants to “[give] everyone a good foundation before their projects got underway” (Small Grants Scheme project).

Examples of training provided include:

— **Creative:** Drum lessons for a course assistant (Access Fund project); Arts Award and Dynamic Youth Award training to the Education Coordinator and Co-Director (Access Fund project); training in music production through the Subsine Ableton Live Producer Course (Targeted Fund project)

— **Technical:** Coding courses (Access Fund project); Thumb jam software training and Figurenotes Training (Targeted Fund project); training on film production and editing to freelance artists, to enable them to “*pass [this knowledge] on to pupils and hopefully utilise it themselves in future*” (Access Fund project); training on 'Introduction to Sound Recording' for a trainee, “*to share with the steering group*” (Access Fund project)

“ The technology training taught me several skills that directly benefited my [YAF] sessions. The children loved using iPad apps such as Thumb jam. [My mentor] gave me some creative ways to use the app during my mentor training. I will continue to use Figurenotes and Thumb jam and to keep expanding my bank of activities that I use them in. (Targeted Fund project trainee)

— **Project management:** while less mentioned by other projects, the Training and Workshop strand delivered training session focused on monitoring and evaluation, engaging youth voice and grant writing. Similarly, one Access project reported arranging an “evaluation day” which provided “*invaluable time to reflect upon the process, successes and challenges of the project*”.

— **People-focused:** training in safe-guarding, autism awareness and mental health first aid for a trainee and staff members, engaged artists and one board trustee, while the Education Coordinator and Co-Director received training in autism awareness and safe-guarding (Access Fund project); training in first aid at work and disability awareness to a trainee (Access Fund project); training in child protection through the NSPCC (Targeted)

Case studies similarly referred to providing training across these categories. Scottish Youth Theatre provided its board and core team with opportunities to participate in training around anti-racist practice, emotional health and

wellbeing, suicide awareness and institutional change making. Notably, a few projects also referenced training with regards to responding to the climate crisis.

Participants of the training sessions provided through the Training & Workshop grant were highly positive, for example remarking on the practical insight gained, the inspirational content, and the 'safe' and supportive environment which encouraged asking questions.

It is likely that some of these training sessions were chosen by the project leads for being related to the Youth Arts Fund funding and project aims. However, feedback from one project suggests that projects were also **responsive to the needs** perceived by trainees themselves in allocating training: *"Due to the content of one of the first Open Training sessions, [our freelance artist] realised he would benefit from training in music production, so we put him through the Subsine Ableton Live Producer Course"*. (Access Fund project)

Organisations highlighted time and resource challenges in attending training

Engage Scotland's case highlighted that smaller organisations can find it difficult to find the time and staff resource for training. In one example, while all creative practitioners and trainees were invited to Engage Scotland's conference, only three ultimately attended. Feedback suggested that staff found it **difficult to attend training due to a lack of time and financial resources**. Similar issues were identified by other projects with regard to freelancers and younger trainees/ participants. One organisation highlighted that they sent online training opportunities to all their artists and *"offered to pay them for their time to attend those training sessions"* (Access Fund project). Another Targeted Fund project paid their project 'ambassadors' to attend training sessions at a rate above the living wage *"to ensure no young people are unfairly disadvantaged by having to miss work opportunities to receive training"*. Feedback from the ambassadors suggested that this was unusual.

“ I have never seen any other paid workshops before, they are usually unpaid which is more off-putting as I'd rather fill that time

with work that is paid which in my case isn't music related work which I'd prefer it to be. (Targeted Fund project participant)

Such challenges may in part explain why some of the Training and Workshop fund sessions noted relatively high drop-out rates, with many who originally registered not attending. One provider put this down to events being offered for free being valued less and/or *"people [not being] worried] about not turning up"*. Reflecting on the above, they posed the question of whether paying freelancers to attend, as well as offering free training, would make a difference to attendance rates.

Project participants at all levels benefited from 'learning by doing' in a collaborative environment

In addition to such 'organised training', findings suggest that artists and creative practitioners, including trainees, as well as staff from the delivery and partner organisations also gained **learning 'on the job' during the course of the YAF project**.

Such learning was reportedly gained by working things out themselves, being pushed to do something new, being guided/ supported by more experienced colleagues as well as by working in collaboration with partners (see Section 5.4). In some cases, this was reported as being supported through regular online or offline get-togethers to allow participants to discuss issues and seek support. One Access Fund project furthermore pointed out that such 'learning by doing' includes learning not only from peers or colleagues, but also from working with the participants themselves.

“ At the suggestion of the group, we turned the tape backwards and continued working on it, turning what was meant to be just a simple mono cover of Howling Wolf into something completely different. In working with the course participants and with ongoing feedback we often learn as much from the students as we teach them, giving us new insights and means of furthering our own practice as well as helping us improve the courses.



A trainee
*“learning
 through
 delivery with
 professional
 dance artists”*
 (Access Fund
 project,
 Barrowland
 Ballet, Dance
 for Camera,
 ©Isobel Mair
 School)

Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival’s project lead for example reported how artists were ‘pushed’ to gain experience in project management and budgeting, with many undertaking such work (to this extent) for the first time. Artists were also supported informally in writing follow-up funding submissions to support their skills in writing these. One of the creatives supported through Engage Scotland’s project highlighted the value of (simply) being able to work in a collaborative and supportive environment in gaining new skills and experiences: *“[The project] opened a window of creative opportunities which enriched [their] printmaking skills and encouraged further research and self-development, made possible with the professional support and advice from the leading project co-ordinators and [...] the inspiring, creative collaboration between the artists and the steering group”*.

Other case studies similarly reported on learning among staff members. Passion4Fusion reported how staff members and peer leaders learned to work with new equipment as well as gained experience in undertaking art activities with young people, largely through *“learning by doing”*. Media Education meanwhile found that the YAF fund helped their team develop their own skills through providing an opportunity to keep creative as well as the need to

improvise, growing their organisational confidence in the process. Scottish Youth Theatre provided regular time for the team to get together which helped to respond to the learnings of the project and establish what could be taken forward. Lastly, Clifftop Projects found that working with trainees provided staff with insight into and an opportunity to develop clearer HR management processes; and that staff furthermore learned to better articulate project plans within funding applications.

A few projects also noted learning by staff from partner organisations, such as teachers, nursery staff, etc., through their participation in the creative activity. This led them to be more skilled or confident in running creative activities themselves. One Small Grants Scheme project for example reported that *“our staff in schools and Early Learning settings were able to gain skills from the artists and reflect on their own practice.”*

Training in all forms led to learning across many areas, which in turn improved confidence levels for staff

As reflected across the subsections above, these various forms of formal and informal training –mentoring, training courses, ‘on the job’ learning – led to learning outcomes across many areas. Projects referred to learning gained in the following three key areas, with training recipients highlighting the increase in confidence this gave them in their abilities.

— Advanced artistic skills, and in connection to this, technical skills

“My choreography and artistic abilities has improved hugely and I feel a massive improvement in my confidence with this.” (Targeted Fund project artist)

— Project management

“My ability to structure and deliver sessions has become more developed and insightful.” (Targeted Fund project artist)

“I am leaving my traineeship [...] with a deeper understanding of the practical and logistical considerations that go into developing artistic work with and for community settings.” (Access Fund project trainee)

— Teaching their art to children and young people of different ages

“I feel I have expanded my thinking in terms of considering how, what, why I teach. Learning things like the midway model etc has been great for me to think about my process vs product when teaching and to consider outcomes, scaffolding and various tools we have discussed and put in practise etc.”
(Targeted Fund project artist)

“We had lots of discussions on linear and non-linear planning and it was definitely a challenge for us to plan in a way that ensured we weren’t being prescriptive but were creating space for sessions to be truly child-led. (...) We had great discussions and I think both learned lots from working in this way and debating whether our plans and delivery were truly child-led.”
(Access Fund project)

“[X] was really great at giving me ideas and starting points to work on, which allowed me to be more confident going into the classes. Also even just basic tips on how to run sessions on your own [...]! Before this I had never delivered a session on my own and now I feel really quite confident in doing so, so I would say it has massively developed my participation in delivering sessions.” (Targeted Fund project)

“I now know how to guide the children to choosing our theme, rather than having me come in and decide. I have learned how valuable it is to give them time, space and privacy in creating other art forms as stimulus. I am now skilled at choreographing a piece for primary school pupils. This is my first time doing this for a whole class. I now have the skills of choreographing on a larger group of more reluctant participants.” (Access Fund project trainee)

“My skills as a facilitator were supported by this wide range of artists and I feel that I have developed a way of learning and teaching that is inclusive for all backgrounds, abilities and ages.” (Access Fund project trainee)



“Our trainee leading a workshop for the project, something she has grown in skill and confidence to be able to do across the course of the project” (Access Fund project, Museums of the University of St Andrews, Moving Art, Connecting Voices, ©Eilidh Lawrence)

3.3.1 Insights from the Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund focus group: *Freelancers and those on temporary contracts receive the same professional learning opportunities as others to ensure quality service*

There was relatively little conversation during the focus group around freelance practitioners’ access to training or progression routes; however, those music services working with freelancers suggested that the aim was to provide all those providing Youth Music Initiative delivery with the same opportunities.

One participant for example noted how *“we encourage for all our inset days for Youth Music Initiative staff to attend, so they receive the same opportunities that core staff do”*. Reflecting the issues highlighted among Youth Arts Fund projects

around challenges for e.g., freelancers to attend training, they reported that all Youth Music Initiative staff (including freelancers) would be invited to an upcoming conference, with costs covered for a day's work. In summary, the focus group participant felt that *"whether Youth Music Initiative delivery or core staff, we try and do the same thing so all get the same opportunities for progression and professional development"*.

This was echoed by another participant, who reported that many of their Youth Music Initiative staff were on temporary rather than freelance contracts but received *"the same opportunities for extra-curricular activities as others"*.

This was related to a clear need to ensure a key skill set to achieve a high-quality Youth Music Initiative delivery, irrespective of whether this is delivered by freelancers or permanent staff. Another participant pointed out that headteachers have clear expectations of the quality and continuity of the service, which means those delivering it need to know how schools work. To this end, long-term engagement and continuous professional development are key, *"whether or not freelancers or permanent"*.

4. Process Evaluation

This section provides feedback on YAF's structure, set-up and administration, including the support received by grantees from Creative Scotland throughout the programme, based on two focus groups with YAF grantees as well as one workshop with Creative Scotland's Creative Learning & Young People Team. It also considers Creative Scotland's sector role more widely.

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The third cohort of Youth Arts Fund grantees which supported this evaluation provided feedback on the funding process and support received from Creative Scotland throughout the programme. Specifically, representatives were tasked with considering:

1. The set-up and structure of the Youth Arts Fund strands, whether it is meeting sector needs and reaching those it is designed to support
2. The administration of the Youth Arts Fund
3. Creative Scotland's role as sector development agency and whether the Youth Arts Fund is delivering sector support and development
4. How coherent Youth Arts Fund funding is alongside other Creative Scotland and third-party funding.

The group met twice over the length of this evaluation, with the first session held in November 2021 and the second in May 2022.

In addition, a workshop with Creative Scotland's Creative Learning & Young People Team took place in May 2022. This focused on the overall approach to creating and managing the funds; Creative Scotland's function and looking to the future.

The findings from across these sessions are presented below. For each theme, the sub-sections have been structured to first summarise the headline thoughts from the grantee cohorts and the Creative Scotland team respectively. The sections then dive deeper into a narrative discussion of the theme based on the workshop with the grantee cohort, expanding on the list of 'headline thoughts'.

4.1 Structure and set-up of the Youth Arts Fund

The first theme of the process evaluation focused on the Youth Arts Fund's overall structure and set-up.

Key findings

Headline thoughts from the grantee cohort

- The nimble application process, quick decision making, and funds transfer models were welcome and considered as highly appropriate to address the Covid-19 emergency. Future funds should build on this trusting and user-friendly approach.
- Application processes were felt to highlight the good relationship between organisations and funders, further developing trust.
- Organisations were enabled to take risks and reach out to new groups and practitioners, extending depth of engagement. However, addressing infrastructure gaps remains an issue for future funds.
- The multi-artform funding approach is vital for the future strength of the sector and for children and young people.
- Working with communities, building trust, and creativity takes time. To support this, long-term funding is essential.

Thoughts from Creative Scotland's Creative Learning & Young People Team

- The establishment of the programme was based on the structure of the Youth Music Initiative programme. The Access Fund model clearly worked and elements of the Fund which worked for other artforms were duplicated. The Small Grants Scheme evolved more freely and was more challenging, particularly to smaller organisations. While the Access Fund was familiar, it felt like this familiarity was valuable during the pandemic. Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes and the Youth Arts Fund Bursary Programme launched later and benefitted from the opportunity to take a risk and to experiment.
- Given the same aims again, the Fund would not necessarily be structured the same way again. The team is keen to see if it addressed identified needs and whether there was benefit to the Youth Arts Fund's straightforward approach.

- It was the first time that funds sat across the whole team, allowing everyone to see the Youth Arts landscape. The team are keen to preserve that overview ability across the whole team.
- The team has gained good feedback from freelancers who were successful in receiving funding and reported that professional development opportunities were maintained and expanded.

Structure and set-up: reporting on the discussion among the grantee cohort

The following paragraphs summarise the thoughts of the grantee workshop participants around the Youth Arts Fund's structure and set-up.

Funding was welcomed and the nimble application process, quick decision making, and funds transfer models were highly appropriate for this emergency. Getting activity out quickly was important and that challenge was met by the Youth Arts Fund's funding strands. In turn, this allowed organisations to act decisively and quickly, in situations where navigating restrictions requires a great deal of flexibility, which is costly. The cascade model of funding (whereby organisations were funded to disseminate resource within their communities via Small Grants Scheme, Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes and Youth Arts Fund Bursary Programme) further enabled increased capacity to ensure funds reached children and young people, despite existing restrictions or difficulties.

By comparison, organisations which are now applying or have applied to Creative Scotland's Open Fund note that its processes are more cumbersome in terms of application and decision-making timetable.

Application processes were felt to highlight the good relationship between organisations and funders, further developing trust. Future funds should preserve that and avoid the need for each application to be an introduction, when funder and organisation are already well known to each other. Organisations are tightly resourced, and applications can be cumbersome and

over-burden staff. A fair way should be established to ensure that knowledge of existing relationships is held within Creative Scotland, whilst still ensuring that opportunities are accessible and available to new organisations. The light touch approach was more fluid, but was felt to maintain rigour and accountability. A suggestion made of how this could be reinforced was that grant periods might be better ending with a meeting with a Creative Scotland team representative and a light-touch written summary report, rather than lengthy written reporting.

The funds allowed organisations to think differently and to act at a key moment, *"to dive in and do something that existing funding didn't do"*. This **allowed for risk taking and engagement with priority groups** facing barriers to engagement and those struggling with online engagement. New practitioners were reached, and this has supported and elevated work. Recipients of differing strands reported broad similarities in how they identified need and changing circumstances. Organisations became able to evolve projects while others increased operating infrastructure and resources to allow for stability and future growth.

Gaps remain within the sector infrastructure. Different funds targeted differing needs. However, an ability to see the overall sector position, where projects mesh and where there might be gaps, would be beneficial. The sector is not homogenous, and the Youth Arts Fund applicants could be from arts sector, communities, or local authorities. All reported these funds met needs.

The cohort represented different artforms, and the extension of funding beyond the music sector was welcomed. It was hoped that funding open to all artforms would continue and that equality across the sector would be the aim. Multi-artform organisations particularly welcomed this broad arts access approach. Organisations reported that public-facing funding enabled them to undertake activity which increases their visibility (to both participants and other funders).

In developing their activities, the cohort emphasises **high performance values alongside widened access and participation.** It was noted it was rare to see both aims within one fund. This dual approach was welcomed and enabled grantees to build on youth talent identified pre-pandemic.

Working with communities, building trust, developing techniques and creativity take time. Long-term funding, ideally three to five years, would enable expectations to be developed and met. Emergency funding allowed trialling of new activity, but the cohort highlighted the danger of short-term funding in gaps appearing between activity, losing connection with participants and progress. Ongoing commitment is critical for children and young people, communities as well as for organisations. Other funding programmes (such as National Lottery Heritage Fund, Children in Need) are typically three to five years long. It was suggested that the Creative Scotland Creative Learning & Young People Team could come together with other funders to make a bigger pot and avoid potential clashes.

With regard to reaching children and young people through devolved funding via the Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes, some noted a distinction between children and young people who applied because they wish to take build on their existing artistic abilities (including ambitions to move into training or work in the creative arts, or to set-up of a creative business) and those who wanted to engage in creative activity to improve mental health, reduce stress, make friends, etc. These **two categories of applicants needed different support**. Both are resource-intensive and future funding through the Youth Arts Fund should recognise this additional workload. The direct connection to individual young people revealed how marginalised some groups are (e.g., care experienced children and young people) and how little information on funding and support they have. Funds were extremely popular, indicating support reached its targets, but further understanding of the scope of need would help future Youth Arts Fund cohorts.

4.2 The administrative of the Youth Arts Fund

The second theme of the process evaluation focused on the approach taken with regards to the administration of the Youth Arts Fund throughout the funding period.

Key findings

Headline thoughts from the grantee cohort

- While the administration process was light touch, it was nonetheless felt to be rigorous. The sector responded well to this approach and greatly appreciated the recognition of the need to disseminate funds quickly.
- Launching all schemes together helped organisations of differing scale to understand their place in the overall picture. Staggered application opening dates and deadlines for response gave stretched staff the time needed to respond.
- The application process could be made more accessible. Guidance notes, for example, could make better use of simplified and concise language. Exploration of the use of alternative application formats (such as filmed applications) would be useful and could aid those with literacy issues.

Thoughts from Creative Scotland's Creative Learning & Young People Team

- The necessity to fund quickly enabled a light touch application system. This made the team consider what information they needed, what they asked for, and to ensure that small funds didn't require the same level of detail as bigger project applications.
- The layering of deadlines was necessary to allow planning and capacity to process applications; however, it also benefitted the sector.
- There has been a shift in both Creative Scotland thinking and recipients' approaches in terms of a clearer understanding of the need to put health front and centre. This has enabled everyone to recognise that mental health issues can affect the ability to report etc. Rigour is still there but the process is based on a more human approach. Previously, applicants may have been wary of sharing concerns, but with increased trust this is now easier.

- In terms of the support structure at reporting deadline time, it was felt that webinars help make communication easier and help both sides understand and know each other better.

Fund administration: reporting on the discussion among the grantee cohort

The following paragraphs summarise the thoughts of the grantee workshop participants around the Youth Arts Fund's administration.

During COVID-19, a wealth of new funding streams became available. This was at a time when resources were most stretched, and work could seem overwhelming. Some opportunities made available to the sector by other organisations offered little lead time with short turnaround between guidance availability and deadline. The Youth Arts Fund was the most straightforward of the new funds and designed for quick funding. It was felt to work and be efficient. **Creative Scotland was flexible and responded rapidly to questions.** This responsiveness was praised and the strength of officers and how well they responded to applicants' autonomy was appreciated. It added rigour to the process by enabling applications to be strengthened. Whilst applications were ultimately required to fill in application forms, the grantees felt that conversations with the Creative Scotland team in particular enabled organisations to develop their thinking on new activities or approaches. It was hoped that this efficiency will not be forgotten in future funds. There was recognition that pre-pandemic, Creative Scotland had made efforts to streamline processes, and it was hoped that both reporting, and application processes would continue to build on that. In particular, the cohort pointed out that detailed and lengthy reporting requirements can be a barrier to smaller organisations.

Organisations new to Creative Scotland funding reported feeling especially supported in the application process. Developing relationships with new organisations needs flexibility and the space to try new approaches. Peer-to-peer support is also helpful, and it was suggested that encouraging more of this could greatly benefit organisations new to developing these funding

applications. Generally, it was felt that one-size fits-all-approaches to application and monitoring would not achieve the best results. For those that had received previous Youth Music Initiative funding, it was heartening to hear that their good experience of this fund was evident across other sectors.

Launching all schemes at the same time was valuable. The visibility of the portfolio of options allowed organisations to see where they fit in best, which fund suited them best. It also demonstrated that the funding was potentially available to all rather than just those with a strong fundraising capacity. The future feels uncertain, particularly in venue-based organisations whose income streams and visitor engagement remains low, and it was hoped that Creative Scotland would recognise that challenging times continue.

Guidance notes would benefit from being more accessible with use of simplified language; an "easy read" version. In particular organisations employing young people found that they were less comfortable with the terminology used in the application guidance. One cohort participant reported that a neurodivergent employee found the physical format of the guidance and forms overwhelming. It was suggested that embracing EDI and allowing filmed applications would benefit those with literacy issues and lessen the need for high level English skills. This would encourage those with less experience to apply and would result in being more inclusive for non-arts organisations.

These suggestions extended to the approach to **requesting applications from children and young people for devolved funds via the Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes.** One organisation reported supporting all applicants by phone, and calls revealed that the **application form was a barrier** and failed to pick up on applicants' passion and commitment. Organisations working directly with young applicants felt that the process further highlighted the challenges to engagement faced by young people struggling with poverty, homelessness, and access to information and technology.

4.3 Creative Scotland's role as sector development agency

The third theme of the process evaluation focuses on Creative Scotland's role as sector development agency and considers whether the Youth Arts Fund delivered needed sector support and development.

Key findings

Headline thoughts from the grantee cohort

- Creative Scotland has a role to identify sector priorities and holds the strategic lead, while artform-specific organisations are well positioned to act as the development leads for their own artform and/or sub-set.
- Good funding and development awareness were felt to go hand-in-hand. However, there must be recognition of the diversity of the sector, with arts organisations, communities, and local government all important.
- The Youth Arts Fund's approach to supporting trainees was a positive example of funds directly linking to sector development through enabling the workforce of the future.
- Funding across artforms, coupled with long-term funding, can be delivered well through the Youth Arts Fund. Equality of funding across artforms enabled infrastructure development for all.
- The cohort welcomed Creative Scotland's partnerships with industry, which gives status to the sector and further enables its ability to work across artforms and with industry links.

Thoughts from Creative Scotland's Creative Learning & Young People Team

- There was felt to be an ongoing lack of understanding of how internal application processing happen within Creative Scotland. It was hoped

that building levels of trust and relationships through the distribution Youth Arts Fund grants would help break down barriers.

- Through the process of setting up and administering the Youth Arts Fund, the team learned about distribution models for funding with children and young people, where and how panels work, how to get children and young people to contribute to evaluation, etc. They agreed that it was important to build on that learning and to enable peer learning.
- It was recognised that sector needs are not just of a financial nature, and that building levels of trust helps reduce existing barriers.
- Team members often manage a huge number of projects, meaning that a deep understanding of each funded project is not always possible. However, it was felt that relationship management is important, for example through drop-in chat spaces, which are a low-risk forum for grantees in which to ask questions or raise concerns.
- The Arts in Education Recovery Group²⁰ identified shared priorities with regard to infrastructure development, equality, and workforce. This helped to unify an understanding of what is needed across the sector.

Creative Scotland's role as sector development agency: reporting on the discussion among the grantee cohort

The following paragraphs summarise the thoughts of the grantee workshop participants around the role of Creative Scotland in supporting the sector.

There was discussion around how significant Creative Scotland's sector development role should be, rather than its role as a funder, given the breadth and complexity of the sector. Sector development priorities vary by artform and sub-sets within each artform. As such, it was felt that while there is a role for Creative Scotland to play in sector development, it is better placed to

community learning settings. Since July 2020, Creative Scotland has worked together with the Arts IN Education Recovery Group.

²⁰ A group of representatives from across the arts sector who are collectively advocating the importance of the arts in education recovery and are providing guidance and support around the safe delivery of arts with schools and

act as a strategic lead, with artform-specific organisations well positioned to act as the development leads for their own artform and/or sub-set. Creative Scotland is in a unique place as a funder of youth arts in its understanding of the value of quality arts provision alongside access.

It was recognised that development and good funding go hand-in-hand and that identified priorities can be delivered in a variety of ways, including by artform rather than by Creative Scotland itself. A suggestion was that one **Creative Scotland development role was that of identifying sector priorities** (for example EDI and sustainability) and how the sector works with government objectives to deliver, over time. A good example of stewardship and connecting grant recipients highlighted the benefits of Creative Scotland leadership: when a large group of potential recipients were encouraged to discuss possible duplication, the group were quickly able to share calendars for delivery and to work out structure requirements. It was suggested that legacy considerations might wish to mirror this good approach.

There was discussion about how the Youth Arts Fund relates to the National Youth Arts Strategy and its objectives. A general feeling was that the National Youth Arts Strategy was not as well embedded in current sector support as other artform strategies. It was noted that the Strategy lacked an action plan and applicants were not asked to evidence their contribution to its strategic aims. There was discussion about whether the Strategy had largely been superseded by the Culture Strategy for Scotland, which was launched in March 2020.

Funding allowed development of the young workforce. Working with trainees ensured that they are ready to tackle more complex roles going forwards. Previously these individuals had little opportunity to join the employment ladder. The Youth Arts Fund's approach to supporting trainees was a positive example of funds directly linking to sector development through enabling the workforce of the future. **Equality of funding across artforms**

furthermore enabled infrastructure development for all and a long-term funding approach would help build this, particularly if applied to sector support bodies to ensure self-supporting development of talent at grassroots level.

The cohort welcomed Creative Scotland's partnerships with industry, which gives status to the sector and further enables its ability to work across artforms and with industry links. During the pandemic, organisations sharpened their digital skills and now work well with partners digitally, further enriching potential industry links.

4.4 The Youth Arts Fund alongside other Creative Scotland or external funding

The fourth theme of the process evaluation looked at how coherent Youth Arts Fund funding was alongside other Creative Scotland and third-party funding.

Key findings

Headline thoughts from the grantee cohort

- Organisations felt well supported through the Youth Arts Fund but reported that they can feel lost within Creative Scotland's Open Fund.²¹ Some in the cohort reported that their application to and delivery of a Youth Arts Fund project had made them more confident in developing an Open Fund application.
- For some venues, particularly regional theatres, engagement with young people was their only activity during Covid-19. This may have shifted their focus towards becoming a more youth-oriented venue and may result in funding applications to the Open Fund for different types of activities than previously.

was also relaunched. This included an online application form and a lighter-touch application and assessment process for applications under £5,000.

²¹ Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Open Fund was Creative Scotland's principle open funding programme for projects. In March 2020, Creative Scotland launched Open Fund: Sustaining Creative Development, which aimed to enable organisations and individuals to explore ways of working that would help them to adapt and respond to the changing circumstances of the pandemic and resulting restrictions. In August 2021, Open Fund for Individuals

- While some cohort participants felt pressure to apply to Open Funds for new project activity when a continuation of activity previously funded under the Youth Arts Fund would be valuable and consolidate outcomes. However, others reported that they were able to get Open Fund funding for a second round of activities.
- The development of the future workforce support is critical and to support this, better partnerships with training and education establishments are needed. Creative Scotland as strategic lead could play a key role in this.
- It was suggested that partnerships between different funders such as trusts and foundations might help to raise the understanding of the value of youth arts activity and streamline the funding environment.
- The sector will continue to need resilience/ recovery support for some time.

Thoughts from Creative Scotland's Creative Learning & Young People Team

- The team recognised that Youth Arts Funding benefitted from having a sector focus as opposed to the Open Funds' spread across the wider landscape. This enabled swifter decision-making.
- It was felt that there is now greater visibility of the youth arts sector within Government post-pandemic and increased understanding of the need to deliver work to children and young people. This also helped to develop an understanding of the support needs for training and professional learning.
- There was an increase in the volume of applications to Creative Scotland's Open Fund. However, it was felt that a lack of a suite of options for follow-on support makes it harder for applicants to navigate or find clear progression pathways.
- The Youth Music Initiative Team has a newsletter that highlights other fund deadlines, based on the recognition that applying to other funds, especially new funds, requires capacity which is lacking in some

organisations. Many organisations know Creative Scotland and so prefer to apply there.

The Youth Arts Fund alongside other funding: reporting on the discussion among the grantee cohort

The following paragraphs summarise the thoughts of the grantee workshop participants around the coherence of Youth Arts Funding alongside other funding opportunities.

Organisations felt well supported through the Youth Arts Fund but reported that they can feel lost within Creative Scotland's Open Fund.

Some in the cohort reported that their **application to and delivery of a Youth Arts Fund project had made them more confident in developing an Open Fund application** for activity such as training or infrastructure support. They suggested that pre-Youth Arts Fund, they would have been unlikely to feel empowered to apply. It was suggested that encouragement to apply to the Open Fund could be further developed by extending participation in decision-making processes where appropriate as well as through peer-to-peer support. As Open Fund applications attract a wide range of activity, it was furthermore suggested that increased liaison between the Youth Arts team and the Open Fund would be welcomed.

Cohort participants regretted that Open Funds only covered 12-month periods and mentioned that resources involved in making Open Fund applications could be a barrier for smaller organisations.

For some venues, particularly regional theatres, engagement with young people was their only activity during Covid-19. This may have shifted their focus towards becoming a more youth-oriented venue and may result in funding applications to the Open Fund for different types of activities than previously. It was suggested that as a consequence of these changes of focus to young people, this may require re-alignment of Creative Scotland funding strands. For example, cohort participants reported that non-youth related work

was influenced by their success with the Youth Arts Fund and will influence attitudes to applications for Open Funds. It was suggested that this may result in Creative Scotland receiving applications for projects which previously may not have existed or applied to the Open Funds and may thus require new strands of activity and funds.

In terms of longevity of funding, **some cohort participants highlighted that they felt pressure to now apply to Open Funds for new project activity when a continuation of activity previously funded under the Youth Arts Fund would be valuable and consolidate outcomes.** Others however provided examples of receiving Open Funding for a second round of activities funded under the Youth Arts Fund and welcomed that.

A two-step approach, with light touch applications for pilot approaches, followed by more intensive process for follow-on projects would be welcomed and would enable the sector to continue exploration of new ways of working.

Focus on training and workforce development is essential in youth development. Future workforce support is critical and to support this, better partnerships with training and education establishments are needed. The arts sector is facing skills gaps, especially in digital areas but also across many technical grades. During Covid-19, many workers were made redundant and have chosen not to return. The freelance base is depleted, and urgent interventions are needed to align work in colleges and apprenticeships. In the past, there was specific funding for apprenticeships. It was suggested that increased liaison with training providers and colleges would sharpen and improve understanding of the need for alignment between course accreditation and the requirements of apprenticeships within the sector. As the strategic lead, Creative Scotland could help to develop this improved understanding, by representing the sector in discussions with training providers and colleges and liaising directly with the relevant government agency, such as Skills Development Scotland (SDS).

Funding partnerships with other funders offer potential to strengthen and deepen the availability of long-term funds. There is a need to spread understanding of youth arts across other funders, such as trusts and foundations. Many non-arts funders have little knowledge of the arts specific

sector despite the youth sector overall being well connected. Historically, this is because of a lack of capacity, assets and resource which leads to a lack of understanding of impact. There was concern about the decline in Local Authority funding. Regular Local Authority-funded provision could help evolve the mission of many organisations.

Particularly for new organisations, Creative Scotland funding brings industry awareness and profile, thereby raising visibility. This in turn can benefit applications to other funders, such as Trusts and Foundations. It is therefore important that future funding is accessible to small organisations with few full-time staff and little resource.

Other public bodies, such as Museums & Galleries Scotland, appear to fund similar demographics to the Youth Arts Fund for museum education. Cohort participants highlighted that if it does not already exist, **an overview of available pots of funding and their distribution would be valuable** and could contribute towards sector development.

Investment through the Youth Arts Fund made a difference to confidence levels, and through this, to resilience and recovery. Many organisations, for example those focused on disability, are some way from recovery and it is important that funding streams recognise these continuing requirements. Organisations which did not receive funding may be struggling. Future funds should monitor this across the sector. Direct liaison between Creative Scotland as strategic lead and the sector development bodies could enable the monitoring of this situation and could help to identify the best approaches to infrastructure development.

There was recognition of a **tension between targeted and longer-term development** in the allocation of funding. Transparency on how individual projects and organisations fit into the bigger picture could help avoid duplication and increase skills-sharing.

4.5 Summary of the ‘top lessons learned’ as identified by Creative Scotland’s Creative Learning & Young People Team

The workshop with Creative Scotland’s Learning & Young People Team highlighted a number of ‘top lessons learned’ through the set-up and administration of the Youth Arts Fund:

- **Learning from the devolved funding** approach (taken in e.g., the Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes) can be carried forward into aspects of the regular Time to Shine programme, such as the existing Nurturing Talent Fund. It shakes up the normal relationship between applicants and Creative Scotland, changes power dynamics and increases trust amongst both parties quickly.
- The Youth Arts Fund highlighted the potential for **light-touch processes** such as expressions of interest for smaller pots of funding. A “*low risk fund*” that Creative Scotland can be more flexible with in terms of building in experimentation and being based on robust but shorter administrative processes, is under consideration.
- Smaller pots of funding can be **more approachable**, and thus within reach of grassroots organisations. Artists who previously thought applications to Creative Scotland were beyond their reach are now part of the Creative Scotland grantee cohort due to the Youth Arts Fund, resulting in a positive feeling for all.
- There is an ongoing goal to increase the use of **digital tools** to make application and reporting processes easier for applicants.
- In reporting, the team is keen to build on an existing recognition of the power of **individual stories** to demonstrate change and impact.
- **The team is keen to retain the learning gained through the Youth Arts Fund and look for new opportunities to apply their learning.** It was a very successful fund, clearly meeting sector organisations’, professionals’

and children and young people’s needs. A continuation of this is equally necessary at this point as it was in 2020.

5. Concluding remarks and recommendations

This section summarises the findings of the report and draws out some key conclusions and recommendations.

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5.2 Recommendations76

5.1 Concluding remarks

The Youth Arts Fund was highly successful, with the set-up and implementation supporting the achievement of outcomes

Overall, the evidence suggests that from **inception and funding process through to implementation and impact, the Youth Arts Fund has been highly successful**. Grantees praised the speed in which funds were distributed, highlighting both the strong levels of trust between the funder and the recipient organisations coupled with a supportive environment. They were also highly positive about the breadth of what was funded, allowing organisations to take risks, and thus supporting work with new partners and participants facing barriers to engagement.

These latter points are backed up by the data and qualitative evidence, which demonstrate that broadly, **the fund was successful in reaching its outcomes**; both with regard to children and young people, as well as sector support. In reaching the Youth Arts Fund's intended outcomes, the **diversity of the different strands** was clearly beneficial. The Access and Targeted Funds, Small Grants Scheme and Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes clearly supported the children and young people-focused outcomes; and both the Access and Targeted Funds were also highly visible across the sector-focused outcomes achieved alongside the more sector focused strands of the fund, indicating how projects were able to **tie in youth-focused work with sector development activities**.

Above all, this suggests a key insight: the **value of, and ability to, trust organisations to deliver strong programmes** and achieve intended outcomes. The Youth Arts Fund's rapid grant distribution as emergency funding was based on reduced administrative demands and built-in **risk and experimentation** to allow the fund – and the individual projects – to be responsive in a crisis. And the evaluation shows that organisations can generally be trusted to achieve strong outcomes without the need for detailed monitoring. By and large, delivery organisations know their line of work, and demonstrated the **passion needed to find new ways of working to 'get it right'**: working with new partners, applying high levels of flexibility to

accommodate children and young peoples' needs, adapting projects along the way, and providing relevant support and training to staff, trainees, artists and partners. Given the opportunity, projects found new ways to reach out to priority groups including those facing barriers to engagement, by creating links with partners in other sectors and putting considerable effort into ensuring engagement was maintained. The latter in particular included a focus on children and young people's mental health needs.

In terms of the outcomes achieved, then, there is some evidence of *all* outcomes that the Youth Arts Fund set to achieve being reached. Evidence highlighted the considerable **potential in the notion of how interconnected outcomes** appear, allowing projects with certain key characteristics to achieve a wide range of mutually supportive outcomes around mental health, skills development and creativity. In this, delivery bodies were supported through fruitful collaborations and targeted training, which in turn increased the skills, knowledge and confidence among those delivering the projects.

Nevertheless, some outcome areas stood out, with **particularly encouraging findings** with regard the ability of creative projects across all art forms to lead to positive results **around mental health and wellbeing** and psychosocial development. Clearly, creative projects with the key characteristics identified in the report (see Figure 11) have real potential to support children and young people's mental health. Increased confidence, self-confidence and social/interpersonal skills were mentioned repeatedly, across age groups, funding strands and priority groups. This was a result of both the interconnectedness between these outcomes and many of the identified project characteristics as well as other outcomes. But it was also a result of delivery organisations being clearly attuned to and supportive of children and young people in developing in these areas. This is a significant achievement, particularly in the wake of exacerbated and ongoing mental health problems among children and young people due to the Covid pandemic, and the Scottish Government's recent focus on this area.

Connected to this, it was inspiring to see the **level and breadth of cross-sector partnerships that were established and valued**, with projects highlighting the positive impact of partnership working on project outcomes (in

particular reaching harder-to-reach group and working with children and young people with mental health issues) as well as the project partners themselves.

However, some achievements were felt to be fragile or less clear-cut, with questions around their longevity once the funding period is over

However, grantees made clear that **achieving outcomes around mental health and wellbeing requires time**, funds and a balancing act with other outcomes such as skills development. Moreover, while there is evidence of mental health being supported and cross-sector partnerships established, it is **unknown in how far these outcomes will last** beyond the time-limited projects themselves. Indeed, some projects hinted in particular at the **fragility of mental health outcomes**, reflecting both the need to nurture and build up confidence first, as well as the need to manage groups carefully to not endanger ground gained (e.g., around social anxiety). And while some encouraging instances were cited of children and young people being encouraged or enabled to continue their creative journey outside of the projects, it is unclear for how many such type of involvement will continue with the end of the projects, particularly among those facing ongoing barriers to engagement. Likewise, while some organisations or individuals reported seeking alternative sources of funding to support future (partnership) work; grantees were equally clear about the need for ongoing funding to support this work. The **need for longer-term/ follow-up funding** to allow for sufficient time to set up projects, build relationships and trust and develop ongoing projects to avoid the 'cliff-edges' of short-term funding, came through repeatedly among grantee's feedback.

Relatedly, this need for longer-term funding is linked to projects' abilities to create progression routes. Evidence was there with regard to raising motivation among children and young people to pursue their creative activity or consider a career in the sector – aided for example by projects' traineeship elements. There was also evidence of the programme supporting artists and professionals – including freelancers and those early on in their career – in raising their abilities, confidence and connections. However, **projects' ability to support young participants to transition from participation towards becoming or entering the cultural and creative workforce** was less clear. This in part lies

in the nature of the evaluation, which is unable to account for longer-term impact at this point but is clearly also hampered by short-term projects. This is particular the case where projects take place in areas where young people otherwise face persistent barriers to participation which cannot be removed by one short-term project alone. Encouraging signs were seen of individual projects making connections with education establishments to establish progression routes. However, if broader impact is to be achieved, this requires extended engagement, supported by longer-term funding as well as a **connected infrastructure**, over many years.

Lastly, connected to the issue of infrastructure, it was notable that relatively **few projects reported on creating any structured avenues for knowledge sharing about the projects across the sector**. While this may have happened in more informal ways, evidence is relatively low here. Given the innovative nature of the programme and individual projects, with new approaches taken to reach priority groups facing engagement barriers and to support wellbeing outcomes, more such sharing would no doubt be welcomed. It would be interesting to understand where the barriers to more knowledge-sharing lie and how this could be promoted going forward.

The evaluation approach highlighted some valuable insight into the use of case studies and a wider range of media to evidence impact

Reflecting on the evaluation approach itself, this yielded new insights by taking on a more experimentative approach to reflect both the creative nature of the work undertaken and the experimentative nature of the fund, as well as to test out the benefits of more open ways of reporting on success. The evaluation's focus on **strong case studies**, based not only on conversations and review of existing reports, but **including consideration of a wide range of media provided by the projects**, was successful. It allowed case study projects to demonstrate more strongly what they had done and achieved, and provided a starting point for conversations between the evaluators and the project leads around impact and the routes to impact, which may not have taken place without the trigger of images, videos, etc. Inclusion of other media also led to much richer case studies, which provide an inspiring picture of the individual

projects and – taken together – of the Youth Arts Fund programme as a whole. As such, we feel encouraged to recommend a scaling-up of this more personal and in-depth approach to gathering impact data for case studies alongside more streamlined end of project reports.

However, at the same time, we feel that the **offer for all projects to provide more visual multimedia evidence through an online tool** designed specifically for this evaluation instead of using the text-based Creative Scotland end of project report only was overall less successful and **yielded some learning** to be taken forward. Many projects preferred ‘simply’ completing the end of project reports and while some projects stood out in using the online form to explain *how* the uploaded media files demonstrated impact, others would have benefited from the kind of face-to-face conversations that took place with the case studies in order to draw out this information. This meant that not all of the uploaded information was immediately useful, lacking clarity as to what it was demonstrating and requiring too much ‘interpretation’ on behalf of the evaluators. It was also felt that inclusion of a wider range of media within the reporting lent itself particularly well to the case studies, rather than the overall evaluation report. There were clear merits in allowing projects to present more varied types of evidence – from images and videos, to uploaded evaluation forms, quotes, etc – but we would suggest that any future approaches of this kind taken either by Creative Scotland directly or by evaluation teams would benefit from:

- going for either the qualitative element of the end of project reports *or* an online form, rather than providing projects with a choice;
- providing clearer instructions as well as best/ worst examples to help respondents understand how to draw out *how* their media demonstrate evidence;
- limiting the number of items provided by organisations: the focus should be on quality, rather than quantity of e.g., images provided.

5.2 Recommendations

In summary, these conclusions lead to a **number of recommended areas for consideration** by Creative Scotland:

- Consider how the Youth Arts Fund’s funding approach - based on trust and simple processes, coupled with direct support where needed – can be replicated, built on and scaled across other Creative Scotland funding streams. Might there be an opportunity for Creative Scotland to act as thought leader around this more widely across the Scottish cultural funding sector?
- Consider how future projects could be shaped to ensure they have sufficient time and resource to build community links, develop trust and accommodate mental health support. For example, might there be opportunities to extend funding periods to include a dedicated set-up phase? Could the project characteristics identified among the Youth Arts Fund projects as contributing to mental health benefits be more formally embedded as requirements into future funding schemes?
- In this context, more generally review the joint project characteristics which were identified among the YAF projects as together contributing to reaching the intended outcomes for children and young people (see Figure 11). There may be value in testing these further through future evaluations of programmes aimed at children and young people. How could the identified characteristics be built on by Creative Scotland in designing future funding models for children and young people? How could Creative Scotland support or encourage project delivery bodies to incorporate these characteristics in their work? How can the identified key project characteristics be built on/ encouraged?
- Consider how longer-term impact may be enabled by ensuring that outcomes are sustained such as through longer-term funding streams (e.g., longer-term grants, progression routes between funding strands, allowing follow-up applications for successful projects); as well as through infrastructure support (e.g., supporting network creation between arts, youth and education organisations; expanding the youth traineeship model).

- Consider how structured knowledge-sharing could be better incorporated into funding programmes, e.g., through making this a more specific demand of funded projects, or through managing a programme-wide knowledge sharing strand alongside the funded projects. Might there be potential to share knowledge gained through the Youth Arts Fund - among projects and for the benefit of others in the sector - now that the project have all completed, for example through a knowledge-sharing event attached to the launch of the report?
- Throughout, grantees valued the opportunity to play a more 'driving' role in the evaluation through participation via the three cohorts. We would recommend that Creative Scotland encourage such grantee participation more widely in future research and evaluation work undertaken for Creative Scotland, to help distribute understanding of and improve a sense of connectedness with evaluation approaches.
- Incorporation of a wider range of media to evidence impact worked particularly well for the case studies; we recommend using a similar approach in future evaluations undertaken for Creative Scotland. If there are aims to continue building on the approach of requesting a wider range of media from across all funded projects alongside traditional end of project reports, evaluators should develop firmer guidelines on i) what type of output would be useful and ii) how this should be accompanied through interpretive text; and providing a limit to how many files should be uploaded.

6. Appendix

| | |
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| 6.1 Cohort participants | 79 |
| 6.2 Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund focus group participants | 80 |
| 6.3 Youth Arts Fund: list of all grant holders across the strands..... | 80 |

6.1 Cohort participants

Figure 17 Cohort 1 Participants

| Organisation | Fund strand | Grant size ²² | Art Form | Location |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| Rig Arts | Access Fund | Medium | Visual Arts | Inverclyde |
| Scottish Youth Theatre | Targeted Fund & YAF Bursary | Large & Medium | Theatre | Glasgow |
| Drake Music Scotland | Targeted Fund | Large | Music | National |
| Glasgow Museums Gallery of Modern Art | Access Fund | Medium | Visual Arts | Glasgow |
| Scottish Book Trust | Targeted Fund & Access Fund | Large & Small | Literature | National |
| Hot Chocolate Trust | Access Fund | Medium | Multi-art form (youth work) | Dundee |
| BIG Project | Access Fund | Medium | Music/ Drama | Edinburgh |
| Lyra/Imagine/Starcatcher consortium | Targeted Fund | Large | Multi-art form | Edinburgh/ Fife |
| Youth Highland | Access Fund | Medium | Film/Sound | Highlands & Islands |
| Wheatley Foundation | Small Grants | Medium | Arts/ Music | Glasgow |
| GlasgowCAN | Small Grants | Medium | Multi-art form | Glasgow |

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

Figure 18 Cohort 2 Participants (Case Studies)

| Project organisation | YAF Strand | Grant size | Art form | Location |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival | Access Fund & Small Grants | Medium | Music | Edinburgh |
| Passion4Fusion | Access Fund | Medium | Multi-artform | Edinburgh |
| National Galleries of Scotland | Access Fund | Medium & Medium | Visual Arts | National |
| Scottish Youth Theatre | Targeted Fund & YAF Bursary | Large & Medium | Theatre | National |
| Media Education/ The Dalry Film Club | Access Fund | Medium | Film | Rural (south west of Glasgow) |
| Engage Scotland | Targeted Fund | Medium | Visual Arts | National |
| Clifftop Projects | Access Fund & NTF – New Routes | Small | Multi-artform/ Participatory Arts | West Dunbartonshire |
| Falkirk Community Trust | Access Fund | Medium | Music | Falkirk |

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

Figure 19 Cohort 3 Participants

| Organisation | YAF Strand | Grant size | Art form | Location |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|----------|-------------------|
| All or Nothing Aerial Dance | Access Fund | Medium | Dance | Edinburgh |
| Articulate Hub | Access Fund & NTF – New Routes | Medium | Music | East Renfrewshire |

²² Small: below £20k / Medium: £20-£50k / Large: above £50k

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Youth Theatre Arts Scotland | Targeted Fund | Medium | Theatre | National |
| Clifftop Projects | Access Fund & NTF – New Routes | Small | Multi-artform/ Participatory Arts | West Dunbartonshire |
| Falkirk Community Trust | Access Fund | Medium | Music | Falkirk |
| Findhorn Bay Arts | Small Grants | Medium | Music/ Wider artform | Moray |
| Sistema Scotland | Targeted Fund | Large | Music | Dundee & Aberdeen |
| The Sound Lab | Access Fund | Medium | Music | National |
| Dunoon Burgh Hall Trust | Access Fund | Medium | Multi-artform | Argyll & Bute |

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

6.2 Youth Music Initiative Formula Fund focus group participants

The focus group included six project lead officers of five local authorities:

- North Ayrshire
- South Ayrshire
- North Lanarkshire
- Falkirk
- Dundee

6.3 Youth Arts Fund: list of all grant holders across the strands

Figure 20 Youth Arts Access Fund grant holders

| Grant holder | Funding | Funding Route | Local Authority |
|-----------------------------|---------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Muirhouse Youth Development | £14,600 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Sound Waves | £29,500 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Argyll & Bute |
| SEALL | £13,218 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Highland |
| Firefly Arts Ltd | £29,500 | Youth Arts Access Fund | West Lothian |
| Friends of the Pipe Factory | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| Aberdeen Performing Arts | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Aberdeen |
| Stirling Council | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Stirling |
| Beacon Arts Centre | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Inverclyde |
| Articulate Cultural Trust | £29,717 | Youth Arts Access Fund | East Renfrewshire |
| Heavy Sound | £25,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Findhorn Bay Arts | £29,680 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Moray |
| Scottish Book Trust | £14,224 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Impact Arts | £29,931 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Falkirk |
| 21 Common | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |

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|---|---------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Cutting Edge Theatre | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Glass Performance | £29,925 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Falkirk |
| PACE Theatre Company | £23,880 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Renfrewshire |
| D Happyness Drum Circles Ltd/Drumfun | £14,468 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Highland |
| RSNO | £12,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| The BIG Project | £29,878 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Station House Media Unit | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Aberdeen |
| Hope Amplified | £29,920 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| Falkirk Community Trust | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Falkirk |
| The Princes Trust | £23,857 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| Mugstock | £14,375 | Youth Arts Access Fund | North Lanarkshire |
| Cosgrove Care | £10,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| Oasis Youth Centre Management Committee | £14,900 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Dumfries and Galloway |
| Clifftop Project | £29,747 | Youth Arts Access Fund | West Dunbartonshire |
| Barrowland Ballet | £26,913 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| All or Nothing | £29,721 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Passion4Fusion | £29,786 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|------------------------|-------------------|
| ACTIONBOAT | £28,881 | Youth Arts Access Fund | South Lanarkshire |
| Atlas Arts | £14,935 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Highland |
| University of St Andrews | £29,962 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Fife |
| Dundendance Theatre | £29,558 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Aberdeenshire |
| The Sound Lab | £29,750 | Youth Arts Access Fund | National |
| Live Music Now Scotland | £29,673 | Youth Arts Access Fund | West Lothian |
| Edinburgh Youth Theatre | £14,207 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| A.R.Ts Afternoon | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| musicALL | £21,640 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| KOR!Records | £14,921 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| Sense Scotland | £29,671 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Aberdeenshire |
| Alchemy Film & Arts | £29,950 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Scottish Borders |
| Media Education CIC | £29,630 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Anim8s | £13,460 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Youth Highland | £28,450 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Highland |
| Action for Children | £14,999 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Renfrewshire |
| Loud n Proud | £26,940 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Renfrewshire |

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|----------------------------------|---------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Oliver Cox | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| Kibble Education and Care Centre | £14,707 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Renfrewshire |
| Horsecross Arts Ltd | £29,416 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Perth and Kinross |
| Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| Midlothian Young Carers Project | £7,768 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Midlothian |
| National Galleries of Scotland | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | East Ayrshire |
| Katie Fairgrieve | £11,929 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Scottish Borders |
| Interest Link Borders | £9,200 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Scottish Borders |
| Scottish Chamber Orchestra | £15,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Rednote Ensemble | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| Rock n Role Models | £11,200 | Youth Arts Access Fund | East Ayrshire |
| Caishnah Nevans | £5,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| Craigmillar Now | £13,770 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Children 1st | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | North Ayrshire |
| Moniack Mhor Writers Centre | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Highland |
| Hot Chocolate Trust | £29,996 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Dundee |
| RIG Arts | £29,846 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Inverclyde |

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|---|---------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Stills | £18,280 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Rock Trust | £10,202 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Hospitalfield Trust | £10,390 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Angus |
| Shetland Island Council | £13,100 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Shetland Islands |
| Edinburgh International Jazz and Blues Festival Ltd | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| An Lanntair | £14,863 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Comhairle nan Eilean Siar |
| Make Do and Grow | £11,610 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| Out of the Blue | £14,600 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| WHALE Arts | £21,925 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Sarah Gough | £26,546 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Glasgow East Arts Company | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| Lyth Arts | £26,418 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Highland |
| Dunoon Burgh Hall Trust | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Argyll & Bute |
| Ochils Youth Community Improvement | £14,770 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Clackmannanshire |
| Where's the One | £14,159 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Scottish Borders |
| Green Door Company | £20,946 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |
| YMCA Glenrothes | £13,279 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Fife |

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|-------------------------|---------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Samba Ya Bamba | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Renfrewshire |
| Reel Youth Media | £27,798 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Edinburgh |
| Soundplay Projects | £30,000 | Youth Arts Access Fund | North Lanarkshire |
| The Soundsystem Project | £27,857 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Dumfries and Galloway |
| Katy Wilson | £29,371 | Youth Arts Access Fund | Glasgow |

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

Figure 21 Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes grant holders

| Grant holder | Funding | Funding Route | Local Authority | Number of awards (to date) |
|--|---------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Children in Scotland | £33,200 | Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes | National | 106 |
| Lyth Arts Centre | £16,700 | Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes | Highland | 9 |
| Articulate Cultural Trust | £16,700 | Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes | tbc | 36 |
| Angus Place Partnership /Hospitalfield | £16,700 | Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes | Angus | 45 |
| Clifftop Projects | £16,700 | Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes | West Dunbartonshire | 39 |

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

Figure 22 Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants grant holders

| Grant holder | Funding | Funding Route | Local Authority | Number of small grants/freelance artists supported |
|---|---------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Aberdeen City Council, Creative Learning | £50,000 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Aberdeen | 25 |
| Action for Children | £50,000 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Edinburgh | 9 |
| Angus Council | £30,000 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Angus | 10 |
| Dundee Rep & Scottish Dance Theatre Limited | £40,625 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Dundee | 6 |
| East Ayrshire Council | £35,000 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | East Ayrshire | 15 |
| Edinburgh International Jazz and Blues Festival | £30,000 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Edinburgh | 20 |
| Fèis Rois | £48,000 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Highland | 16 |
| Fife Cultural Trust | £50,000 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Fife | 15 |
| Findhorn Bay Arts | £50,000 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Moray | 10 |
| Glasgow Connected Arts Network | £25,000 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Glasgow | 8 |
| Made in Midlothian CIC | £30,000 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Midlothian | 10 |
| North Edinburgh Arts | £36,025 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Edinburgh | 15 |
| PACE Theatre Company | £20,000 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Renfrewshire | 10 |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------|------------------|----|
| SambaYaBamba | £27,505 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Glasgow | 9 |
| Scottish Borders Council | £50,000 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Scottish Borders | 12 |
| Shetland Arts Development Agency | £39,150 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Shetland Islands | 5 |
| The Pier Arts Centre | £29,058 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Orkney Islands | 10 |
| Wheatley Foundation | £50,000 | Youth Arts Fund: Small Grants | Glasgow | 15 |

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

Figure 23 Youth Arts Targeted Fund grant holders

| Grant holder | Funding | Funding Route | Local Authority |
|--------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Drake Music Scotland | £61,880 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | City of Edinburgh |
| Feisean nan Gaidheal | £30,000 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | Highland |
| Feis Rois | £64,820 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | Highland |
| National Piping Centre | £37,477 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | Glasgow City |
| National Youth Choir of Scotland | £64,820 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | Glasgow City |
| National Youth Orchestra of Scotland | £30,000 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | Glasgow City |
| Scottish Music Centre | £64,820 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | Glasgow City |
| Tinderbox Collective | £64,820 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | City of Edinburgh |
| Scottish Book Trust | £64,820 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | City of Edinburgh |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Starcatchers (with Lyra & Imagine) | £193,605 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | City of Edinburgh |
| Toonspeak Young Peoples Theatre | £44,448 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | Glasgow City |
| YDance | £35,892 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | Glasgow City |
| Youth Theatre Arts Scotland | £48,939 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | City of Edinburgh |
| Engage | £40,744 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | National |
| Scottish Brass Band Association | £50,680 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | East Ayrshire |
| Sistema Scoland | £50,805 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | Stirling |
| Scottish Youth Theatre | £64,079 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | Glasgow City |
| Film Access Scotland | £40,744 | Youth Arts Targeted Fund | Aberdeen City |

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

Figure 24 Youth Arts Training & Workshops Fund grant holders

| Grant holder | Funding | Funding Route | Local Authority |
|-----------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Children in Scotland | £10,000 | Youth Arts Training & Workshops Fund | Online |
| YDance (Scottish Youth Dance) | £6,500 | Youth Arts Training & Workshops Fund | Online |
| Youth Theatre Arts Scotland | £6,500 | Youth Arts Training & Workshops Fund | Online |
| Music Education Partnership Group | £6,500 | Youth Arts Training & Workshops Fund | Online |
| Film Access Scotland | £6,500 | Youth Arts Training & Workshops Fund | Online |
| Engage | £6,500 | Youth Arts Training & Workshops Fund | Online |

| | | | |
|------------|--------|--------------------------------------|--------|
| Imagineate | £6,500 | Youth Arts Training & Workshops Fund | Online |
|------------|--------|--------------------------------------|--------|

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

Figure 25 Youth Arts Fund Bursaries grant holders

| Grant holder | Funding | Funding Route | Local Authority | Number of Bursaries supported |
|------------------------------|---------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| The Work Room | £20,000 | Youth Arts Fund Bursaries | Glasgow | 2 |
| Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop | £28,985 | Youth Arts Fund Bursaries | Edinburgh | 4 |
| Cove Park | £30,000 | Youth Arts Fund Bursaries | Argyll & Bute | 4 |
| Rumpus Room | £27,000 | Youth Arts Fund Bursaries | Glasgow | 3 |
| Eden Court | £26,600 | Youth Arts Fund Bursaries | Highland | 2 |
| Pier Arts Centre | £30,000 | Youth Arts Fund Bursaries | Orkney | 2 |
| Fife Contemporary | £12,600 | Youth Arts Fund Bursaries | Fife | 1 |
| Horsecross | £29,980 | Youth Arts Fund Bursaries | Perth & Kinross | 3 |
| The National Piping Centre | £23,819 | Youth Arts Fund Bursaries | Glasgow | 5 |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|---------|---------------------------|---------------------|---|
| AC Projects | £19,000 | Youth Arts Fund Bursaries | Stirling | 2 |
| Scottish Youth Theatre | £30,000 | Youth Arts Fund Bursaries | Glasgow | 5 |
| Clifftop Projects | £16,900 | Youth Arts Fund Bursaries | West Dunbartonshire | 2 |

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

BOP Consulting

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