

London 2012 Cultural Olympiad and Entrepreneurship: Creative Jobs Programme

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The Creative Jobs Programme (CJP) created forty traineeships for young unemployed Londoners, who were hosted by arts organisations across Central and East London. These training posts were open to 18-24 year olds who had been on Jobseekers Allowance for at least thirteen weeks, and were targeted at, but not restricted to, residents of the Olympic host boroughs.

The intention of the project was to attract young people who were enthusiastic about a career in the arts, willing to learn and had the right attitude, rather than those who had prior experience and/or qualifications.

The core aims of the programme were to:

- Address youth unemployment, particularly in deprived areas of East London

- Improve fair access to entry level jobs in the arts and cultural sector
- Diversify the workforce within the arts and cultural sector.

The project was funded by the London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), Legacy Trust UK, Arts Council England and commercial sponsors BP. It was managed and administered by the Royal Opera House, who drew on previous experience of leading the Cultural Quarter Programme, a Future Jobs Fund training scheme for London based arts organisations.

The scheme was devised with the intention to ensure that the Cultural Olympiad created a long-term legacy for young people, especially in East London, and to create a test bed for the future delivery of nationwide programmes of training and apprenticeships for young people in the arts and creative industries. The project was a strategic fit with ACE's Goal 4: 'the arts leadership and

workforce are diverse and highly skilled’.

All jobs created through the scheme were part-time (24 hours per week) six month fixed term contracts and were paid at National Minimum Wage. In addition to the core time spent at their host organisation, the trainees were offered a range of enrichment activities, including a series of compulsory masterclasses, access to a mentor working within the sector, the chance to work on a joint project with other trainees, and the chance to complete a Gold or Silver Arts Award.

Evaluation Methodology

This case study focuses on the outcomes of the Creative Jobs Programme for trainees, host organisations, and the wider cultural and creative sector. It explores the impact of the scheme’s link to the London 2012 Games and Cultural Olympiad, and draws out success factors and considerations for the development of future arts sector training programmes for young people.

This case study paper is based on the following material:

- Analysis of data from the job application forms of successful and unsuccessful applicants
- Data from a survey and exercises completed by successful applicants on induction day, exploring motivations, hopes and fears, and previous awareness of the Cultural Olympiad
- Data from an online survey of trainees at the midpoint of their placement, self-assessing their job readiness and confidence, and gathering qualitative feedback on their experiences (completed by 38 trainees)
- Data from a further survey of trainees at the end of their placement (completed by 25 trainees)
- A half-day focus group with eight trainees, delivered towards the end of their placement, exploring personal outcomes and gathering feedback on the practical elements of the scheme’s delivery
- A half-day focus group with seven members of staff from host employer organisations
- Telephone and face-to-face interviews with the project manager and members of the project steering group, representing the programme’s key funders.

The Creative Jobs Programme Legacy - Key Findings

CJP placements were completed in November 2012. In the current job market it is likely that the cohort may take time to find further paid employment, regardless of the quality of the training and mentoring they experienced on the scheme. There is limited information available about where trainees went after the programme finished, based on end of project survey data from 25 trainees. This suggests that half of the trainees had further employment lined up at the time they completed their placement and it is likely that the number of trainees who have gone on to employment will now be higher. Of these, 70% were already working in these roles at the time of their CJP placements, suggesting that some had been offered further work with their CJP placement host while others were continuing to work in part-time jobs they had been combining with their CJP placement. One respondent to the survey was returning to education. The remainder had no specific plans at the time they left their CJP placements, most of them stating that they were actively engaged in searching for work.

Based on the interviews carried out with trainees, project managers, host employers, and

members of the steering group, the likely legacies of the project beyond the employment statistics can be summarised as:

- a) Development of a cohort of 39 young people who are engaged, enthused and job ready, with much improved CVs and access to references from professionals in the sector.
- b) A network of arts organisations with growing experience in training young people from diverse backgrounds, leading to improved practice in their own organisations and the potential to share this practice as new apprenticeships schemes roll out. This may have particular benefits in East London, where there is now a network of experienced organisations with a combination of training skills and the ability to reach young people in the local community.
- c) Effective partnership working and networks emerging between large and small arts organisations in London, which could lead to a range of new collaborations.
- d) Improved communication and links between arts organisations and agencies helping young people to move into work and training, with the potential to build strong partnerships in the future.
- e) A strong exemplar of what the arts can do for unemployed

young people, which could help arts organisations to advocate for their role in the youth unemployment agenda, drawing down funding from Department of Business, Innovation and Skills and Department for Work and Pensions.

- f) Potential to broaden the programme out further, to commercial organisations in the creative industries.
- g) An immediate impact in terms of informing the national roll out of 6,500 apprenticeships and other training opportunities via the ACE Creative Employment Programme.

Creative Jobs Programme and the Cultural Olympiad

Research on this programme indicates that the Cultural Olympiad had influenced both the existence and the structure of the Creative Jobs Programme. The steering group, management team and employers were all certain that the scheme would not have been able to go ahead without the funding brought to the table via LOCOG and Legacy Trust UK. BP's support for the scheme was also part of the company's broader role as a sponsor of activities for young people within the Cultural Olympiad.

The funding available through the programme, including trainee wages, was important in bringing

smaller arts organisations on board, and thus it was the positioning of the scheme within the Cultural Olympiad which secured the involvement of East London based arts organisations. This enabled the partnership to grow from its original base of organisations involved in the earlier Cultural Quarter Programme, which had also been led by Royal Opera House. The movement into East London, while previous similar schemes had been focused on Central London, was seen as a significant and positive development.

Beyond the direct role of the funding drawn down through the link to the Cultural Olympiad, interviewees were confident that the impetus provided by the Games had had other positive impacts on the project. The project was a late development within the wider Cultural Olympiad programme, and the partnership of participating arts organisations under the management of the Royal Opera House was brought together very quickly in order to fit within the timeline for delivery of 2012 programming. Organisations were motivated in part by the opportunity to enhance their engagement with the Cultural Olympiad, especially those in East London which could use the programme to 'give something back' to the local community.

While it was not their main motivation, the marketing of the traineeships to young people as part of the Cultural Olympiad also had a small but significant impact on their enthusiasm to participate. The London 2012 brand, coupled with the high profile of many of the participating host organisations, made the project more attractive and visible to potential applicants than it would otherwise have been, and was seen by some as an indicator of quality.

Furthermore, some of the young people involved as trainees in this project worked on other projects directly related to the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. For example the traineeship based at the Geffrye Museum was located within a *Stories of the World*¹ project team.

Quantitative Data

The Applicants and Trainees

Overall, there were 267 applicants to the scheme, coming from across London and in two cases, from Hertfordshire.

¹ See Issue 3 within this Volume, dedicated to the *Stories of the World* programme, one of the original *Major Projects* that launched the Cultural Olympiad in 2008, involving work with young people acting as curators in museums across the UK.

Gender

Out of 263 candidates who answered the question on the application form about their gender, 129 (49%) were men and 134 (51%) were women. There was also an even gender split in the cohort of successful applicants.

Ethnicity and Residence

There was a broad mix of candidates from a range of ethnicities. Information on ethnicity is only available for 219 candidates and so it is difficult to report on the ethnicity of the full cohort of applicants with accuracy. However, based on the data collected, 60% of candidates came from a diverse range of BME groups, while 40% were White British. 39 candidates (18%) were Black African, while a further 30 (14%) were Black Caribbean, Mixed Caribbean, Black British or Black African/Caribbean.

There were smaller numbers of Asian candidates. Four described themselves as Asian, seven as Asian Bangladeshi, six as Asian Pakistani, four as Indian or Anglo Indian, and six as Asian Other, making up 27 of the candidates (12%). Three candidates were Chinese. Other candidates described themselves as Turkish, Irish, Moroccan, Greek Cypriot, Filipino, Hispanic, Latin American and North African.

The applicants came from across London. In total, 91 candidates (34%) lived in the Olympic host boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, Greenwich, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest. Of these around a third came from Newham, suggesting that the effectiveness of relationships with Job Centres and other agencies may have been particularly strong there.

Educational Qualifications and Work Experience

38% of applicants were educated to degree level, with 96 applicants holding a degree and a further five having a postgraduate qualification. Graduates were over-represented amongst successful candidates compared to the wider cohort of applicants, with 22 out of the 40 (55%) holding a degree and one a Masters degree. Only two applicants did not list any qualifications on their application form.

65% of the trainees had already had a job since leaving education, and 80% had undertaken unpaid or voluntary work. Most (73%) felt that their voluntary work had been or would be of benefit in finding future employment. The trainees had been unemployed for an average of seven months prior to joining the Creative Jobs Programme.

The Host Organisations

The cohort of 23 host organisations was a diverse mix of large and small arts organisations, based in Central and East London. One host, Hemingway Design, was a private sector design company. The host organisations offered a wide variety of roles, in departments including visitor services, marketing, learning, design, multimedia, retail, IT, collections, and archives.

Several organisations took on more than one trainee, with the majority choosing to place them in separate departments.

Programme Impacts

Impacts on young people

Every respondent to the final trainee survey felt that the Creative Jobs Programme had improved their future career prospects, with 80% thinking it had improved them 'a lot' and the remaining 20% 'a little bit'.

It's so valuable to have this on your CV when there was nothing there before (CJP trainee)

The programme appears to have been highly beneficial to young people, in that they believe that it

has had a positive impact on their future employability. They enjoyed the opportunity to work in the arts, meet new people, learn and practise skills, and make contacts with people who could help them to establish a career in the sector. Overall, trainees were strongly convinced that the scheme had enhanced their transferable skills, their confidence, and as a result, their employability.

Most of the trainees were seeking to develop careers in the arts. However others have moved into other fields, including teaching, law, management consultancy and the travel industry.

The midpoint survey indicated that what the trainees most valued about the Creative Jobs Programme was the time they spent working in an arts organisation. This finding was backed up in the focus group discussion, where the young people expressed frustration at the part time hours, and the compulsory masterclasses, because they were taking them away from time in their organisation, which they considered to be the most valuable aspect of the scheme. However in the end survey the trainees were more likely to make positive references to the masterclasses aimed at improving their skills in writing job applications and interviews, and to the impact of having a mentor, suggesting that this became more

important to them as they neared the end of their time on the programme. The chance to meet new people and the chance to learn new skills were also rated very highly in the survey. The fact that they were being paid was very important (for their self-esteem as much as for practical reasons, as around 80% of the cohort had worked unpaid before), as were the professional contacts they were developing in their chosen field.

In the focus group, trainees made the following list of personal outcomes from the programme:

- Experience in their chosen field
- Growth in confidence
- Generic office/organisational skills/professional practice – job readiness
- Being part of a team
- Working with other people – staff, public, children and vulnerable young people
- Teaching skills
- Archiving/library/database skills
- Networking/contacts
- Strengthened CV
- Use of software
- Communication skills
- Opportunities to try new things and see what they were capable of.

Importantly, the trainees in the focus group could all point to contributions they had made to their host employers, whether these were practical tasks they

had completed or fresh perspectives they were able to bring to their work. A small number of trainees left their placements early to take up places in higher education, and one trainee was sacked for misconduct, but on the whole retention across the scheme was very high.

Impacts on employers

Employers were impressed by the quality of the trainees. They felt the benefits to their organisations far outweighed the costs in terms of time spent on training, supervision and administrative tasks relating to the trainees. For most attendees of the employer focus group, the trainees were doing a 'real' job, which made a real contribution to the running of their department; they were valued and would be missed.

Participating in the programme had a range of impacts on the host employers. Working with the trainees and dealing with their day-to-day pastoral issues had been a learning curve for some organisations, building their confidence to take on young people as employees who may have specific support needs because of difficult personal circumstances.

It is clear that the employers see the hosting of training placements as a social responsibility distinct from any

other unpaid internships or informal work experience opportunities. This is because they reach young people who cannot access these opportunities due to a lack of financial support or social networks. In some cases, the CJP prompted wider organisational thinking around jobs and young people and is likely to lead to longer-term changes in policy and practice. For instance, TATE instigated a change in its policy, and will no longer offer unpaid internships. All their interns will be paid the London Living Wage and, during this project, TATE supplemented the wages of their CJP trainee to meet that standard. Other examples include the British Museum, which is considering recruiting apprentices to entry-level jobs in their front of house team. Further, the National Portrait Gallery paid the fees to enable their trainees to accredit their experience through a NVQ qualification in addition to their participation in the Arts Award.

All of the staff interviewed through the focus group stated that they would be keen for their organisations to take part in a similar scheme again.

Impacts on the cultural sector

The scheme has had a range of benefits for the wider arts sector, with the potential for these to continue beyond the end of the programme.

Firstly, the structure of the programme provided a tried and tested networking and partnership building opportunity for arts organisations and their staff. As a result of the connections made through CJP and its predecessor scheme, small organisations are building relationships with large organisations based on their mutual interests and their different areas of expertise. There is the potential for this to lead in a number of directions, and some partners are already looking at developing joint initiatives.

The project has tested how best to implement training and entry level job schemes in the sector, and feedback from the trainees has provided a useful set of guidelines around how to create recruitment, induction, and training processes which work. These can be implemented in future schemes. The programme's management team have built their contacts with agencies and Job Centres across London, enabling them to reach a more diverse pool of applicants, and individual host employers have been impressed by the quality and diversity of applicants available through Job Centres, leading them to consider increasing their use of Job Centres in recruitment for a wider range of posts. This has the potential to lead to 'a change in the recruitment culture in the sector' (Andrea Stark, ACE) and

widen the diversity of people going into careers in the arts.

On a more strategic level, the scheme has provided a valuable template for arts organisations working together in clusters, which could enable the sector to create traineeships in volume, and has demonstrated that the arts is a valuable training ground for developing a wide range of transferable skills. The successful inclusion of Hemingway Design within the programme also highlights the potential for more training and development activity delivered jointly across the subsidised arts sector and commercial creative industries.

Finally, the project has created a pool of experienced, talented and qualified young people who are ready to take on their first professional jobs in the sector.

Wider impacts

Beyond the arts sector, it is possible to speculate that the scheme could have benefits in the wider community.

The project has started a dialogue between the arts sector and agencies working with unemployed young people, such as Job Centres, booster schemes like START, and the Princes' Trust. This could be built on to ensure that the arts sector can influence how young people are

prepared to apply for jobs, and position creative and cultural organisations as potential employers for a wider range of young people with a diverse range of skills, not just those who self-identify as creative and keen to work in the arts.

The project has employed young people from disadvantaged communities in East London and further afield, and the presence of young advocates for the arts and their local arts venues in those communities may be a benefit.

Finally, the project has created an exemplar which stakeholders can use to talk about the high quality of training in the arts sector, its understanding of young people's learning needs, and its potential contribution to the issue of youth unemployment. It will be necessary for the arts to engage in policy discussions beyond the sector in order to secure the funding and support necessary to roll out future training and employment schemes. This programme enables the sector to go into those discussions with experience and a strong track record.

Programme Management

Structure

Interviews with members of the steering group and representatives of the host employers suggest that the role

played by the project management team at the Royal Opera House was very significant in delivering the project effectively within a tight timeframe, and enabling smaller arts organisations to participate, through the provision of which included communicating with Job Centres, shortlisting applicants, co-ordinating masterclasses, mentoring and group project activity, and managing the Arts Award element of the programme. Individual members of the team were highly praised by interviewees. The need for an organisation to act as a hub and deliver administrative functions for a wider cohort has been picked up by the steering group as an important consideration in the delivery of future jobs programmes. Trainees also made reference to the role of the Royal Opera House team in supporting their placements:

Knowing the CJP leaders were an email away was comforting if extra support was needed. (Trainee)

However throughout the interviews, especially the focus group with trainees, it appeared that a small number of employers were not fully aware of all of the aspects of the programme, perhaps because they had not been actively involved in its development. Trainees therefore had to negotiate and explain to their employers when they

needed time to participate in masterclasses or group project activities.

The application process

Members of the project steering group were keen to challenge the recruitment culture in arts organisations through the delivery of this project, encouraging employers to think beyond their usual recruitment methods and recruit young people on the basis of their attitude and potential rather than their levels of qualifications and experience.

Focus group interviews with employers suggested that in many organisations this change had taken place.

It's actually a very different interview process, because you weren't picking the best candidate for the job in terms of skills levels... we were looking at who would be best at doing this job for six months, and it's not people who would be quite happy to wander around the departments and have a look at the objects but have no interest in customer services. We thought, you've got no skills, you've got no qualifications, but you've got the right attitude, you look like you want to work with the public. (Host employer)

The process of shortlisting and choosing trainees pushed host employers beyond their comfort zone. They were keen to ensure that they considered who would most benefit from the opportunity as well as identifying those who were capable of fulfilling the role. The host employers felt that this had been successful. All felt that their trainees would have found it difficult to find their first paid work in the arts because of a lack of contacts, skills and experience, and in some cases qualifications, but that they were capable of developing careers in the sector and were making a strong contribution in their role.

Trainees reported that they had been placed in organisations which were a good fit in terms of their interests and aspirations.

I wasn't expecting to be put in a role where I would fit so well, or that would suit me so well either. (Trainee)

There was concern expressed by both employers and trainees that Job Centres and other support organisations for unemployed people do not promote such schemes effectively and are not adequately supporting potential candidates. Employers felt that some of the young people they interviewed had been inadequately prepared by Job

Centres, and they were not able to respond well enough to interview questions, or have the confidence to 'be themselves'. There is a need for further information sharing and understanding between Job Centres and employers so that a wider diversity of unemployed young people are in a position to compete for traineeships and entry level jobs in the arts.

The induction and training process

Employers were clear that trainees needed to go through the same induction process as any member of staff. In addition, staff were mindful of the fact that trainees, in many cases, had not spent time in a professional workplace before, and would need things explaining to them which other new starters would take for granted.

We got them immediately on all the training courses... and the same induction course that all new staff training in that role would get. (Host employer)

From the trainee's perspective, it was clear that how they were introduced to their colleagues could set the tone for much of the rest of their placement:

My line manager ... sent round an email asking everyone to take me for coffee and tell me stuff, she sorted things out for me, and that made me want to prove that I was as good as she expected me to be. (Trainee)

Every time my manager introduced me... she made a point of saying I was only going to be there for six months. I'd started with the enthusiasm that I was going to work really hard to do the best I can to give myself a chance of having a job, and that really killed it. (Trainee)

It was important to trainees that they felt they had a clearly defined role which made a genuine contribution to the running of their department. In this respect, the part-time nature of the scheme was problematic for some employers and trainees, preventing trainees from being involved in all aspects of the work of their department.

If you're working three days a week and you're a marketing assistant, you've got to make sure that the clients who have booked their shows into your theatre, you have constant communication with them, and me working three days a week, ... I couldn't keep on top of it. (Trainee)

It's important that people feel that they're making a meaningful contribution. They don't want to feel like they're just shadowing all the time, they want to do something that will be a legacy when they've gone. They can say 'that's on the website, I did that'.
(Employer)

I've done internships before. They treated us like interns at the start, and now they treat us like employees, but I guess it takes a while for them to learn what your skills are. (Trainee)

Mentoring and masterclasses

All of the respondents to the end of placement survey agreed that they had been adequately supported on the programme, with 65% agreeing with the statement 'I received lots of support' and 35% agreeing that they had received 'adequate support'.

The programme included monthly masterclasses delivered by staff working in various roles within cultural organisations in London.

The focus group and end of placement survey findings suggest that trainees placed more emphasis on the value of mentoring and masterclasses at

the end of their placements, when they were considering their next steps and applying for jobs. In the earlier months when trainees were focusing on developing their skills in their job roles, they tended to see masterclasses as an unwelcome distraction. Trainees clearly felt that the best use of masterclasses was to help them with the generic skills which would help them to secure employment: specifically support with CVs and job application forms, interviews and presentation skills.

There was no consensus on the best way to deliver these masterclasses. In the previous Culture Quarter Programme run by the Royal Opera House, classes were weekly and the feedback from trainees was that this took them out of their organisations for too long. However there was a feeling amongst employers who had experienced both schemes that, this time, the trainees had not bonded as effectively as a cohort, because they did not meet often enough.

Experiences of mentoring also varied widely. Two interviewees from the steering group had acted as mentors for trainees on the programme and felt that this had worked well and that the process had contributed to the personal development of their mentees. One trainee had had very high quality support:

I've got a mentor who's read through my applications and helped me out, she got me an interview, she's doing exactly what I wanted. (Trainee)

I was very lucky to have a wonderful line manager and a really inspirational mentor. (Trainee)

However other trainees had not been able to develop good relationships with their mentors and were not sure of the value of mentoring.

Qualifications

The programme offered trainees the opportunity to complete a Gold or Silver Arts Award through the completion of a group project with other trainees. The provision of the Arts Award as part of the scheme was difficult, and several trainees dropped out. The main reasons for this were that they did not see the benefit as they already had higher level qualifications, and that they were struggling to fit in their Arts Award work because they were already juggling two jobs. The trainee focus group did recognize that Arts Award could be of great value to a trainee without other qualifications.

Employers were also unsure about the value of the Arts Award, with most stating that

they would prefer to see candidates with NVQ qualifications as these demonstrated their ability within a workplace.

Conclusion: key success factors

There were a number of elements identified by trainees, employers and the project steering group as being key to the successful delivery of the project. These were:

- Payment of trainees – 67% of trainees stated that they would not have been able to take up their place if the placement had been unpaid. A wage is vital to reach young people from a diversity of backgrounds, with travel costs as well as living expenses being a challenge. Further, the trainees held the perception that unpaid internships and placements would not be recognised by the Job Centre, and they would be placed under pressure to take any paid opportunities even if the placement was more appropriate to their chosen career.
- The central funding of the trainees' wages enabled small arts organisations to benefit from the scheme that otherwise could not have taken part.
- There was a wide range of roles across the programme, broadening the potential pool of

applicants, and demonstrating the value of training within an arts organisation to young people who intend to develop careers in other fields, such as marketing, IT, finance and event management.

- Young people were referred through various agencies, some particularly focused on working with harder-to-reach young people and the longer-term unemployed. This enhanced the diversity within the applicant cohort.
- Central management and administration of the project by ROH was a significant benefit which enabled smaller arts organisations with limited capacity to participate in the scheme.
- A mixed cohort including those with and without degrees – the programme recognised that even graduates experience barriers to working in the arts sector, and the opening of the scheme to graduates enabled roles to be created (for example in graphic design) in departments where degree level skills are an essential prerequisite.
- The quality of recruitment, induction and line management processes was high, and as a result, despite the diversity of organisations and applicants, the retention rate for the scheme was very high.

Research credits

Kate Rodenhurst is a Research Associate of the Institute of Cultural Capital (ICC).

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