



Creative Partnerships

Study of the Impact of Creative Partnerships on the Cultural and Creative Economy

Report of Findings

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Burns Owens Partnership Ltd

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Summary

The cultural and creative industries are increasingly seen as key components of a modern, knowledge-based economy. Characterised by flexible, portfolio working, creative and cultural practitioners move between public and private sectors; demonstrating versatility, flexibility and adaptability. The attitudes, skills and characteristics of the industry are in high demand throughout the economy, and are seen as key to fuelling and driving the knowledge economy.

Creative Partnerships (CP) draws heavily on this labour pool in delivering its programme in schools. By opening up new markets for practitioners and providing them with opportunities for professional development, CP can be seen as an innovative economic intervention, developing local creative economies as well as contributing to educational outcomes.

Although individual CP offices are given considerable autonomy, there is a discernible model of economic intervention at work. CP offices act as an intermediary between the creative and cultural industries labour market and schools, aggregating and purchasing services on behalf of schools. These intermediaries control projects, budget and delivery, and build a small trusted core of practitioners. Project delivery is typically achieved through agents. CP offices tend to focus upon practitioners in the visual arts, performing arts and film and video.

The activities and expenditure of CP offices have a significant impact upon individual practitioners and businesses, especially the “core” group around each CP office. Key impacts include increased income, the development of transferable skills, enhanced creative practice, and increased access to new markets.

The research has also found evidence of wider impact on local and regional creative and cultural economies, through the use of sub-contracting, increased collaboration, the development of networks and increased access to new markets.

Creative Partnerships has undoubtedly had an impact on creative practitioners. However, CP creates an artificial and temporary marketplace. CP and Arts Council England will need to consider its longer term implications for education sector capacity-building as they take CP ideas and practice into the future.

1 Introduction

1.1 Creative Partnerships

Creative Partnerships (CP) is a government-funded national initiative working in 36 of the most disadvantaged areas of England. It was designed to build sustainable relationships between, schools, creative practitioners and organisations. Creative practitioners work across and beyond the curriculum, animating the classroom and finding new ways to teach.

Established in 2002, by July 2006 CP had worked with over 2,500 schools and directly employed 3,500 creative practitioners and shared its practice with a further 5,500 schools.

CP operates as both a direct and indirect intervention. It is primarily an educational initiative, but it is also a major, direct investment into the UK creative economy. Most of this investment is channelled through local offices which work with selected schools to purchase the goods and services of cultural and creative organisations and firms.

Through its agreement with the DCMS (*Policy and Delivery Agreement 2004/05*), the Arts Council/Creative Partnerships is committed to increasing the number of cultural and creative practitioners and organisations involved in delivering creative education, in addition to increasing the impact of the sector on schools. One of the objectives of Creative Partnerships is to: *“Build the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors to work effectively with schools, and provide opportunities for cultural and creative professionals to enhance the skills they need to work in educational settings.”*

The recent Transaction Analysis research (May – September 2005)¹ revealed that 60 - 70% of the annual expenditure of ‘first-generation’ local area offices goes directly into the cultural and creative sector in the form of grants or contracts for services, or through continuing professional development activities. This represents on average of £0.5m per office per annum. This implies that CP is investing almost £20m per annum in the creative sectors through its 36 offices.

The transaction analysis research found that local offices have established themselves as key components of the local support structures for creative enterprise, organising networks, brokering relationships, delivering training and, most importantly, acting as a gateway to a major new market for creative services.

¹ Burns Owens Partnership, Transaction Analysis Research, Arts Council England, 2005

1.2 The Brief

While there is much anecdotal evidence of Creative Partnerships' impact in the creative economy, very little systematic data has been gathered on this aspect of Creative Partnerships' activities.

In order to address this gap in understanding, Creative Partnerships commissioned Burns Owens Partnership to undertake this study of the impact of CP on the cultural and creative economy. The aim of the study was to investigate three areas of impact: on the market for creative products and services; on individual practitioners and firms; and on local and regional economies. The research questions were:

- Is Creative Partnerships really 'building the capacity' of the cultural and creative sectors? Is there a genuinely new 'market' in the making, both in terms of the firms/practitioners involved and the types of service delivered? How can we demonstrate this?
- How is Creative Partnerships having an impact on the cultural and creative sectors? Is there an identifiable process at work? Can this be described, measured and replicated in ways that complement other partners in local and regional development?
- Is Creative Partnerships' investment in the creative economy seeding development in a sustainable way? Is there a virtuous circle involving the education sector as a market and creative enterprise in local economies?
- What are the implications of our findings for the future development of the Creative Partnerships agenda? For Arts Council England? For the broader cultural and creative sectors? For schools? For other partners?

1.3 Our Approach

In answering these research questions, it was decided to use both qualitative and quantitative research methods. This provided the study with both in-depth information and findings which represent the experiences across CP phase 1 and 2 offices. Through a pilot study with one CP office, we were able to explore further the research questions outlined above. This resulted in a common research framework, which all research strands drew on, allowing for comparability across the various methodologies.

Qualitative Research

The qualitative research focused upon **12 CP offices**, chosen to represent phase 1 and 2 development and to provide a cross-section of geographic and urban and rural backgrounds.

A summary of CP office pilots is included below:

South West	East Midlands
Cornwall and Plymouth	Nottingham
South East	West Midlands
Southampton and the Isle of Wight	Birmingham
Kent	Yorkshire
East	Bradford
Thames Gateway - Basildon and Thurrock	North East
North West	North and South Tyneside
Cumbria	Durham and Sunderland
Merseyside	London
	London East

For each in-depth CP office the following tasks were carried out:

- CP office staff *focus groups*. Focus groups were held in order to better understand the management, operation and recruitment processes of CP offices. One focus group was conducted per CP office. 51 CP staff members took part in this exercise.
- Creative practitioner *focus groups* at each of the twelve CP offices. This involved freelancers, Regularly Funded Organisations (RFOs) and commercial organisations. In order to allow for an open and honest discussion, the research team conducted focus groups with staff and practitioners on separate occasions. Topics addressed included practitioner experience of CP, including recruitment methods, training received and perceptions of benefits and impacts. In total 56 creative practitioners were consulted.
- Telephone *interviews* with a cross section of creative practitioners. Practitioners were chosen at random by a long list, reducing likely selection bias, and providing a more representative sample. Between two and five telephone interviews were conducted per CP area. In order to improve comparability and consistency, telephone interviews covered the same material as the focus groups. In total 42 creative practitioners were contacted and interviewed.

Further information on the qualitative research found in Appendix C – Qualitative Research Methodology.

Quantitative Research

The quantitative research consisted of:

- An online *survey* of 300 practitioners with experience of CP working. In order to maintain comparability, survey questions reflected those of the random telephone interviews.
- Cost code analysis of each CP office’s expenditure reports, designed to reveal patterns in expenditure, including proportion of spend on the creative economy, and any focus upon particular types of practitioners.

Appendix A - Survey Analysis and Appendix B - Cost Code Analysis outline the main findings from these two pieces of work.

In total, **450 individuals** were contacted and consulted. The qualitative research strand involved obtaining in-depth information from 150 individuals. The quantitative research strand included an online survey which drew 300 responses from creative practitioners. It also involved a detailed analysis of all CP phase 1 and 2 office accounts, where we were able to explore how, and to what extent, CP offices interact with their local and sub-regional creative and cultural economies.

1.4 This Report

This report summarises our findings as follows:

- **Section 2** places CP within the context of the wider cultural and creative economy and the history of arts education.
- **Section 3** explores the CP model and its impact on delivery, recruitment and the type of practitioners contracted.
- **Section 4** analyses the direct impact CP has on creative practitioners in terms of financial stability, skills development, access to clients and market development.
- **Section 5** outlines the wider economic impact of CP, especially in terms of building networks.
- **Section 6** brings together all the findings to draw some conclusions on the benefits of the CP model and some of the challenges it faces in the future.

In addition to the main report, three appendices contain more detailed research findings:

- **Appendix A: Survey Results** outlines the key findings from the online survey, and explores CP's impact on creative practitioners.
- **Appendix B: Cost Code Analysis** uses information from the CP office accounts on the type of creative practitioner CP engages with and their contribution to the creative and cultural economy. This section also explores in detail how three CP offices have successfully adapted to their local creative and cultural economies.
- **Appendix C: Qualitative Methodology** contains more information on the choice of in-depth CP offices, and outlines the main methodological issues and provides a list of consultees.

2 Creative Partnerships in the Context of Local Cultural and Creative Economies

CP has a valuable role to play in supporting the development of the cultural and creative industries, and ensuring that the qualities of creative thinking, flexibility and enthusiasm are developed and harnessed throughout the education system.

In opening up new markets for practitioners and providing them with opportunities for professional development, CP can be seen as an innovative economic intervention, developing local creative economies as well as contributing to educational outcomes.

2.1 A Source of Economic Renewal

The creative industries are increasingly seen as part of a modern, knowledge-based economy, not just in metropolitan areas, but in a variety of economic contexts. While global cultural production has become more concentrated in a handful of centres, cities and towns of all sizes have seized upon the potential of these sectors either for re-branding and re-imagining or, more recently, for the diversification of their economic base away from declining industrial sectors. This means that even relatively deprived areas have seen growth in these sectors in recent years.

In general, the creative industries are seen as increasingly important for economic development for the following reasons:

- Creative and cultural industries are a fast growing economic sector – now accounting for 8% of the UK's GDP².
- Falling barriers to entry in some creative sectors – digital technology has helped to promote innovation and new entrants.
- Creativity is increasingly seen as an important input into the whole economy.
- Consumers are spending more of their incomes on a range of cultural and leisure goods.

The link between culture and the wider economy is increasingly important. For example, the creative industries provide some of the ideas and images that are used in other contexts, such as advertising copy, product design, branding or other commercial manifestations of creative culture.

² DCMS Cultural and Creative Economy Estimates October 2005

Skills such as team working, communication and presentation skills are highly developed in many creative industries, particularly those in the performance sector. These skills are increasingly sought after throughout the economy. Also in demand are the 'ways of working' and 'attitudes' that are said to be characteristic of these sectors – whether this is the 'project life' company, the entrepreneurial freelancer, or the 'emotional intelligence' and commitment that cultural workers are said to bring to their practice.

2.2 Cultural and Creative Labour Markets

Flexibility

The cultural and creative industry sub-sectors that CP mainly works with – the arts and independent television and film production – are flexible and networked, with a high component of self-employment. This contributes to their high levels of creativity and dynamism. It allows production, which is sometimes project based (such as making a film), to call upon a large, highly skilled labour pool when necessary.

In addition, in a context where autonomy and self-expression are highly prized, many practitioners prefer to remain outside of the employee job market and pursue freelance or self-employment.

The creative economy, with which CP engages, is therefore largely characterised by micro-businesses (1-9 employees) and the self-employed, often working in casualised and highly insecure conditions. Developing these economies is not just about creating new jobs, but also about improving the frequency and type of employment of current practitioners.

Market Growth

Recent years have seen both an expansion of cultural and creative industry practitioners, and the development of new markets for their skills. As well as greater opportunities for commercial engagement, there has been a growth in demand for the services of cultural and creative industry practitioners in new public sector settings – education is obviously the primary market for those involved in CP, but there are also new markets in health and urban regeneration schemes.

Understanding public sector markets requires a different set of skills from those required to sell products and services through commercial channels. Those skills, once developed, are highly transferable. In many freelance markets, the cost of such skills acquisition is often borne by the individual. Getting involved with CP provides a highly valuable route to skill development that would otherwise be costly or unavailable to individual practitioners. It is in this context that the training and development opportunities offered by an intervention such as CP needs to be seen.

Networks

A characteristic of the creative and cultural industries is the large numbers of freelancers and micro-businesses. In order to combat the fragmented nature of the sector, it has traditionally evolved a dense, highly networked structure.

There are two types of network:

- A close geographically based network, constructed around personal relationships and the exchange of 'tacit' knowledge.
- Looser, often international networks, facilitated by digital technology. In sub-sectors such as film or videogames, this sort of network is clearly important; and small videogame companies will often have developed international networks before they form local ones.

For most of the practitioners with whom CP engages, it is the local, high-trust and often personal networks that offer routes into employment and career development. It is via these personal networks that practitioners are often identified in the first place. Staff at CP offices, or other intermediaries, will have worked with practitioners in previous projects, and it is these 'reputation effects', spread via networks, which ensure future employability for practitioners. Typically, paper qualifications play much less of a role in these sectors than in some others.³

Public Sector Intervention & Network Development

The last decade has witnessed an increasing level of public funding to help facilitate and strengthen these networks, with a variety of sub-sector-specific and geographical networks and public intermediaries now a standard feature of local development for the creative industries.

Most practitioners welcome such public sector interventions, but there are concerns that the nature of public funding - short-term and concerned with measurable outputs - is ill suited to the support of fragile ecologies such as entrepreneurial networks. Successful networks take a long time to develop and trust between partners is a crucial ingredient. This trust can be easily eroded by short-term decision-making.

Widening Access

Public policy has a vital role to play in breaking down the social exclusivity of many networks. Publicly funded network development has attempted to focus on opening up networks, driven both by the need to be truly effective (by capturing hidden talent) and by the social obligations imposed by the use of public money. Publicly funded network development may also be used to promote diversity within the cultural and creative industries.

It is crucial therefore that CP develops and harnesses networks that are based on trust, and are inclusive, formalised and sustainable. Practitioners will find CP work particularly challenging without a detailed understanding of existing networks.

³ Leadbeater & Oakley, 2001, Surfing the Long Wave, Knowledge Entrepreneurship in Britain, Demos, London

2.3 The Mixed Creative Economy

The Role of the Subsidised Sector

The links between formal publicly-funded cultural institutions (e.g. theatres, orchestras, galleries and museums) and the wider ‘creative economy’ are complex, dense and sometimes difficult to disentangle. Despite the market-led rhetoric of the creative industries, the subsidised cultural sector remains a major part of the health of most local creative economies. Economic development interventions therefore often need to work across both the subsidised and commercial sectors.

The Subsidised and Commercial Sectors: Fluid Movement

Practitioners often move between work in the subsidised sectors and the market. Consumers similarly move between the commercial and the public sectors often without knowing it, and the aesthetic sensibilities that are formed through public investment in art galleries, education and urban design often exercise themselves subsequently in the market through an increased consumption of cultural goods and services.⁴

Conclusion

CP, as a public intervention into the market place, is characteristic of this mixed economy and seeks to work with the grain of it. In opening up new public sector markets for practitioners and providing them with vital opportunities for professional development, it can be seen as a factor in the development of local creative economies, as well as contributing to educational outcomes.

2.4 Creative Partnerships in the Context of Art Education

In developing local creative economies, any successful intervention has to work across both supply and demand sides. In CP’s case, the focus for a demand side intervention is clear – it is the education market. This is a market with a relatively long history, which has developed particular ways of working with arts practitioners. CP has sought to change the nature of the links between practitioners and schools in a radical way, so before considering the operation, management, delivery and impact of CP, we need to look briefly at the educational context in which CP operates.

Artists began working in schools in the UK in the 1970s, with a focus upon performance (theatre in education, sometimes dance) or visual arts. This traditional model of artists in education was designed to supplement the existing arts elements of the curriculum, or to address social issues such as bullying, racism, or sex, that were viewed as important for pupils to understand, and where it was felt that the arts could ‘humanise’ the discussion

⁴ Burns Owens Partnership, 2006, Looking Back, Looking Forward: 10 Years of Arts Council Work in the Creative Industries, for Arts Council England

of sensitive issues.⁵ From an Arts Council England point of view such activities also served to open up a new market for the arts.

The model of artists working in schools was established by funds provided principally by Local Education Authorities (LEAs) or by additional contribution from parents. However, since the 1990s, when education budgets have become increasingly devolved to individual schools, arts education work has diminished, as schools have struggled to fund the relatively high costs associated with recruiting artists and arts organisations.

The recent policy focus on the 'holistic' provision of services for children, embedded in Every Child Matters (ECM) and Youth Matters (YM), has seen the importance of cultural education back on to the agenda⁶, albeit more in rhetoric than reality in some cases. In addition, there is increasing recognition that the sort of skills developed via an arts-rich education, both technical skills and broader communication skills, are increasingly in demand; both in the growing creative sectors and across the economy.

The Robinson Report, *All Our Futures*, expanded the debate about arts education to encompass not only notions of 'cultural entitlement', but also the desirability of 'forms of teaching that are intended to develop young people's own creative thinking or behaviour'⁷. Arts Council England's Children and Young People Strategy now seeks to encourage 'wide social recognition of the value and transformative power of the arts and creativity'⁸.

The importance of creativity in the workforce and the desirability of the skills ascribed to cultural and creative practitioners convinced many educational policy makers that teaching creativity via the arts has a valid and valuable contribution to make, not only to developing a creative workforce but also to wider school change. However, the models for facilitating this process had not changed significantly since the 1970s. CP was set up to develop a new model of collaboration between schools and practitioners; one which required the formation of longer term relationships and high levels of skills and commitment on both sides.

The CP model requires a relatively large, geographically driven pool of labour, able to work flexibly and to understand the needs of schools. This was available in many local economies. But building a sustainable demand in schools was always likely to prove more challenging.

⁵ See also Gulbenkin, *Arts in Schools*, 1984

⁶ See, *Review of Museums, Library and Archive Activity with Young Children*, BOP for MLA North West and MLA.

⁷ DCMS, *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education*, London 1999.

⁸ Arts Council England, *Children, Young People and the Arts*, London 2005.

3 How CP Delivers

Despite the considerable autonomy given to CP offices, there is much conformity in the delivery of services. CP offices exhibit a number of common characteristics, including in-house control of projects, budgets and delivery, the building of a small trusted core of practitioners, and a tendency to deliver through ‘agents’. CP offices most frequently work with practitioners in the visual arts, performing arts and film and video. An illustrative example of CP Cumbria is included at the end of this section.

3.1 Market Control Retained In-house

All CP offices act as an intermediary between schools and the practitioner market, facilitating and brokering relationships. Schools typically do not have a strong understanding of the practitioner market, and lack the capacity to broker and manage effective creative programming. By retaining control of programming, budgets and the commissioning of practitioners, CP offices are able to perform a valuable intermediary role, forming a crucial link between schools and practitioners. This model necessarily impacts upon the way CP is delivered, requiring ‘agents’ to perform a brokerage role.

3.2 Use of Agents

Although not universal, most CP offices appoint intermediaries to manage projects. These intermediaries have a variety of names across the CP offices - Creative Development Workers, Creative Agents or Creative Advisers – but we will refer to them as ‘agents’ throughout this report.

Eight of the twelve CP offices that were studied in the report used intermediary agents to deliver on the ground. In the remaining CP offices, whilst no formal ‘agent’ is allocated, core practitioners typically adopt this role.

These agents might have responsibility for a single school or for a cluster of schools, and do not always deliver projects themselves. Agents have responsibility for appointing practitioners, determining project scope, managing budgets and programming and brokering relationships between practitioners, schools and CP offices.

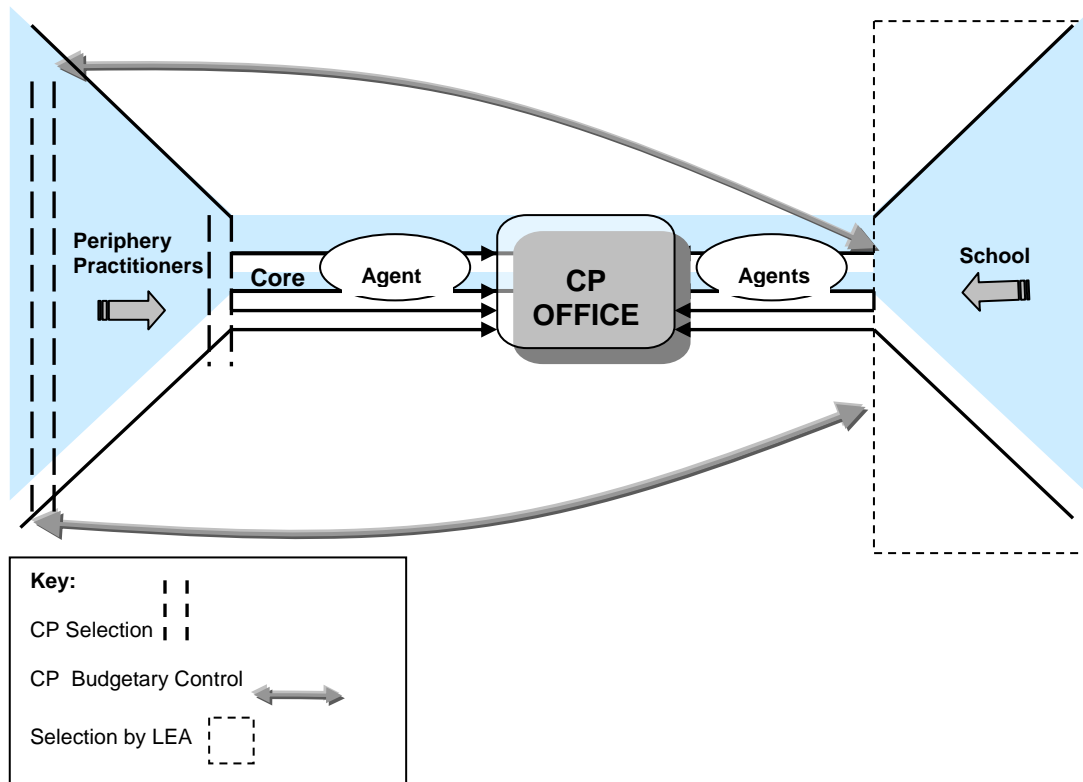
3.3 CP as Gatekeeper

The creative agents used by CP offices have a particularly influential role. In one CP office, the five creative agents working in the cultural and creative industries field have received 27% of all creative industries spend

CP offices and their agents may be viewed as ‘gatekeepers’. They perform this role in two key ways. First they control access to funding for schools. Second, and perhaps more importantly, they act as gatekeepers to employment opportunities for creative and cultural industries practitioners, and thus to professional

development opportunities. The diagram below illustrates this gatekeeping function. It shows how practitioner and school engagement with CP is controlled by CP offices and their agents.

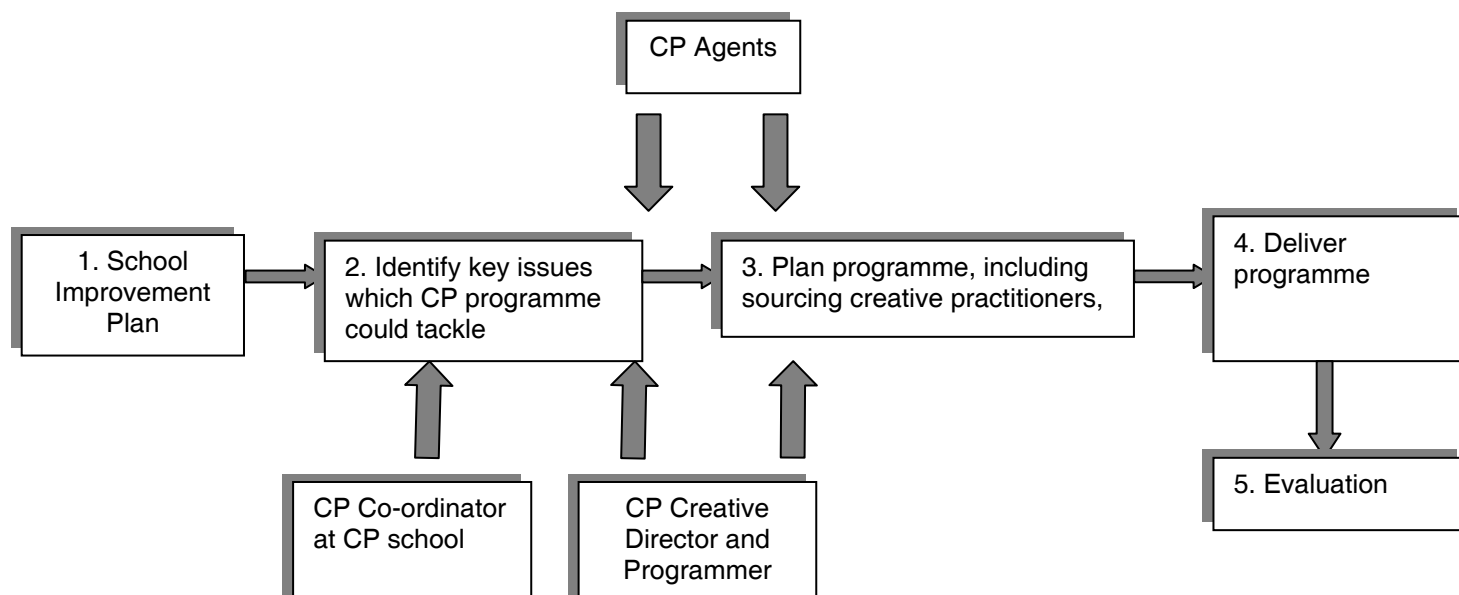
Figure 1 Model of a CP Office



3.4 Model of a CP Project

Figure 2 below outlines how the majority of CP projects are formed, delivered and evaluated. It shows how CP projects are fundamentally different from their traditional ‘arts education’ counterpart. Unlike much other arts education, CP projects are embedded within the School Improvement Plan (SIP), rather than ‘add ons’ to core school activities. Doing this requires a longer planning and development stage, involving CP co-ordinators at CP schools, CP agents and the CP office. Meeting the various needs of schools can be highly complex, sometimes requiring short ‘one off’ projects, and at other times projects aiming for longer term curriculum change. This necessarily requires a wide range of practitioners – from those engaging with CP in a long-term intensive process, to those involved in just one short-term project. The evaluation stage ensures that all projects have measurable outcomes. This project model has implications for the impact CP has on creative and cultural practitioners. For example, the extensive programming stage requires agents to develop effective analytical skills and team working skills. Managing as well as delivering projects means many practitioners have to form project management skills. The impact of CP on creative practitioners is outlined in more detail in section 4.

Figure 2: Model of a CP Project



An illustrative example of the context a CP office operates within is included below:

CP Cumbria

Like all CPs, CP Cumbria operates within the constraints and opportunities of the pre-existing environment. In this case: long standing traditions of good arts education in schools delivered by a small number of practitioners with arts education experience, combined with the sheer difficulties of getting quickly around a large under populated and mountainous region,. To combat geographic difficulties, two offices were set up, in Whitehaven and in Barrow in Furness. Strong artist networks are being built to combat the isolation of artists and as a long-term support strategy for the exit of CP. To combat low capacity an intensive CPD and research programme is being set up. The region has excellent HE training in art but loses graduates from the region: CP hopes that training and opportunities to work will improve retention.

In common with all CPs recruitment was primarily through existing networks: the Director was previously in charge of Cumbria Arts in Education. While the preference is for developing local skills, Cumbria has been willing to recruit from across the whole of the north of England: parts of Cumbria are quicker to get to from Newcastle than from Barrow. Perhaps a quarter of their practitioners come from outside the region. Schools have a larger say than in many CPs about choice of practitioner.

Each school has a lead creative that manages projects, brings in other practitioners and operates as the primary point of CP communication with schools, and in effect as the gatekeeper. Lead practitioners have a large say in which artists and organisations are suggested to schools, and tend to use personal networks as the main source, although schools have the final choice from a shortlist.

CP Cumbria has tended to work with the more flexible smaller organisations and with freelancers.

3.5 Recruiting Practitioners

Number of Practitioners

In total approximately 3,500 creative practitioners have been contracted directly by CP. On top of this figure are freelancers, sub-contracted by many organisations to carry out the CP work.

Economic Contribution of CP

CP has invested £29 million directly in the creative and cultural economy. This represents half of all CP phase 1 and 2 office spend

An Initial Wide Trawl but a Narrowing Focus

Geography

Capacity within the local pool varied from area to area: in Thames Gateway for example very few practitioners and no RFOS existed; in large cities the pool of potential partners was wide. In areas such as Cumbria and Isle of Wight, geographic isolation was an important factor to consider.

All CP areas began the process of recruitment with a wide and open trawl of existing individuals and organisations within their regions. This is usually by open events, invitations to submit expressions of interest, and widespread advertising of opportunities, leading to an open tendering process. The contacts, databases and address books held by CP staff supplemented the trawl. Drawing on existing networks and contacts is a common method utilised throughout

the creative economy, typically a consequence of its diverse, fragmented nature. This method of recruitment often becomes the norm as CP offices become increasingly involved in delivery and have fewer resources available; or agents complete recruitment.

The use of existing networks and contacts necessarily conflicts with an 'open' system, but has numerous advantages. By drawing on embedded local networks, CP staff can quickly and effectively identify and nurture local emerging talent. The networks are also often different to the ones traditionally drawn on by Arts Council England, bringing in new "types" of practitioners to the arts education market.

Attitude

CP offices were looking in the first instance for flexibility to work in what they called 'a CP way', rather than specific skills or experience. The CP way is characterised by a willingness to start with the needs of the school rather than importing an external agenda.

Creation of a Core Group

As programming has evolved, all the CPs consulted (12 offices as part of this research)

Over a third of all practitioners in the survey got work with CP through informal networks or word of mouth, and nearly a quarter were approached directly by CP staff.

For just over a quarter of survey respondents, the core of CP delivery partners, CP work accounted for over half their turnover.

46% (£13.42m) of all cultural and creative spend went to just 6% (220) of the creative practitioners contracted by CP.

developed a suppliers list of practitioners who would be used regularly. This meant high trust levels and strong school relationships could be developed and ensured that CP provided schools with practitioners who were fully conversant with the aims,

objectives, needs and culture of CP. On average, each CP office spent 48% of its creative and cultural spend on 9% of its practitioners.

The open recruitment practices carried out at the beginning of CP offices, tended to be replaced by a practice of re-commissioning practitioners, a natural result of the need for a core of practitioners with strong, detailed understanding of CP. In some instances, this was seen to conflict with the open tendering process. Nottingham, for example, tried to maintain an open system by continuing to call for expressions of interest.

Whilst offering a number of benefits in strong relationships, detailed understanding, and high levels of capacity to work within the CP model, the creation of a core pool of practitioners also carries a number of implications for the operation and delivery of CP. For example, new practitioners are likely to find gaining access to CP work particularly challenging without a detailed understanding of existing networks.

Type of Practitioners

Visual arts, Music and Performance

Overall, 70% of practitioners surveyed came from a visual arts, performance or music background. This may be a result of the availability of practitioners, facilities and curriculum preferences. For example, nationally, there is a pool of 244,000 creatives in music, visual and performing arts sectors, compared to 54,000 in film, video and photography, and 111,000 in television and video.

Cost code analysis reveals that 52% of total creative and cultural economy spend is within performing and visual arts, with approximately 25% of creative practitioners operating within the visual arts. The largest group by spend is arts organisations, which account for 21% of all CP creative and cultural spend. 769 artists and sculptors have been employed by CP. By number, they are the biggest group, accounting for 19% of all creative practitioners contracted by CP.

Prior Experience

Attitude and thinking ‘in a CP way’ are seen as important criteria for being selected to work with CP. However, overall evidence indicates that experience of working with children and young people is viewed as equally – if not more – important. A significant proportion (43%) of practitioners had been working in their field for more than 10 years, and almost three quarters (71%) had worked with schools prior to CP.

Delivery by Freelancers

The tendency for arts freelancers to work flexibly in portfolio careers and across a variety of settings meant that they were the group most able to work with CP: just under two thirds of those working for CP are freelance arts professionals. This high level of engagement with freelancers represents a departure for Arts Council England, as typically this group has been particularly challenging to engage.

Publicly Funded Organisations and Regularly Funded Organisations

CP has worked with a large number of organisations that have never received direct public funding. One third of organisations involved in CP have never received direct public funding, and 60 % have never received Arts Council England funding. This is evidence of CP’s ability to engage with a new market of practitioners.

Creative Partnerships'⁹ own research supports this finding. This work shows that up to March 2006, Creative Partnerships had directly engaged with 199 RFO (13% of all RFOs) and 419 businesses/individuals receiving Grants for the Arts (4% of all Grants for the Arts), with 119 organisations receiving both types of funding. This represents only 13% of all Creative Partnerships partners, a clear indication that Creative Partnerships is working with a different group of practitioners from those in receipt of other Arts Council England funding.

Where larger arts organisations were used, they often acted as agents rather than direct deliverers, employing freelancers to complete delivery. Overall, publicly funded organisations account for a fifth of partners.

Many CP offices made initial attempts to utilise the capacity of RFO in their regions, but a number reported difficulties in doing so due to differing remits, policies and working practices.

Legally Constituted Companies

Some CPs worked hard to bring legally constituted companies on board as sponsors or hosts of projects. Examples include Southampton and the Isle of Wight, working with the Red Funnel Company, the Chamber of Commerce and Ordnance Survey; and Kent, working with the Channel Tunnel Company and local pharmaceutical company Pfizer.

Working with legally constituted companies remains uncommon (around 10% of all practitioners). This may not indicate an unwillingness of commercial companies to work with CP or visa-versa, but is due to the contradictions between the pressures and rhythms of company life to the much more structured environment of schools.

Legally constituted companies working on delivery tend to be hybrid organisations, with an existing arts or community emphasis able to adapt to CP environments. Furthermore, these companies typically employ freelancers or individuals to undertake CP work.

⁹ This refers to work carried out in July 2006 which compared Creative Partnerships monitoring database (containing a list of all partners CP has engaged with) and the Arts Council England Regularly Funded Organisations and Grants for the Arts lists

4 The Impact of CP on Practitioners and Businesses

90% of practitioners have undergone some skills development following involvement with CP. The impact of this skills development has been felt most intensely by a small 'core' of practitioners. These 'core practitioners' engage with CP for an extended period of time, are heavily relied upon for project creation, delivery, management and evaluation, and gain extensive benefits through structured and informal training. CP involvement provides financial stability, builds strong transferable consultancy skills, and offers new avenues for creative development. The highly challenging work furthermore often re-defines practice, and prompts a re-examination of potential markets and service offerings.

4.1 A Range of Impacts: The Core Network Model

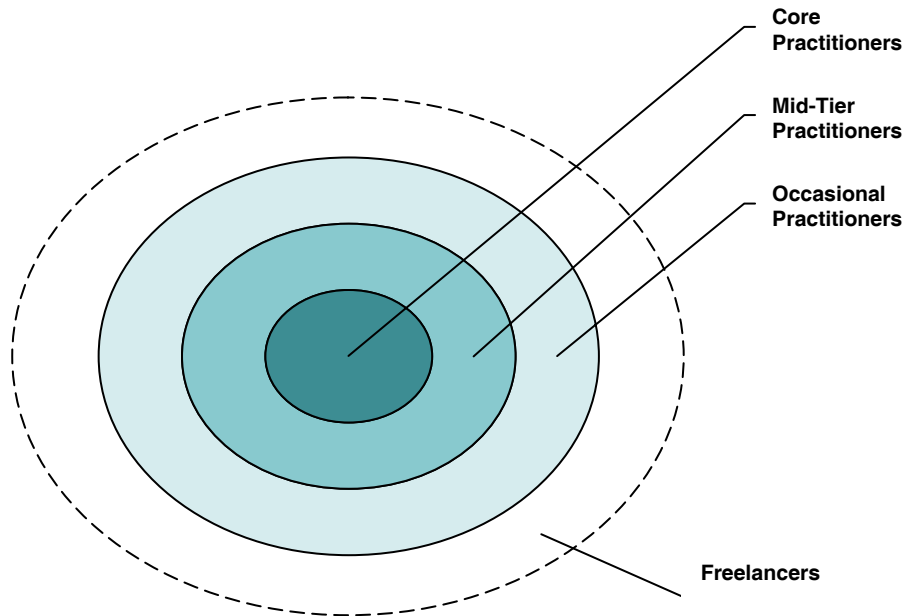
Cost code analysis showed that 24 of the 25 offices operated a core/periphery model

Our cost code analysis reveals that 52% (or £1.2m) of one CP office's spend on practitioners was programmed to just 8 practitioners.

All practitioners do not benefit equally from their involvement with CP. Overall, CP has worked with over 3,465 creative practitioners (to March 2006), but has worked most extensively with a small group of practitioners, maintaining a series of less intensive relationships with a larger group of 'non core' practitioners. On average, each CP office spent 48% of its creative and cultural spend on 9% of its practitioners.

Figure 3 below outlines the core network model. It shows how CP forms a variety of relationships with practitioners, ranging from the 'core' to the occasional practitioner. The CP model of engagement is fluid; forming different types of relationships as necessary for the needs of each school. Practitioners can move from different sections of the model, or occupy varying positions with different CP offices. The core consists of practitioners contracted by CP on an on-going basis, or to work on large projects. The mid-tier practitioners work with CP on a relatively frequent basis and are contracted to work with CP at different times throughout the year. They may work within a CP school for a day a term, or be contracted by a core practitioner. The occasional practitioners are hired to carry out specific roles within a project, (e.g. a cameraman working on a film project) or attend CPD courses ran by CP; with the hope of becoming mid-tier or core practitioners. Freelancers can fall into any of these categories. For example a core organisation may employ them as a project manager, therefore they become a core practitioner, or they may be employed for evaluation, therefore becoming a mid-tier or occasional practitioner.

Figure 3 Core Network Model



Key:
Core Practitioners: Long-term relationship with CP, ongoing involvement, gaining extensive benefits and investment
Mid-Tier: Practitioners contracted by CP for long-term, or mid-sized projects
Occasional Practitioners: Practitioners contracted by CP for one-off short term projects, or CPD training
Freelancers: Contracted by core or mid-tier to complete specific CP project roles or functions

The Core

The core tends to remain relatively static. In many cases it is formed towards the beginning of the lifecycle of the CP offices, becoming increasingly difficult to enter. This can introduce tension between the priorities of programming and ensuring access. There can be good reasons for having a relatively static core: the schools trust the practitioners, and the CP offices know that practitioners will produce work to a high standard. However, it does limit the opportunity for new entrants to the creative and cultural economy to work with CP.

Approximately a third of practitioners (29%) have worked for CP for more than two years.

For a significant number of respondents (44%), CP accounts for a small minority of turnover/income (10% or less). However for a sizeable minority (12%), CP accounts for 50% or more of annual turnover/income.

While this model has many benefits (fluidity, building trust, ensures high quality products) it does results in a ‘two-speed’ process, where a small, select group of practitioners are

equipped with extensive skills, contacts and training to develop a successful business proposition for the education market; whilst a larger number of less regularly and intensively involved practitioners receive a small number of benefits.

4.1.1 Quantifying the Core Network Model

Whilst our research shows that the benefits and impacts are manifested mostly in a small, select 'core' of practitioners, the scope of CP extends beyond the individuals and organisations directly recruited and paid by CP. Over half of survey respondents (54%) use freelancers to carry out CP work, and in the majority of cases, these organisations have hired between 1-5 freelancers each (62%).

The core network model is not the only variable which impacts on the level of benefits CP offers practitioners. Employment status, size and length of time as a creative practitioner are other variables which have an impact on benefits.

Freelancers tend to receive the widest benefits from CP. Focus group work finds RFOs are least likely to find long-term benefit in CP involvement, with a tendency to either (a) recruit individuals to carry out CP work, or (b) maintain only a short relationship with CP. For example, whilst 39% of freelancers have become more efficient at project management, this figure is 29% for publicly funded organisations. Furthermore, 47% of freelancers are now more adept at working with schools, whilst for publicly funded organisations the figure is only 37%.

Nearly a third of practitioners have been working professionally for less than three years. According to our interviews, this group of relative newcomers to arts practice tended to have experienced the most benefits from CP, particularly in terms of skills, confidence and CV enhancement. 57% of practitioners working for three years or less have developed skills in working with schools, compared to 36% of practitioners who had worked for ten years or more. Furthermore, 21% of practitioners with three years (or less) of experience had developed discipline-specific skills, whilst just 10% of counterparts with ten years experience had developed the additional skills. This suggests that CP has been successful in training a new generation of skilled practitioners for future involvement in education based creative work.

Ben Kidger and Karen Barnes – CP Kent

After graduating both Ben and Karen chose to work locally. Ben at a local gallery that he ran (he now lectures), and Karen as a practising artist (previously TEFL teacher). Ben was recruited to CP Kent via the KIAD (Kent Institute of Art and Design) graduate scheme and Karen via a programmer. Both spent a large amount of their time working on CP projects – between 2 and 4 days a week; Karen still does.

CP Kent influenced Ben and Karen's career paths tremendously. It opened doors by providing networking opportunities, support, developing their own practise and self-development. Without CP involvement, Ben and Karen may have needed to relocate to find sufficient work.

4.2 Financial and Business Stability

One of the most frequently discussed benefits of working with CP revolves around the

42% of survey respondents state that CP work provides them with greater financial stability than other types of work.

21% of survey respondents state that CP work offers better rates of pay than other types of work.

notion of financial stability. CP offers practitioners longer-term projects that provide a sense of security and financial stability. Three

quarters (74%) of respondents state that their turnover or income had increased since working with CP. For just under a third (31%), their turnover or income had increased by a lot. 36% of respondents whose turnover or income had increased relate this growth to CP work. Furthermore, CP has been typically found to pay high rates of pay that elevate practitioners' sense of worth.

7% of respondents have employed new staff to complete Creative Partnerships projects.

This totals 40 new posts, 8 of which are full time and 32 part-time. 15 posts are permanent and 25 temporary.

4.3 Development of Creative Practice

A significant number of practitioners find their work with CP to be highly satisfying and stimulating. Whilst some practitioners have gained opportunities to work in an organic, process-driven way within the education sector in the past, CP has provided opportunities to extend and develop this type of exploratory work.

59% of practitioners have developed additional creative practice skills, as a direct result of involvement with CP

74% of practitioners find that CP provides more time and space for creative practice and development

CP work is innovative and custom-designed through a process of consultation with individual schools. This has reduced the extent to which creative programmes have been delivered as 'off the peg'. Furthermore, practitioners noted that working with children has re-ignited passion for their practice.

Somethin' Else – London East

Somethin' Else is an independent radio broadcast production company based in East London, employing 75 permanent staff. It was contracted by CP London East to run "Right to Rights", a multimedia project accumulating in an interactive website based on citizenship.

Working directly with young people was not something the organisation had done before. The project members reported feeling re-inspired by the young people's enthusiasm and creativity. It was also a great opportunity for Somethin' Else to complete some research

and development and get direct feedback from their target audience. This summer, Somethin' Else has accepted five students from the school for work experience.

Collaboration

Creative Practitioners often operate within an isolated environment, relying on internal capacities for motivation, business development, creativity and project completion. In the wider creative economy, there are limited opportunities for freelance practitioners to work together in a collaborative environment.

As a result of working with CP, 61% of practitioners have developed partnership-working skills.

CP provides a contrast to this typical freelance environment, and instead encourages - and indeed requires - a collaborative approach. Practitioners noted that this reduced their sense

of isolation. The ability to work with other practitioners, often from another discipline, led to a sense of practice enrichment.

Some practitioners noted that contacts formed during CP involvement had become important in their own right, as practitioners have collaborated outside CP to develop joint practice and service offerings.

By increasing levels of collaboration, practitioners have been exposed to new types of practice. In some instances, this has prompted practitioners to widen their identity, viewing themselves as broader 'creative' workers, rather than, for example, more narrowly defined sculptors.

Denzil Monk – Cornwall

Denzil is an independent writer and film maker. He has completed a variety of projects with young people and is a co-founder of the Cornwall Film Festival.

Through CP he has worked with a variety of creative practitioners, many from outside his own discipline. This form of collaboration has opened up new projects and ideas for him. In a large rural area like Cornwall, Denzil found CP to be an effective way of developing new networks and partnerships.

4.4 Transferable Skills

CP has provided informal, ‘on the job’ based business skills development for practitioners, and in a number of cases this has led to direct changes in the way practitioners manage and approach their business operation and development.

Consultancy Skills

Upon entering the school environment, practitioners have been required to develop consultancy and change management skills. They have developed the ability to understand and evaluate school needs, and translate these requirements into a firm programme of practice. Those working as ‘creative agents’ have developed the skills required to being about change within the school curriculum, and have furthermore developed ‘brokering’ skills that lead to a better understanding of school needs, and an

The results of our survey show that 35% of practitioners have developed project management skills, 45% evaluation and monitoring, 7% marketing, and 61% partnership working. These are all transferable skills that can be applied to practitioner work both within and outside of the education sector.

ability to match demand with capacity.

These consultancy skills are highly transferable, and may be used to assist practitioners in better understanding and responding to the needs of their clients, both within and outside of the education sector.

4.5 Access to New Clients

Market Awareness

One of the key benefits gained through CP is the increased ability to work within the educational context. This suggests that CP has equipped practitioners with a better

60% of practitioners responding to our questionnaire have developed an enhanced understanding of the role of creativity in teaching and learning, and 44% a better understanding of the institutional context of schools

understanding of the education market, a transferable skill that will allow practitioners to build and develop suitable offerings to schools in a post-CP environment.

Punch Records - Birmingham

Punch Records, founded in 1996 and based in Birmingham, specialise in educational music activities for young people and offer workshops on DJing, MCing, percussion and other musical skills.

Punch Records are a lead partner for CP Birmingham. This role encompasses running one of five clusters (run jointly with the Women and Theatre Group), delivering programmes and acting as brokers and managers.

One key benefit for Punch Records has been the ability to get on the ‘radar’ of arts education, thereby providing a road into new markets. Punch Records started with just two employees. However, as a direct result of CP work, the company has been able to employ four additional full-time staff, with two of these positions provided for artists.

In addition to company growth, Punch Records have begun to adapt their products and services to meet the needs of the wider education market. CP has highlighted potential opportunities, and offered insight into the education market. The company are now keen to exploit education-based opportunities in the longer term, and have developed a 'maths and music' programme that can be used outside of the CP programme. The company are acutely aware of the need to stimulate demand, and are planning 3 years ahead to source alternative funding that schools may be able to use to employ them.

Market Testing

In addition to raising awareness of new markets, CP provides practitioners with a unique opportunity to test current and future creative offerings. New products, services and techniques are likely to emerge as CP provides a 'seed bed' of stability and support that encourages risk taking.

Of those that consider CP to differ from other types of work, 66% state that it allows more risk taking.

Within a practitioner's typical environment, there is little room or time for experimentation in new techniques, processes or offerings, with emphasis instead upon immediate delivery and the need for cash flow. CP offers a unique opportunity for experimentation and creative practice development

within a safe and secure environment, where the emphasis is on collaboration and organic development, rather than product or service.

This focus upon developing practice has been beneficial to many practitioners as it challenges ingrained assumptions, and promotes a re-visiting of assumptions regarding the specific role and identity of the practitioner.

4.6 Confidence and Identity

In many instances, practitioners have noted that involvement with CP has increased their confidence through operating within a new environment that values practice and engenders a sense of self-worth and value. CP has also encouraged some Regularly Funded Organisations to re-examine their educational and outreach programmes.

Of those that gained new work, 43% believe CP has played a contributing role. CP has provided opportunities for skill development, and has allowed practitioners to develop a track record of working with school children.

Association with the CP 'brand' is however, viewed as having some negative effects. Though many practitioners felt that they attracted higher levels of recognition and respect following association with CP, some practitioners felt as though their practice had been defined and contained within the CP agenda, thus limiting their scope to the education sector. This perhaps diluted the strength of the internal practitioner brand.

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Quay Arts – Southampton and Isle of Wight

The Quay Arts Centre in Newport is the Isle of Wight's leading art gallery and venue for live arts events and is an Arts Council England Regularly Funded Organisation. Quay Arts Centre was contracted by CP Southampton and Isle of Wight to run a series of projects on the Island.

Prior to CP, Quay Arts education budget was limited, with very little outreach work. Relationships with schools were very ad-hoc. Through CP, Quay Arts have developed strategic relationships with schools and a new remit around education. They are currently awaiting a decision on increased funding for education work. Quay Arts relationship with CP has now ended, but they are continuing to take forward the sustainable aspects of CP work.

4.7 Achieving Impact: Continuing Professional Development

The majority of practitioners involved in the CP programme have received some form of training. This has been delivered through a combination of formal, structured training and ‘on the job’ learning. Whilst practitioners welcomed the opportunity for formal training, it is felt that most benefit is derived from the informal opportunities of working in schools.

Structured Training

Our survey research reveals that 55% of creative practitioner respondents have been offered formal training by CP. This was most likely to be in the form of structured training days (69%), followed by conferences and networking events (55%). Just under a third have taken part in dedicated Continuing Professional Development Courses, and 14% have taken part in mentoring schemes.

CP offices have provided a variety of formal training opportunities. For example, Merseyside have held intensive courses for core practitioners that were acknowledged by participants to be ‘transformative’.

Thames Gateway Structured Training

Thames Gateway CP has embedded structured training within the recruitment and development process.

The CP office holds ‘development days’ which serve as recruitment tools. Practitioners are invited to the development day to gather details of (a) what CP can offer, (b) how practitioners can engage with the programme, and (c) develop training and skills.

Successful development (selection) day practitioners were offered contracts. However, prior to any direct work with schools, they were provided with 5 days of structured training and development (entitled ‘ignition’ or ‘accelerate’). On one of these days, artists were ‘mixed’ with schools, and were given two weeks to build a programme with the school. This was seen as a consultation by residency.

Practitioners are positive regarding their experiences of formal training, but it is noted that provision is not standardised across offices. This has prompted a feeling of inconsistency, and is particularly apparent amongst those practitioners who have worked in more than one region.

Learning ‘On the Job’

In Cornwall, CPD has been ‘weaved’ into programmes, with little specific or formal training. This emphasis upon informal training was seen as a positive aspect by most practitioners, as benefit and learning is often gained through informal channels.

Learning ‘on the job’ is one of the key ways in which freelance practitioners can access training and development. CP has encouraged and

enhanced these types of learning opportunities through the need to develop project management skills, and school consulting and liaison. Practitioners have negotiated project content and delivery with schools, requiring a sophisticated understanding of client needs. They have furthermore developed skills in managing and collaborating with other practitioners, often from different disciplines and backgrounds.

5 Creative Economy Impact

While we can demonstrate the impact of CP on practitioners, it is more difficult to generate hard evidence of wider impact. However, we can show that (a) Arts Council England is being directed towards new markets, (b) networks are being nurtured and developed and (c) increased demand for cultural and creative practitioners in education and other sectors.

5.1 High Impact at Core, Evidence of Some Ripple Effects

A key topic of interest throughout this research is the extent to which CP has led to a 'ripple effect' of benefits throughout the creative economy. CP has spent £29million

Between 660 and 1,530 freelancers have been hired by CP survey respondents to complete CP projects, with 29% of these respondents spending over half their CP budget on freelancers. The total numbers of freelancers employed as a direct result of CP will be much higher.

within the cultural and creative economy, constituting a major economic intervention and investment. This equates to 50% of all CP office spend going directly into the cultural and creative economy.

As we have discussed, the majority of this investment tends to be concentrated upon a core of practitioners. However, one area in which a

ripple effect may be discerned is via practitioner use of freelancers to deliver CP work. Our survey reveals that over half (54%) of respondents use freelancers to carry out work on CP projects.

Ashton Group Theatre - Cumbria

Ashton Group Theatre is a touring theatre company based in Barrow-in-Furness. It employs 2 full time staff and draws on a pool of approximately 20 freelancers.

Through CP, the theatre has been able to contract a variety of freelancers, some of which it has not worked with before. For example they have worked with a group of animators. They are looking for opportunities to work with these new contacts in the future.

5.2 Networks

CP efforts to engender and encourage a collaborative approach to creative programmes has led, not only to an enrichment of practice, but to a longer term network of linkages and relationships that will support practitioners in their future work.

Of those respondents who had gained new work as a result of involvement with CP, 69% state that this a result of access to networks.

Practitioners have gained an opportunity to forge relationships with new organisations and

individuals, working in and outside of specific disciplines. This has been particularly important and beneficial for the high proportion of freelancers involved in CP work, who typically do not gain extensive opportunities to work collaboratively or across disciplines. This has inevitably heightened awareness of new opportunities for business development, and a pool of potential collaborators upon which to draw for future projects, both within and outside of the educational environment.

Furthermore, networks nurtured and developed by CP have a role to play in widening access, and in encouraging diversity within the cultural and creative industries.

5.3 The Education Market

New Markets Exploitation

46% of survey respondents state that they have gained new work as a result of CP.

In 40% of cases, this was non-CP related work. 32% in non-CP schools, and 26% are working with young people and children outside of schools. A similar percentage has found work on other community projects. For 9%, Creative Partnerships has contributed to further commercial work

Working in education within the participative, explorative CP process has shifted creative practitioners' expectations of education sector work, and has, to some extent, raised awareness of both new markets and new opportunities for work within existing markets. Our survey

reveals that for 36% of respondents (109 individuals/businesses), CP has contributed to further non-CP work. CP therefore provides practitioners with access to valuable tacit knowledge and social capital that supports their future business development. Some practitioners have begun to access education-based work not funded through CP, or are developing products and services that might target this market in the future.

A caveat to acknowledge is that for half of respondents (49%), the additional work accounts for less than 10% of their turnover/income. Education may be a growing market for practitioners, but it is yet to reach its potential.

Lorna Rose – Birmingham

Lorna Rose is a visual artist who uses inspiration from the 'Reggio philosophy' to facilitate creative exploration.

Lorna notes two key benefits from her work with CP. In the first instance CP Birmingham has provided an element of stability. Work is paid for 'up front', and three days a week are guaranteed throughout the life of the project. This introduces stability, and highlights the importance of 'knowing that work is there'.

However, the most significant benefit for Lorna has been the ability to access new markets. Lorna has been able to secure non Creative Partnerships funding for two days a week for one of the nurseries she worked for as part of CP.

These findings suggest that CP has raised practitioner awareness of the potential of the education market to provide rewarding and challenging work, thereby increasing the supply of practitioners available for education based work.

6 Conclusions and Implications for the Future

6.1 Benefits

CP is a unique economic intervention that has impacted strongly and positively upon a core of creative and cultural practitioners. Most of these are freelancers, a group for whom it is very difficult to design appropriate training and CPD services. The impact has been felt across the UK, not just in areas such as London and the South East where the greatest number of practitioners are concentrated.

CP has nurtured a pool of practitioners and creative agents that are highly skilled, with a strong understanding of the education market. CP has provided these practitioners and agents with unique CPD opportunities that will not only support engagement with the education market, but are highly transferable across public and commercial sectors. CP has achieved this with a group who are traditionally viewed as difficult to reach

A Pool of Highly Skilled Creative Workers

One of the objectives of CP is to “build the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors to work effectively with schools, and provide opportunities for cultural and creative professionals to enhance the skills they need to work in educational settings”. Evidence suggests that CP has achieved this objective in three key ways.

Experimentation: In the first instance, CP has provided space and time for a core of practitioners to develop their disciplines in an organic, fluid way that allows experimentation. CP working is process, rather than product, led. This creates room for innovation, experimentation and development of practice, and is a unique offering to creative and cultural practitioners in the education market.

Market Knowledge: Secondly, CP has equipped a core pool of practitioners with a strong understanding of the education market. Whilst many had gained experience of the education sector under the traditional ‘arts education’ banner, the CP ‘way of working’ was relatively new. The collaborative, participative approach encouraged by CP fostered a deeper understanding of the needs of schools, and closely related creativity to whole school change. Furthermore, practitioners were equipped with the consultancy, negotiation and change management skills to develop, manage, and evaluate future education work – be this in a CP environment, or in an independent school programme for creativity. In this sense, CP has helped in developing a pool of ‘market ready’ practitioners.

Training and Development: CP has succeeded in building a model for creative and cultural practitioner CPD. Each CP office has used a combination of formal structured training, and informal ‘on the job’ learning to equip creative and cultural practitioners with the skills they need for continued practice progression, collaboration, and crucial transferable skills that will prove relevant in a variety of settings, be they education, publicly funded or commercial markets.

A Unique Model for CPD

CP has therefore developed and trialed a unique model for CPD. CP has sought to build a unique dual-purpose programme that benefits both schools and practitioners. Learning through doing the job, combined with high quality support and some formal training, is a very successful model of workforce development.

This CPD model provides a strong basis and foundation for further refinement and development, and should offer an exemplar upon which to base future skills development programmes for the cultural and creative community.

Emerging Practitioner Networks

The creative and cultural industries are characterised by freelancers and micro-enterprises (although this varies from sub-sector to sub-sector). To combat issues of isolation, and to build teams to satisfy the requirements of larger, or cross-sector projects, these sectors have traditionally formed strong formal and informal networks. These networks are crucial in gaining access to work, training, and staff, acting as a portal for tacit knowledge.

CP has supported and developed these networks, in addition to seeding new ones. Practitioners have frequently commented on the benefits of meeting and working with practitioners from different disciplines, and in a number of instances relationships continued and flourished outside the CP sphere, providing opportunities for collaborative working, and ongoing social and work-based networks. Indeed, developing sustainable, inclusive and formalised networks is crucial to the longer term success of CP.

Practitioner – School Relationships

It is not only relationships between practitioners that have been nurtured and strengthened. Practitioners have also been able to form relationships with schools, through the CP process of collaborative, participative working. In some instances relationships formed between a school and creative practitioner have been solidified as schools contract with practitioners directly.

A New Constituency for Arts Council England

Through the development of CP, Arts Council England have gained an opportunity to forge new relationships with a wider cross section of practitioners, organisations and commercial companies – many of whom have never accessed direct public funding in the past. CP provides a strong base and foundation to build and strengthen these links.

Local strategies

The future of creative work by practitioners in schools is in part dependent on the supporting ecology at a local level, and we see evidence of local strategies emerging. In Birmingham the local authority has long been committed to encouraging and funding creative work, and thus there are local agencies that may be able to take up the brokerage, funder and consultancy role needed to continue the work of CP. In contrast, in Bradford the local authority is commercially managed and standards-driven and it will be more problematic to bring a new partnership of agencies together to continue CP-type support.

In many CP areas plans are being made to:

- strengthen networks of practitioners so they can support each other independently.

- create networks of interested agencies to take up the CP brokerage and consultancy role, and to the extent that they can, the funding role.
- encourage schools to take on some of the commissioning, budget control and project management roles to prevent a hand-holding culture and encourage independence.

6.2 Challenges

CP has succeeded in developing a core of highly skilled, market-aware practitioners that are ready to engage with the education sector. However, there are a number of challenges associated with the model, including a series of unintended consequences such as wage inflation, and questions regarding sustainability. These challenges must be addressed, but do not outweigh the significant benefits of a pool of market-ready practitioners.

6.3 Unintended Consequences

Competition

CP has competed with practitioners who have been accessing education-based work outside of the CP sphere. The comprehensive, large-scale, co-ordinated programmes developed through CP have raised expectations in some schools about the level of service and scale of impact on offer from creative practitioners. The study has found anecdotal evidence that in some cases and in some areas this effectively renders non-CP practitioners uncompetitive in the education market. They find it more difficult to sell to schools and, in some cases, to recruit fellow practitioners to work at previous rates (see below).

Expectations

Just as CP has raised expectations amongst schools, the study found raised practitioner expectations about the type of work that may be possible in schools and the rates one may command.

Artificial wage inflation

The research study found evidence that CP holds a 'firm line' regarding rates for practitioners, paying what it deems are fair market rates. This is in line with the objectives of the Arts Council in ensuring that creative practitioners are acknowledged and valued for their work. Whilst this policy has resulted in 'artificial' wage inflation, there is no direct means of assessing its implications.

6.4 Sustainability

Investment in Creative Practitioners

CP has met its objective in building capacity amongst a core of practitioners. As we state above there are many lessons to be learned from CP as a model for professional development. Possibly the most important of these is the practical lesson that considerable investment and time is required to equip practitioners with the knowledge

and transferable skills necessary to work effectively in the education sector. This should be taken into consideration by Arts Council England and partners such as DCMS and the Sector Skills Councils as they consider future models for professional development.

Investment in the Role of the Agent

Many of the core group of CP practitioners have also been trained to take on the 'agent' role. CP is training up a cadre of creative professionals with highly marketable transferable skills. These skills will be invaluable to Arts Council England and its partners in its future attempts to promote the creative learning agenda, regardless of the actual operational model adopted.

Market Readiness: Capacity Building amongst Schools

As an economic intervention, CP is designed to stimulate both the demand and supply of creative practitioners in education, leaving a legacy of 'market ready' practitioners, and "investor ready" schools. Our research shows clearly that a small core of creative practitioners are 'market ready'. What is less clear is whether schools are in a position to invest effectively in creative practitioners in the absence of CP or a similar agency.

It may be argued that CP has introduced a model that does not sufficiently support capacity building amongst schools. Whilst retaining the majority of decision making 'in-house' offers consistency and simplicity, it may be argued that schools have not developed the skills and confidence they would need to commission independently.

However, many head teachers argue that it is not reasonable to expect schools to develop and manage a creative programme such as CP. They do not possess the skills, resources or market knowledge to purchase the services of creative practitioners. This is particularly true in the schools which would most benefit from CP type activity. OFSTED's report (July 2006) for CP states that the schools which are most likely to benefit from CP are the ones that are least likely to engage with the creativity agenda without outside support.

These issues indicate that without an intermediary to broker relationships between practitioners and schools, it is unlikely that any schools-driven market would exist.

However, even with a brokering agency like CP, schools need to develop more effective project design, management and co-ordination skills if the impact of CP type activity is to be sustained or increased.

It is important therefore that CP addresses capacity building from both a practitioner and school perspective. CP has already built substantial capacity and market understanding amongst practitioners – it must also begin to address these issues within the school community.

The Issue of Demand

In addition to not always possessing the skills to develop and manage CP-type work, schools show little evidence of being in a position to invest directly in practitioners. Flexible funding from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has yet to filter down to schools. With many demands on school resources, there is no clear indications that this funding will be spent on developing creativity in schools or on initiative such as CP. Many CP office staff, as well as a considerable number of practitioners are concerned that the market for practitioners in education will largely evaporate without some continued form of separate funding.

There are some who are confident that schools will be persuaded of the value (and feasibility) of continuing to fund creative work, but there appear to be few grounds for believing that this will be the case in anything but a small minority of schools. The recent CP survey of head teachers does not ask specifically about sustainability, but heads still comment frequently that “while the experiences gained were certainly valued and worthwhile it was very difficult to sustain them financially”¹⁰.

CP and Arts Council England should consider whether they have paid enough attention to stimulating demand as well as developing supply, both by persuading the education system to take on the development of creativity and by pressing for funding and policy to support a creative learning approach. Without a demand side the development of supply will remain of limited application.

It must be remembered that the CP model is new and experimental. Ongoing refinements are both desirable and necessary to ensure an appropriate balance of control, and tacit knowledge exchange. Indeed, its evolution is evidenced by the instances of CP offices giving money directly to schools to broker and manage relationships with creative practitioners. Additionally, one office has given approximately £250,000 directly to schools to run CP activities. These are isolated examples of school demand for practitioners, and there may be further examples and evidence that has not been collected as part of this research project.

Alternative Models?

Due to the short timescales in which CP has been operating, and the need to fund, develop and implement a programme of creative work within a relatively tight deadline, CP offices have not typically experimented with alternative models of work. As one might expect, a relatively uniform model of engagement has been harnessed across the board – which has enabled much to be accomplished in a short space of time.

However, as we have indicated, there are a number of challenges to long-term sustainability without continued funding. In order to progress and develop a sustainable model for future creative practitioner engagement in schools, room, time and funding to experiment with new models will be required.

¹⁰ BMRB Social Research for Arts Council England, [Creative Partnerships: Survey of head teachers](#), April 2006.