WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST FELLOWSHIP REPORT:

Space, survival and sustainability:

the future of community arts organisations in the UK

By Zain Dada
Churchill Fellow - 2019

Contents

Background to the fellow	**P 3**
Executive Summary	**P 4**
Introduction: Survival, Space and Sustainability.	**P 8**
Experiences and lessons learned from the Fellowship	**P 14**
a) Case Study: ArtShareLA	P 16
b) Case Study: Community Arts Stabilisation Trust	P 18
c) Case Study: Creative Growth	P 21
d) Mapping Oakland: Mapping small arts and culture organisations in Oakland	P 23
e) Case study: Young Chicago Authors	P 25
f) Case Study: The Point NYC	P 28
Conclusion and Recommendations	**P 31**
Acknowledgements	**P 35**
Bibliography	**P 36**

Background to the Fellow

My name is Zain Dada, I'm a cultural producer and writer based in London. Currently, I'm the producer/arts programmer at Free Word - an arts venue focussing on the power & politics of words. Prior to this, I was at Bush Theatre as a community assistant and worked toward disappearing the barriers between the theatre and the local community in one of the most diverse areas in the UK.

Before getting into the arts & culture sector, I worked as a sessional youth worker - where I formed a poetry collective called Words Apart. Alongside weekly writing workshops, we were invited as a group of young poets to perform in a variety of different spaces including the Southbank Centre.

Following this, I pursued an undergraduate degree studying BA Politics & History at SOAS, University of London before moving onto becoming the co-president of the SOAS Students' Union and co-founding the 'Decolonising SOAS' campaign which aimed to interrogate the colonial roots of SOAS and how that legacy might implicitly impact everything from curriculum, funding, to widening participation.

After my undergraduate degree, I studied an MA in Creative Writing & Education at Goldsmiths, University of London in 2017 and received a scholarship from the Aziz Foundation in 'Developing Arts Management Professionals and Artists from British Muslim Communities.'

As an artist, I've been involved in DIY projects and zine-making which encompassed archiving the oral history of traders at Shepherds Bush Market in West London. I've also been involved in campaigns to save public space including the Granville Centre in South Kilburn whereby I co-programmed an event with author, Zadie Smith - which lead to Brent Council reversing their decision to demolish the space for unaffordable housing in 2016. More broadly, I'm inspired projects, initiatives and movements which are accessible, creative and broad in their approach to provoke social change.

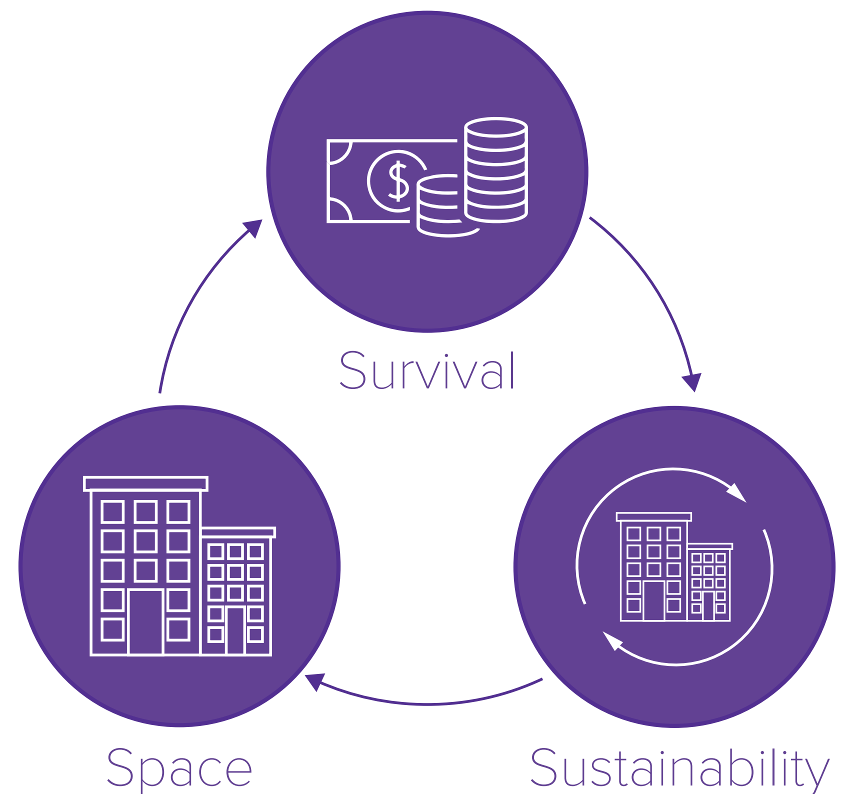
As the co-founder of Khidr Collective - a multi-disciplinary arts collective platforming the work of Muslim artists, I co-edit our bi-annual publication, the Khidr Collective Zine. Leading a multi-disciplinary collective has lead me to experiment with different mediums from working with illustrators to producing animation short films.

This work has contributed to my interest in embarking on a fellowship on 'space survival and sustainability: the future of community arts' and receiving a Winston Churchill Travel Fellowship.

Executive Summary

‘Space, survival and sustainability: the future of community arts’ is the result of a research trip funded and supported by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust as part of their Churchill Fellowship. In this executive summary, I outline the three interconnected issues of survival, sustainability and space alongside eight related recommendations to improve the future of community arts organisations in the UK.

This research looks at six community arts organisations and projects in the United States in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, San Francisco and Oakland. I examine their approaches to mitigating threats to community arts organisations in the United States as an instructive guide for community arts organisations, funders and local authorities in the UK. With that in mind, the eight recommendations are split across local authorities, funders and community arts organisations.



Executive Summary

Survival

The impact of austerity since 2010 has had a huge effect on community arts across the UK. The initial impact came from cuts to public services and community spaces including libraries and youth centres. In turn, the financial pressure on local authorities has meant there has been added pressure to sell off public land to private developers, usually to accommodate residential amenities. Although this issue has been particularly acute in London, other cities are facing similar issues as the cost of land and housing increases.

Space

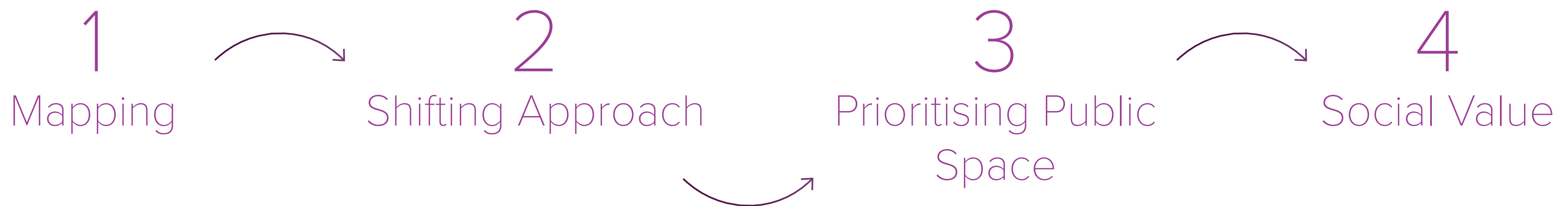
The way public space and community arts is valued has had a knock on effect on community arts organisations. The arts, culture and creative sectors are viewed through the prism of their value to their economy which has helped, for example, the Greater London Authority in London argue for more investment into the arts from central government but has had a cultural impact on how local authorities view public space. Community centres and public spaces are increasingly being managed by developers and private enterprises and are turned into enterprise hubs or demolished outright to make way for housing. Community arts organisations are not seen as socially valuable in this context by both local authorities and funders.

Sustainability

Plans to regenerate cities or boroughs are often short termist. Instead of investing in organisations which have worked within communities for generations, awards such as the London Borough of Culture invest millions into programming instead of coupling this with investment into spaces that tangibly sustain culture for the long term. For example, Brent Borough of Culture 2020 working in a community centre which is due to be reduced severely in size and replaced with an enterprise hub and in an area whereby local libraries and youth spaces have been under threat for years. Additionally, organisations have not got the social capital, knowledge of process or opportunities to make the case for co-operative models of ownership in their own areas.

Key Recommendations

Local authorities and funding bodies:



Local mapping exercises of local community arts organisations using a methodology which incorporates qualitative research and accounts for the voluntary nature of the community arts eco-system. Identifying community arts organisations that historically operate in different areas.

Re-framing the approach in confronting issues of space. Shifting from support of 'artist studios' to support for community arts organisations who have historic presence in existing communities.

Prioritising existing public spaces (libraries, community centres and youth centres) - providing funding and legislation for those buildings to remain.

Designing a measurement for 'social value' in accounting for the necessity for public spaces which facilitate 'everyday creativity.'

Key Recommendations

Community Arts organisations

1

New Models

2

New Income Streams

3

Creating Stories

Community Arts organisations in the UK seeking to grow and remain in areas threatened by gentrification need to build the case for long term leases, ownership and co-operative models. This ‘ownership model’ key to remaining in areas threatened by gentrification.

Generating different methods of income to supplement any funding subsidies in order to survive the fluctuation in arts funding.

Narrative building around your organisation; garnering investment from your own community (financial and voluntary).

Introduction

Over several years I've observed the delicate tension which community arts organisations occupy. On one hand, I've seen the ways that, despite a lack of arts subsidy, community arts organisations have done transformative work with very little resource. On the other hand, I've witnessed how those same organisations are hampered by the crippling realities of financial sustainability, personal welfare (the very real risk of burn out) and the existential threats to their spaces.

As my background will attest to, I've worked across varying parts of the arts and culture eco-system. From being a youth worker in a youth centre which was impacted by cuts to youth services in 2010 to co-founding my own collective made up of British Muslim artists. I've worked as a freelancer outside the walls of arts institutions, negotiating partnerships for free space and micro-grants and I've also, more recently, worked in arts institutions as the producer, commissioning artists and granting space. In addition to this, I've worked in partnership with various community arts organisations over several years.

In this time, working across varied but connected sectors, I'd grown familiar with the issues facing community arts organisations. Those issues related to the sustainability of community arts organisations and how they in turn, facilitate 'cultural capability.' The phrase 'cultural capability' is described as the "freedom to speak, to express, to be heard, to experience, to make, to build, to contest, to create." [1] *Toward Cultural Democracy - promoting cultural capability for all,* a report published in 2017 by the Cultural Institute at Kings College London articulates in depth, some tangible examples of what 'cultural capability' looks like. The authors of the report identify the term 'everyday creativity' as cultural activity which exists outside of the framework of the formal, publicly funded arts sector.[2] This cultural activity could be identified as community choirs, guerrilla gardening and local knitting workshops. But 'everyday creativity' has also birthed arguably the biggest music scene in the UK today, Grime music. Stars like Stormzy and Skepta emerged out of a musical renaissance in inner-city London which began in the early 2000s with Grime's spiritual father, Wiley in Bow, East London. Today, the genre has spread across the UK and internationally. As journalist Dan Hancox identifies in his book, Inner City Pressure: The Story of Grime, the emergence of grime is the story of creating something out of nothing as the musical genre emerged outside of the framework of public arts subsidy and in amongst the lean years of austerity, struggle and the cutting of resources in inner cities.[3]

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1 Dr Wilson, Nick, Dr Gross & Dr Bull, Jonathan & Anna. Toward Cultural Democracy - promoting cultural capability for all. Kings College. (2017).
2 Ibid, 2017, p6.
3 Hancox, Dan. Inner City Pressure: The Story of Grime. Harper Collins. 2018.

In many ways, the idea of 'everyday creativity' helps narrow precisely what 'community arts' is. According to Owen Kelly, it is defined as "a group of people engaged in a process of collective creativity."[4] The term 'community arts' itself emerged in the 1970s as a particular response to "harsh economic conditions."[5] To further this, theorist, Francois Matarasso asserts that the UN's definition of 'community development' helps focus what 'community arts' is. The definition stated that 'community development is "a movement to promote better living for the whole community with active participation and if possible on the initiative of the community."[6] The community advisory panel of the Greater London Authority described community arts as something which "Involves people on a collective basis, encourages the use of a collective statement but does not neglect individual development or the need for individual expression."[7] As the idea of 'everyday creativity' puts forward, this conception of community arts was something which was largely ignored by mainstream arts institutions and funding bodies.

Drawing on these formative definitions and research, its clear that community arts organisations often sit outside the remit of the institutional or mainstream cultural eco-system. Community arts has such a broad and varied remit that it could incorporate unincorporated community groups, groups based at youth centres, registered charities with arts remits and or collectives who represent identity-based communities. Some of the key issues with sitting outside of a mainstream arts ecology is around value and power. How are community arts organisations going to be valued if they are not recognised by funders as legitimate? How are the buildings which house community arts organisations protected? How do these community arts organisations survive and sustain themselves in this context? These formative questions lead me to identify three key interconnected issues which frame the research trip and are intrinsically linked to the issues around building economies for community arts.

Survival

There is no doubt, the context of austerity has impacted the health of community arts organisations[8] - since 2010, £400 million has been stripped from "non-essential" services including "museums, libraries and art festivals." This period of scarce resource has not meant the need has lessened, if anything, the need for arts & culture and community arts organisations in particular, has increased. But in order to identify some of the challenges, it's crucial to briefly examine the origins of how value toward community arts is prescribed and therefore, how funding has historically been allocated.
In the UK, "the state has assumed the role of the patron of the arts, and custodian of specific national culture," which emerged out of the "establishment of the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1945."[9] In Kelly's seminal book, *Community, Art & the State*, he asserts that national patronage of the arts was a double edged sword because of the state's "construct [of] a specific dominant culture."[10] This 'dominant culture' is a result of the assumptions and beliefs of a "powerful group" embedding itself into the decision making around arts and culture in Britain.[11] Those assumptions and beliefs are intimately tied to the ideas around who 'art' is for and where 'value' should be placed. Inevitably, this has lead to an unequal distribution of resources whereby the funding of mainstream arts institutions is unquestionably supported whereas the community arts eco-system is starved of resource. In addition to this fundamental dynamic around the arts & culture eco-

4 Kelly, Owen. Community, Art and the State. etc. pp83.
5 Matarasso, François. All In This Together': THE DEPOLITICISATION OF COMMUNITY ART IN BRITAIN. 1970 9 2011. pp 211.
6 Ibid. pp219.
7 Ibid.
8 Frances, Ryan. Only a small, sad nation robs its people of arts and culture. (The Guardian, February 2019). https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/07/arts-culture-services-austerity
9 Kelly, Owen. Community, Art & the State. ( ), pp 70.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid. pp72.

system is the language around ‘economic growth’ and the arts. As the term, ‘creative industries’ has developed, the state characterises the arts and established institution’s under the auspices of growth and value. Therefore, how much an industry is worth, dictates it’s level of subsidy and community arts organisations have fallen well below this radar of measuring arts in economic terms.[12] For example, in 2018, Mayor Sadiq Khan launched a campaign which looked at disappearing cultural spaces. However, the focus was inexorably on the loss of “artist workspaces.”[13] The use of the term ‘workspace’ is purposeful in that it implies a link between ‘creativity’ and ‘economics.’ There is little mention of libraries, community space or community arts because it is viewed outside the framework of ‘economic value.’ Under definition of “artist workspaces,” the arts are only valuable if they contribute to profit-making.

In opposition to this, several movements have emerged to oppose these kinds of structures. Notably, *The Movement for Cultural Democracy*, which is made of a coalition of artists, activists, organisations, academics and thinkers who argue for a “radical redistribution of funding to arts and cultural activities.”[14] Within the manifesto for *The Movement for Cultural Democracy* is the demand for “cultural activities” to be “supported and funded” at a “local level” with “genuinely equitable and diverse structures.”[15] The manifesto draws on the question of ‘value’ and how it’s essential to see arts & culture at a local level as something which is a social value. But how did we get here? Drawing back onto the current socio-political context and how this informs community arts organisations, it’s important to identify the structural inequalities and impact of austerity which *The Movement for Cultural Democracy* underlines in their manifesto. This also gives us an idea of why and how, culture is viewed in economic terms and how this has impacted community arts spaces.

In the recent report on race and class inequality in London, researcher Dhelia Snoussi highlights the ways in which “austerity measures have indeed put strong financial pressures on local councils, creating growing incentives for them to attract wealthier and middle class residents: a way to generate higher council tax income while reducing demands on public services.” [16] The impact of this, as Snoussi points out, is the “incentive” for councils to sell “council owned land” which includes community centres, youth centres and libraries.

How does this fundamentally impact the community arts eco-system? The foundation of an inequitable funding structure, the economic impact of austerity and subsequent consequences has made life immeasurably difficult for those operating in community arts contexts. Inevitably, it means that local authorities are viewing any public land or space through the prism of scarcity, whereby, anything that can be recouped or that is not of ‘economic value,’ is not valuable. The on-going legacy of austerity connects the issues of survival and space and underlines that many of the threats to community arts organisations do not emerge out of a vacuum. This is also an essential component to how organisations
in the United States have emerged and it is important to draw these comparisons. These community arts organisations and groups, whether they are un-constituted or registered charities, are responding to the society around them. As Owen Kelly identifies, “what community artists can do within their work is to assist these struggles and to participate in the development of the consciousness that fuels them. They can construct events, images and statements which are congruent with those struggles.”[17]

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12 Matarasso, François. All In This Together’: THE DEPOLITICISATION OF COMMUNITY ART IN BRITAIN. 1970 9 2011. pp 236.
13 Mayor calls for continued effort to keep artists in London. August 2018. https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-calls-for-protection-of-artists-spaces
14 MANIFESTO V 2.0. Movement for Cultural Democracy. http://culturaldemocracy.uk/
15 Ibid.
16 Snoussi, Dhelia & Mompelat, Laurie. ‘We Are Ghosts’: Race, Class and institutional prejudice. Runnymede and CLASS report. 2019. pp18.
17 Kelly, Owen. Community, Art and The State. pp147.

Space

Value is a key and formative part of both community arts organisations valuing themselves and the arts eco-system in which they occupy themselves. Measurements of how community arts organisations are undervalued can be looked at several ways. As mentioned, a period of austerity has meant arts & culture has suffered in the most broadest sense but this has also impacted funding - and reduces, the already narrow criteria in which community arts organisations occupy. Connected to this, is the intellectual and social capital to even apply for these grants and funding opportunities. Value can also be ascribed in physical ways and that is also deeply connected to austerity and the pressure put on local authorities by central government. Community centres and community spaces are a key pillar of community arts surviving and importantly, in turn, enable cohesive societies and communities.

One practical example of this is the Granville & Carlton Centres in South Kilburn, North West London. Granville Centre was originally a Presbyterian hall in the 1880s serving the local community, being a space for weddings and even funerals. In 2017, the Granville Centre's thriving youth services were cut - a service which served up to 800 young people in the local area. The Granville Centre is also home to the Granville Community Kitchen, lead by Leslie Barson and Deidre Woods which runs free community meals every Friday as well as food-centred activities and events. Although not ostensibly, a 'community arts organisation,' the Granville Centre is a space which has facilitated culture from running film screenings to after school clubs. It's well noted that, the author, Zadie Smith used the space as a teen and Britain's Got Talent 2017 Winner and pianist, Tokio Myers fondly remembers Granville as a space to meet neighbours and play music as a resident of the South Kilburn area. However, in 2016, the Granville and Carlton were due to be demolished by Brent Council to be replaced by unaffordable housing. A local, campaign batted away the threat of demolition for a short period of time. However, the threat, by the local council would have robbed a community of an invaluable asset which has a site of culture for many community arts organisations.

It is worth framing this research within the context of the communities themselves in order to understand why the need for community arts is so acute. There is an undoubted correlation between the need for community arts organisations and the communities facing the sharp edge of austerity. Researcher, Dhelia Snoussi's interview with the Granville Community Kitchen's co founder, Leslie Barson illustrates the realities of what would happen if these kinds of community centres - which are sites of 'everyday creativity,' didn't exist:

"What we're seeing increasingly is that enclosure of community and public spaces, it's getting narrower and narrower where people can go. So they're going to private spaces like McDonalds"[18]

The Granville Community centre is by no means an isolated example which only affects London. A central part of this research is how the other cities and even towns across the UK including Manchester, Birmingham and Liverpool are facing similar issues. A newspaper report in 2018 by the *Manchester Evening News* reported that 14 community spaces across Rochdale are facing closure.[19] Furthermore, the question is not just how to protect community centres, youth centres and libraries as spaces of 'everyday creativity' but also how other community arts organisations acquire or find space. As cities like London (and increasingly, Birmingham and Manchester) become more and more expensive, the idea of community arts organisations competing to manage space as part of unique co-operative models or through capital fundraising projects becomes incredibly rare. Not only are community arts organisations competing with the building of residential homes across the UK, but they are also competing with the larger, established arts institutions.

18 Snoussi, Dhelia & Mompelat, Laurie. 'We Are Ghosts': Race, Class and institutional prejudice. Runnymede and CLASS report. 2019. pp21.
19 Manchester Evening News. A day in the life of the threatened Burnside community centre in Langley. https://www.manchestereveningnews.

Sustainability

The issue of sustainability is at the very heart of these interconnected issues around the community arts eco-system. How do community arts organisations create sustain themselves in difficult economic conditions? How do community arts organisations continue to foster 'everyday creativity' and increase 'cultural capability' in an environment where projects and organisations are disappearing at alarming rate? How can funding bodies and the state support this eco-system? Organisations in the UK have attempted to address these issues with varying degrees of success from employing social enterprise models to membership schemes. For example, Cockpit Arts, founded in 1986, draws on the social enterprise model whereby 80% of their income is earned revenue.[20] Their model enables them to re-invest profits from any earned revenue back into the work they do to support emerging craft-makers. This has worked for Cockpit Arts which also functions as a registered charity but reduces reliance on state subsidy. However, different organisations have different needs, and as my research in America revealed, the size and scope of organisations who define themselves within the bracket of 'community arts,' varies in overall operating costs.

Drawing on my own experience as the co-founder of Khidr Collective, an organisation supporting the work of British Muslim artists, we've experienced our own challenges around sustainability. In stark contrast to Cockpit Arts, Khidr Collective is an unincorporated, un-constituted organisation which has thus far relied on the support of donations, trusts, foundations and crowd-funding campaigns to produce the magazines we make, the events we produce and the animations and other digital work we are delving into. At the time of writing, Khidr Collective is made up of a team of 12 with a core team of 5 members who lead on everything from editorial responsibilities to administrative tasks including funding applications. However, the time and capacity offered by the wider collective is voluntary and unpaid. This is not unusual for community arts organisations and especially collectives, but it does mean, smaller community arts organisations run the risk of burning out. Sustainability concerns not only an organisation's health but the health of individuals involved in organisations who are often operating in difficult circumstances. This is a broader issue amongst other grassroots collectives across London and the UK where labour is often unpaid and voluntary.

One of the big issues around sustainability is encouraging long-term solutions to communities rather than short term thinking. An example of this is the recent initiative by the the Greater London Authority including The London Borough of Culture Awards, which "shine a light" on the "character and diversity of London boroughs" as well as underlining that "culture is for everyone."[21] The Mayor's initiative offers successful bids from London boroughs up to £1.35 million funding to promote "ambitious cultural activity" celebrating "local people and places."[22] The London Borough of Culture Award for 2020 has been granted to Brent which has an exciting array of re-distributive cultural activity and a brilliant programme.[23] However, in the context of long term sustainability, it's important to note that the Brent 2020 team is based in the Granville Centre, a community space, which as mentioned, was under threat before and is under threat in 2019 to be reduced in size to make way for housing an an enterprise hub. The enterprise hub, is about incubating and growing local business however, it replaces the main hall in the Granville Centre. Zeroing in on the borough of Brent in London as a particular example provides us with a fascinating paradox around culture, social value, space and community arts. Despite being the year of 'the borough of culture,' in the most recent planning committee meeting in January 2020, it was decided that Preston Library in Brent would be redeveloped

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20 Cockpit Arts, About. https://cockpitarts.com/about-cockpit-arts/
21 London Borough of Culture. https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/currentculture-projects/london-borough-culture-0/london-borough-culture
22 Ibid.
23 Brent 2020. https://www.brent2020.co.uk/

(and reduced in size) to accommodate new flats and the Granville and Carlton centres also redeveloped (and drastically reduced in community space provision). Another key caveat, is the Granville and Carlton Centre proposals are part of a wider regeneration plan for the South Kilburn estate. The wider issue here is around the 'long term' sustainability of spaces of social value which facilitate 'everyday creativity.' Despite the inspiring programming, the area which has received the Borough of Culture award is tangibly reducing spaces where creativity is forged and produced. How successful is the legacy of Brent 2020 if there is a successful programme of cultural events but community spaces like the Granville and Preston Library are not sustained and do not exist in ten years time?

An issue connected to this and under the auspices of 'sustainability' is growth. To be clear, not all community arts organisations need or want to grow, but for those organisations where growth should be a natural transition, what pathways enable them to do so? How are community organisations without the connections and social capital, expected to grow and build the communities around them without an infrastructure of support? Without that crucial infrastructure, there are no pathways to enable voluntary collectives to have paid staff or indeed, to acquire space of their own.

As it's been outlined, drawing together issues of 'survival,' 'space' and sustainability,' has thrown up a series of questions I was keen to investigate; how are community arts organisations in other contexts keeping their spaces, surviving and sustaining themselves in order to serve the communities they represent? How are smaller collectives equipped to maintain and grow? What are the ways in which community arts organisations can tangibly take up physical space in cities where space is too expensive? We also know, that community arts organisations are doing urgent and necessary work in addressing social issues at a time whereby social cohesion in society is under gross threat. In my fellowship and subsequent research, I hoped to meet, interview and shadow organisations, Foundations and researchers in the United States who were attempting to address these issues.

Experiences and lessons learned from the Fellowship

In accounting for this context and the interconnected issues of survival, space and sustainability, the Winston Churchill Travel Fellowship enabled me to meet community arts organisations, researchers and foundations with expertise on the community arts ecosystem in the United States of America. I chose to visit five cities within in the United States with similar contexts to cities in Britain. Those cities were Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Francisco and Oakland. The purpose of visiting these cities was motivated by the knowledge that community arts organisations in the United States are navigating many of the same social issues as cities in Britain are, in regards to scarcity of resource for the most structurally disadvantaged. The cities chosen are large, diverse cities, with stark class inequalities and historic cultural activity which has influenced the world from the emergence of Hip Hop in New York to the organising of the Black Panther Party in Oakland. It's important to note also that the socio-political context is very similar in the United States whereby "beginning in the 1980s, Reagan-era cutbacks" have decimated social services" which has meant community arts organisations increasingly rely on "private donors, foundations and dwindling government dollars."[24] As a result, funders are often funding "programming which fills the gap of "social services," which often includes community arts organisations.

There are of course stark differences in the community arts eco-systems which differentiate the United States from the UK. Namely, that in the United States, depending on the state, public subsidy tends to account for a very small percentage of community arts organisations. Beyond the practical examples of best practise from community arts organisations, there were also research-based projects and organisations like Mapping Oakland and Community Arts Stabilisation Trust which examined the community arts ecosystem in much broader contexts. My travels also revealed how some community arts organisations in the United States have challenged the fundamental assumptions around foundational giving which assumes that "organizations expect to be funded by benefactors rather than by their constituents" and the implications of working within the confines of funding from a foundation could rescind that funding at any given moment if it's board of trustees disproves of the organisations activities.[25] Each case study identifies different models and approaches around building economies in community arts and the various models from consultancy, social enterprise, merchandising in and amongst a different funding landscape. I spent some time identifying the impact of the organisations in regards to 'cultural capability' and learnt how vital this work was. There is an ethnographic element to covering each case study which documents my own observations. These case studies will also provide an insight into how community arts organisations, foundations and researchers are navigating questions of survival, sustainability and space in similar contexts to large cities in the UK. The case studies include interviews, summaries of models, methodologies of research and distinct approaches.

24 INCITE. The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex. pp149.
25 INCITE. The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex. pp9-10.

Oakland
San Fransisco
L.A.
Chicago
New York

Case Study:
ArtShareLA

ArtShareLA is a gallery, exhibition space, office which also offers residential space specifically for artists. It's based in the Art District of LA which is the eastern part of Downtown LA which became a haven for artists as the Venice and Hollywood areas became too expensive for artists and communities. The building is a former two-story textile factory which was sold to ArtShare LA in 1997 whereby the top floor was transformed into 30 affordable flats and the bottom floor was "redesigned to include a theater, art gallery, art and ceramic studios, classrooms, and administrative space."[26] The space began as an "after-school arts center for youth aged 12-18 and as an affordable housing complex" before the recession in 2008 meant a new strategic direction was necessary as the neighbourhood demographics has shifted Following a realignment of values, ArtShare LA re-launched with a key goal "nurture the wealth of local talent by providing emerging artists with a roadmap to find financial success and to gain exposure."

I spoke to artist, curator and founding member of ArtShareLA, Terry Ellsworth who is a long-time Artist District resident. Ellsworth gives an insight into how ArtShareLA has overcome the changing social dynamics of the area as well as the funding landscape whilst providing the resource for their community of artists to survive. The space has one theatre, three classrooms, two art galleries and ceramics studio as well as the low income housing for artists which Ellsworth tells me, has a strict criteria to meet. Ellsworth explains that, initiatives like the Perimeter Gallery, gives a space for emerging artists which chimes with ArtShareLA's "mission is to enfranchise and encourage up and coming artists." Ellsworth tells me about some of the dynamics of the

26 ArtShare LA, About Us. https://artsharela.org/about/

neighbourhood, with the infamous Skid Row a stones throw away and an impoverished community sitting side by side a swiftly gentrifying Arts District. This was something which struck me on my visit to the area, industrial warehouses situated in between new cafes, tents of the local homeless population and the last remaining active industrial factories. In the midst of this, sits ArtShareLA, itself a former factory which was hosting a local community event when I arrived. ArtShareLA began in 1997 as a response to the economic depression of the area as schools were losing funding in the 1990s, whereby ArtShareLA began as after school club. This pattern of community arts organisation emerging out of desperate need is not unique to LA. As the area rapidly shifts, there are a few reasons why ArtShareLA is well prepped for the possibilities of threats to their space.

The building itself was purchased with the help of the city council which is one of the key reasons it still exists in the area. I spoke to other members of the ArtShareLA team who provided insights into the financial stability of the organisation which relies on grants and donations as well as the revenue from the renting the theatre and revenue from their low-cost apartment spaces. What is particularly unique about ArtShareLA's model is how they support artists and build economies for their communities. As mentioned, the Perimeter gallery in their space functions as a space for emerging artists to learn how to display (via the support of experienced artist and curator, Terry Ellsworth) as well as other aspects of launching a show or exhibition. Due to the lack of space for performing artists, ArtShareLA has become a home for performing artists with a sliding community scale for renting space or classrooms. One of the most fascinating ways that ArtShareLA functions is to work as an agency for the artists they support. Most of the art exhibited is for sale with a 60/40 split (40% goes to ArtShareLA). Beyond this, Art-ShareLA leverages their relationships to get local business, rotating galleries and city councils to purchase or sell their artists work in their spaces. This holistic model of supporting artists begin at the point of developing artists at the very inception, from the first exhibition at the Perimeter Gallery, to ArtShareLA supporting their artists in getting a mural commission for example. There is a co-operative feel to ArtShareLA's work, whereby redistribution, love and support is absolutely key.

Before I left the space, I was struck by the ways in which the organisation seeks to preserve the original character of the area. Despite the stark changes in the Art District area, the day I visited, ArtShareLA was filled to the brim with people within the community. Undoubtedly, ownership of their own space is the fundamental pillar of how the organisation has built its sustainability around. ArtShareLA's example can be instructive to local authorities, funders and community arts organisations here in the UK in underlining the potential alchemy that can happen when community arts organisations own their own space. However, this alchemy is only possible if local authorities are receptive to approaches from community arts organisations and being committed to up-skilling organisations.

Case Study:
Community Arts Stabilisation Trust

Community Arts Stabilisation Trust based in San Francisco and Oakland was founded in response to the tech firms based in the city and Silicon Valley. The rise of San Francisco as one of the most expensive cities in the world is well documented. San Francisco is a city where residents resort to “micro-living” and where 70% of the population of San Francisco earn well above the median income.[27] The average house price in San Francisco is $1.6 million which is “six times the national average” and renting requires an average salary of $164,000 a year.[28] The cost of living has impacted racial dynamics too as San Francisco’s black community has gone “13 per cent of the population in the 1970s to about 5 per cent today.”[29] In a desperate state of affairs, many people have resorted to sleeping in cars with “the number of people who live in vehicles has increased by 45 per cent in the past two years.”[30] Inevitably, in this context community arts organisations have not escaped the consequences of stratospheric levels of wealth being poured into the city, whereby its fundamental landscape has been shifted. Community Arts Stabilisation Trust has emerged out of this vacuum to address the ways in which “artists are being rapidly displaced out of the City due to spiked demand and prices for real estate.”[31] In response, CAST’s mission is “to create stable physical spaces for arts and cultural organizations to facilitate equitable urban transformation.”[32]

27 Financial Times. Extreme Micro-Living in San Francisco. https://www.ft.com/content/bbca3e24-dea2-11e9-b112 9624ec9edc59
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Cast-SF, About. https://cast-sf.org/about/
32 Ibid.

CAST's role in an impossibly difficult property market is to emphasise how important arts and culture is to San Francisco's identity is both historically, presently and in the future. However, their approach emphasises a number of things which includes building and equipping communities, developing partnerships, acquiring space, developing skills and creating the infrastructure to keep leases below market rates. Crucially, CAST recognises that community arts organisations are a key part of this legacy of San Francisco. This approach is fundamentally supporting organisations from the bottom up and meeting community arts organisations on where their needs are rather than dictating those needs onto them.

To get a clearer picture of the practical work CAST does, in simple terms, CAST acquires properties in particular San Francisco neighbourhoods, they build capacity of community arts organisations to lease or own buildings, they also create the infrastructure to keep leases below market rates for those organisations who are not buying and leverage funds to achieve their goals of buying space in the first instances. A practical example of their work is the purchase of a neglected theatre in the central market/tenderloin district of San Francisco. CAST identified the space as a "a rare opportunity to purchase space already designed as a theatre."[33] The building and space was offered to *Counterpulse Arts*, who "provide space and resources for emerging artists and cultural innovators, serving as an incubator for the creation of socially relevant, communitybased art and culture."[34] Counterpulse Arts has a 25 year old presence in San Francisco and was previously known as 848 Performance Space, the organisation rebranded in 2005 as Counterpulse Arts. In 2012, when Counterpulse Arts' long term lease for their space in the SoMa district of San Francisco was under threat, they were facing displacement. Twitter had moved their office to the area and rents were spiking.

Serendipitously, Counterpulse were approached by CAST to take part in their pilot project. Subsequently, Counterpulse "leased to purchase" a site on 80 Turk Street which ensured Counterpulse would exist "without the threat of displacement." CAST built capacity within Counterpulse to raise $3.8 million dollars to renovate the space and Counterpulse Arts opened at 80 Turk Street in Spring 2016.[35] The space itself contains "vibrant performing arts space that includes two rehearsal studios, office space and a three-story lobby with full ADA access for performers with limited mobility." In addition to this, CAST has partnered with a Bay-Area based Foundation, Kenneth Rainin Foundation, who will "build organizational capacity to purchase the building after a period of seven to ten years."[36]

CAST's work with Counterpulse serves as an example of the need to purchase buildings for community use at a time whereby rents are spiking at an astronomical rate. Another example of their work can be seen through the purchase of a 1007 Market Street (the Walker Building), in the Central Market district of San Francisco. The Luggage Store Gallery occupy the building and the CAST assisted purchase allowed the organisation which has been serving the community to fend off the interest of private investors. In a similar vein to Counterpulse, The Luggage Store Gallery will undergo a physical renovation but will also be assisted to build internal capacity to advance it's mission as an "anchor community arts organisation" for the neighbourhood.[37] The examples of The Luggage Store Gallery and Counterpulse Arts underline CAST's approach to reacting to a volatile economic market, however, this approach is not purely reactive. CAST's most recent pilot project, *Keeping Space - Oakland* aims "build the capacity of the Oakland arts and culture sector to be "real estate ready" and to mitigate the adverse impacts of displacement for arts and cultural groups, collectives, and organizations in Oakland."[38]

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33 Cast-SF, Strategies - Real Estate. https://cast-sf.org/strategies/realestate/
34 Counterpulse Arts, Who is Counterpulse? http://www.counterpulse.org/mission-history/
35 Ibid.
36 Cast-SF, Strategies - Real Estate. https://cast-sf.org/strategies/realestate/
37 Ibid.
38 Strategies. Keeping Space - Oakland. Cast-SF. https://cast-sf.org/strategies/keeping-spaceoakland-2-2/

Through unique partnerships, CAST is offering both technical and financial assistance to Oakland based community arts organisations to be "real estate ready." In an environment where community arts organisations have emerged out of difficult social and political circumstances, technical assistance is invaluable. CAST's *Keeping Space* programme involves technical assistance which covers "financial planning, space planning, identifying/evaluating potential sites, negotiating leases or purchase agreements, developing construction budgets and project timelines, and analyzing potential funding sources." In addition to this, CAST provides grants to "groups, collectives, and organizations that have a developed plan for securing a long-term or permanent, affordable arts and cultural facility."[39]

CAST's approach is a marriage of practical support and building capacity to enhance resiliency. There is a key recognition in the ethos of the organisation that in order for the cultural eco-system of the Bay Area to survive, organisations must gear toward being "real estate ready" as well as the appropriate infrastructure to design models which support it's work thereafter. CAST's foundational mantra is about valuing the organisations which have been historically undervalued and practically providing the tools for community organisations to have space and sustain themselves. Encouragingly, CAST's model has been adopted by the GLA as part of a scheme called the Creative Land Trust which seeks to "secure 1,000 affordable workspaces in its first five years, helping artists to flourish and helping to maintain London's status as an international cultural capital."[40] The scheme has support from Arts Council England with £2 million funding and the Mayor has pledged £4 million. One of the key differences to CAST's approach in San Francisco and the new initiative in London is the Creative Land Trust's impetus on 'artist studios.' In the description of the new scheme by the Mayor and on the Creative Land Trust's website, the emphasis is on "arts and culture benefiting the economy."[41] This approach is flawed in that it ignores existing communities (renders them invisible) and does not give credence to the already flourishing communities who facilitate 'everyday creativity.' The Creative Land Trust's approach mimics CAST in that they "purchase of freehold properties or long leases, and through planning policies such as a section 106 agreement or a Community Infrastructure Levy."[42] However, the language used is around 'creative workspaces' and 'artist studios' instead of the preservation existing community arts organisations who are often doing incredible work in communities in cities across the UK.

39 Ibid.
40 Mayor launches groundbreaking Creative Land Trust, 6th February 2019. https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-launches-groundbreaking-creative-landtrust
41 Creative Land Trust, Why Artists Studios Matter? https://www.creativelandtrust.org/why-studios-matter
42 Creative Land Trust, Support Studios. ihttps://www.creativelandtrust.org/support-studios

Case Study:
Creative Growth

Creative Growth Arts Centre is a non-profit community arts organisation based in Oakland which "serves artist with developmental, intellectual, and physical disabilities by providing a professional studio environment for artistic development, gallery exhibition, and representation."[43]
The organisation was founded in 1974 with a clear mantra to create a "path forward for people with disabilities to express themselves and a professional gallery would exhibit their work."[44] The building itself is a former auto-mechanics store which has been renovated into a white cube gallery space. The space was bought via a combination of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and several capital campaigns. Creative Growth Studio hosts 150 artists and the gallery space showcases the work of the Creative Growth community of artists as well as taking work across the world in major international festivals and art fairs.

Creative Growth has had some artists attend for 40 years who engage with a wide variety of artistic mediums including woodshop, ceramics, mixed media, wearable textiles as well as a digital media lab with a working green room. In addition to the studios and gallery, Creative Growth also has a quiet classroom space. On my visit, I was struck by the scope and size of the organisation which in a similar vein to ArtShareLA, is situated in a former warehouse/factory space. I spoke to Creative Growth's Communications and Partnerships Manager, Jessica Daniel about their model of sustainability as well as some of their challenges. Daniel told me a bit more about their model, which relies on a combination of state funding for every participant. A large proportion

43 Creative Growth, About. https://creativegrowth.org/about
44 Ibid.

of this income is used to pay the staff team of 30 (which includes administrative and studio staff). Another chunk of their revenue comes via grants and foundation funding. The largest chunk of revenue for Creative Growth comes from art sales. Their model of art sales relies on a network of art collectors and donors enabling them “to sustain the high quality level of materials and support in the studio and to continue to exhibit the artists’ work locally, nationally, and internationally.”[45] Daniel tells me that this model is feasible because Creative Growth own the building and due to the increasing rents in Oakland, the fundamental bedrock of Creative Growth’s survival is owning its own space. However, there are other fundamental issues related to space which relate to the studio staff who work at Creative Growth. Daniel tells me that due to the pressure of increasing costs of living for staff nearby, staff are having to travel from afar. Another challenge for Creative Growth has been the difficulty of having inventory space, and being able to archive the work they produce. Despite the challenges, Creative Growth has spent decades cultivating a community of structurally disadvantaged artists to progress their work professionally as well as financial gains whilst sustaining the organisation itself to continue it’s invaluable work.

In many ways, Creative Growth’s success can be a lightening rod to community arts organisations situated in cities across the UK. Creative Growth invested (through local authority support), in buying a warehouse space in an area where manufacturing had become stunted by the economic downturn of the 1970s. There are examples of community arts projects and organisations situated in similar areas who could learn from this process of attempting to secure long term leases or capital projects. However, there are stark differences in the UK across cities as London leases are vastly different to places such as Liverpool. Across the UK, there are underused buildings and public spaces which are often left derelict for years, investment into these spaces as buildings which are primarily for community arts would underline foresight and long term thinking for the future of community arts organisations. As Creative Growth’s model underlines, this is something which could benefit community arts organisations in the UK.

45 Ibid.

Case Study:

Mapping Oakland:

Mapping small arts and culture organisations in Oakland

Oakland is one of the most diverse cities in the United States with a thriving cultural ecosystem. However, despite that rich diversity, as outlined in this report, that diversity has been threatened by volatile shifts in the economy and rapid gentrification. In the 1980s, 47 percent of Oakland's population was African-American but the most recent census 2010 underlined that there had been a 24 percent decline. Oakland is suffering from the knock on effect of the cost of living in San Francisco and the hyper-inflated real estate market. According to a 2016 study, 59 percent of Black and Brown residents in Oakland "are overburdened with housing costs."[46] The city's rich artistic and cultural eco-system has inevitably felt the impact of these shifts in both demographics and resourcing which led to the *Mapping Oakland* research project. *Mapping Oakland* was a project commissioned by the Akonadi Foundation and the Kenneth Rainin Foundation to "address the lack of research on small, grassroots arts and culture organisations serving communities of colour in Oakland, California."[47] The research sought to examine Oakland's community arts eco-system which is described as the "geography, existing infrastructure, assets and the challenges" and combined collating quantitive and qualitative data. *Mapping Oakland* was targeted toward funders who could identify ways of shifting how they offer support to these organisations and crucially, what the terms of support could or should look like.

In order to understand the reasoning behind this process of cultural mapping, it's necessary to briefly run through the inequalities within

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46 Mapping Small Arts & Culture organisations of Oakland. Akonadi Foundation & Kenneth Ranin Foundation. p9.
47 Ibid. p4.

funding infrastructure and the cultural eco-system at large. The research cites a 2017 report, *Not Just Money: Equity Issues in Cultural Philanthropy* by Holly Sidford and Alexis Frasz which examines inequality in the arts in the United States. The report identified that "60 percent of arts funding goes to 2 percent of cultural institutions."[48] Funding disparities were even starker on race lines as only "4 percent of arts funding" went to organisations serving Black and Brown communities. *Mapping Oakland* also cited a report *Working with Small Arts Organisations* which identified how there is often no data on organisations with a budget of less then $25,000 which leads to many organisations "being under the funders radar.[49] In the context as socio-economics, public space and a lack of general operating budgets, these organisations issues are exacerbated by the fact that funders fundamentally do not see them, recognise them, or indeed, see them as economically valuable.

The research methodology of *Mapping Oakland* 'mapped' 138 POC (people of colour run) organisations with annual budgets $250,000 or less[50] drawing on interviews and focus groups which identified "informal arts hubs, art spaces and collectives." In addition to this, the research drew on the insights of "arts workers, organisational leaders and arts funders" to contextualise the map and research. These interviews included community stakeholders who provide insight into the wider historical context of Oakland. Some of the findings of the *Mapping Oakland* project identified the different artistic mediums and often, the creative ways organisations have navigated a lack of funding via social enterprise models. Approximately 11 percent of the community arts organisations in Oakland employing a social enterprise model for example. Another aspect of the research findings was the ways the "independent cultural eco system" is "fuelled by a strong sense of place." The research identified the histories of the Black Panther Party and Chicano movements being rooted in Oakland as a way organisations in the present continue to have a connection with place. One of the most stark bits of finding from the report pointed to capacity issues around applying for funding and the interconnected issues around limited operating budgets. Community arts organisations in Oakland are often applying for short term funding opportunities which are "project by project." Furthermore, the report underlined the increasing cost of renting space for many organisations as rent increased from $22 per square foot to $37 from 2012 to 2016.[51]

The Mapping Oakland research, it's aims, methodologies, findings and recommendations provide an invaluable snapshot into many of the challenges within one of the most diverse cities in America. The report's process of 'mapping' involved both quantitive and quantitive research which provided some synergy in relation to structural issues and how and why spaces are struggling or surviving. Crucially, the report makes these community arts organisations 'visible' to funders and grants-makers as well as highlighting how the issues facing them can be mitigated.
In the UK, there are progressive examples of similar initiatives, namely the GLA's "London Cultural Infrastructure Map" which provides data on cultural centres, creative workspaces, artist studios, community centres and more.[52] The map provides some essential locational data on where physical infrastructure exists across the city. It would be brilliant to build on this kind of research in the spirit of 'Mapping Oakland' which used a borough in a large city in the UK as a case study and matched that with qualitative data to get a sense of the needs of community arts organisations and also identify those organisations that might be 'rendered invisible' by a map like this. Identifying a methodology which is careful not to exclude organisations (on the basis of how much they raise annually) is key in ensuring smaller, unincorporated organisations are identified. As 'Mapping Oakland' shows, these processes are more often than not, racialised as or organisations run by Black and brown communities tend to fall below the threshold.

48 Ibid. p6.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid. p40.
*52 Greater London Authority, London's Cultural Infrastructure Map. https://www.london.gov.uk/*what-we-do/arts-and-culture/cultural-infrastructure-toolbox/cultural-infrastructure-map

Case Study:
Young Chicago Authors

Young Chicago Authors emergence as a community arts organisation is a symbiosis of the historic literary and poetic tradition of Chicago and the need to address the socioeconomic challenges facing young people in Chicago. The organisation has a commitment to use creative writing to "help young people from all backgrounds to understand the importance of their own stories and those of others, so that they can pursue the path they choose and work to make their communities more just and equitable."[53] Young Chicago Authors approach is imbued with the ethos of arts education which draws from the vacuum left behind by the funding cuts impacting African-American and other diverse communities. The creative writing programmes run by YCA is combined with the annual *Louder Than A Bomb* festival, which is the United States' largest poetry slam. YCA has six primary objectives that guide their work with young people which are intimately tied into the idea of creating and sustaining space for their community. Those objectives range from providing incubation space for their cohort of artist-teachers, providing safe spaces for young people from different neighbourhoods to connect and build friendships and of course, to foster creativity and expression.

According to YCA's 2017 impact report, the organisation has served 10,000 students between the ages of 12 and 25, which represent the race and class diversity of Chicagos youth. Outside of the quantitive statistics accessed via the report, on my visit one of their open mic nights in collaboration with IMAN (Inner City Muslim Action Network), I attended an evening of poetry where the voices of young poets were

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53 Young Chicago Authors, About. https://youngchicagoauthors.org/about

held up in joy, expression and love whilst being facilitated by a YCA alumnus and published poet, Fatimah Asghar. I also attended Louder Than A Bomb's final which featured a brilliant area of Chicago's finest talent in an auditorium hall which fit 1,000 people. The range of young poets from different schools across the city underlined the ways in which YCA facilitates the literary and poetic legacy the organisation grew from. That impact was rewarded in 2016, when YCA was awarded the MacArthur Award for Creative and Effective Institutions and its certainly evident in the uniqueness and efficiency in how they function as an organisation. I spoke to YCA's Executive Director, Rebecca Hunter and Director of Institutional Giving, Alissa Goldwasser on how the organisations financial model functions.

YCA's income stream is a combination of earned revenue, foundation grants, government grants, corporate sponsorships and donations. These operating revenue funds their programming, fundraising and general and administrative costs. Beyond the financials however, this revenue has a cyclical way of supporting and bolstering the young poets, artist-teachers and the organisation itself. Hunter and Goldwasser explained to me that "non profit models" need "business models." The teaching artist core, who are the heart and soul of the programmes are put on a yearly contract and provided with professional development alongside their teaching commitments. An emphasis is placed on giving the teaching artist core the space to cultivate their own work as well as being paid to be mentors, coaches and teachers to the young people across different programmes. The young people across their programmes are also given a variety of opportunities in engaging with slams and competitions. For example, the winners of *Louder Than A Bomb* are given shoe deals and and partnerships with other corporate sponsors garner a whole range of other opportunities for their artists. Part of YCA's strategy has been to build strategic partnerships with the corporate firms who recognise their reputation as a talent incubator. Partnerships are also built with publishers including Haymarket Books which partner with YCA on their Breakbeat Poets Anthology collection which is guest-edited by high profile poets who have come through the YCA programmes. Haymarket Books have also worked with YCA

to publish debut anthologies of their teaching artist core who in-turn get the opportunities to travel abroad and tour their work. The earned revenue comes via enquiries via corporate firms and schools who are looking to book their poets form gigs, workshops or to run programmes at their organisations. Hunter tells me that holding all of this together, is the “family foundations” of the organisation, which create an infrastructure of support around their young poets, teachers and staff. YCA has also been incredibly adept at creating a narrative around the work they do which is bolstered by Netflix feature-length films which tell the story of the *Louder Than A Bomb* poetry slam.

The work that YCA does is distinct from the other case studies mentioned in this research because of it’s not necessarily rooted in one particular community. The organisation works across the city and draws its staff and teaching artist core from different parts of Chicago. YCA’s model combines a recognition of the socio-economic issues which has created their need whilst diversifying their revenue. As their Executive Director, Rebecca Hunter tells me, institutional funding shifts its focus and if you’re too reliant, instability can soon follow. YCA’s work as an organisation is build on being an organisation which practically builds up the community of poets across the city rather than exploiting their talents. This is a recognised, symbiotic relationship which means alumnae of their programmes are often giving back with their time via performances, facilitation or offering encouragement to other young poets to get involved. YCA’s strength, which is often missing from community arts organisations in the UK, is to construct a convincing narrative. It’s important to note, that having the capacity to construct a narrative is not always possible given many community arts groups are underfunded, voluntary and exist in a context of scarcity. However, for organisations looking to grow, YCA’s process of developing young aspiring poets into teachers and eventually published writers, has given it a convincing ‘unique selling point.’ In practical terms, despite the crudeness of having to ‘sell your value’ as an organisation, there is an element of working within an existing system to survive as a community arts organisation in the UK and Young Chicago’s process provides a fascinating exemplar for this.

Case Study: The Point NYC

The Point NYC is a community arts organisation based in the Hunts Point section of the South Bronx. Hunts Point is a multi-ethnic, working class neighbourhood with 75% of the neighbourhood being Hispanic and 21% of the area Black (as of the 2000 census).[54] On my visit to the area, I was struck by how industrial Hunts Point was, there area is dotted with large warehouses, a lack of side-walks or pedestrianised areas and is overshadowed by the a huge overpass and highway. When I did some further research into the context of the area, I discovered that half the population live below the poverty line and that Hunts Point is one of the largest food distribution points in the state whilst being situated next to the Bruckner Expressway. Despite the area being home to “hosts the largest marketplace for fresh produce, meat, and fish” in the country, the area is also a food desert and has no supermarkets.[55] Acknowledging this context, gave me an understanding as to why the Point, NYC was founded as a community arts organisation in 1994. The four founders of the space, who were South Bronx natives, found an old Bagel factory as a prospective site to turn into a community arts space. Importantly, the organisation was founded to address a “community in crisis” and worked across arts, business and environmental services which would strengthen the community.[56]

I met one of The Point’s Executive Management Director, Danny Peralta to discuss their work historically and presently. When I approached the space, between the large industrial warehouses, huge trucks and

54 U.S Census data. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/bronxcountybronxboroughnewyork?
55 Newstalk, Poor N.Y. Neighborhood Feeds Region, But Has No Supermarket. https://woldcnews.com/970152/poor-n-y-neighborhood-feeds-region-but-has-no-supermark
56 The Point NYC, History. https://thepoint.org/history/

wide roads I was greeted by these sprawling, beautiful murals on the outside. When I entered the venue, I was introduced to a graffiti artist from South Korea collaborating with The Point on a mural - an indication of their commitment to international collaboration and solidarity building. The space itself is an impressive 4,000 foot atrium housing a cafe, offices, a theatre, green room and even a dance studio. The Point's central aim is "dedicated to youth development and the cultural and economic revitalisation."[57] The Point's approach is not limited to the arts but through a multi-faceted approach which deal with the range of issues the community is facing, some of that work is even policy-based. Peralta explained that the area has a molotov cocktail of issues beyond the ones I researched including the fact that the area is below sea level and that there is no emergency wi-fi should the area suffer from a natural disaster. As the climate crisis intensifies, activists in Hunts Point have worked toward creating a resiliency to the spectre of a grave environmental injustice the more regularised impact of climate injustice via pollution. The Point has been at the heart of this resistance.[58] For example, The organisation led on a policy-led initiative and community response where they piloted a free Wi-fi project which created the infrastructure for community wi-fi accessible to the community. Peralta describes The Point's approach is to create an "ownership infrastructure" in the work they do.

That infrastructure is evident in the organisation's artistic approach which covers a broad range of mediums. This artistic approach ranges from running dance classes, an in-house theatre company, facilitating school visits and arts-education programmes, photography courses, film-making courses and even a South Bronx Arts Fellowship. The Point's space is crucially owned by them as a result of investment at the time of its founding which, in-turn enables the organisations sustainability. Half the building is rented out to a city agency who pay rent. Therefore, there are spaces in the building rented out to community businesses including a community kitchen but given subsidised rates to get those local businesses on their feet. This model's key distinction, which

57 The Point NYC, Mission. https://thepoint.org/mission/
58 The Guardian, The sinking class: the New Yorkers left to fight the climate crisis alone. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/sep/20/new-york-city-sinking-climate-crisis-waterfront

draws similarities to ArtShareLA, is the subsidised rents which support new business owners. Peralta tells me that the organisation employs 27 part time staff and 40 staff are given a stipend alongside several freelancers with a total of 80 staff on payroll. Crucially, at the heart of the organisations infrastructure is the fact they own the space and can rent parts of it to diversify their income streams alongside grants from foundations and trusts. The Point's model is also distinct in that it draws from city and state funding alongside more traditional arts funding because of it's multi-faceted approach.

My visit to The Point illustrated an organisation emerging out of a crisis and set of injustices and using community arts as a medium to challenge this. The organisation is different in that it has to work across business, environment and the arts with collectives, artists, civil society groups, local businessmen, politicians and local residents because the remit is so broad and because the areas issues are so severe. Peralta tells me that his approach in working at The Point is to "build the good stuff and destroy the bad." The Point NYCs came out of emergency conditions in the community which was about 'survival.' What is brilliant about the work they do, is how The Point has gone from strength to strength from the programmes they support to the policy impact they have on the South Bronx community. There are examples of similarly embattled communities across London, Birmingham and Manchester who face a range of social issues, but very few can rely on 'ownership infrastructure.' A key step toward the concept of 'ownership infrastructure' which Peralta describes is for local authorities and funders to identify and up-skill community organisations to take a step toward innovative models of ownership (through long term leases, capital projects or co-operative models).

Conclusion and Recommendations

One of the key aspects that has come out the research and report is how many of these organisations have emerged out of an urgent need. The organisations I visited began as ways of addressing crisis' from climate injustice, gentrification, youth violence, youth empowerment, poverty and a whole spate of other issues. Many of these organisations represent communities facing historic and present structural injustice situated in communities in cities across the United States whereby resources are often scarce. It was interesting to compare how community arts organisations in the United States are dealing with the issues of survival, space and sustainability in their own way through different models as well as building economies in their own communities. What was striking was the similarities to the UK in this regard. Many community arts organisations in the UK have emerged out of urgent need in communities suffering from socio-economic issues.

On an organisational front, aside from the various different contexts, it was fascinating to note that *ArtShareLA*, *The Point NYC* and *Creative Growth* all owned their own spaces. Crucially, these organisations bought the properties in the 1980s and 1990s respectively whereby the prospect of putting together a capital project in a seemingly undervalued and undesirable area was feasible through committed founders. The real estate and property landscape of the United States has shifted significantly since then but the key message within those contexts was that for organisations invested in place, place-making and their geographic communities, owning space is essential. In contrast, for community arts organisations invested in cross-city dialogue and youth empowerment such as Young Chicago Authors, ownership is less important. However, YCA's unique and innovative model draws on strong narrative building, a familial support network and inspired leadership to build active economies for the artists and young people they support which simultaneously supports the organisation as a whole. The YCA's narrative building has given it support from communities across Chicago as well as the organisations and foundations funding them.

Aside from the research on community arts organisations themselves, it was also necessary for me to visit exciting, pilot projects which took on an action-orientated research approach to making change. *Community Arts Stabilisation Trust* directly addresses the issues of high costs of rent, space and sustainability in a clear, cogent way. *Mapping Oakland*, a research project piloted by the Akonadi Foundation and the Kenneth Rainin Foundation looked at the needs of People of Colour led community arts organisation in Oakland and examined precisely what the needs are for those organisations via quantitative and qualitative research. There are examples of similar projects in London in particular however the framing is around 'economic growth' in regards to both supporting 'artist studios' and mapping infrastructure instead of seeing community arts as a social value and contributing to 'everyday creativity.'

My research trip provided invaluable insights into community arts organisations and research projects in the United States who are mitigating issues of survival, space and moving toward sustainable models. One of the key arguments based off this research trip is that long term planning by local authorities and funders in supporting community arts organisations can make a seismic difference. In each of the case studies in the United States, there is a relationship between local authorities, funders and community arts organisations. In some instances, that relationship was non-existent and required work (*Mapping Oakland*) and in some instances, it was forged in the early 1970s, 80s or 90s (*Creative Growth Oakland, The Point NYC* and *ArtShareLA*). Nevertheless, this relationship was an essential part of the alchemy of cementing an organisations or spaces' existence in an area it has worked in for years. For the relationship between community arts organisations, funders and local authorities to be fruitful, there is a fundamental need to view community arts through the prism of social value instead of economic value. This re-framing is essential in understanding how you enable a country whereby the arts is accessible to all, whereby cultural democracy can spread and where 'everyday creativity' can thrive.

Recommendations

Local Authorities and Funding Bodies:

1 Mapping

Working with local stakeholders to undergo a ‘mapping’ of community arts organisations. Identifying organisations which have historically operated in different areas. Recognising what the needs of different community arts organisations are, from scaling up to acquiring or retaining space. Alongside this mapping, it’s essential that funders and local authorities work with community arts organisations to give them the knowledge, training and support to apply for funds, creating their own income streams and build their own business cases for owning buildings.

2 Shifting Approach

Re-framing the approach to support community arts organisations instead of a focus on ‘artists studios.’ Incorporating a new model across other cities in the UK which draws on initiatives such as Community Arts Stabilisation Trust in the Bay area in the United States.

3 Prioritising Public Space

Long term prioritising of community arts in areas prone to hyper-development. Protecting community spaces such as youth centres, community centres and libraries as spaces which facilitate ‘everyday creativity.’

4 Social Value

Creating a measurement of ‘social value’ outside of thinking of the creative sector in economic terms. Incorporating this in the analysis of spaces under threat and how best to support them.

Recommendations

Community Arts Organisations:

1
New Models

For community arts organisations seeking to grow; building a case (to independent trusts and foundations and/or local authorities) on the importance ownership/co-operative running of spaces and buildings which are underused. Lobbying local authorities to offer "publicly owned assets for cultural activity."[59] Particularly focussing on the social value of spaces. Community arts organisations are harder to displace if there is an 'ownership infrastructure' in place in communities and areas at risk.

2
New Income Streams

Supplementing any public arts subsidy by creating new income streams through innovative models. Implementing a process which enables the artists/communities you support to re-invest in your organisation (with their time, social capital or finances).

3
Creating Stories

Building a narrative around your organisations. Generating community support and emphasising why your communities should support you financially. Disseminating that narrative via a website, social media output and through other means which underline the social value of an organisation.

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