

The KnowledgeEAST Creative Impact project:

A position paper and user's guide

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This paper is an outcome of the KnowledgeEAST Creative Impact project. **KnowledgeEAST** is a knowledge transfer programme bringing together the higher education institutions in the Thames Gateway region, funded by the Higher Education Council of England (HEFCE) as part of its Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) as well as the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and London Development Agency. KnowledgeEAST's aim is to unlock the academic expertise within the region's HE institutions to help build the economic and social wealth of the region.

The **Creative Impact project** is a small partnership within the larger KnowledgeEAST partnership, between Trinity College of Music and the Laban (now merged as Trinity LABAN) and Goldsmiths College. Trinity and Laban, as well as being leading higher education institutions in their respective performing arts – music and dance – have developed a significant portfolio of projects using the performing arts in social contexts in the communities of the Thames Gateway. As arts practitioners committed to the social and economic development of their communities, they have identified a need for wider recognition of the potential and value of the arts, and particularly performing arts, in addressing social exclusion. Crucially, there is (a) a need to articulate the value of this sort of work in a language understood by both the 'regeneration industry' and its funders *and* arts practitioners, and (b) a need for more robust methods of evidencing this value in a way that is user-friendly for practitioners and meaningful for the broader regeneration sector.

As part of the project, then, TrinityLABAN, working with Goldsmiths College's Office for Business and Community Development (PureGoldsmiths), commissioned the **Centre for Urban and Community Research (CUCR)** at Goldsmiths to review the literature around this field and produce a user-friendly evaluation Toolkit for evidencing the value of this sort of work. CUCR has considerable experience of qualitative evaluation and of regeneration policy. In particular, we have a wealth of experience in working to share qualitative research skills with residents in action research projects, and in using the arts (particularly the visual arts) in social research.

The partnership assembled an **Advisory Group**, composed of academics with a range of relevant expertise and professionals active in the cultural industries and economic development, to guide this work. The membership is listed as an appendix at the back of this document. The thinking involved in this project was a collective endeavour, heavily shaped by the contribution of the Advisory Group.

In thinking through these issues, we used two projects as examples: Laban's **Pick Up The Pace**, a project to include young men in dance, funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and Trinity College of Music's **Isle of Dogs Music**, a range of projects to involve residents of the Isle of Dogs of different generations and ethnicities in music, funded by the Isle of Dogs SRB and HSBC.

Our research questions were:

1. How can we quantify **the impact of music and dance** as examples of cultural and creative activity on the economic development of an area and the communities within it? What might the **key indicators** be? What **methodologies** might be used?
2. What is the **impact of the work that higher educational institutions do** with their communities outside of teaching and research? What in particular are the **'soft' impacts** on the lives of the young people they engage with?
3. How can we undertake **evaluative research** about non-verbal forms of expression? What are the most useful **tools**?

The team at CUCR (involving Alison Rooke, Ben Gidley, Thomas Zacharias and Jen Tarr) have produced a Toolkit and a Literature Review, which are available from us at [-----](#). This document sets out the principles we have come to through the project and introduces the Toolkit and Literature Review. It has five sections:

1. The Value of the Arts in Social Regeneration
2. Building Local Cultural Capital through the Arts
3. A Dizzying Array of Indicators
4. The KnowledgeEAST Creative Impact Indicators
5. Evidencing the Value of Creativity

1. *The Value of the Arts in Social Regeneration*

The three key findings of our literature review were that:

- Since the 1990s, *the argument in UK for the value of the cultural and creative sector in regenerating regions and neighbourhoods has been substantially won*. National and local policy makers and funders recognise the work of the sector. The New Labour government's Cultural Industry Task Force and PAT 10 investigation, as well as the work of Comedia (and especially Landry and Matarasso) were key landmarks in this argument.
- However, *this understanding has been uneven*. The value of the cultural and creative sector to physical and economic regeneration has been extremely widely recognised (in part due to high profile physical projects like the Baltic Exchange, the new Laban building or the Tate Modern). But the value of the sector to *social* regeneration has been less widely recognised. Likewise, the value of the cultural and creative industries has been extremely widely recognised (e.g. in the 'cultural quarter' or 'creative hub' economic development strategies). But the value of smaller scale arts projects has been less widely recognised.
- There is, however, considerable *evidence for the value of the arts* – particularly through small scale projects – in supporting the social regeneration of communities.

Some of the issues that emerged were:

- Funders and regenerators think in terms of hard outcomes while arts practitioners think in terms of soft outcomes – and arts projects produce soft rather than hard outcomes. This contributes to the marginalisation of arts-based social regeneration in contrast to 'harder' creative industry economic development.
- There are major translation problems: communicating between the arts and regeneration is difficult. Often funders and policy-makers know that arts-based projects are valuable, but have no language to articulate that value. Because of this lack of a language, funding is more likely to go to a 'harder' project.
- Deprived communities are thought of in social policy contexts as lacking in culture, whereas it is clear to arts practitioners that deprived communities possess a wealth of culture as collateral. This can be capitalised on in terms of place marketing and the visitor economy, but it can also be invested in a range of other ways.
- Economic development is increasingly focusing on building enterprising behaviour in deprived communities. However, it is not widely recognised that creativity and the creative process involves taking risks, a key element in enterprising behaviour.

Examining the Pick Up The Pace (PUTP) and Isle of Dogs Music (IoDM) projects, we felt that there were at least three ways in which we could

demonstrate the value of such projects, in a language that mediated between that of the regeneration industry and that of arts practitioners.

- **Knowledge Transfer:** Knowledge Transfer is recognised in economic development policy as a key to making regions more innovative and competitive. We felt that the PUTP and IoDM projects offered a model of knowledge transfer which focused on building individuals' and neighbourhoods' capacity for creativity. Creativity, we observed, involves a level of confidence and risk-taking. This in turn is transferable to other spheres of life for the neighbourhoods and the individuals, building their human capital – thus contributing to economic and social regeneration.
- **Human capital:** It was clear from PUTP and IoDM that participants' cultural vocabularies expanded. We believe that expanding cultural vocabularies can be seen as building human capital. The model of inclusion evidenced in IoDM involved recognising and valuing the creative practice that already existed on the Island – for example, by unearthing hidden musical cultures and supporting them to perform before varied audiences – and investing in it as cultural capital. Seen as capital, an area's cultural life can then be seen collateral, as an asset, to be invested in to help regenerate an area.
- **A geography of inclusion:** Arts projects have a special ability to break down boundaries and build cohesion. The model of inclusion evidenced in PUTP was about bringing young men from 'excluded' areas of South London *into* a space of high cultural capital, both literally, through bringing them to Laban, and through including them in the high cultural capital artform of contemporary dance. This constitutes an expanded cultural geography, a geography of inclusion rather than exclusion. The Isle of Dogs is characterised not just by lines of exclusion but also by lines of division: between Bengali and white residents, between generations, between the estates and the new luxury flats and offices. IoDM was able to bring participants together from across this divided community through music – office workers in the new financial district of Canary Wharf were brought together with young people from the Islands housing estates; mainly Bengali schoolchildren performed WWII songs to mainly white elders. This geography of inclusion clearly contributes to building not just 'cohesion' but understanding – and even celebration – across lines of difference.

2. Building Local Cultural Capital through the Arts

We argue that a useful framework for understanding the value of the arts is through the metaphor of capital. 'Social capital', a term developed by Bourdieu, Putnam and Coleman, has been well taken up by policy makers in recent years. Although the term is not without its problems, we believe that the arts can contribute significantly to a community's social capital. We also believe that Bourdieu's concept of 'cultural capital' is useful for thinking about

the impact of the arts on a community. These terms and their lineage are explored fully in the Literature Review which accompanies this document.

Together with our Advisory Group, we have used the following constellation of concepts to rethink the value of the arts in social regeneration.

Risking: A key element in enterprising behaviour, as increasingly recognised in government economic development policy (e.g. in the recent Local Enterprise Growth Initiative), is the *capacity to take risks*. Creativity, as it is understood by arts practitioners, is also in part about a risk-taking capacity. This can be illustrated by the Laban's Pick Up The Pace project, where young men, whose particular version of masculinity proscribes certain ways of holding one's body and touching other men's bodies, are forced to use their body differently through dance, which constitutes a significant risk. Thus they are developing not just the skill of a new form of dance, but also the capacity to take risk in their personal lives. This risk-taking behaviour fostered through creativity is transferable to other aspects of life, as an element in enterprising behaviour.

Active citizenship: In a mass market society, individuals are often positioned as passive consumers of culture and civic life. The notion of active citizenship, if understood in an enlarged sense, can be about taking the risk of a step from passive consumption to active production of culture and civic life. Performing in a concert, for example, can be seen as such a step. When residents do this collectively, as a community, performing for each other, local citizenship is enriched. We think of this in terms of *celebration*, one of the keywords of the Isle of Dogs Music Project – neighbours producing, consuming and celebrating local culture together.

A culture of celebration: While the government stresses 'cohesion' (which is about creating community through sameness) as a solution to living with difference, we stress instead celebration (which is about appreciating difference). Performing arts facilitate recognition of one's own culture through openness to other cultures: by performing to others one presents oneself and one's culture to others; by acting as an audience, one learns to appreciate others. The arts' ability to tell stories makes it a special vehicle for valuing and sharing different local histories and traditions. On the Isle of Dogs, this might mean celebration between old and new *neighbours* - both in terms of neighbours from different ethnic groups and in terms of gentrifying residents moving to traditional working class areas – and between *generations*. In terms of social capital, all this constitutes both 'bonding' and 'bridging' social – binding neighbourhoods together and bridging divides between communities.

Geographies of inclusion: One of the key risks creativity encourages is the risk to enter spaces of 'high' cultural capital. For young people from an estate in Deptford, for example, to enter a 'high' cultural capital like Laban is a risk. By breaking down the invisible exclusions that protect such spaces, a project like Pick Up the Pace creates an inclusive geography where a geography of exclusion existed before. At the same time, performing arts have the ability to create spaces of celebration within neighbourhoods. We can see this as creating civic space outside the traditional spaces of representational

democracy, where people can venture the risk to enter into dialogue with difference in a safe way through performance.

Community cultural capital: Dominant society sees deprived neighbourhoods (both white working class residents and non-white residents) in terms of deficit and lack. Thus, when Isle of Dogs Music began, Trinity was told there was no cultural activity on the Island. While deprived communities lack economic wealth, in fact they are often rich in 'cultural collateral'. So, Isle of Dogs Music found all sorts of informal music activity, from elderly members of the Peking Opera living on a housing estate, to Somali string ensembles, to older white residents whose memories of the war were carried in popular song. Arts projects can allow residents to take the risk of recognising, increasing and investing in their own cultural capital. This can include their expectations about what is possible and desirable, values, meanings and dreams. Arts projects can also facilitate mainstream organisations to recognise and invest in residents' cultural capital

Embodied cultural capital: On the individual level, the level of the individual body, performing arts enhance embodied skills and competences. Young people use the phrase 'flexing' to talk about the embodied skills valued in street culture. Performing arts can help people to 'flex', to take bodily risks. This might mean breaking out of what Bourdieu calls 'the habitus', the forms of embodied behaviour we are trained into through our social and cultural location – as with the example of the young men touching in a dance project mentioned above. Thus creativity in the arts practitioner's sense of or talent, performance skill, or virtuosity is a good in itself, and transferable to other spheres of life.

3. A Dizzying Array of Indicators

We found through our literature review that numerous studies had put forward what amounted, in the words of one of our Advisory Group members, to a "dizzying array of indicators" for the value of the arts. In terms of listing outcomes and indicators, particularly relevant is Michelle Reeves *Measuring the Economic and Social Impact of the Arts*, which summarises:

- 50 social impacts identified for Comedia by Matarasso (1997)
- Williams (1997) key outcomes
- Institute for Employment Studies (2000) soft outcomes
- QUEST's key performance indicators (2000)
- DETR Framework and Menu of 29 indicators of sustainable development
- Health Development Agency (2000) impact on health indicators of art projects

Helen Jermyn's *The Art of Inclusion* (2004) also helpfully summarises some of the indicators put forward by previous studies.

4. *The KnowledgeEAST Creative Impacts*

In the light of this dizzying array and of the two helpful summaries, we decided that there was a need to identify from the list indicators that were:

- particularly relevant to the sorts of projects we're interested in (exemplified by Pick up the Pace and IoD Music)
- meaningful to arts practitioners and HEIs
- meaningful to regeneration agencies/funders

We have used the cultural capital framework set out above to organise these indicators, which we are calling the KnowledgeEAST Creative Impacts. The Toolkit which accompanies this paper starts off with a 'Translation Guide', listing key indicators from the literature and translating between the type of language practitioners use and the type of language regeneration agencies and funders use. In summary, the Impacts we are proposing are:

Creativity as enterprising behaviour: capacity to take risk (i.e. creativity as transferable skill)

Active citizenship: no longer passive consumers of culture and civil life – the arts as something you do as well as consume. Neighbours as audiences: local people consuming and celebrating local culture together.

A culture of celebration: Recognition of one's own culture – through openness to other cultures. Tolerance and celebration between old and new neighbours. Valuing and sharing local history and traditions. Developing understanding and celebration across generations (bonding and bridging social capital)

Spaces of celebration: Cultural spaces as civil spaces – spaces of dialogue and risk.

Community cultural capital: Residents taking the risk of recognising, increasing and investing in their own cultural capital (including expectations about what is possible and desirable, and values, meanings and dreams). Other organisations recognising, increasing and investing in residents' cultural capital

Embodied cultural capital: Flexing – increased embodied cultural capital (taking bodily risks, breaking out of the habitus). Enhancing creativity: Developing creative talent and performance skill (i.e. creativity for creativity's sake)

5. *Evidencing the Value of Creativity*

When we were commissioned to develop an evaluation Toolkit, we thought there was a need to provide a step by step guide – primarily for arts practitioners and HEIs engaged in community development/social inclusion projects – to doing evaluations of creative-based projects. However, as we

progressed through the literature review, we increasingly felt that this need have actually been met, through tools such as:

- The Arts Council's *Self-Evaluation* information sheet. This sets out how an arts project might go about the process of an evaluation.
- Evaluation for All. This is an open-access web-based guide to evaluation for practitioners of social/regeneration projects.
- The Scottish Arts Council's creative project evaluation toolkit. This is a comprehensive web-based interactive process open to users who register.
- The Arts Council's Partnerships for Learning. This is a a step-by-step guide to evaluating arts education projects

In light of this, we produced something slightly different. The Toolkit that accompanies this document provides, first, a **translation guide** setting out the Creative Impacts in the language of practitioners and regenerators. Then, we provide a **matrix** through which each of these impacts can be evidenced in very concrete indicators. For example, the impact we summarise as 'Cultural spaces as civil spaces: spaces of celebration, dialogue and risk' can be evidenced through qualitative indicators like 'Participants express different views and values – these might be challenged, but never in a hostile way.' This in turn can be measured using methods like session observations or facilitated dialogues, carried out by practitioners or evaluators. Similarly, the impact we summarise as 'Active citizenship: no longer passive consumers of culture and civil life – the arts as something you *do* as well as consume' can be evidenced by a range of qualitative and quantitative indicators – e.g. Participants perform in public before an audience of neighbours. Methodologies for capturing this might include:

- Count number of participants who performed as result of project, and number of performances. (Practitioners)
- Count attendees – sort by postcode. (Practitioners)
- 'Mood-o-meter' to assess positive feeling at a performance (Practitioners or evaluators)
- Post-performance vox pop to identify response of audience and participants (Practitioners or evaluators)

Finally, in the Toolkit we set out a practical '**Evaluation How-To Guide**', which goes through these methodologies one by one and explains in practical everyday language how they can be applied and what they tell you.

Appendix: The KnowledgeEAST Creative Impact Advisory Group

- Lassell Hylton, London Small Business Growth Initiative/Deptford Economic Development Partnership/Destination Brixton
- Veronica Jobbins, Head of Professional Studies, Laban
- Michael Metelits, Office for Business and Community Development, Goldsmiths College
- David Powell, Consultant, Cultural and Creative Industry Adviser to Thames Gateway London Partnership and Five Boroughs Cultural Framework for 2012 Olympics. Author of *Creative and Cultural Industries: An Economic Impact Study for South East England*
- Debra Reay, Arts Consultant, Thames Gateway Creative Skills/Creative Hub Development Consultant
- Professor Vic Seidler, Sociology, Goldsmiths College. Author of *Man Enough: Embodying Masculinities*
- Andrea Spain, Head of Professional Development, Trinity College of Music
- Professor Helen Thomas, Director of Research, London College of Fashion. Author of *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory*
- Dr Fran Tonkiss, Sociology, London School of Economics. Author of *Market Society: Markets and Modern Social Thought, Trust and Civil Society, Space, the City and Social Theory* and *Contemporary Economic Sociology*

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