

Creative Scotland

Platforms for Creative Excellence (PlaCE) Programme Evaluation

Years 1-3
Final Report and Case Studies

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BOP
Consulting



Contents

Executive Summary	2
Key findings	2
2. Introduction	4
2.1 This report.....	4
2.2 The Platforms for Creative Excellence Programme	4
2.3 The evaluation approach	5
3. Stronger organisations	8
3.1 Staffing and Turnover	8
3.2 Operational capacity and programming.....	9
3.3 Audience and participant numbers	9
3.4 Strategic development	10
3.5 Quality and innovation	14
4. Broader engagement	18
5. Enhanced collaboration	24
6. Increased professional development	28
6.1 Professional development offer provided by the festivals	28
6.2 Professional development outcomes reported	29
7. Process evaluation	32
8. Summary of findings	34
8.1 Evidence of shorter-term outcomes.....	34
8.2 Evidence of longer-term outcomes	35
9. Recommendations	37
10. Case Studies	38
10.1 Key findings	39

10.2 Imagineate - Edinburgh International Children's Festival: <i>Immerse</i> programme with schools	42
10.3 Edinburgh International Book Festival: Outriders	45
10.4 Scottish International Storytelling Festival: The Big Scottish Story Ripple	48
10.5 Edinburgh Festival Fringe: Fringe Marketplace	50
10.6 Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival: Edinburgh Festival Carnival.....	53
10.7 Art Festival: sector development - early career progression.....	56
10.8 Edinburgh International Film Festival: EIFF Youth	60
10.9 Edinburgh International Festival: You Are Here.....	63
10.10 Science Festival: Travelling exhibitions	65

List of Figures

Figure 1 PlaCE programme awards	4
Figure 2 PlaCE evaluation logic model	7
Figure 3 Total staff and turnover Baseline to Year 3	8
Figure 4 Number of festivals indicating activity strands as created or improved in Year 3	9
Figure 5 No of audiences reached through the festivals.....	10
Figure 6 Core festival staff opinion on impact of PlaCE funding on organisational development	11
Figure 7 No of community participants engaged by the festivals	19
Figure 8 SIMD profile of Edinburgh (dark red is more deprived)	20
Figure 9 Location of community partners (Edinburgh)	20
Figure 10 Location of schools (Edinburgh)	21
Figure 11 Location of community partners and schools (Edinburgh)	21
Figure 12 Location of community partners and schools (Scotland)	22
Figure 13 Community partners perspectives on quality of engagement.....	22

Figure 14 Outcomes reported by community partners (n=33, coded from open responses)	23
Figure 15 Core festival staff on the impact of PlaCE on partnership development	25
Figure 16 Programming partners on success and value of partnership with Festivals.....	26
Figure 17 No of festivals who indicated CPD offer	28
Figure 18 Impact of professional development outcomes reported by participants (net agreement).....	29

Cover image: Edinburgh International Children's Festival, *The Lost Lending Library*, credit: Louise King

Executive Summary

The Platforms for Creative Excellence (PlaCE) programme was a three-way partnership between the Scottish Government, the City of Edinburgh Council, and the Edinburgh Festivals, administered by Creative Scotland. Created in 2018, the five-year programme **aimed to support festivals' strategic development across three primary areas of work:**

1. Sustained and strengthened programming innovation
2. Increased creative development opportunities across Scotland
3. Improved lives for citizens and communities through cultural engagement

This report provides analysis of progress against the intended outcomes and impacts in Years 1-3 of the programme (2019-2022). It is based on annual statistical returns from nine festivals; surveys with festivals' programming and community partners, core festival staff, and professional development attendees; three focus groups with festivals; and case studies.

Key findings

Throughout, it is important to highlight the **huge impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on festivals' operating environment and ability to deliver** planned activity in both Year 2 (2020) and Year 3 (2021). This was particularly significant in Year 2, where festivals had to deal with several national lockdowns. Evidence from Year 3 however shows that despite ongoing restrictions to in-person delivery, festivals adapted and were largely able to deliver planned activity again – albeit with adjustments – with some real successes in terms of community engagement and co-creation activity.

1. Sustained and strengthened programming innovation

- **PlaCE funding likely played a significant role in festivals' resilience through the pandemic.** Permanent staff and turnover appear stable, although the number of temporary staff dropped significantly since Year 1 as a result of reduced activity during the pandemic.

- The number of **activity strands funded by PlaCE remained relatively stable** despite the challenging conditions (35 in Year 3, 41 in Year 1).
- While participant numbers declined across the totality of festivals' activity, the proportion of **participants taking part specifically in PlaCE-funded activities increased** (28% to 53%).
- Festivals reported that **PlaCE funding contributed to organisational strategies**, although this does not seem to be directly related to quality assessment, assurance or organisational impact approaches.
- The first three years of PlaCE funding were more **focused on building internal capacity, programme development, and network building** than on developing internal systems and processes. The impact of this on festivals' resilience or growth over time remains to be seen.
- **PlaCE funding supported and enabled the production of high quality cultural outputs** (in partnership), affirmed by 95% of programming partners.
- Core festival staff were similarly positive about **PlaCE funding supporting festivals to create innovative products and outputs**, although this figure dropped slightly between 2020 and 2022. PlaCE funding provided flexibility and support in shifting services online during the pandemic and allowed them to continue commissioning ambitious work.

2. Increased creative development opportunities across Scotland

- **Partnerships with other arts and culture organisations and professionals remained relatively high** (133 in Year 3), although lower than in the first year, likely as a consequence of the pandemic.
- However, among these partnerships, the number of **international partnerships has dropped significantly** since Year 1, also likely due to pandemic-induced restrictions on international travel.

- The number of **co-created activities and initiatives increased year on year**, seeing a 360% increase from Year 1 to Year 3 and indicating that models of collaboration have developed positively throughout the first three years of PlaCE funding.
- Levels of professional development activity were similar in Year 3 as in Year 1, with **over 500 people supported by professional development through PlaCE in Year 3, including 283 who had not participated in such festival programmes before**. However, there was a drop in professional networking and providing sharing platforms, again as a result of Covid-related restrictions.
- Significantly fewer opportunities were provided to emerging practitioners (i.e., less than 5 years' professional experience) than in Year 1, reflecting a **move towards supporting established professionals** who had lost their livelihood during the pandemic.
- Those who participated reported **very positive outcomes from their CPD**: 85% of CPD activity participants reported **enhanced skills and knowledge they could not find elsewhere**.

3. Improved lives for citizens and communities through cultural engagement

- PlaCE enabled festivals to **engage with new and existing communities and schools** across Edinburgh and Scotland. This activity is **well matched to need** as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- The number of **participants engaged has stabilised again since the height of the pandemic and remains significantly higher than before PlaCE funding, with a 33% increase between the baseline and Year 3** despite the overall drop in festivals' activity levels due to Covid. The number of school engagements has risen by 72% between the baseline and Year 3, despite the pandemic-induced reduction in festival activity.
- Community partners reported **high levels of satisfaction** from their engagement with festivals: 97% reported that their partnership had clear

positive outcomes for the individuals and communities taking part and benefited their work.

- Festivals **transformed the way they work with communities**, democratising approaches and taking a more equitable approach to co-creation.

Recommendations

- **Building resilience and capacity coming out of the pandemic**: The findings suggest that the scale of intended PlaCE activity is normalising after the pandemic; however, there is less evidence that organisations are addressing their own needs to build resilience and capacity (e.g., strategies, policies). This may be a consequence of festivals being in ongoing recovery mode. In this context, it would be interesting to further explore how festivals can build resilience and capacity coming out of the pandemic.
- **Development based on structured needs analysis**: Programming, innovation and professional development needs have likely changed significantly due to the pandemic. Structured needs analyses should be implemented where these have not been updated since the beginning of the programme, particularly for emerging and early-stage professionals.
- **Sharing best practice on community engagement**: Community and schools engagement work continues to grow, with innovative and effective models of practice. There is an opportunity to share learning and practice among the PlaCE cohort and with other organisations, also ensuring the footprint extends beyond Edinburgh.
- **Finding new ways to collaborate internationally in the context of environmental concerns and global financial instability**: Following the end of Covid-related travel restrictions, there is an argument that hybrid online/offline collaborations should continue in light of environmental concerns and global financial instability - an opportunity for festivals to revisit their international priorities and ways of working, and for funders to highlight and support effective forms of international collaboration.

2. Introduction

2.1 This report

In September 2019, BOP Consulting was commissioned to undertake a programme-wide evaluation of the three-year Edinburgh Festivals Platforms for Creative Excellence (henceforth PlaCE) programme.

This report represents the final point in this evaluation programme, which has run in parallel to the programme's activities since Autumn 2019. It summarises findings from across the three years; structured around the Logic Model developed at the beginning of the evaluation period in collaboration with the funders and festivals (Figure 2).

For the purposes of this evaluation and report we refer to the timeframe of the programme according to the following breakdown:

Baseline – Pre-PlaCE funding (data refers to year ending in March 2018)

Year 1 – From the funding being announced (October 2018) to the end of the first full financial year (March 2020)

Year 2 – The financial year April 2020 to March 2021

Year 2 took place during the beginning and height of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the three national lockdown in March-May 2020, October-December 2020 and January-April 2021 as well as tight restrictions over Christmas 2020/21. Outside of these periods, restrictions to public events were in place, including social distancing, indoor restrictions and mask wearing, severely impacting festivals' delivery.

Year 3 – The financial year April 2021 to March 2022

Delivery during Year 3 was also affected by Covid with ongoing restrictions to public events including social distancing, indoor restrictions and mask wearing during the festival 2021 season, which were only lifted on 9th August. Overall, in-person delivery was therefore at around 10% of the 2019 level.

2.2 The Platforms for Creative Excellence Programme

Launched in 2018 as a legacy of the festivals' anniversary the previous year, the PlaCE programme was intended to catalyse a step-change in how Edinburgh's festivals enact their role in relation to the development of Scotland's creative sector, their connectedness to its diverse communities, and the way Scotland presents itself to the wider world.

The programme was a unique three-way partnership between the Scottish Government, the City of Edinburgh Council, and the Edinburgh Festivals, with the public funders committing £10 million over five years, delivered in two stages. A further £5million was contributed by the festivals themselves. The PlaCE programme was supported and administered by Creative Scotland.

PLACE was organised around three intended impacts or programme strands:

1. Sustained and strengthened programming innovation
2. Increased creative development opportunities across Scotland
3. Improved lives for citizens and communities through cultural engagement

Funding was awarded to festivals by programming strand following an application process. Most participating festivals covered all three strands as part of their PlaCE activity. Figure 1 below shows the PlaCE funding awardees and corresponding programming strands:

Figure 1 PlaCE programme awards

Festival	Award	Programme strands covered
Edinburgh Art Festival	£645,000	1,2,3
Edinburgh International Book Festival	£585,000	1,2,3
Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society	£500,000	1,2,3
Edinburgh International Children's Festival (Imagine)	£534,602	1,2,3

Edinburgh International Festival	£1,200,000	1,2,3
Edinburgh International Film Festival	£373,647	2,3
Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival	£635,489	1,2,3
Edinburgh International Science Festival	£532,000	1,2,3
Edinburgh's Hogmanay	£400,000	1,2
Scottish International Storytelling Festival	£300,000	1,2,3
Festivals Edinburgh	£140,000	1,2,3

Source: Festivals Edinburgh

Each programming strand covered a broad range of activities, with great diversity in size, scope, geography and delivery model of activities across the Festivals. While many new projects were developed through PlaCE, in some cases the fund was also used to bolster existing projects and work streams. Crucially, projects were also allowed to use the provided funds to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and to new find ways to work around them. Each festival developed and agreed their bespoke workplans for each year with Creative Scotland.

The pandemic had a major impact on the planned activities of each festival, although this was not universal. Some festivals were able to carry out their planned PlaCE activities throughout the pandemic, particularly adapting their work with communities to online models. In other cases, programming development was halted or delayed and, with the cancellation of most or all direct in-person festival activities throughout 2020 and ongoing restrictions around social distancing in 2021, some festivals had to divert PlaCE funding to organisational resilience (including direct staffing and operational costs).

2.3 The evaluation approach

2.3.1 Evaluation framework

This evaluation was structured around a Logic Model (see Figure 2), which maps PlaCE programme activity across shorter term (1-3 years) deliverables and intended outcomes; longer-term (3-5 years) intended outcomes and the

overall programme impacts. The Logic Model was accompanied by a set of indicators and tools which are used to provide evidence of intended outputs and impact (see Appendix 1).

The evaluation framework was developed in collaboration with the festivals and funders to ensure it represented the reality of the programme based on their interpretation of the fund's original aims. Festivals had the opportunity to contribute additional indicators which they considered as reflecting the additionality of the programme and explored and challenged the assumptions underpinning relationships between outcomes in the Logic Model (see Appendix 2). A further outcome was added to the Logic Model in December 2020 to account for the impact of the pandemic on the planned programme activities and impacts.

Alongside evidence of the intended outcomes, this evaluation also seeks to understand the added value of the PlaCE programme, e.g., how is the programme impact greater than the sum of its parts? Different programming approaches from festivals and a combination of 'new' and 'existing' projects mean it is not always straightforward to disaggregate PlaCE data from core festival data. In recognition of this challenge, evaluation tools were designed to interrogate attribution (e.g., 'to what extent would this have happened without PlaCE?') and provide evidence of additional impact.

2.3.2 Research undertaken

A full methodology in Appendix 1 details the indicators used to explore different programme outcomes, and their corresponding data sources, across the three years.

Each year, regular quantitative and qualitative research was undertaken. The quantitative research included five surveys, which were completed by the festivals each year to allow progress to be tracked across the three years. An abridged version was completed in Year 2 given the additional pressures on festivals and lower levels of activity. These included:

- A festival data logs of collecting management, delivery and attribution data, submitted by all festivals¹
- A core festival staff survey exploring internal assessment of organisational capacity and strategy
- A cultural professionals survey for artists and practitioners who engaged in professional development activity delivered by festivals
- Two festival partner/stakeholder surveys: one for community groups and one for programming partners

This quantitative data was complemented by:

- the development of nine in-depth case studies exploring festival activity across the three years and covering all festivals²: two were developed for inclusion in the Yr1 report, a further two for the Yr2 report and the remaining five were developed in the third year of the evaluation. All are included in a separate case study report alongside this final evaluation report, with key themes included in the findings presented in this document.

The case studies are attached as an appendix to this report.

- three 'process review' workshops with the festivals in each year of the evaluation
- interviews with the fund managers, Creative Scotland, as well as annual partner progress meetings.



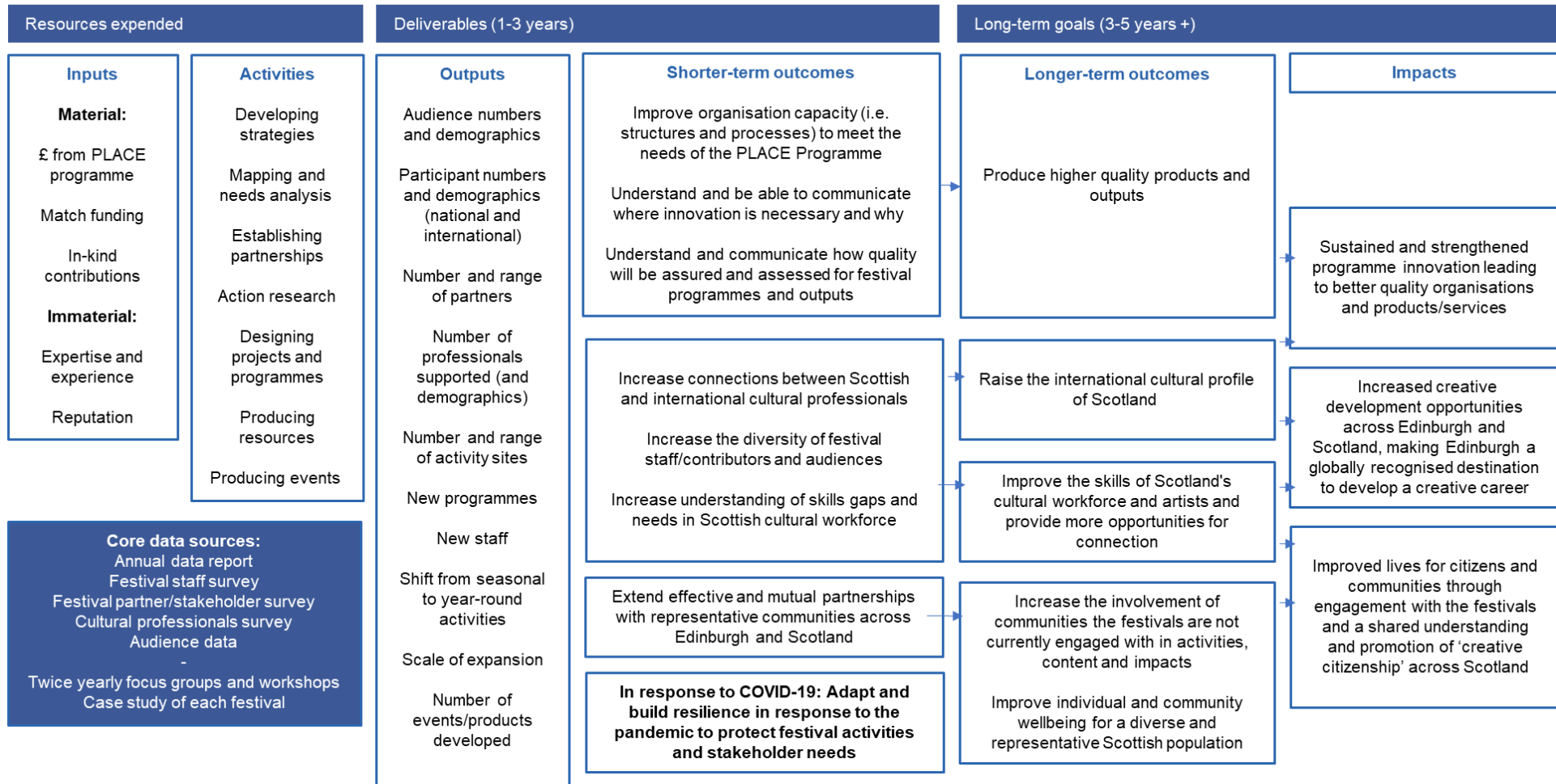
Photos: Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society

¹ We did not receive a final data return from Hogmanay despite several attempts over three months. Therefore, the data in this report corresponds to 9 of 10 awards made to festivals.

² Apart from Hogmanay who did not respond to several attempts to participate in a case study.

Figure 2 PlaCE evaluation logic model

Platforms for Creative Excellence Programme – Logic model



Source: BOP Consulting

3. Stronger organisations

Intended outcomes - shorter-term:

Improve organisational capacity to meet the needs of the PlaCE programme

Understand and communicate how quality will be assured and assessed for festival programmes and outputs

Understand and be able to communicate where innovation is necessary and why

Intended outcomes - longer-term:

Produce higher quality products and outputs

Key findings

PlaCE funding has likely played a significant role in festival resilience through the pandemic. Permanent staff and turnover appear stable, although the number of temporary staff employed by festivals has dropped significantly.

The number of activity strands funded by PlaCE however remained relatively stable despite the challenging conditions (35 in Year 3 compared to 41 in Year 1). While participant numbers have declined, the proportion of participants taking part in PlaCE funded activities (rather than general festival activities) has increased from 28% to 53%.

Festivals report that PlaCE funding has contributed to organisational strategies, although this does not seem to be directly related to quality assessment, assurance or organisational impact approaches.

The first three years of PlaCE funding has been more focused on building internal capacity, programme development, and network building than it has on developing internal systems and processes. It remains to be seen

whether this will have a stronger or weaker impact on festival resilience or growth over time.

3.1 Staffing and Turnover

PlaCE funding was intended for festivals to develop programmes, improve organisational policies, and establish new and lasting partnerships. While it was not intended as a direct way for festivals to expand their staff teams (permanent or temporary) or turnover, *per se*, these remain useful indicators; the logic being that in expanding and developing their programmes and partnerships, the size and capacity of festivals would also grow to accommodate this.

The pandemic had a direct effect on most festivals' capacity; therefore, these indicators are now less about the extent to which PlaCE funding has enabled organisational growth, and more about resilience to the threats of the pandemic. The data from baseline to end of Year 3 can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Total staff and turnover Baseline to Year 3

	Permanent staff (total)	Temporary staff (total)	Turnover (total) ³
Baseline (2018)	167	685	£24,683,092
Y1 (2019-20)	178	688	£26,457,260
Y2 (2020-21)	140	133	£15,948,364
Y3 (2021-22)	172	364	£21,297,354

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

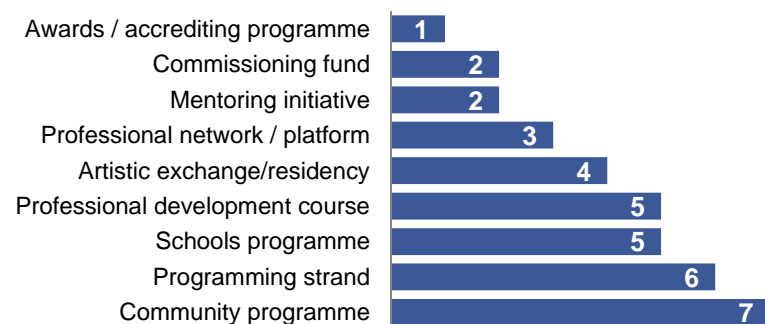
We can see that despite permanent staff numbers falling by 24% in the main pandemic year (and turnover dropping by £10.5million) from the previous, both

³ Excluding three festivals (Hogmanay, Art and Film) who did not provide complete data

have stabilised in Year 3 with turnover now £3.4million lower than in the baseline year.

The main difference between baseline and Year 3 is in the number of temporary staff employed by the festivals (e.g., crew, admin, festival support staff) which has dropped 61% since the baseline year. Much of this can be explained by the limitations imposed on festival activities by ongoing COVID-19 restrictions in Year 3, which were not removed in time to stage a substantial in person peak season in August 2021, resulting in delivery levels of around 10% compared to 2019. Although it is likely that this will pick up again, it is worth monitoring. The implications for festivals are significant given the additional skills, talent, and capacity that this temporary workforce brings to them, and arguably more significant for the Scottish cultural workforce who take an income from these sources.

Figure 4 Number of festivals indicating activity strands as created or improved in Year 3



Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

3.2 Operational capacity and programming

A total of 35 strands of activities were created or significantly improved in Year 3, down 15% from 41 bespoke programming strands created or significantly improved in the first year of PlaCE. This is an average of 4 strands of activities per festival – down 1 from an average of 5 reported in Year 1. This ranged from a maximum of 8 new strands of activity to a minimum of 1 and was not reflective of the size of the festival.

Similarly to Year 1, festivals strongly attribute the development of the activities to PlaCE with an average attribution score of 3.46 out of 4 across all activities and festivals (where 1 is that the activity would have happened anyway and 4 being would not have happened at all).

As can be seen in Figure 4, most festivals developed community programmes, other forms of programming, schools programmes and professional development courses.

3.3 Audience and participant numbers

As may be expected in relation to pandemic restrictions, audience numbers have declined compared to the baseline and Year 1. Few festivals provided audience data in Year 2 and we did not ask for disaggregated data (i.e., general audiences Vs audiences in PlaCE funded activity). Year 3 data shows a potentially interesting increase in the proportion of total audiences coming from PlaCE activity strands. While the total audiences engaged by festivals in Year 3 is low compared to before the pandemic (470,000 compared to 1.3million), 26% were counted as audiences of PlaCE activity compared to 15% in Year 1. This may indicate a larger proportion of total audiences taking part in community and schools activity than was the case before the pandemic; alternatively, this may indicate that PlaCE funds were spread more widely across main stage programmes as well as tailored community and school activity by the festivals.

Figure 5 No of audiences reached through the festivals

	Audiences reached through all festival activity (ex. participants)	Audiences reached through PlaCE activity (ex. participants)	% 'PlaCE audiences'
Baseline	Total: 1,160,149 Average: 145,019		
Y1	Total: 1,277,222 Average: 159,653 (n=8, range from 16k to 298k)	Total: 201,251 Average: 22,361 (n=9, range from 2k to 70k)	16%
Y2	Data on audiences minimal and not disaggregated		
Y3	Total: 471,204 Average: 67,315 (n=7, range from 5k to 178k)	Total: 123,094 Average: 15,387 (n=8, range from 197 to 81k)	26%

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

There is also data for *participants* (i.e., members of the public engaging in more active or developmental programme activity rather than audiences).

- The total number of participants reached through all festival activity in Year 3 was 39,836 (an average of 5,691 per festival, ranging from 60 to 15,500)
- The total participants reached through PlaCE activity was 21,193 (an average of 2,649 per festival, ranging from 151 to 10,000)
- Taken overall, this indicates that a large proportion (53%) of festival participants are taking part in activity funded by PlaCE.
- The total number of participants has declined since Year 1 (from around 76,000), although the proportion of participants in PlaCE funded activity has increased significantly (from 28% to 53%), suggesting that PlaCE activities are now core to the overall participatory offer of festivals

The final focus group with festivals suggested that most are looking at hybrid online/offline models of delivery now that they have gone through the experience of COVID, but still place huge importance on in-person delivery. Some suggested that the funding helped to adapt and create quality digital content during the pandemic and that they can now see advantages in hybrid model to widen reach, including engaging more internationally.

“ It has provided impetus to look at new ways of working. We wouldn't drift away from in-person but are looking at ways to maintain digital too because of the number of people and countries we reached.

“ We now define has a hybrid festival. We're really keen to rebuild real life audiences as well as online – but it is now a fundamental part of our business with impact on staffing, development, everything.

One festival also pointed to the promising role of hybrid programme delivery in relation to the climate crisis and net zero targets. Another reported that they struggled to maintain quality within digital engagement, and they have since returned to only in-person delivery.

3.4 Strategic development

In Year 3 festivals reported the following operational and strategic elements created or significantly developed as a result of PlaCE funding:

- Two thirds indicated significant development in relation to organisational strategies (6 out of 9)
- Slightly less than half indicated progress on organisational policies and mapping exercises (4 out of 9)
- Two festivals reported improvements in 'quality assurance strategies/approaches' and one reported a 'needs analysis' developed

— Two festivals indicated changes to their Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policies as a result of PlaCE funding

“ We have cross fertilised between PlaCE objectives and our general policies and strategies in respect of international work, place-based work, community and schools programmes, and Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion, across the piece but not least in the development of our partnerships.

“ Used mapping in relation to community development programme and working in new areas of the city and building connections between groups. PlaCE-funded work is now in our main programme rather than a separate section of the programme, although 2021 was a programme that was not as internationally diverse as previous years due to impact of pandemic on travel. PlaCE has helped us shape our EDI policy and linked to increased diversity in the artistic programme.

One festival highlighted the strategic significance of adapting from face to face to online delivery and how this was enabled by PlaCE funding:

“ With the pivot to online activity, home working and adapting to part time furlough, we had to develop new ways of working. This included digital training and alternative timetabling. We developed online safety protocols for working with members of the public and updated our child protection policies for online meetings. In addition to producing online content (instead of live events) we had to learn how to market these events to reach a new digital audience. We found this work allowed us to be much more accessible and inclusive to our audience - online content was captioned, with BSL interpretation, free to access and posted then hosted online indefinitely to allow for asynchronous engagement.

Asked to what extent these would have been developed without PlaCE funding, five out of seven festivals felt they would have been partially developed, one that they would have been completely developed, and one that they would not have been developed at all. Taken overall this indicates that PlaCE funding has enabled festivals to allocate resources for organisational development that would not be happening otherwise. Although the plans for organisational development that existed in 2019 have likely also been changed since the pandemic and it may be useful to explore again what ‘strategy development’ looks like for each festival at this stage in the programme.

Figure 6 Core festival staff opinion on impact of PlaCE funding on organisational development

	Year 1	Year 3
My organisation’s capacity, structures and processes have expanded to meet the needs of the PlaCE programme	52% strongly agree 48% agree (n=25)	33% strongly agree 53% agree (n=30)
Any changes in my organisation’s capacity will last beyond the PlaCE funding	25% strongly agree 29% agree (n=24)	24% strongly agree 28% agree (n=29)
My organisation’s strategy has significantly developed with the help of PlaCE funding’	41% strongly agree 55% agree (n=22)	30% strongly agree 52% agree (n=27)

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

The festival staff survey, managed by BOP and distributed across core staff in each festival, indicated broad agreement that PlaCE funding has had a strategic impact, albeit to slightly lower levels than at the end of Year 1. As may be anticipated in the wake of the pandemic, questions relating to expanded capacity or the ability to significantly focus on strategy received lower levels of agreement than previously (although still 86% and 82% agreement respectively).

Among those that strongly agreed or agreed with that their strategy had developed with the help of PlaCE funding, examples given included:

- Increasing geographic reach (in terms of partners and audiences, Scotland-wide and international)
- Increasing reach into new communities and learning how to engage with them
- Improved online activity
- Increased commitment to supporting career pathways
- Business strategy development
- Time to develop new partnerships and projects

“ We have had brilliant opportunities to try out new projects and ideas, in a properly funded way, which has really helped develop our strategy. This is especially the case in our work for and with schools.

“ Activities that are at the heart of our PlaCE funded programme have informed our strategic direction - including learning a lot about the need for long term partnerships in community contexts, and our commitment to support emerging/early career artists and curators through our programme.

Of those who agreed or strongly agreed that 'Any changes in my organisation's capacity will last beyond the PlaCE funding' (53%), most referred to PlaCE supporting the creation of lasting networks and expansion of collaborations/partners; identification of lasting new ways of working (including with new audiences); the creation of permanent new posts; increased capacity leading to increased fundraising-ability and improved long-term planning. The lower level of agreement likely indicates that while some of these changes will have a longer-term impact, festivals are cautious about agreeing that these changes could happen *without* the continuation of the PlaCE funding.

“ Because of the PlaCE funding, our programme and regional network could considerably expand to new areas in Scotland. This resulted in high-quality events, in the majority of cases featuring new work, that tend to be organised year after year. Such long-term collaboration with regional partners would not have been possible without the PlaCE funding.

“ This project, and the funding in particular, has allowed us to explore and develop new ways of connecting arts industry professionals with work presented at the festival, innovating how work can be shared and picked up online which reduces stress on carbon footprints often associated with travelling for work.

“ PLACE funding enabled myself and my newest colleagues to join the organisation, given the higher level of resource the organisation is now in a better position to think ahead, plan into the future and find other sources of funding available.

“ In recruiting myself and the Development and Strategy Manager, the organisations' ability to strategise, futureproof and develop has increased.



Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival, Image credit: Edinburgh Festival Carnival



Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival, Image credit: Edinburgh Festival Carnival

Insights from the case studies: organisational capacity

Festival case studies collected since January 2020 highlighted the following overall impacts:

- **Increase of digital skills and their position within the organisation:** improved staff digital literacy skills; creation of new tech teams/ digital working groups; moving tech/digital team more central to operations & plans for ongoing strategic development to understand how to continue hybrid model through strategic development
- **Embedding of new programme elements** piloted or scaled up through PlaCE within festivals going forward; including through re-positioning of internal teams
- **Improved ability and opportunity to secure match-funding**, with impact on longer-term planning
- **Development of new skills** among festival staff, through PlaCE-created opportunities to try new approaches or bring in external experts, e.g., marketing skills in working with newer artists, exhibition design
- **Improved considerations, understanding and approaches to audience diversification and accessibility requirements**, with ambition to retain new insights and approaches

Insights from the case studies: learning gained in addressing the challenges of COVID-19:

- **Remote working increased the importance of co-delivery between festivals, artists and community group/school staff** – this relied on open dialogue between all partners to allow for swift and effective change
- Created **need to engage with larger range of smaller audiences in diverse ways** rather than simply through one large performance, “challenging existing measures of success that rely on attendance numbers” only
- Festivals gained **new skills and insights into creating online/offline performances and activities** – and gained awareness of the benefits (e.g., wider reach across a larger geography, more environmentally sustainable interaction across distances) and challenges of digital provision (e.g., cost implications, ongoing digital poverty) and the need for balance between digital solutions and physical encounters
- Festivals **improved staff digital literacy skills and made tech teams more central** to operations than previously/ created new digital working groups, with plans to understand how to continue hybrid model through strategic development and beyond the 2020-2022 period

3.5 Quality and innovation

3.5.1 Quality assurance and impact measuring

96% of festival staff replied ‘yes’ to the question ‘does your organisation have measures in place to assess and assure the quality of your products and outputs?’, although just 50% agreed that PlaCE funding has helped their organisation to develop these measures. A slightly higher proportion of staff (63%) indicated that PlaCE funding had helped their organisation to measure success.

Across both aspects it seems that PlaCE funding has been more focused on capacity, programme development, and network building than it has on internal systems and processes, potentially limiting the impact that such a focus could enable over time. However, this may in part be due to festivals working in and reacting to a time of crises, shifting their focus on the protection of core capacity in programming, staff and partnerships rather than revising internal systems and processes. To this end, it would be instructive to see how progress develops in this area now that the impact of the pandemic has abated somewhat.

3.5.2 Quality of outputs

Throughout, there has been strong affirmation from core staff that PlaCE funding has supported and enabled the festivals in producing high quality cultural outputs. From a high score in Year 1, this increased even further in Year 3, with almost all core festival staff agreeing on the value of PlaCE in enabling the creation of high-quality output. Among core staff who responded to the survey,

- In Year 1, 73% strongly agreed or agreed that PlaCE funding has enabled the organisation to produce higher quality cultural products and outputs
- In Year 3, 92% strongly agreed or agreed that PlaCE funding has enabled the organisation to produce higher quality cultural products and outputs. 91% strongly agreed or agreed that PlaCE funding had positively impacted the quality of their organisation’s output (n=24)

This was affirmed by programming partners surveyed across both years who agreed on the high-quality output of their partnership with the festivals:

- In Year 1, 11 out of 11 (100%) strongly agreed or agreed that the cultural outputs produced by their partnership were of a high quality
- In Year 3, 19 out of 20 (95%) strongly agreed or agreed that the cultural outputs produced by their partnership were of a high quality

3.5.3 Innovation

Insights from the case studies: Innovation

The festival case studies highlighted that funding allowed festivals to take risks which could not be taken without this 'additional' financial support, leading to:

- The creation of **successful and novel new programme elements** (e.g., Imagine's school-based immersive theatre experience, Book Festival's collaborative artist travels; Storytelling's 'pay-it-forward' approach; EIF introducing more challenging themes and works away from the mainstream)
- The **introduction of successful new approaches to engage a wider range of audiences and ensure fit** (e.g., Storytelling's non-prescriptive community engagement and 'pay-it-forward' approach; Jazz & Blues' approach to letting projects be led by artists and communities rather than central rationale; EIF's interactive approach to developing new material during their You Are Here project, exposing ideas in development to audiences and thereby enabling them to be part of the development conversation and allowing artists to respond)
- The introduction of **new ways to connect the festival with artists, producers and venues internationally** (e.g., Fringe Festival's new online marketplace platform to connect artists and programmers; Science Festival's ability to innovate and raise quality of output, thereby raising appeal of output to new (inter-) national hosting venues)

Core festival staff were similarly positive about PlaCE funding supporting their festivals to create innovative products and outputs, although this figure dropped slightly between 2020 and 2022:

- In Year 1, 95% of core festival staff strongly agreed or agreed that the PlaCE programme enabled their organisation to innovate its products and outputs
- In Year 3, 81.5% strongly agreed or agreed with the same statement.

Reflecting this strong perception of the value of PlaCE to support innovation, in 2021 following the height of the COVID pandemic, projects highlighted in particular how the PlaCE funding provided flexibility and support in shifting services online and how PlaCE funding allowed them to continue commissioning “*ambitious, experimental activity*”, including digital activities – requiring huge innovation to maintain visibility and an offer for their audiences both at festival management and output level.

“ Thanks to PlaCE we have been able to innovate radically and as a result move ahead of our international rivals in our reputation as a leading festival of ideas.

Again, this high level of perceived innovation was reflected among programming partners. Of those surveyed,

- In Year 1, all partners strongly agreed or agreed that ‘the festival delivers innovative cultural products/ outputs’
- In Year 3, 94 % (18 out of 19 responses) strongly agreed or agreed with the same statement.

Qualitative responses from staff indicated several examples of innovation taking place among the festivals. The longevity of PlaCE funding was seen as essential in providing festivals with the time required to build up projects, develop strategy and make connections. In this context, it is worth noting the important role of festivals as places of experimentation and innovation, acting as laboratories of new thinking and practice for the wider cultural eco-system. As such, it is in the nature of such work that not everything will go to plan – but that all such activities generate valuable learning, whether ultimately considered successful or not. This is reflected in comments highlighting that

PlaCE funding has enabled the development of new work and projects, including those that may be deemed as ‘risky’:

- “ PlaCE has enabled project ideas to be realised, which have meant much more engagement in ideas which may have been deemed risky - these are often the best ones!
- “ Overall, it's really been a gamechanger for us. Having this kind of funding, larger sums in one application rather than smaller individual project applications, has really allowed us to focus on innovation and learning rather than constantly managing shorter project and funding turnarounds.

PlaCE funding has supported the creation of work that relates to the needs of communities and helped to innovate and build new ways of working with and engaging communities:

- “ The long-term nature of PlaCE has enabled us to innovate in our ways of working – for example to be able to build in depth projects with community groups and grow our understanding of communities and partners in a particular locality.

As described above, it has helped festivals to build their digital capacity to reach more audiences and support the establishment of innovative new collaborations and commissions.

Reflecting this final point, in Year 3 core festival staff largely agreed (88%) that ‘PlaCE funding has helped to diversity the festival’s contributors and partners’.

Lastly, across the years, core staff have overwhelmingly remained in agreement that ‘diversity in the cultural workforce leads to innovation in cultural outputs’ (100% in Year 3). In this regard, staff particularly highlighted how a larger geographic and cultural spread of partners and artists, including engaging with more local artists/ partners than previously, has led to a diversification of

contributors, and a more accessible and diverse programme, and through this, a diversification of their audiences.

- “ For the first time, we've decided to open up our programme by sending out an open call to artists across Scotland (living in and working in Scotland), which meant that our festival became more accessible, and our programme greatly diversified its content.
- “ We have been able to put on workshops and masterclasses about inclusion and access, employ diverse practitioners to deliver these, and engage young people from a wider range of backgrounds and locations.



Art Festival: Isabella Widger, Platform 2021. Photo: Sally Jubb

4. Broader engagement

Intended outcomes - shorter-term:

Extend effective and mutual partnerships with representative communities across Edinburgh and Scotland

Intended outcomes - longer-term:

Increase the involvement of communities the festivals are not currently engaged with in activities, content and impacts

Improve individual and community wellbeing for a diverse and representative Scottish population

Key findings:

PlaCE has enabled festivals to engage with new and existing community and school partners at scale, across Edinburgh and Scotland. Postcode data shows that this activity is well matched to need as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The number of participants engaged has stabilised again since the height of the pandemic and remains significantly higher than before PlaCE funding. The number of school engagements of the festivals has risen by 72% (from 497 in 2018 to 855 in 2022).

Community partners report high levels of satisfaction from their engagement with festivals and report clear positive outcomes for the individuals and communities taking part.

Festivals report transforming the way they work with communities, democratising approaches and taking a more equitable approach to co-creation.

4.1.1 Engagement activity

All festivals, bar one, reported engaging with community groups in Year 3. The total number of organisational engagements⁴ reported by festivals in Year 3 was 148. This is lower than the 212 reported in Year 1 but remains significantly higher than the 65 engagements reported for the baseline year.

82 of the 148 (55%) community organisation engagements in Year 3 were new relationships to that festival. This is higher than the 48% that were new in Year 1, indicating that festivals have made continuing efforts to broaden the range of community partners they are working with.

Six out of seven festivals indicated that this work would have partially taken place without PlaCE funding, although qualitative responses from staff in surveys and focus groups indicates a clear reframing of the scope and remit of their community work as a result of PlaCE funding.

Participants in our final evaluation focus group noted clear changes in how they were engaging with community groups. PlaCE helped to create strong, long-term partnerships and to innovate and respond to changing partner needs. Strong relationships now mean that festivals can approach their partners and ask what they want, rather than 'imposing activity from above'. One festival suggested that *"the power balance has shifted – local individuals exercising views through social media have become much more vocal about what they are expecting from arts and culture. People expect more from us as a festival now"*

“ From the outset, going through partnerships made it easier to reach target groups. We've tried to bring this thinking to highest level and it has revolutionised how we deliver projects from beginning of PlaCE to now. It's still trial and error, but the difference is that we used to start with the programmes and aims, and now because of the relationships we have built, we ask what are you trying to achieve, we have these skills for you.

⁴ 'Engagements' refers to the number of community groups and organisations reported by the festivals, which may be higher than the total number of individual groups or organisations since some can work with more than one festival.

Completely flipped on its head. How do we take this mentality up to festival programming and sponsorships now?

After initially rising from the baseline year to Year 1, the number of participants taking part in community projects dipped significantly between Year 1 and Year 2 as expected, due to the onset of the Covid pandemic, as seen in Figure 7.

Positively, however, despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic and only a partial return to on-site delivery in the 2021 festival season, numbers are again stabilising, rising significantly between Year 2 (3,742) and Year 3 (15,632) to return to an increased level from the original baseline (an increase of around a third from the baseline figure). It should be noted, however, that one festival accounts for 10k of the latter.

Figure 7 No of community participants engaged by the festivals

Baseline	Total: 11,770 Average: 1,177 (n=10, range from 0 to 6,000; one reported 0 community participants)
Y1	Total: 20,422 Average: 2,042 (n=10, range from 0 to 7,600; two reported 0 community participants)
Y2	Total: 3,742 (n=6, range from 90 to 1,318)
Y3	Total: 15,632 Average: 2,233 (n=7, range from 80 to 10,498)

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

Insights from the case studies: community engagement

- Projects provided capacity **to bring festival work to communities, areas and audiences that couldn't previously be reached due to lack of capacity**; expanding festivals' participant focus as well as increasing community organisations' understanding of the value of arts activity (e.g., Jazz & Blues, Storytelling)
- Projects were **open-minded rather than prescriptive whilst centrally curated**, to ensure themes and delivery were accessible, enjoyable and tailored to community needs (e.g., Storytelling, Jazz & Blues)
- Projects **allowed participants to harness their imagination, learn about their traditions and gain new creative skills**; thereby creating joy and mental health benefits as well as supporting the development of transferable skills (such as communication, collaboration) (e.g., Imagine, Jazz & Blues, Storytelling)
- Projects **allowed communities to connect in new ways and engendered charitable activity** (e.g., Jazz & Blues, Storytelling)

4.1.2 Schools

The total number of school engagements across total festival activity continued to increase from baseline and Year1 despite the pandemic though at a slower pace than increases in the first year.

The baseline number of school engagements was 497, this increased to 743 in Year 1 and there were 855 engagements reported in Year 3, indicating a 72%

increase from the baseline⁵. The total number of pupils reportedly involved in festival activity was 41,033, including pupils outside of Edinburgh.

4.1.3 Postcode heatmaps

The following maps indicate the location of the community partners and schools worked with based on the postcode data submitted by festivals. The first map shows the overall Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation profile for the City of Edinburgh.

Figure 8 SIMD profile of Edinburgh (dark red is more deprived)

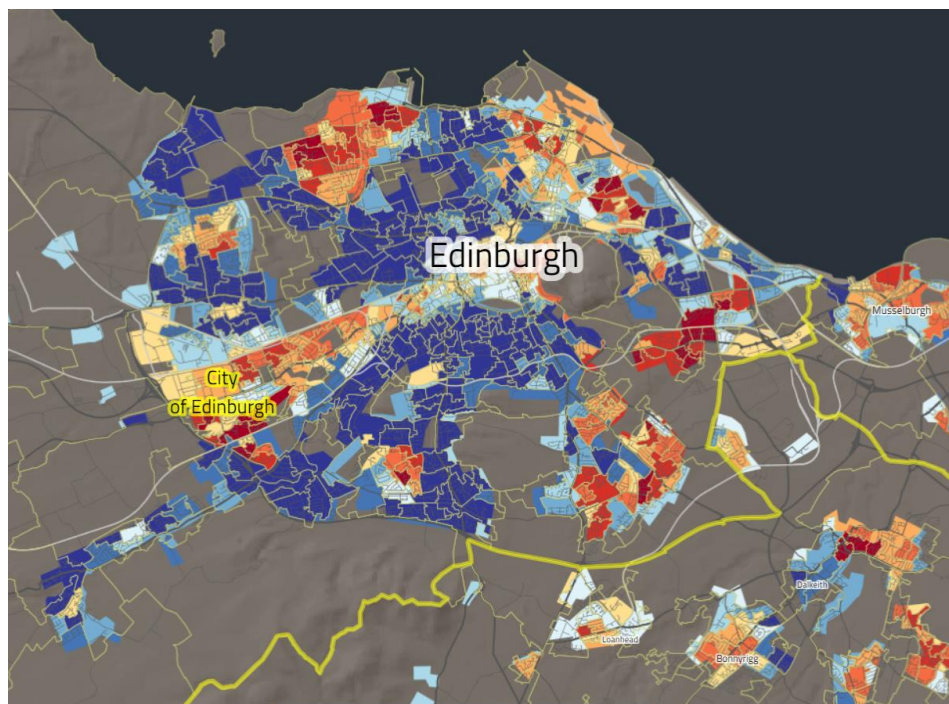
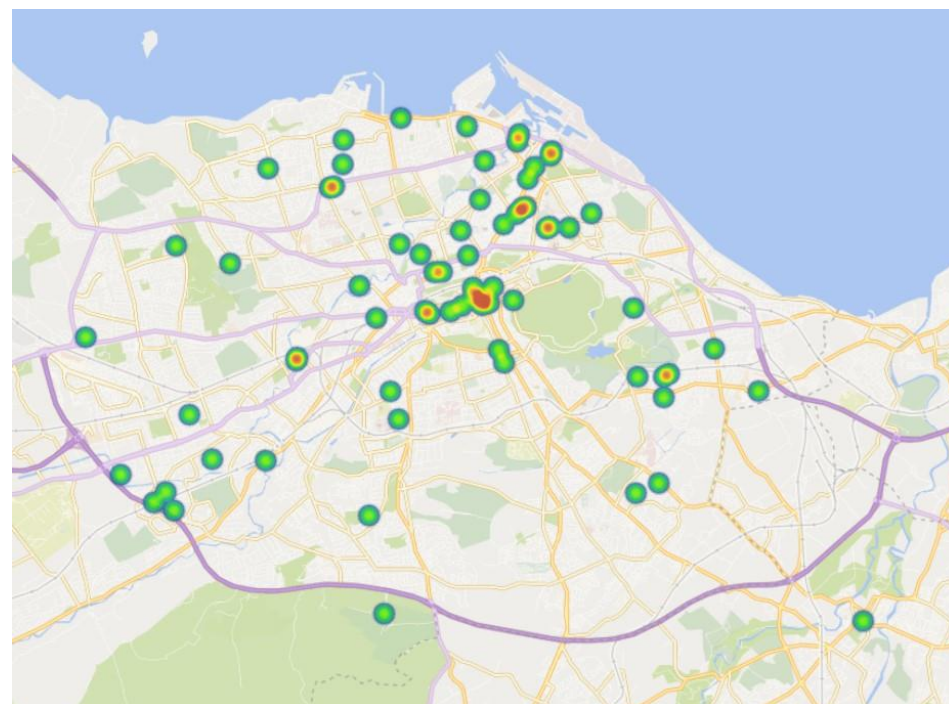


Figure 9 Location of community partners (Edinburgh)



⁵ It should be noted that 500 of these relate to one festival.

Figure 10 Location of schools (Edinburgh)

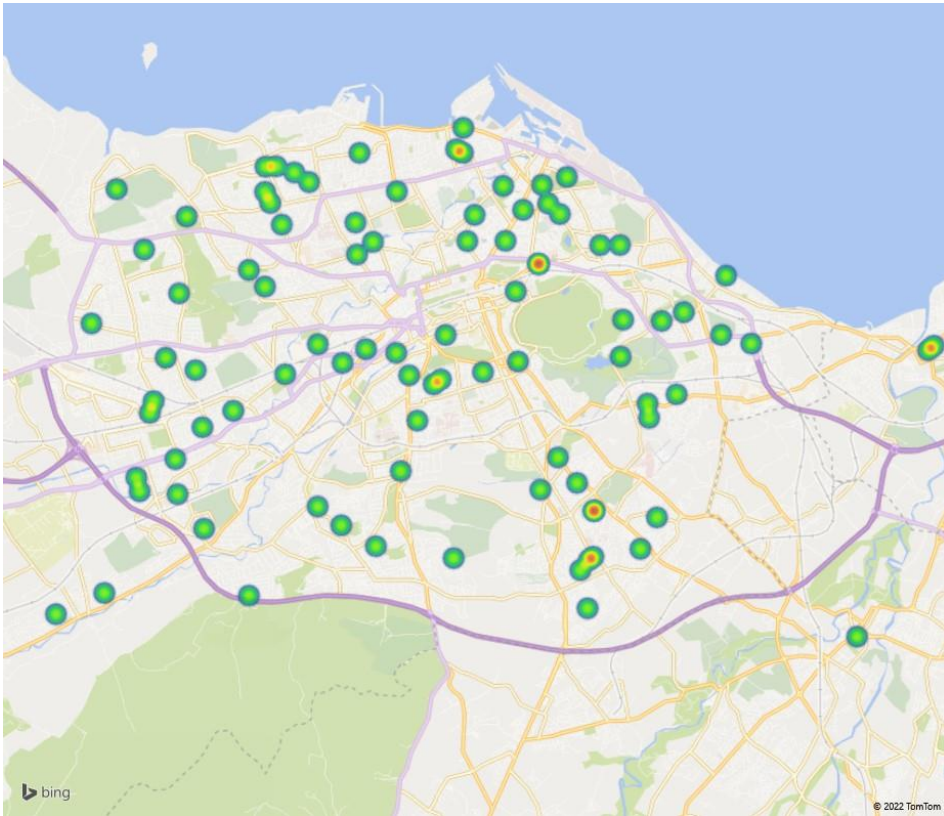


Figure 11 Location of community partners and schools (Edinburgh)

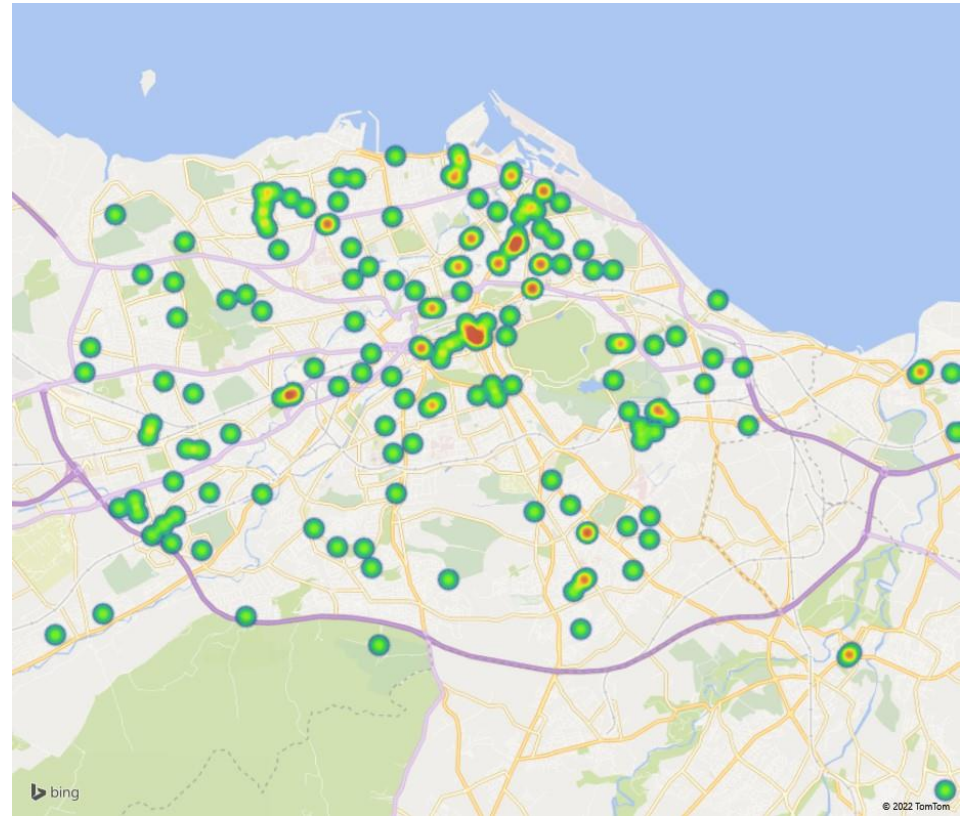
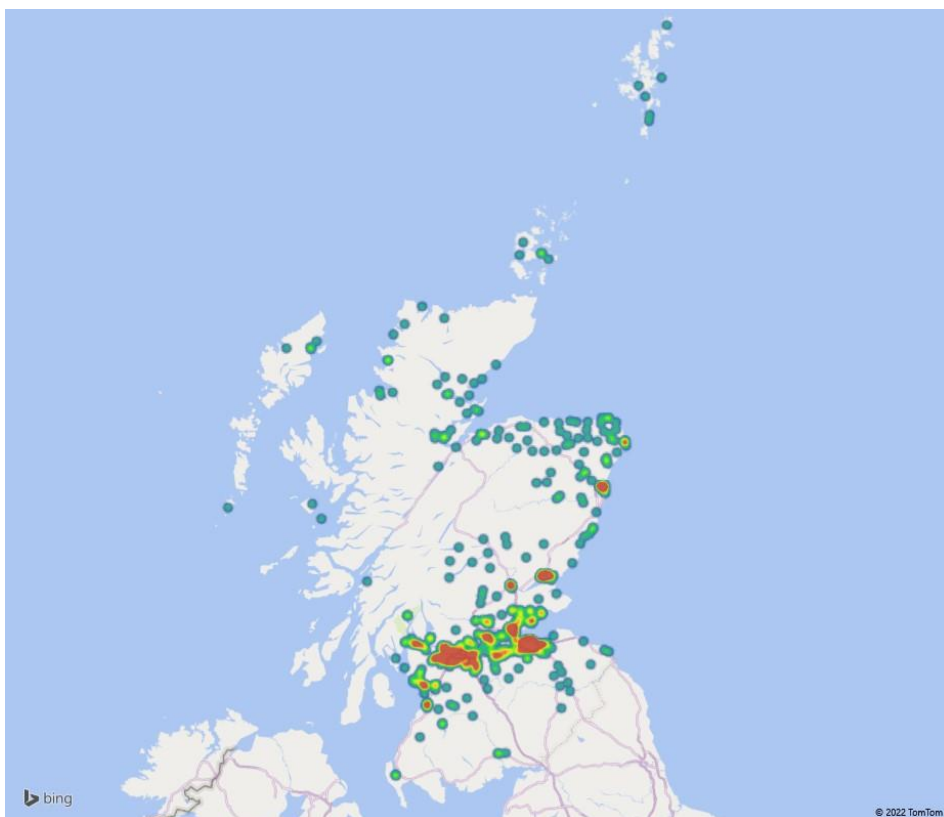


Figure 12 Location of community partners and schools (Scotland)



Overall, we can see clusters of activity in the city centre, as well as the more deprived areas of Granton, Leith, Craigmillar and Nidrie and Wester Hailes. Although the data does not allow us to drill down into the scale or depth of engagement in each of these areas. The location data, alongside the data indicating that festivals are continuing to build new partnerships year on year, implies that there are increased and targeted engagement projects with the most deprived communities in the city.

The Scotland-wide map indicates how many of the festivals have worked across the country with community and schools partners. Four of nine festivals providing postcode data included coverage outside of Edinburgh.

4.1.4 Quality of engagement

Figure 13 Community partners perspectives on quality of engagement

	Year 1 (n=27)	Year 3 (n=33)
This partnership had valuable outcomes for those who took part	73% strongly agree 27% agree	76% strongly agreed 21% agreed
This partnership has benefited my/ my organisation's work in a meaningful way	69% strongly agree 31% agree	76% strongly agreed 21% agreed
This was an equal and even partnership	58% strongly agree 31% agree	55% strongly agreed 39% agreed
This was an effective partnership	73% strongly agree 27% agree	76% strongly agreed 21% agreed

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

Figure 13 shows that community partners (i.e., schools and community organisations) are generally very positive about their experiences with the festivals, with results in the Year 3 survey broadly in line with what was reported in Year 1. Among all community and domestic partner survey respondents, 97% strongly agreed or agreed that they or their organisation was likely to partner with the festival in the future

Community and domestic partner survey respondents highlighted the following as 'most valuable outcomes of the partnership for participants' who took part. The most referenced was the sheer ability to reach out to and engage new audiences/communities that would not otherwise have benefited, with resulting positive consequences, providing the opportunity to take part in a new experience and engage with the festivals in a new way, recognised as having clear value in itself. Beyond that, developing creative skills and raising

confidence were more frequently mentioned than specific outcomes related to wellbeing or educational outcomes.

Figure 14 Outcomes reported by community partners (n=33, coded from open responses)

Outcome	n	%
Better understanding of community work/ the need to reduce access barriers/ reaching out to new audiences that would not otherwise have been involved	18	55%
Creative activity/ developing creative skills	7	21%
Participants' confidence in themselves/ their work	4	12%
Supporting new collaborations	4	12%
Bringing the community together	3	9%
Bringing work to a live audience (post Covid)	3	9%
Enthusiasing and engaging participants	2	6%
Improving participants' wellbeing	2	6%
Improving participants' educational outcomes/ skills development	2	6%
Acquainting audiences with new cultural output	2	6%

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

“ The partnership allows us to offer our project members new and exciting opportunities and enables us to remove many barriers that people with a learning disability face in accessing events in their community.

“ Young people who would not normally be able to access the festival - due to financial reasons, or lack of confidence - could attend shows with us for free and be shown how easy it is to book shows etc. which encouraged them to make use of tickets outside of planned visits with us.

Community partner survey respondents were also asked to outline what they considered ‘most valuable outcomes of the partnership for them/ their organisation’.

Most mentioned that it enabled them as organisations to access new community audiences and participants who they were not already engaging with their work (55%), others appreciated the additional time and resource the partnership enabled for creative development and ideation (18%), others appreciated the partnership as an opportunity to gain feedback and insight on their work (15%), fewer (2 organisations) mentioned that it was a good opportunity to raise their own organisational profile.

There were no clear dominant themes in the open questions relating to how partnerships could be improved in the future. Some organisations mentioned that they would like more advanced planning/lead-in time for project planning, contingency planning, shorter but more frequent collaboration sessions, clearer communication, and an opportunity for all organisations involved in projects to meet more regularly.

Finally, the festival staff survey indicates what the festivals themselves have learned from expanding their community work. When asked what they have learned most from the first years of PlaCE funding, many responses related to community work:

- Reach out to and empower your communities. Ask people what they want: get to know your communities' needs before programming. Don't impose ideas.
- Always interrogate first who a project is for and how they can best benefit from it
- Listen to the needs of your networks and support them
- Acknowledge the hard work of community partners
- Clear value of working long-term within one place/one community
- Co-curation, working with young people takes dedicated staff and time

5. Enhanced collaboration

Intended outcomes - shorter-term:

Increase connections between Scottish and international cultural professionals

Intended outcomes - longer-term:

Raise the international cultural profile of Scotland

Key findings:

Partnerships with other arts and culture organisations and professionals have remained relatively high (133 in Year 3), although lower than in the first year, likely as a consequence of the pandemic.

The number of international partnerships has dropped significantly, also likely as a consequence of the pandemic.

The number of co-created activities and initiatives has increased year on year, indicating that models of collaboration have developed positively throughout the first three years of PlaCE funding.

5.1.1 Creating new partnerships and relationships with organisations and individual practitioners

Festivals continued to create new organisational partnerships throughout the programme period. Although a lower number of new partnerships were reported in Year 3 than in Year 1, numbers are still strong considering that festivals by now were in their third year of the programme (and hence there may have been less call for *new* delivery partnerships). However, there was a considerably lower number of international partnerships, which may be explained by ongoing COVID-related barriers to international engagement (with e.g., fewer

opportunities to meet new international partners, travel, or invite them to the city):

- In Year 1, a total of 160 partnerships were reported as having been developed through PlaCE, with a wide range between festivals from 3 to 51 (based on responses from 10 festivals). 19 of these were with international partners, recorded by six festivals.
- In Year 3, 133 partnerships were reported as having been developed; again, numbers varied widely between festivals from 0 to 68 (based on responses from 9 festivals). Five of these were with international partners, recorded by three festivals.

As a likely consequence of the lower number of international partners, fewer festivals this year reported seeing their activities covered in the international media than previously: where in Year 1, 60% festivals reported that their PlaCE activities had been covered in international media (including from French, Belgian, German, Chinese, US, Nigerian and South African outlets)⁶, in Year 3, only three out of nine festivals reported PlaCE activities covered in international media. However, this needs to be seen in the context of the ongoing restrictions festivals faced in Year 3, which included social distancing as well as a curtailing of international travel, thus severely reducing in-person delivery – marking it significantly more challenging for festivals not only to engage with audiences, but also with partners. Given this, the still relatively high partnerships reported in Year 3 are evidence of festival's ongoing drive and ability to work in partnership.

As previously, most festivals in Year 3 felt strongly that their new partnerships were made possible through PlaCE funding: six out of nine festivals reported that their partnerships 'would not have been developed at all' without PlaCE funding' and a further two that they 'would have been partially developed'.

Projects also reported a lower number of 'individual cultural practitioners and professionals engaged with for the first time through PlaCE'; this may again be an ongoing consequence of the pandemic over the past year as well as the fact

⁶ BOP Consulting, International partners survey n=5

that festivals were engaged in ongoing activity and already had their partnerships in place:

- In Year 1, festivals reported 518 individual cultural practitioners and professionals engaged with for the first time through PlaCE, with a fairly even split between those based in Scotland or elsewhere (all 10 festivals responded, numbers ranged from 2 to 180)
- In Year 3, festivals reported 283 individual cultural practitioners and professionals engaged with for the first time through PlaCE, with 85% based in Scotland (based on data from 8 festivals, numbers ranged from 1 to 91)

Projects were slightly more positive that relationships with individual cultural professionals may have developed without PlaCE funding: only two out of nine felt that these ‘would not be developed at all’ and five that ‘they would have partially been developed’ (two out of 9 festivals did not respond to this question).

Lastly, 88% of core staff again overwhelmingly agreed that the PlaCE funding helped to *diversify* the contributors or partners their festival worked with.

Figure 15 Core festival staff on the impact of PlaCE on partnership development

	Year 1	Year 3
PlaCE funding has helped to diversify the Festival's contributors/ partners	55% strongly agree 32% agree	42% strongly agree 46% agree

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

5.1.2 Working in partnership

Despite the slightly lower number of new partnerships, encouragingly, the number of projects delivered and/or co-created in partnership with another individual or organisation saw a continued increase from the baseline year. This suggests that festivals are continuing to collaborate with existing partners as well as new partners:

- The total number of festival projects *co-created* in partnership with another individual or organisation in the baseline year was 73, increasing to 252 in Year 1, with a total increase of 245% in co-created activity across all festivals. Despite facing ongoing Covid-19-related restrictions, festivals were able to further increase this number to 335 co-created festival activities/ programmes/ initiatives in Year 3 (a 33% increase from Year 1 and a 359% increase from the baseline), suggesting clear enthusiasm for such joint development approaches as well as increased ability to set up and deliver them. Out of these 335 activities, 133 were new activities (40%). Again, numbers varied hugely between festivals, ranging from 1 to 131.
- In Year 3, a total of 290 festival activities/programmes/initiatives were delivered across festivals in partnership with another individual/organisation (n=7 festivals). However, numbers varied hugely between festivals, with one festival reporting 129 activities/programmes delivered in partnership compared to five reported by another festival (two festivals did not report on this at all).

The case studies revealed a number of benefits to the festivals of working together in partnership, including improving their community work, providing new sources of inspiration, broadening their reach, leveraging additional resources and finding new ways to develop artists (see blue box below).

Likewise, as in Year 1, the programming partners who responded to the survey were highly positive about their partnership with the festivals, with strong agreement across all festivals about the effectiveness, innovation and quality of the partnership and its output; about seeing the partnership as beneficial to themselves; and – in consequence – about wishing to work with the partner in the future and recommending working with the festival to peers (see Figure 16). Again, it is worth reflecting here on the role of festivals in developing new thinking and practice through experimentation and innovation; including in working together with partners.

Lastly, 17 out of 20 respondents also strongly agreed or agreed that their partnership was ‘equal and even’. While this represents the lowest strong agreement among all statements in Year 3, it nevertheless highlights highly

positive affirmation by a majority of respondents, with more in total responding positively here than in Year 1 (10 out of 11). Of the three who did not 'strongly agree' or 'agree' here, two remained neutral and only one 'disagreed'. Notably, most of those who responded to the survey had partnered with the festival previously, further lending weight to the idea that partners see this as a positive experience.

Qualitative responses further support the positive experience felt by partners, with responses to the question of "how could the ways of working have been improved" highlighting how positive the experience was or suggesting minor improvements such as *"more time in planning"*, *improved "clarity on logistics arrangements"* or more international travel/ online meetings with international organisations. Only one project noted any specific issues with the partnership, around feeling they required more assistance from their more experienced partner and suggesting contract negotiations could be improved *"to ensure a fairer process with regard to expectations, and risk, when working with smaller companies with more limited resources"*.

Figure 16 Programming partners on success and value of partnership with Festivals

	Year 1 (n=11, 5 Scottish, 1 rest of UK, 5 international)	Year 3 (n=20, 15 Scottish, 4 English, 2 international)
This was an effective partnership	11 out of 11 strongly agreed (9) or agreed (2)	19 out of 20 strongly agreed (13) or agreed (6)
This was an equal and even partnership	10 out of 11 strongly agreed (4) or agreed (6)	17 out of 20 strongly agreed (10) or agreed (7)
The cultural outputs produced by this partnership were of a high quality	11 out of 11 strongly agreed (8) or agreed (3)	19 out of 20 strongly agreed (14) or agreed (5)
The festival delivers innovative cultural products/ outputs	11 out of 11 strongly agreed (8) or agreed (3)	18 out of 20 strongly agreed (13) or agreed (5)

The partnership has benefited my/ my organisation's work in a meaningful way	11 out of 11 strongly agreed (9) or agreed (2)	19 out of 20 strongly agreed (16) or agreed (3)
I am/ My organisation is likely to partner with the festival in the future	11 out of 11 strongly agreed (9) or agreed (2)	19 out of 20 strongly agreed (15) or agreed (4)
I would recommend working with the festival to my peers	11 out of 11 strongly agreed (10) or agreed (1)	19 out of 20 strongly agreed (14) or agreed (5)

Source: BOP (2022)

Insights from the case studies: impacts gained from national and international networking and collaboration

PlaCE-funded projects supported festivals and professionals in creating new relationships and networks both locally and at international level, resulting in lasting links and potential future collaboration, providing new sources of inspiration as well as creating wider reach for festival output:

- **Creation of new links between festivals, local artists and communities**, offering legacy potential through ongoing relationships and including a more diverse range of artists not previously connected with (e.g., Storytelling, Jazz & Blues, EIF)
- **Creation of direct and autonomous networks between artists and communities** by empowering and supporting artists to work directly with communities (e.g., Storytelling, Jazz & Blues)
- **Intensification of work with (new) international partners**, creating long-term strategic relationships, helping to leverage resources, increasing festivals' profile internationally and highlighting/ creating potential for future collaborative opportunities – including a wider reach and longer life of festival outputs toured internationally (e.g., Book Festival, Science Festival)
- **Building of new partnerships outside the usual festival circuit**, thereby broadening geographic connections and creating new ways to develop artists outside of established festivals (e.g., Book)
- **Creation of new digital systems to connect artists and producers internationally** within and outside the Festival period without the need for travel – overcoming challenges such as COVID and Brexit and creating connections that would not happen in a live space only (e.g., Fringe, EIF)

6. Increased professional development

Shorter-term outcomes:

Increase understandings of skills gaps and needs in the Scottish cultural workforce

Longer-term outcomes:

Improve the skills of Scotland's cultural workforce and artists and provide more opportunities for collaboration

Key findings:

Levels of professional development activity were similar in Year 3 as they were in Year 1, although there has been a drop in professional networking and providing sharing platforms.

Significantly fewer opportunities have been provided to emerging practitioners (i.e., those with less than 5 years' professional experience) than in Year 1.

Those who have participated report very positive outcomes from their involvement, particularly indicating that the CPD offer is not available elsewhere.

6.1 Professional development offer provided by the festivals

Compared to Year 1, slightly fewer festivals in Year 3 reported delivering a professional development offer supported by PlaCE funding. Accounting for the festival who did not provide monitoring data this year, there were notably fewer professional networking/ platforms offered, as see in Figure 17 below. As noted in previous sections, this is likely to be a result of the ongoing restrictions to in-person delivery due to the Covid pandemic during the 2021 festival period.

Figure 17 No of festivals who indicated CPD offer

	Professional development course	Professional networking/platform	Mentoring	Artistic exchange/residency
Year 1 (n=10)	6	7	2	5
Year 3 (n=9)	5	3	2	4

Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

Reflecting this, between the years there was also a decrease in the number of cultural practitioners who participated as beneficiaries in professional development activities such as skills development and networking delivered through PlaCE.

It is important to note that a significant proportion of those registered in Year 3 came from one festival alone (Fringe):. However, the same was true in Year 1 with one festival (EIFF) accounting for the majority of cultural professionals registered: without this festival, numbers look more similar across the years. This suggests that in each year, one festival put a larger focus on CPD as a key part of their activity, while most other projects provided CPD as a side-line alongside other activities.

As seen elsewhere, the proportion of international practitioners in Year 3 was smaller than previously, which may also be a consequence of the pandemic, with restrictions on international partnerships and travel.

- In Year 1, a total of 4,057 cultural professionals participated in CPD activities (e.g., skills development, networking) delivered through PlaCE; 80% of these were based in Scotland and 20% internationally. EIFF

accounted for 3,687 of these, with all remaining festivals accounting for 370 cultural practitioners, only.⁷

- In Year 3, a total 551 cultural professionals participated in PlaCE activities as beneficiaries of skills development, networking, etc (data based on 8 festivals as one did not respond to this question); 92% of the cultural practitioners engaged were from Scotland. Figures varied hugely, with Fringe Festival accounting for the vast majority of cultural practitioners (400) followed by Storytelling (109), compared to others reporting 0 or 3 practitioners only.

Interestingly, among these cultural professionals, the proportion of ‘emerging practitioners’, defined as those working in their field for less than five years, was considerably lower in Year 3 than in Year 1. This may be reflective of a general shift to supporting established professionals who had lost their livelihood during the pandemic.

- In Year 1, 66% were ‘emerging practitioners’
- In Year 3, 12% were ‘emerging professionals’

6.2 Professional development outcomes reported

Slightly over half of those who participated in the festivals’ CPD offer in Year 3 and responded to our evaluation survey (n=20, with 16 engaged by one festival⁸) had not participated in activities/ programmes with this festival before. This suggests that the festivals continue to draw in new professionals to their CPD offer, but also suggests that those who have previously engaged see this as an attractive opportunity that they are keen to repeat. The indeed was confirmed by the fact that 95% of respondents agreed that they would like to participate in activities/ programmes from the festival in the future.

As in Year 1, CPD participants in Year 3 were highly positive about the outcomes of their engagement, in particular about being able to engage in

opportunities not on offer elsewhere (this came out noticeably stronger in Year 3 than in Year 1, albeit with a small sample) and about developing their existing skills and knowledge. Respondents were similarly positive about making new connections, developing their professional practice and learning new skills. As in Year 1, feedback was less positive around increasing knowledge/ understanding of the arts and cultural sector in Scotland and of increasing their awareness of available CPD opportunities elsewhere (see Figure 18).

Figure 18 Impact of professional development outcomes reported by participants (net agreement⁹)

	Year 1 (2020) Hogmanay, EIF, EIFF (n=16)	Year 3 (2022) Fringe, EIFF, Art Festival (n=20, with 16 responses from EIFF)
This activity/programme has given me opportunities I wouldn't be able to find elsewhere	75%	85%
My existing skills/ knowledge have been developed as a result of this activity/ programme	88%	85%
I have made connections through this activity/ programme that are likely to benefit my work	75%	79%
My professional practice has developed as a result of this activity/ programme	75%	79%
I have learned new skills as a result of this activity/ programme	75%	70%
I have increased my knowledge and understanding of the arts and culture sector in Scotland	N/A	58%

⁷ BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020

⁸ The extent to which these responses are indicative of all festival CPD participants should be considered with this in mind.

⁹ Net agreement represents the proportion of those agreeing with the statements with the proportion of those disagreeing subtracted.

I am more aware of professional opportunities available to me as a result of this activity/ programme	50%	53%
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Source: BOP Consulting (2022)

In summary, this may suggest that festivals' CPD offer focused on specific skills and networking rather than more general knowledge-sharing about the sector. Reflecting this, when asked about the most valuable part of the CPD activity/ programme, survey respondents highlighted the opportunity to learn from and communicate with other experts in the field:

— receiving high quality professional support from e.g., mentors and managers; some nuanced this with gaining support in creative development

“ Being supported and given advice from industry professionals throughout the process of writing, and having your projected looked at in each stage, in order for it to develop into the strongest possible version.

— meeting and gaining insight from a range of experts and industry professionals (through meetings as well as lectures)

“ Meeting directors/ producers talking about their experience taking their projects off the ground.

— the opportunity to share and discuss ideas with other participants/ peers

“ As is often the case with these kind of development labs, the other participants are often the most valuable people you meet as you're able to share ideas and discuss opportunities.

“ Overall, I would highly recommend and would love to be a part of one of the [festival] schemes in the future. The speakers were all brilliant, the organisers and producers fantastic and the other

writers and me have now formed a network emerging talent that can support each other going into the future

However, participants also highlighted some issues with the expense of the programmes (and/or the low level of remuneration for attending, a challenge for freelancers in particular) and lack of face-to-face contact due to COVID (beyond a few very specific comments around improvement of key programme parts).

The case studies also highlighted skills gained by professionals – including artists, other staff as well as staff from participating partner organisations such as community groups and schools – through 'learning by doing' during delivery of the project. Learning highlighted included skills as well as broader insight into collaborative approaches to working, experimenting with new art forms and raising understanding of the value of creative activity (see blue box below).

Insights from the case studies: skills development for professionals

Case studies highlighted the following learning through the projects:

- Inspired and **widened artists' views** through providing opportunities for creative collaboration (e.g., Book Festival)
- Encouraged and provided artists with the **space to try out new artistic forms** (e.g., Book Festival)
- **Increased community groups' and teachers' understanding of the value of creative activity**; how to harness participants'/ young people's imagination and how to run projects (e.g., Imagine, Storytelling, Jazz & Blues)
- **Provided artists – including those from minority groups/ 'not the usual suspects' and emerging artists – with new skills and practice** including in managing projects (from planning and communication to delivery and evaluation) and working with communities, thereby increasing professionalism, visibility, confidence and employment/ fundraising prospects (e.g., Jazz & Blues, Art Festival)
- **Creation of a better level-playing field for entry** into the arts for those from lower socio-economic and ethnic minority backgrounds, e.g., through offering year-long paid internships and sustained support across multiple projects (e.g., Jazz & Blues, Art Festival)

7. Process evaluation

Throughout our evaluation activity over the past two years, festivals commented on the benefits of unique elements of the PlaCE programme in achieving the outcomes discussed above and presented in the Logic Model.

1. The provision of funds that were ‘additional’ to festivals’ usual income.

This allowed festivals to:

- branch out and reach new audiences, artists, participants that could not otherwise be reached, including from marginalised or hard-to-reach communities and, relatedly, to improve the accessibility of their offer
- create new development opportunities/ try out new approaches that are costly, take time or are risky; at a time when festivals and artists needed to react to a changing world

2. The provision of longer-term funding across multiple years. This allowed for:

- longer-term planning and, due to this, delivery of larger-scale projects as well as firming up of national and international collaborations, thereby reaching new markets
- longer than usual engagement with groups and individuals, developing increased levels of trust, understanding and safety, essential to impact on individual and community wellbeing in the long-term
- opportunities to carry forward learning from year to year, meaning that annual cohorts across the years could learn from each other and programmes could adapt and improve from year to year

3. The flexibility in how festivals were able to use the PlaCE funds. This allowed:

- festivals to bring this flexibility forward in their projects and allow for openness, ‘democratisation’, and artist/ community-led projects with regard to themes and delivery, thereby ensuring activities were tailored to local needs
- funds to go towards staff salaries, which meant being able to use this to enable further fundraising and reduce reliance on project funding¹⁰
- During the pandemic the flexibility has enabled some festivals to survive, maintaining staff, maintaining partnerships, and updating their offer to a completely unforeseen set of circumstances

4. The unique combination of intended outcomes and impacts provided a valuable balance for what most festivals needed to do:

- Programming is linked to community and international work, the CPD offer is also linked to programming and community work, all of which enables the festivals to grow and develop as organisations (even if this is not formally recorded in policies etc).

“ During this devastating period for arts and creativity, this range of options still allowed us to do different things. Not everything we had hoped, but PlaCE helped us to at least deliver on some of them, and that might have been the key to festivals surviving and maintaining relationships. It’s really important to get across the message that PlaCE has kept us going and alive in different ways. In maintaining this diversity lies our strength.

“ The extent of the benefit may be dependent on future sources of funding being identified beyond PlaCE to carry on the work that

¹⁰ This was reported by two festivals, further longer-term research would be required to explore the scale of this observation across festivals.

has been developed to date – but regardless of this I feel certain that 5 years of PlaCE funding will have been significant in shaping the future of the organisation, its strategic vision, its levels of ambition with regard to working internationally, to engaging with communities and to innovating in our ways of working.



Edinburgh International Film Festival, Image credit: EIFF

8. Summary of findings

The following section summarises evidence from across the report against first the shorter-term and then the longer-term outcomes included in the evaluation framework for this evaluation, before concluding with a set of recommendations.

Throughout, it is worth highlighting once again the huge impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had on festivals' operating environment and ability to deliver their planned activity in both Year 2 (2020) and Year 3 (2021) of the programme, impacting both the shorter-term and longer-term outcomes. The impact was particularly significant in Year 2, where festivals had to deal with several national lockdowns, causing a significant shift in activity. Evidence from Year 3 however shows that despite ongoing restrictions to in-person delivery, festivals adapted and were largely able to deliver planned activity again – albeit with adjustments – with some real successes in terms of e.g., community engagement and co-creation activity.

8.1 Evidence of shorter-term outcomes

1. Improve organisational capacity to meet the needs of the PlaCE programme

Within the context of the pandemic, the findings show that PlaCE funding has been essential for festivals to maintain the growth in capacity that had been demonstrated in the first year of the programme. It is only through maintaining their core operations that the partnerships and expertise that had been galvanised earlier in the programme were able to be continued. Monitoring data shows that in most cases this is leading to a strong return to 'normal' in terms of the original programme aims.

2. Understand and communicate how quality will be assured and assessed for festival programmes and outputs

While most festivals indicate that they have quality assurance processes in place, and that this has developed to some degree as a result of PlaCE funding, there is little evidence that this is being communicated, shared, or understood

more broadly. There is an opportunity to further develop understanding and communication of quality within and across the programme.

3. Understand and be able to communicate where innovation is necessary and why

As with quality, innovation is understood and communicated differently across each festival. The strongest innovations reported relate to pandemic resilience (digital programming, hybrid working etc.) and in approaches to community engagement and programming. There is less evidence of needs analyses being conducted in Year 3 than previously, either for general audiences, international work, or community focused programming. This may be due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic and the uncertainty around grant funding from all sources.

4. Increase connections between Scottish and international cultural professionals

Year 3 findings indicate that while some international work has continued it has been significantly curtailed by the pandemic, this includes providing opportunities for international cultural professionals to participate in festival offered CPD activity.

5. Increase the diversity of festival staff/contributors and audiences

There was very little data on diversity of staff or general audiences submitted as part of the Year 3 reporting process, perhaps also due to the lower number of audiences and participants taking part in Years 2 and 3. The continued growth of community and schools work indicates that audiences and participants in these strands are likely diversifying. Both aspects have likely been significantly affected by the pandemic, therefore this should be picked up further into the programme as planned activities normalise.

6. Increase understandings of skills gaps and needs in the Scottish cultural workforce

As above, there was little data to suggest that there had been consistent attempts to understand skills gaps and needs either in specific cultural sub-sectors or in the Scottish cultural workforce more generally. It is likely that these

needs have changed since the beginning of the programme, particularly for those earlier in their careers, providing a potential area of focus for the programme moving forward.

7. Extend effective and mutual partnerships with representative communities across Edinburgh and Scotland

There is strong evidence that festivals are working at a new scale and in new ways with schools and community organisations across Edinburgh and Scotland. Partners report strong positive outcomes from the approaches to partnership working and for the communities that are being engaged.

8. In response to COVID-19: Adapt and build resilience in response to the pandemic to protect festival activities and stakeholder needs

This has been the clearest short-term outcome of the PlaCE funding in Years 2 and 3. The pandemic threatened all aspects of the PlaCE intended impacts (i.e., building organisational capacity, developing international work and networks, and engaging broader communities). To see the positive trends across many of these aspects reported in Year 3 is testament to the flexibility of the PlaCE funding during this period. The data reported here indicates that in many ways originally planned activities and impacts are now back on track.

The secondary finding is that understanding what communities, artists and cultural professionals, and domestic and international partners actually need from the festivals has likely altered because of the pandemic. In order to achieve the planned longer-term outcomes (below) there may be further activities required to review if the understanding that was established in Year 1 of PlaCE, and before the pandemic, remains relevant to the new operational context.

8.2 Evidence of longer-term outcomes

The longer-term outcomes were aspirations for 3-5 years into the programme. The following summary explores where there is stronger or weaker evidence of these emerging, although it is likely that there will be more evidence to explore these outcomes in the remainder of the programme.

1. Produce higher quality products and outputs

The level of activity in Year 3 is not significantly lower than before the pandemic, the accompanying case studies also show in greater detail how PlaCE funding has led many festivals to innovate and develop their offer. Programming and community partners are very positive about the quality of the work, although there is likely further work needed for festivals to assess and determine quality themselves and communicate this more widely.

2. Raise the international cultural profile of Scotland

International activity has been significantly curtailed by the pandemic, and, compared to other strands of PlaCE work, seems to be recovering more slowly. There is little evidence at this stage that PlaCE funding, specifically, has contributed greatly to the international cultural profile of Scotland. Although in supporting festival resilience in the pandemic, it should be noted that all festivals are still able to engage in international work, which may not have been the case otherwise.

3. Improve the skills of Scotland's cultural workforce and artists and provide more opportunities for collaboration

While there has been a continuation of professional development activities in Year 3, which has been valued by those taking part, the main decline in the offer has been in networking and collaboration opportunities. It is likely that the skills and needs of the workforce have changed in the past two years and the festival offers should be updated accordingly.

4. Increase the involvement of communities the festivals are not currently engaged with in activities, content and impacts

There is strong evidence that festivals continue to engage with new communities, that this is targeted to those most likely to be unengaged, and that festivals are developing more sophisticated and equitable forms of engagement in this process.

5. Improve individual and community wellbeing for a diverse and representative Scottish population

There has currently not been an attempt to measure individual or community wellbeing as part of this evaluation. There are promising outcomes being reported by community partners, therefore an opportunity exists to further develop (democratically) how individual and social wellbeing outcomes can be further explored in the extensive community work taking place.

9. Recommendations

- **Building resilience and capacity coming out of the pandemic:** The findings suggest that the scale of intended PlaCE activity is normalising after the pandemic. While there are many projects taking place, there is less evidence that organisations are addressing their own needs in terms of strategies and policies that could build their resilience and capacity over time (e.g., quality, impact, EDI). This may be an ongoing consequence of festivals being in survival mode in 2020 and 2021, with ongoing challenges on the road to full recovery. In this context of ongoing recovery, it would therefore be interesting to further explore how festivals are focusing or able to build resilience and capacity coming out of the pandemic.
- **Development based on structured needs analysis:** Relatedly, programming, innovation and professional development needs have likely changed significantly since and because of the pandemic. Structured needs analyses should be implemented where these have not been updated since the beginning of the programme. This is particularly required for emerging and early-stage professionals.
- **Sharing best practice on community engagement:** Community and schools engagement work continues to grow and many festivals (and partners) report innovative and effective models of practice. There is an opportunity for the festivals to share this learning and practice among themselves, as the PlaCE cohort, and with other organisations, also ensuring the footprint extends beyond Edinburgh.
- **Finding new ways to collaborate internationally in the context of environmental concerns and global financial instability:** International partnerships and collaborations have reduced significantly as a result of the pandemic. While travel is normalising, there is an argument that hybrid (online/offline) collaborations should continue to be pursued in light of ongoing environmental concerns and global financial instability. There is an opportunity for all festivals to revisit their international priorities and ways of

working, and for the funders to highlight and support effective forms of international collaboration.



Edinburgh International Festival: Hannah Lavery. Photo: Chris Scot

10. Case Studies

10.1 Key findings

The following section presents some key findings from across the case studies with regard to impacts achieved and learning.

10.1.1 Impacts achieved

Impacts are presented to be aligned with the sections of the main final impact report.

Organisational capacity

- *Increase of digital skills & their position within the organisation*: improved staff digital literacy skills; creation of new tech teams/ digital working groups; moving tech/digital team more central to operations & plans for ongoing strategic development to understand how to continue hybrid model through strategic development (e.g., Fringe, Film Festival, International Festival)
- *Embedding of new programme elements* piloted or scaled up through PLACE within festivals going forward; including through re-positioning of internal teams (e.g., Storytelling, Jazz & Blues, Arts Festival, Film Festival)
- *Improved ability and opportunity to secure match-funding*, with impact on longer-term planning (e.g., Jazz & Blues, Arts Festival, Science)
- *Development of new skills among festival staff*, through PLACE-created opportunities to try new approaches or bring in external experts, e.g., marketing skills in working with newer artists, exhibition design (e.g., International Festival, Science)
- Improved considerations, understanding and approaches to *audience diversification and accessibility requirements*, with ambition to retain new insights and approaches (e.g., Jazz & Blues, International Festival, Film Festival)

Understanding and communicating innovation, taking programming risks

- Funding provided for time and funds to allow Festivals to take risks which could not be taken without this 'additional' financial support, leading to:
 - The creation of successful and novel *new programme elements* (e.g., Imagine's school-based immersive theatre experience, Book Festival's collaborative artist travels; Storytelling's 'pay-it-forward' approach; International Festival introducing more challenging themes and works away from the mainstream)
 - The introduction of successful *new approaches to engage a wider range of audiences* and ensure fit (e.g., Storytelling's non-prescriptive community engagement and 'pay-it-forward' approach; Jazz & Blues' approach to letting projects be led by artists and communities rather than central rationale; International Festival's interactive development approach enabling audiences to be part of the development and artists to respond)
 - The introduction of *new ways to connect the festival, artists, producers and venues internationally* (e.g., Fringe Festival's new online marketplace platform to connect artists and programmers; Science Festival's ability to innovate and raise quality of output, thereby raising appeal of output to new (inter-) national hosting venues)

Improved lives for citizens and communities through cultural engagement

- Project provided capacity to bring festival work to communities, areas and *audiences that couldn't previously be reached* due to lack of capacity; expanding festivals' participant focus as well as increasing community organisation's understanding of the value of arts activity (e.g., Jazz & Blues, Storytelling)
- *Projects were purposefully open-minded rather than prescriptive* while centrally curated to ensure themes and delivery were accessible, enjoyable and tailored to community need (e.g., Storytelling, Jazz & Blues)

- Projects allowed participants to harness their imagination, learn about their traditions and gain new creative skills; thereby *creating joy and mental health benefits as well as supporting the development of transferable skills* (such as communication, collaboration) (e.g., Imagine, Jazz & Blues, Storytelling)
- Projects allowed *communities to connect in new ways* and engendered charitable community activity (e.g., Jazz & Blues, Storytelling)

Collaboration and international networking of festivals and professionals

- Projects supported festivals and professionals in creating new relationships and networks both locally and at international level, resulting in lasting links and potential future collaboration, providing new sources of inspiration as well as creating wider reach for festival output:
 - *Creation of new links between festivals, local artists and communities*, offering legacy potential through ongoing relationships and including a more diverse range of artists not previously connected with (e.g., Storytelling, Jazz & Blues, EIF)
 - *Creation of direct and autonomous networks between artists and communities* by empowering and supporting artists to work directly with the communities (e.g., Storytelling, Jazz & Blues)
 - *Intensification of work with (new) international partners*, creating long-term strategic relationships, helping to leverage resources, increasing festivals' profile internationally and highlighting/ creating potential for future collaborative opportunities – including a wider reach and longer life of festival outputs toured internationally (e.g., Book Festival, Science Festival)
 - *Building of new partnerships outside the usual festival circuit*, thereby broadening geographic connections and creating new ways to develop artists outside of established festivals (e.g., Book Festival)
 - *Creation of new digital systems to connect artists and producers internationally within and outside the Festival period* without the need for

travel – overcoming challenges such as COVID and Brexit and creating connections that would not happen in a live space only (e.g., Fringe, EIF)

Skills development for professionals

- Inspired and *widened artists' views* through providing opportunities for creative collaboration (e.g., Book Festival)
- Encouraged and provided artists with the space to *try out new artistic forms* (e.g., Book Festival)
- Increased *community groups' and teachers' understanding of the value of creative activity*; how to harness participants'/ young people's imagination and how to run projects (e.g., Imagine, Storytelling, Jazz & Blues)
- *Provided artists* – including those from minority groups/ 'not the usual suspects' and emerging artists – *with new skills and practice including in managing projects* (from planning and communication to delivery and evaluation) and *working with communities*, thereby increasing professionalism, visibility, confidence and employment/ fundraising prospects (e.g., Jazz & Blues, Art Festival)
- Creation of a better level-playing field for entry into the arts for those from lower socio-economic and ethnic minority backgrounds, e.g., through offering year-long paid internships and sustained support across multiple projects (e.g., Jazz & Blues, Art Festival)

10.1.2 Insights and learning

Throughout, the case studies highlighted a range of insights and learning gained about programme structure and project focus and delivery. Whilst a significant challenge throughout large parts of the delivery period, COVID also presented an opportunity to trial and learn from new approaches

Insights with regard to the wider programme structure

Throughout, festivals commented on the benefits of three key elements of the PLACE programme in achieving all the above outcomes:

1. The provision of *funds that were 'additional' to festivals' usual income*. This allowed festivals to:
 - branch out and reach new audiences, artists, participants that could not otherwise be reached, including from marginalised or hard-to-reach communities and, relatedly, to improve the accessibility of their offer (e.g., Jazz & Blues, Arts, Film, International Festival)
 - create new development opportunities/ Try out new approaches that are costly, take time and are risky; at a time when festivals and artists needed to react to a changing world (e.g., International Festival, Storytelling, Fringe, Science)
2. The provision of *longer-term funding across multiple years*. This allowed for:
 - longer-term planning and, due to this, delivery of larger-scale projects as well as firming up of (international) collaborations, thereby reaching new markets (e.g., Jazz & Blues, Science)
 - longer than usual engagement with groups and individuals, developing increased levels of trust, understanding and safety (e.g., Imagineate, Jazz & Blues)
 - opportunities to carry forward learning from year to year, meaning that annual cohorts across the years could learn from each other and programmes could adapt and improve from year to year (e.g., Book Festival)
3. The *flexibility in how festivals were able to use the PLACE funds*. This allowed:
 - festivals to bring this flexibility forward in their projects and allow for openness, 'democratisation', and artist/ community-led projects with regard to themes and delivery, thereby ensuring activities were tailored to local needs (e.g., Storytelling, Jazz & Blues)
 - funds to go towards staff salaries, which meant being able to use this to enable further fundraising and with this reduce reliance on project funding (e.g., Jazz & Blues)

Festivals gained learning through addressing the challenges of COVID

- Remote working increased the importance of co-delivery between festivals, artists and community group/ school staff – this relied on open dialogue between all partners to allow for swift and effective change (e.g., Imagineate)
- Created need to engage with larger range of smaller audiences in diverse ways rather than simply through one large performance, "*challenging existing measures of success that rely on attendance numbers*" only (e.g., EIF)
- Festivals gained new skills and insights into creating online/offline performances and activities – and gained awareness of the benefits (e.g., wider reach across a larger geography, more environmentally sustainable interaction across distances) and challenges of digital provision (e.g., cost implications, ongoing digital poverty) and the need for balance between digital solutions and physical encounters (ALL)
- Festivals improved staff digital literacy skills and made tech team more central to operations than previously/ created new digital working groups, with plans to understand how to continue hybrid model through strategic development (e.g., Fringe, Film Festival, International Festival)

Festivals gained insight into engaging with communities

- Community engagement must be targeted to local need, kept simple as well as "*fun and lively*" rather than campaigning, to reach the widest audience (e.g., Storytelling)
- A more community/artist-led approach to developing projects requires iterative communication and planning and openness to change and a flexible delivery plan that can react to change (e.g., Storytelling, Jazz & Blues)
- There is huge appeal and potential in the connection between entertainment and kindness/ engendering charitable activity (e.g., Storytelling)
- Providing whole-school involvement increases potential to teach staff about lesson and project development (e.g., Imagineate)

10.2 Imagine - Edinburgh International Children's Festival: *Immerse* programme with schools

This Case Study was initially included in the **Year 1 Interim report** in December 2020.

“ We are lucky...we make and share the magic and wonder of life every day. However, for some of our school children, they don't experience magic or wonder...and sometimes, they get very little chance to be 'carefree children'. Today, the whole team involved in this project brought magic, wonder, joy and excitement to all the children...and it's only DAY ONE! Thank you so much!
(Head Teacher)

“ We found a book. It invited us to go to the library. It was incredible. How can this be happening?
(P6 Pupil)

For three years, Imagine, producer of The Edinburgh International Children's Festival, will work intensively with six Edinburgh schools in areas of high deprivation. The *Immerse* programme will bring a series of theatrical happenings, artists in residence and creative learning projects, to transform creative learning for pupils in areas where it is most needed.

School-based projects

Year 1 included a whole school experience over three weeks, based around *The Lost Lending Library*. Building on its existing relationships with schools, Imagine worked with immersive theatre specialists Punchdrunk to create a magical space within the school where teachers and pupils could play and learn.

The school is visited by a librarian who talks about favourite books and helps imagine a dream library, based around the book "How to Live Forever" which

has recently been read in class. The next day everyone is surprised to see a schoolroom door has mysteriously been replaced with a bookshelf.



The Lost Lending Library. Credit: Louise King

Librarians know about books, so the Head Teacher calls him back to help pupils investigate. Together they find the key to a hidden magical library whose

guardian tells them of her travels, finding precious stories. Every child in the school experiences the wonders of this magical library and, by writing a story for inclusion on its shelves, becomes an apprentice librarian. The library stays in the school for another week so that pupils can visit it again with their teacher, before disappearing as quickly as it arrived, off to find more children in other countries and schools.

During visits from the librarian the children learn that every object, everything, has the potential to spark storytelling and that they are storytellers themselves.

Imagine will be delivering a second Punchdrunk project in the Autumn of 2020, which will be teacher-led

Impact on schools and pupils

From the point of view of the artists involved, the project represents a longer engagement than usual for school projects and this sense of familiarity and engagement brings trust, understanding and a feeling of safety.

“ One particular young girl who we thought would have to go in by herself had what her teacher described as a lightbulb moment during her visit, with the class, to the library.
(Participating artists)

Involving a whole school changes the environment in a school: *“It opens the imaginations of the pupils but also presents potential new approaches to teaching staff in terms of how they can set lessons and deal with particular projects”*. One P6 teacher commented:

“ The kids were SO engaged. The worry was they weren't going to believe it and initially some of mine were like, that but as soon as they went to the library it was all so real.

Another, also a P6 teacher, noted that:

“ It was all about their imagination and tapping into that. They had to visualise how the library would work, what it would look like, what it would smell like, use all their senses. They all loved it.

Teachers commented that the legacy of harnessing imagination will change their approaches and open doors for pupils. One mentioned previously non-verbal pupils who had engaged strongly during the sessions: *“Such a layered experience – next week we could explore space or whatever they want”*.

A teacher described how:

“ Even those who struggle with writing and have struggled to get stories onto paper in the past have managed to write their stories. Some said – oh I'm not a storyteller – but have now done just that

Another commented:

“ They are all doing the writing, that's a huge thing for them and they planned it and have done it all themselves.

Knowing teachers were not marking these stories also seemed, according to a teacher, to have unlocked young peoples' imagination.

Some teachers had not heard of Imagine before this involvement but would now look out for it and spread the word among fellow teachers in other schools.

Adapting to the pandemic

In addition to the Lost Lending Library, the Immerse project brings artists in residence to schools. In March with pupils in lockdown at home and artists unable to reach them in person, Imagine had to rethink some of the residencies' delivery mechanisms. Most of the residencies were completed, but

for those that weren't, the artists found alternative ways to share the work developed with the children, such as films and magazines instead of live performance and exhibitions.



Immerse, St. Ninians. Credit: Brian Hartley

The Immerse programme had planned for pupils to attend Children's Festival productions and follow up with a creative learning project inspired by that experience. Following the cancellation of the Children's Festival due to the pandemic, Imagine created an Immerse Ideas fund, which provided paid opportunities for artists to deliver home based projects for pupils and their families.

These projects took into consideration the digital poverty experienced by many of the Immerse pupils. Artpacks of high-quality resources were produced for children who didn't have any access to the internet and couldn't participate in the projects otherwise (150 artpacks were distributed).

With Covid, additional reliance on co-delivery between teachers and artists has further involved head teachers who have been responsive to the additional

training required to deliver flagship events into the curriculum. Imagine is benefitting from its open and sustained dialogue with schools, which has enabled this swift and effective delivery change, without sacrificing quality or learning.



Artist in residence, Craigroyston. Credit: Kat Gollock

10.3 Edinburgh International Book Festival: Outriders

This Case Study was initially included in the Year 1 Interim report in December 2020.

Festival-based writer development through travelling

Outriders is the writer development strand of the Book Festival PLACE Programme. It is a long term, year-round project, which develops writers over time and brings projects to publication. For a festival, development is not the usual place to find themselves in the writer journey. But in this online festival era with its emphasis on local as well as international, this involvement in the development of Scottish writing, set in an international context, offers an important standpoint for Edinburgh as a festival.

Outriders origins in 2017 saw five Scottish writers embark on curated journeys across the Americas, travelling with a writer from their destination. This was followed in 2019 by writers journeying across Africa. This exploration of how, in disorienting times, writers make a unique contribution to understanding our world, gave voice to stories and insights on contemporary geopolitical contexts. Travelling together, writers noticed different things and informed each other, opening eyes to experiences not otherwise seen as well as exploring what it means to be from a place: In this era of access, are we seeing the truth or what we perceive? Are we in a time to reimagine travel?

Outriders has clear objectives – travel, meetings, collaboration and publication. These outputs can be put into event context throughout development by engagement at the outset, on return and on publication, allowing audiences to be part of the creative process and to engage with writers throughout. Every cohort develops a distinct relationship to the festival – long term engagement and continuing development which could last over several books.

Biennial editions of *Outriders* in 2019 and 2021 were planned within the PLACE strand and developed the original model to enable longer-term support and create a legacy for Scottish writers as well as the development of an

international creative network with unique opportunities for more diverse audiences to meet international authors and experience innovative new work.



During the 2019 Festival, *Outriders America* and *Outriders Africa* participants met to discuss the programme, share challenges, develop connections, and participate in public events. This helped build relationships prior to travel for *Outriders Africa* and was a response to feedback from the Americas cohort. Representation at the 2020 Festival was digital.

The complex logistics of delivering ten distinct journeys and experiences meant that the development and planning process for *Outriders Africa* became extended, and the first cohort travelled in 2020. It was felt particularly important to broker creative partnerships which were sensitive and relevant to the context and themes of the programme. Whilst the diverse group comprises Scottish, UK and international writers, each pair is not necessarily one Scottish and one African writer.

For 2021, the Festival may explore the potential for a post-Brexit European focus with journeys across the continent, travelling overland to shape experience and to be part of a carbon reduction strategy. Plans for *Outriders Europe* are currently on hold while the Covid-19 impact is being assessed.

In each cohort, emerging and established writers represent a range of practices, nationalities, ethnicities, backgrounds, and genders, chosen on quality but also thematically and for a willingness to embrace the potential of creative collaboration whilst undertaking a physically and emotionally challenging journey.

Impact

Working with partners across Africa enabled the festival to develop strategic relationships, leveraging resource and building profile. Jalada Africa, a pan Africa collective based in Nairobi, and Womanzone in Cape Town, as well as British Council's Momentum Programme helped spread the benefits of the project far beyond the *Outriders* themselves and developed digital mapping as well as helping change perceptions about both travel writing and identity.



With bespoke development support, *Outriders Africa* moreover saw individuals form partnerships to explore an international journey, new to both, meeting writers and communities and engaging on issues such as migration, colonial legacy, inequality and the impact of globalization and environmental change.

Each writer is commissioned to create new work in any form. Some have embraced storytelling in different forms, moving, for example, from fiction or poetry to screenplay or essay.

Covid-19 has impacted on the completion and further development of some ventures, including mapping, as it did on the journeys of participants which were curtailed or re-routed, often in challenging circumstances. However, all completed and are developing creative content and collaborations.

For *Outriders Africa*, a pan-Africa publisher, Cassava Republic, will produce a publication of travel writing in all its forms – however, Covid-19 has, to date, impacted on production and writing schedules to delay publication. Additional

commissions have arisen and more are anticipated as years progress and the impact of journeys and relationships emerge.

This is a year-round project and festivals can find that work outside the festival highlight can go unrecognized. Partnerships such as that with Jalada Africa offer new international platforms and approaches.

In Africa, unlike Europe, there are few established book festival counterparts and therefore the traditional networks of the festival have been expanded to include more grassroots ventures to broaden connections geographically but also offer ways to reach and promote developing writers.



Donna Ogunnaike. Credit: Suzanne Heffron

10.4 Scottish International Storytelling Festival: The Big Scottish Story Ripple

*This Case Study was initially included in the **Year 2 Interim report** in July 2021.*

Complementing the over-arching Festival theme “In the Flow”, SISF’s 2020 community strand, the Big Scottish Story Ripple, promoted a “*ripple of kindness*”. Community groups and schools received a fully funded storytelling session and in turn offered a good deed to their community.

Enhancing and extending community engagement

Tying into the PLACE programme ambitions, local and community engagement, as well as supporting storytellers to build local links, are a significant part of SISF’s remit. However, The Big Scottish Story Ripple deepened and built new ways to enhance this engagement. The ‘ripple’ element invited community members and leaders to think of ways to give back locally and work together to build connections. This element was entirely new to SISF’s work.

Storytellers, local groups, and schools were invited to apply, pairing practitioners with schools and hubs to keep connections local, minimise costs and follow Covid-19 regulations. The project offered a blank canvas, without a prescriptive theme, to enable groups (particularly those which may not have previous engagement with storytelling) to use the funding and session in the best way to suit local needs. Event delivery was extended beyond the usual booking of the main festival to October-March, in the hope that guidelines would permit live events (though it was recognised that most would be online).

This strand reached nationwide and explored the knock-on/ripple effect of good turns and how that mirrored the effect of storytelling itself, where stories are passed on and tales ripple through generations. “Paying it Forward” feels like a nationwide initiative and this project tapped into a desire to participate and build communities. There was no prescriptive theme, allowing applicants to engage with storytelling that was accessible, enjoyable, and tailored to need; delivered online at home or in a back yard or community garden, recognizing varying levels of social anxiety. SISF reached out across partner networks and organisations via social media channels and mailouts to encourage

registrations. Events were held across 19 of Scotland’s 32 Local Authorities with participation open to those further afield as well as local. This nationwide uptake provided SISF with greater reach than ever.

Impact

The impact is evident at differing levels and strengthens the place of community initiatives at the heart of SISF. It offered the opportunity to give back to communities at a time of uncertainty, disconnection, and isolation. Local storytellers now have community links, offering legacy potential both for the Festival and their individual work and collaborations. Partnerships were forged with diverse communities such as Edinburgh Multi-Cultural Family Base, LBGTY Scotland, CAPS Mental Health Advocacy, Edinburgh Museums and Galleries and Art Link.

In Celtic traditions storytelling would be at the heart of communities and is one of Scotland’s oldest traditional artforms; opportunities to rediscover the joys and benefits of sharing local tales and heritage served the substantial appetite for community knowledge and connection. The “good deed” element of the project offered local fun and benefit through events as diverse as tree planting, free book distribution, foodbank donation and community clear ups.

The social impact of the festival, and the charitable behaviour engendered, has increased, as many storytellers continue relationships with communities through pro-bono work and mental health advocacy. Storytelling for Wellbeing, a strand of the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival, connects storytellers and volunteers to share their mental health experiences with community organisations – linking the “ripple” effect to continuing work. Further work is planned with the Talking Statues project again placing storytellers in communities and spreading storytelling skills, verbally and visually, to local groups and individuals. Talking Statues, Scotland’s Greatest Ghost Stories and other main event strands will be linked to communities through resource packs and walking tours to build on the importance of “using the means around us” to tell stories and open community spaces to accommodate cultural events.

To reach the widest audience community engagement must be fun and lively rather than campaigning. Empowering storytellers to communicate directly with

their communities, promoting their events through local media, cut out the need for centrally coordinated messaging. This led to direct and autonomous networks being forged which in turn became established partnerships between, for example, storytellers and local schools.

Organisational Learning and Skills Development

The Festival has learned that local communities across Scotland are adaptable, resilient, kind, strong and creative. The simple core premise of entertainment and kindness appealed and will work for future ventures, linking local to nationwide campaigning and inspiring each other. Keeping projects simple (from application to delivery and payment) ensured a greater uptake at a stressful time when people were inundated by heavy news, mental overload and stretched resource.

SISF's Development Officer, newly returned from maternity leave, found working from home under COVID regulations isolating, but seeing her *"inbox light up with those wanting to be involved"* brought a sense of being back within the working community as she engaged in this multi-faceted project, requiring input at all levels from design, promotion to delivery. Whilst there were times when demand felt almost overwhelming, the enthusiasm and variety of storyteller and community requests brought enrichment, changing her thinking about delivery and community engagement as the accessible, non-prescriptive model paid off.

For some, storytelling online is new and SISF will continue development support for Storytelling Forum contributors through links, workshops, and tips to enable storytellers to adapt. Future development days will also focus on changing ways of delivering stories as well as safeguarding and accessibility.

For many storytellers and other performers, stepping back onto stage, after a period of online delivery, may be daunting and exacerbate social anxiety. SISF will ensure that its support networks, via online café discussions and training events, considers physicality as well as mental health and skills maintenance (for example, when not on-stage performers may not have played musical instruments regularly).

The Future

This strand can become a core element of future Festivals and reach out to new local communities and schools as well as building on work with those engaged. From feedback, longer lead times would be beneficial for applicants as would a designated online space to advertise events and good deeds as well as to celebrate and inspire.

Storytelling adapts well to online platforms and a blend of live and digital community offers would work well in the future. The project proved that the basic tenets of storytelling – *"eye to eye, heart to heart, mind to mind"* can be achieved in new ways and that community delivery, in a variety of ways, can maintain quality.

10.5 Edinburgh Festival Fringe: Fringe Marketplace

This Case Study was initially included in the **Year 2 Interim report** in July 2021.

Fringe Marketplace provided a dedicated showcase platform to connect arts industry professionals across the world with professional artists and tour-ready work.

Strengthened programming innovation and artist development

The Fringe occupies a critical spot in the cultural calendar for artists to make and share work, and for programmers looking to present and buy. The Fringe recognised that the lack of a festival in 2020 would be damaging to onward touring, commissions and the development of new and existing collaborations that drive innovation. The Fringe Industry Office, with creative agency Bright Signals, created and designed the *Fringe Marketplace* platform to facilitate connections between arts industry members and professional, tour-ready work intended for the 2020 Fringe.

As the global potential for digital presentation is explored, this platform opens new channels for communication and collaboration. It offers those unable to travel to Edinburgh for geo-political, financial or language barriers the chance to participate, to engage and to share work internationally. It also supports dialogue about what it means to tour and share work, while contributing to a future where sustainability, accessibility and potential reach of touring is reimaged.

Impact

Even when unable to travel or perform live, by using the *Fringe Marketplace* platform and reach of the Fringe, artists and industry from around the world were enabled to connect, collaborate, actively converse, develop work, network and progress projects. The opportunities and connections created (outside the frantic Festival time) also add benefit to programmes such as international showcases (Made in Scotland, Canada, Taiwan, Australia etc). Funders of

these showcases remain committed to the benefit of working with and through the Fringe and its networks when presenting digital works at a time when Brexit and Covid19 has seen physical access to the world reduced.



The circumstances of 2020 meant there was an absence of extensive and hard data on shows booked for tours - physical, live or digital. However, there is anecdotal evidence that artists made connections with producers and industry as well as establishing discussions on tour potential. One Scottish company, Scottish Dance Theatre, reported that after being pitched in the Made in Scotland digital Fringe showcase event on Marketplace, *Antigone Interrupted* was asked to digitally present for a venue in Mexico and, off the back of that engagement, in India. *Brink*, a show by Maiden Voyage Dance featured in a Northern Ireland hosted showcase event on the platform, reported they were offered onward platform opportunities at BCCHINA/UK festival resulting in 15,000 views.

While *Fringe Marketplace* has in-person touring performance at its core, there is recognition that post Covid-19 the cultural landscape is shifting and artists are encouraged to think about how and whether their work could be shared either in

an online space, through licensing or new creations and collaborations which give programmers a greater variety of options.

Collaborations are beginning to form in the online space that will develop work between partners who, in the live space, may not have met or developed shows together. New ways of working are being explored and tapping into global development potential. For example, Fringe stars *Police Cops*, whose work was previously developed in a rehearsal room, are now collaborating with distant teams to create a musical of their hit show.

Organisational Learning and Skills Development

This was the Fringe's first venture into digital programming and staff digital literacy skills developed quickly. In 2020 the response was reactive and had a focus on replacement of the missing conversational element that lack of a physical Fringe engendered. However, it soon became apparent that digital solutions are powerful and not simply replacements of physical encounters and finding the right solutions continues as requirements evolve.

The scale and diversity of the Fringe has posed a challenge to navigate and in 2017 Fringe established a team of associates; programming specialists who critiqued work, providing solid context and opinion to supplement the curatorial expertise of prospective programmers. In the digital space, programmers are more likely to be able to catch a show themselves but need the Associate experience to sift and find suitable work.

Creating a year-round online programming platform has the potential to be of significant value to artists and industry and further emphasise the Fringe's role as the world's largest performing arts market. To further maintain and deepen bonds with programmers and curating venues, *Marketplace* will, in 2021, include a *One To Watch* space where work not yet tour-ready can be presented and develop partnership potential. In turn, this will afford greater insight into venues' programming reasoning and the trends in programming internationally and go some way to alleviating the pressure of a paucity of ready to tour work following lockdowns.

The structure of the organisation is undergoing change with the technology team now more central to operations rather than providing a support function. A tech strategy is being developed to sit equally alongside other strategies. When filling the currently vacant Head of Marketing position it is recognised that it will be vital to ensure the postholder and team can meet the challenge of marketing across all platforms.

The Future

In 2021, most live events will be presented by UK based artists and Marketplace will primarily be used by international programmers and artists/venues. Fringe will, with participation from DCMS, investigate the potential for Marketplace to be a year-round sectoral resource. Already it is evident that the industry role of the Fringe is more than assistance in providing press releases and publicity, and that technology strategy must mesh with the August conversations and presentations.



Credit: Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society

Artists are keen to get their work in front of industry but not all work can be easily translated into digital assets. The barriers facing artists include the type of work created as well as financial considerations, lack of access to appropriate spaces to record work and difficulties imposed by legal restrictions such as social distancing. Many of the problems artists face digitising their work will continue to exist in a hybrid live/digital model of arts delivery even after Covid restrictions are lifted.

With *Marketplace* being repopulated before the start of the festival, it can be used more and more by programmers before they hit the ground to scout work. Ideally, they would find work on *Marketplace* and get in touch directly with that company, thus maximising their time on the ground and after August extending the opportunity to connect. *Marketplace* will not replace physical travel but may reduce it and find new models for collaboration between artist and programmers.

Change is already happening within *Marketplace* – to improve how the platform could suggest work to delegates based on programming interests; to incorporate a listing of Fringe shows which have indicated they seek to connect with industry; to expand the visibility of industry to artists on the platform; and to introduce an integrated networking and event space, Fringe Connect.

10.6 Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival: Edinburgh Festival Carnival

This Case Study was written for inclusion in the final Year 3 report.

Edinburgh's Jazz and Blues Festival opens with Edinburgh Festival Carnival which, for the last 10 years, it has produced. Carnival also now has a year-round programme focusing on planning, development and delivery of engagement, focusing on supporting health and wellbeing as well as creative work. For the community element, the focus is on under-represented artists, participants, audiences, and areas with the aim of mitigating some barriers and gaps that exist within the city. Before PLACE funding, the festival had no capacity to undertake this work.

It was recognised that creative collaboration – led by artists and audiences rather than by a central rationale – was the best way towards democratisation of this community-based strand of work. Artists were identified through meeting, research, conversation, and networking. Organisations working with children and young people were approached to identify issues of importance to their work, then together artists and youth organisations talked to potential participants to identify how they could best collaborate. This iterative approach required everyone to be open to change along the way, as did planning and delivery during changing Covid restrictions.

The projects, all aimed at children and young people, included dance (South Asian and Latin American), music (hip-hop, afrobeats, samba and drumming), circus/ariel performance, spoken word and poetry, visual arts and costume making. All culminated in an outdoor performance which was digitized. Local organisations such as Passion4Fusion, Goodtrees Neighbourhood Centre, North Edinburgh Arts and Multi-cultural Family Base in Leith, joined forces with individual schools across the city and as far as Tranent in East Lothian. Led by artists, each project engaged children and young people in issues of cultural identity whilst celebrating the vibrancy of the Carnival.

"It can be very lonely being a young black person in Edinburgh and even more so as a young black person of Caribbean

heritage. The Masked Words project gave my son the opportunity to learn about his roots in a fun way and to meet and socialize with peers. He had a great time dressing up in costume and eating Caribbean food. The project was well coordinated, and the material and calibre of presenters was excellent. We really need more opportunities like this for our young people". (Parent of young participant, Masked Words)



Impact

For Carnival, the multi-year PLACE funding has had significant impact by enabling longer term planning and delivery. A vital area of PLACE funding has been to fund salaries to enable further project fundraising. The Festival is aware that reliance on project funding dilutes what the Carnival can deliver, reducing resource for the core.

Connecting with groups and communities over a longer period than a one-year intervention has reaped rewards. Similarly, the pipeline for artist development has been enabled by longer term involvement. For example, in year one an Indian dance project, *Tatties*, began and artists developed during this now create their own programme and develop their capacity.

“ This project is a source of incredible networking opportunity for me and my CPD, thanks to the connections made I was already able to engage in a workshop with one of the partners and I am in contact about potential new works with other partners. (Katarzyna Wypiorczyk (Kasia) Artist/Capoeira Teacher)

For the festival, the sheer volume of participants and programmes helped readdress their participant focus, expanding representation of class, gender, race and disability. Artists developed their practice and skills through running projects. One artist, Nico Kisitu, is now in Ghana further developing his skills and will be re-commissioned to lead more projects on his return. This is seen as a holistic journey of capacity building.

Many participating artists were new to delivery of youth arts projects and especially to taking responsibility from the planning and ideas stages through to delivery and evaluation. All recognised this as of considerable benefit to their careers and aim to build further. Many noted an increase in confidence in delivering youth arts:

“ I increased confidence in skills as a freelance artist capable of delivering programmes in the future. Big confidence boost opening up travel and young people work opportunities. (Niko Kisitu, The Passion Project.)

Participants also recognised their own confidence boost as well as the ability to perform quality work in public and a developing understanding of the arts. Many participants came from minority communities and a sense of belonging and identity was successfully fostered:

“ We help parents understand their child’s journey through music is valued and beneficial to the successful development of the young person, and what the values we teach and skills can become to a wider society. (Niko Kisitu, The Passion Project.)



Image credit: Edinburgh Festival Carnival

Young participants also commented on the fun approach used in, for example, the music and dance of Brazil in the *Piece Warriors* project, helping them develop communication skills and understanding of the cultural background of music. As well as having fun, leaders noted young people responded well to the therapeutic and calming approaches used by the artist leaders.

“The Masked Words project gave me a new sense of pride in my Caribbean identity. I loved exploring the characters, costumes, and stories of Carnival, and tying it to my experience of living in Scotland and what I know about Scottish history. Huge thank you to Lisa for giving us that opportunity, and for bringing so many of us together.”
(Participant, age 22, Masked Words)

Youth Arts organisations saw the benefit of enhanced reputation in delivering quality projects with skilled artists, evidenced by high quality videos made in cooperation with Carnival staff. Youth leaders commented on the benefits to young people’s mental wellbeing that these arts projects brought.

“I think there is a definite link between the arts and wellbeing. By empowering children and young people to explore their own interests and choices through making art – we can promote confidence building and good mental health. The arts can be used as a coping tool to promote wellbeing as well as being fun.” (Rosalind Ann Sanderson, Wave the Flag)

Learning

All artists hope to continue working with Carnival and community groups and to build on the learning that pilot projects brought as well as extending and enhancing provision (for example, *Flying Free* would like to work with the Jazz and Blues festival musicians on a live score to accompany performance).

“Although I lead many groups, I do so in my local area with the children who regularly attend my capoeira classes, so having the opportunity to go to a new community for me and deliver workshops with a new group increased my confidence in creating, producing and delivering face to face experiences for young people, the supporting youth workers and other artists involved in the project.” (Katarzyna Wypiorczyk (Kasia) Artist/Capoeira Teacher)

The festival discovered a high number and diversity of talented artists who had previously not connected with them, highlighting the city’s diversity. They celebrate that but recognise there is much more to be done. One artist with dyslexia and dyspraxia commented on evaluation reporting and how the use of different delivery methods such as video rather than written reporting would be more user friendly and accessible for all.

Participants noted increased confidence through deeper understanding of technique as well as a focus on experimentation:

- “ In this project, I really liked learning new moves and experimenting for the solo/group pieces (Flying Free participant)
- “ I really liked working in a group because I liked hearing everyone else’s ideas and then we could put all of our ideas together. I feel a lot more confident about performing now, and also in aerial as I feel I have better technique. (Flying Free participant)

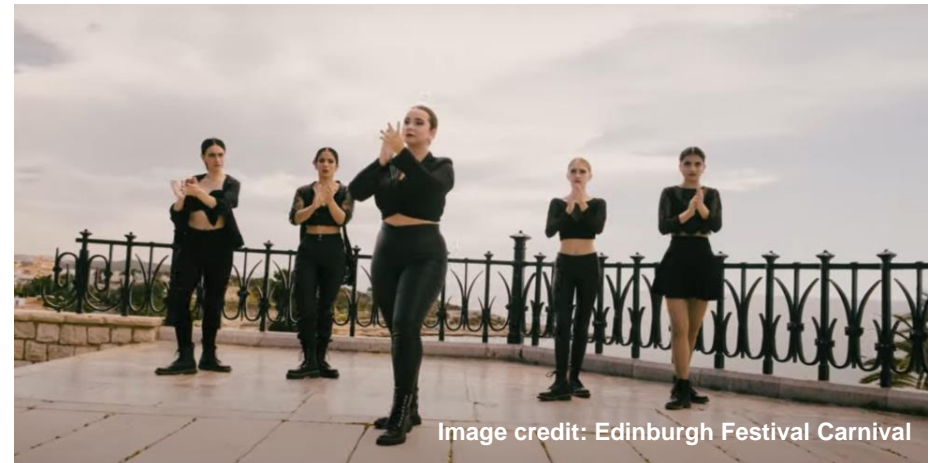


Image credit: Edinburgh Festival Carnival

Having PLACE funds provides the bedrock for the community initiatives, but match funding has been vital to expand the programme, as has a flexible delivery plan that can react to change. This year, for example, the festival has 19 visiting international artists and, because of rising costs, the accommodation bill nearly doubled. Without additional funding this problem would have been insurmountable.

At a recent vision strategy, day succession planning and diversity figured highly in discussions.

10.7 Art Festival: sector development - early career progression

This Case Study was written for inclusion in the final Year 3 report.

For Edinburgh Art Festival, PLACE funding supported an ambition to influence sector development. Strengthening the sector's development and diversity by investing in future generations and placing their views, ideas and approaches at the centre of programming was enabled by two PLACE-supported projects:

- *Platform*: Support for early career visual artists to have a meaningful presence during the festival season. PLACE funding enabled the festival to expand the scale, development opportunities and artist fees offered, supporting Platform to be a key element of the festival programme.
- *Programme Assistant internship*: Previously the festival offered a 3-month placement. PLACE funding enabled a unique opportunity in Scotland: a year-long paid internship for an emerging Scottish curator.

Artists selected as part of Platform and the Programme Assistant internship work together on the Platform strand - learning, influencing and creating progression opportunities through peer-to-peer networks as they move forward in their respective careers.

Platform in 2019 was held at the ECA Fire Station building, in 2020 at the City Art Centre (in October/ November following the cancellation of the festival due to Covid) and for 2021 and '22 at the festival's HQ at the French Consulate for Scotland / Institut Français d'Ecosse. This latter move raised the profile of the artists and strand, presenting it to stakeholders, VIP guests and funders at the festival's official private launch event.

- “ It was nice to be part of an emerging artist opportunity where the project didn't feel like an add-on, rather something which was embedded in the festival as a whole alongside the established commissions. (Jessica Higgins, Platform: 2021)

Platform artists are selected by a panel of influential curators and artists from across Scotland, assisted by the Programme Assistant. The festival seeks to work with artists of all identities and encourage applications from those who are currently under-represented within the visual arts.

- “ In terms of opportunities I've experienced first-hand, this has been the most supported, in terms of fee, budget and technical administrative support. I felt a lot of confidence in the team who were really responsive and seemed committed to helping us through the process. (Isabella Widger, Platform 2021)
- “ I actually don't think there are any other opportunities like this in Scotland. It's really amazing that there's a fairly entry-level opportunity that is well supported enough to hire on a full-time contract. (Colm Guo-Lin Peare, 2021 Programme Assistant)



Isabella Widger, Platform 2021. Credit: Sally Jubb

Skills Development

For many artists, involvement in Platform will be their first opportunity after higher education to develop their practice and expand their skills. Artists are supported by the festival's Programme Manager in their contribution to, and participation in, the group show – often a first in itself. Working with a technical curator, with a writer on the accompanying publication, and speaking about their work (in person and on camera during Covid) develops new skills and can expand practice and professionalism. Some may work with communities (for example, textile artist working with local knitting groups) and all have a dedicated allowance for bespoke mentoring.

“ Platform has been an opportunity to develop a work that I wouldn't ordinarily have been able to achieve, given the support and resources that are available. I've used the opportunity to learn new skills and try out different techniques that I wouldn't normally have done. (Jessica Higgins Platform: 2021)

“ It was a huge support to be able to select my own mentors (or generally to be able to self-determine what kind of support I might need and from who). I got invaluable support from the two mentors I picked, and also have developed lasting relationships with both that I think will provide future support. (Rabindranath A Bhowe, Platform: 2020)

The year-long traineeship, the Programme Assistant, is a unique opportunity to develop skills through networks and practice over a longer time period, developing towards resilient and resourceful curators. With responsibility for the development and curation of Platform, the Assistants also work on the festival's Commissions Programme. To date five, Assistants have participated. All are graduates, many with their own art practice, emerging from Scotland's Art Schools. The significant demand for this entry level programme is demonstrated by a 14% growth in applications over the course of the opportunity. 33% of applicants self-identify as coming from a lower socio-economic group, indicating

the growing importance of making entry into the arts more of a level playing field, ensuring that those with talent are given the opportunity to succeed.

“ I feel that this role allowed me to be more involved in the programme than other similar early-career roles in visual art organisations... I feel that my employment prospects have increased significantly having undertaken the role, as I gained more significant experience of project-coordination in a supported, professional environment. (Abigail Webster, 2019 Programme Assistant)



Rabindrath A Bhowe, Platform 2020. Credit: Tom Nolan



Kirsty Russell, Platform 2021. Credit: Sally Jubb

Impact

The ambition of PLACE funding drove expansion of the reach and partnership potential of the Platform strand as well as attracting more interest from artists around Scotland. To date, this includes the participation of artists trying to sustain a practice in more remote parts of Scotland, including North Uist, Huntly, Arbroath and Lumsden, as well as cities such as Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow. With increased funding for participating artists and a well-publicised focus on accessibility and inclusion, it became a more attractive opportunity and increased the number of those able to consider involvement. Now centrally integrated into the Festival's commissioning programme, it also benefits from considerable press coverage. 34 early career artists have to date participated.

“ Platform feels like one of the best opportunities for emerging artists in Scotland in terms of exposure. Having a PR team behind you is amazing, and something which is not always

offered. The support of the team at EAF has been incredible, and of course I can't speak for all opportunities, but the support here has definitely been stronger than any that I've experienced. (Rhona Jack, Platform: 2020)

The Programme Assistant role is framed firmly within the festival's ambitions for sector development. It is an opportunity for those embarking on the steps towards a curator role and could lead them to academia or directly into galleries, museums or festivals. This longer-term placement enables the Assistant to participate in the full development cycle of the festival. Seeing the project from research and development to evaluation, in a small team, is a unique opportunity in Scotland and expands the pool of potential curators. It also gives direct access to a national and international network of arts professionals, curators and artists (including the Festival's citywide network of 18 partners from National Galleries through to Fruitmarket). To date all Assistants have remained within the sector.

“It has already impacted hugely - I wouldn't be in my current role if it wasn't for this opportunity. My confidence grew massively... To be trusted with projects straight away and be allowed some autonomy was very important to my confidence and has informed my ambitions and goals. I also learned a great deal of practical skills through the EAF team taking time to mentor me on different aspects of the organisation.” (Rachael Simpson, 2019 Programme Assistant, now producer at Collective)

2020's Art Festival was cancelled. Platform took place in November at City Arts Centre and made much use of social media campaign resulting in a high footfall across the month. Platform: 2020 was also featured in a wide range of print and online press including The List, Art Daily, The Skinny, The Scotsman and The Herald.

“ We made a physical exhibition happen safely in a pandemic, that's pretty impressive! (Mark Bleakley, Platform: 2020)

The Future

The ambitions of the PLACE programme have ensured that the festival look forward to securing these supported elements. Evaluation and learning reinforces recognition that sector need dictates the festival continue interventions, at current scale.

PLACE funding has allowed the festival to secure match funding not previously accessed, which has made a considerable impact to longer planning.

“Through PLACE, the festival has greatly benefitted from having multi-year (3-5 year) support for both Platform and the Programme Assistant opportunity, where previously funding for both elements was secured on an annual basis. We as an organisation have learned that there has been a real value in the security of longer-term funding, which has critically enabled us to embed these opportunities into the both the festival programme and the wider ecology of the sector.” Jane Connarty, Festival Programme Manager

10.8 Edinburgh International Film Festival: EIFF Youth

This Case Study was written for inclusion in the final Year 3 report.

EIFF Youth engages young people aged 15-25 with EIFF, developing their passion for film and nurturing future talent – as film goers, filmmakers, journalists, or exhibitors. The programme is designed with a commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and is as accessible as possible.

EIFF has run small scale programmes for young people for over a decade and expanded the offer in 2018 during Scotland's Year of Young People. PLACE funding ensured this expanded programme, branded EIFF Youth, continued beyond 2018.

The programme has two core elements: *Young Programmers* are a group of local young people aged 15-19 who meet the EIFF team weekly to watch, discuss and curate films for Filmhouse and EIFF, as well as writing copy, hosting screenings, and collaborating in marketing campaigns. The *Youth Advisory Group* are 20–25-year-olds engaged in the run up to EIFF to help design events at EIFF Youth HQ (St John's Church). They oversee the shortlisting of screenings for the EIFF Youth New Visions Short Film Competition and host related events.

Pandemic Impact

Returning from furlough in November 2020, the EIFF Youth team re-engaged with the Young Programmers and the Advisory Group to start provisional planning for EIFF 2021. An initial group of 12 became a solid cohort of 7 who met weekly over Zoom from Nov 2020 – August 2021. In February 2021, they produced an innovative online weekend watch party around the theme of 'Women with a Movie Camera' alongside the EIFF Youth Film Course Showcase. Audiences for both far exceeded previous events. In 2019 the Youth Film Course Showcase was physically attended by 30-40 people whereas the online event on You Tube was available to all, accessible (including captions and BSL interpretation) and free. It has been viewed 350+ times and developed

a new BFI player relationship allowing free access to the showcased films to participants.

Accessibility

In August 2021, EIFF Youth ran a hybrid Weekender with eight online events and a weekend of bespoke, Covid-19 secure workshops at EIFF Youth HQ. The Youth team also curated a film programme screening in cinema, online and outside at Film Fest in the City. Again, online screenings impacted positively in audience terms with 200+ people watching the EIFF Youth New Visions Short Film Competition in the first 12 hours – versus 45 attendees in Filmhouse in 2019. Audiences will continue to grow over time as events are hosted on YouTube for several months.

PLACE funding enabled all events to be free and accessible through captioning and BSL interpretation. In addition, audio description was used on the Shorts programme. This commitment to accessibility will now be a feature of all future work.



Strengthened programming innovation and artist development

PLACE funding secured a bigger programme of work for young people and crucially allowed work to continue throughout the year – including the EIFF Youth Eco Weekender held in November around COP 26 and the Spring weekend of films showcasing Black stories on film.



Image credit: EIFF

It has also enabled events previously only accessible in Edinburgh to be shared online immediately. For example, the Jack Lowden interview was accessed 300 times in 12 hours whereas previous events of this kind were accessible only to theatre capacity, around 30 people. The opportunity now arises to reassess the format of sessions such as post screening Q&A and address how, in a hybrid world, these can be richer experiences. This will influence work across CMI (Centre for Moving Image) and EIFF, far beyond EIFF Youth.

There has been an expanded range of partners engaged in EIFF Youth industry career events, with particular focus on skills gaps and course finding with universities and training agencies across Scotland.

In person events at EIFF Youth HQ rated very highly in feedback evaluation forms with 77% rating the experience excellent and 90% identifying as newcomers to the venture, indicating that reach has successfully expanded to new participants.

“ Extremely fun and engaging as well as educational. (2021 Participant)

“ A fun and informative look into on set dynamics. (2021 Participant)

Impact

Organisational learning and skills development

EIFF Youth working practices and approaches have directly impacted on the work of EIFF and the wider CMI. Delivering on the commitment to accessibility is one such practice. In 2021 all festival content online was captioned, with BSL interpretation and audio description made available. EDI and access are now at the forefront of planning across CMI and included in all budgets.

The team delivering EIFF Youth is now an integral part of the Community Engagement Team working across both CMI sites in Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Moving the team into the mainstream of the organisation has given their work greater impact and strengthened engagement rather than simply event delivery.

The Research and Development function of EIFF Youth has been the catalyst for new partnerships to engage different audience groupings and engage in community led development. For the 2021 Festival, new partners included BFI Player, Screen NETS, BECTU Vision, BAFTA Albert, Edinburgh Youth Theatre, Strangetown, Edinburgh Film Academy, Tinder Box Collective and Procam Take 2.

Evaluation of the programme has also used different approaches to mesh quantitative and qualitative analysis using online interviews and testimonials. Again, this has potential to impact across the organisation.



Programming

All events in the programme are accessible and this is a huge part of the events workload. The effectiveness of this approach will be evaluated to assess impact and what that means for future programming across the organisation

Enabling EIFF Youth to experiment with different formats and to try out new approaches will, over time, have further impact across the organisation. For example, following the 2021 February Weekender, digital events have been commended within CMI as a model for delivery of public facing activity giving free access, captioning and BSL interpreting. Successful delivery of Senior Selections at Home – the Filmhouse programme for senior film lovers – shows a direct link to this work pioneered by the Youth team.

In 2022 EIFF Youth hopes to be back in cinemas for screenings and to hold workshops in real life. Covid contingency planning means that the team will also explore opportunities to continue some online offers. To ensure good access and digital inclusion, EIFF Youth will continue to offer data dongles for online activity in addition to traditional travel /subsistence support.

Looking ahead to 2022, the EIFF Youth Team are confident that collaborating with young people to design programmes, planning for hybrid delivery and ensuring optimal accessibility will remain at the heart of all they do.

“ It's great. It's cheap. It's inspiring. (2019 Participant at EIFF Youth HQ)

“ Incredible, extremely informative session for those going into that industry. (2019 Participant)

10.9 Edinburgh International Festival: You Are Here

This Case Study was written for inclusion in the final Year 3 report.

Edinburgh International Festival (EIF) chose to focus their PLACE work on increasing creative development opportunities across Scotland and to creating a social, artistic, and intellectual focal point for the sector in Scotland and internationally.

From this concept, the team focused on *You Are Here*, a development opportunity for artists in Scotland, exploring themes and ideas raised in society and across the festival. At EIF 2019 these themes were presented as part of the Departure Lounge series.

Scottish writer Hannah Lavery took part in the series, working on *Lament for Sheku Bayou*, a personal response to a tragedy exploring identity, community and belonging in modern Scotland. This was Hannah's festival debut and after a rehearsed reading in 2019 the production became a joint venture from EIF with Lyceum Theatre and National Theatre of Scotland (NTS). It was performed online at the 2020 festival and on stage to sell out audiences in 2021.

Strengthened programming innovation and artist development

For EIF, costly development innovation could not have happened without PLACE funding and the opportunity to enable Scotland's emerging artists to react to changing times may have been missed. The chosen approach exposed ideas in development to audiences, enabling them to be part of the development conversation and allowing artists to respond on a platform hitherto unavailable. This challenging presentation approach would not have been undertaken if the model had been based simply on ticket sales. Funders seek risk-taking at EIF but that approach is difficult when production is driven down a completely commercial route which tends to move away from emerging and unknown artists. EIF welcomed the opportunity to re-engage with these newer (to EIF) artists.

Staff also found that presenting work in this way required a different marketing stance and skills, as did working with new artists less likely to have agents and therefore likely to have a direct relationship in marketing their work. Learning how to reap the benefits of a festival audience platform has been a positive learning experience for artists while enabling EIF to develop different voices for audiences. It has also allowed the team to consider what diversifying audiences means and how to achieve that goal.



Innovation development for schools

NTS, Lyceum and EIF produced a resource pack for schools across Scotland to complement the production of *Lament for Sheku Bayou*. The pack has been downloaded by 69 schools across the central belt. The pack includes:

- Filmed performance of the production from November 2020
- Creative Writing video workshop from Hannah Lavery

— Downloadable teachers' document

Instead of focusing on theatre-specific topics, as has been more usual for a schools' resource, it was agreed that supporting teachers and students with the wider themes of the play, how they relate to us as individuals and as a nation and how to best explore this in a classroom setting would further complement the strand themes and this individual work. The content of the play is targeted at adults and the script uses strong language. It was therefore decided that the resource would be used best to support pupils in S5 and S6 across Modern Studies, Politics, PSE and English as well as Drama. The pack sits with other teacher resources on the NTS website and EIF continue to promote its use as a digital resource for schools across Scotland.

Clementine Burnley, a facilitator with experience exploring diversity and inclusion in the workplace, designed the content of the resource. Using the themes of the production, particularly around racism and colonialism, and how best to discuss these in a classroom setting, the download document looked less to comment on the play and more to explore how to make sure teachers felt equipped to discuss the topics the play raises in a fair and safe manner ensuring all pupils felt their voices and opinions were valued, allowing for discussion.

Pandemic impact

The *Departure Lounge* format challenged audiences and it was hoped would diversify those attending festival events - data was captured for online events (postcode and first-time bookers).

Areas of the world that seemed most pandemic hit were also areas of the world currently under-represented in programming. As the pandemic impacted on travel and representation, it became evident that there was a need to challenge measures of success that rely entirely on attendance numbers. During and post pandemic visiting artists might experience the festival in different ways - perhaps attending for a longer period and engaging with audiences and the city in multiple ways rather than simply through one performance and a one-night stay. Artists might visit schools, engage with local artists, and understand the city through this deeper engagement.

In 2020, online EIF engaged with audiences from 60 countries, balancing lack of physical interaction with global interaction in a sustainable way.

Impact

Organisational learning and skills development:

The challenge for these new ways of working is how they can be embedded as events return to the stage. The 2021 International Festival presented many events digitally alongside live performance, and although received some financial support through sponsorship, grants and viewer donations, this was still a costly approach.

EIF has established a digital working group to consider strategic development.

Programming

In 2022, more challenging works will be embedded into the programming alongside mainstream productions. This approach was successful in 2021 and audiences found work new to festival programming. Themes around migration in 2022 will continue the PLACE work looking at the impact of refugees on both the city of Edinburgh and across Scotland. These themes have always been important to EIF, but presenting them in more varied programming is new.

PLACE programming has developed as part of the main programme of the festival. Debate has been taken to the heart of the festival through talks and discussions and this will continue.

10.10 Science Festival: Travelling exhibitions

This Case Study was written for inclusion in the final Year 3 report.

Edinburgh's Science Festival has used Place support to develop and mount large scale travelling exhibitions with European partners. *Pale Blue Dot* and *Datasphere* both built upon prior learnings and connections initiated through the Expo-funded *Play On*¹¹ exhibition:

- *Pale Blue Dot* (2021) Celebrating Scotland's Year of Coasts and Waters 2020/21, this exhibition delved deep into the science, beauty and mystery of our oceans. It received 15,680 visitors (restricted by Covid). The focus on biodiversity allowed audiences with varying levels of knowledge to enjoy and learn without feeling overwhelmed by the scientific content. (This also toured to Germany but the centres were largely closed owing to Covid.)
- *Datasphere* (2022) will be displayed in the Grand Gallery of the National Museum of Scotland as part of the Edinburgh Science Festival 2022. The Earth is no longer just a sphere, it is a 'datasphere', and the festival's flagship new exhibition explores this, asking what's so big about data and how can we make sense of it all? It received 44,000 visits as part of Edinburgh Science Festival.

Impact

For Edinburgh's Science Festival PLACE funding brought a welcome three-year initiative to their portfolio. The festival attracts very little dependable long-term funding with no mainstream funding route such as Creative Scotland available to the science engagement community. Most sponsors prefer to commit on an annual basis. The festival sought to mount large-scale projects, but these take long term development to reach fruition. Three-year funding offered the chance to develop in-house, secure touring partners in Europe and attract funders. PLACE has joined EXPO as the biggest public funds available to the Science Festival and these longer-term investments have been transformational in programming and supporting international collaboration.

Organisational Development

The science centres which have hosted these exhibitions plan at least 18 months in advance so international partnership projects must be offered to match that timetable. PLACE funding enabled Edinburgh Science Festival to target those markets, either as exhibition receivers or design contributors, for the first time.

This new approach allowed the festival to have much greater return on investment than from a two-week run in Edinburgh where, although heavily used, exhibition life would be short. For example, one of the exhibitions, *Play On*, became part of three science centres in Germany where 100,000 additional visitors attended, more than doubling visitor impact. There is untapped potential in the exhibitions at home and internationally.

Having time to develop allowed space to innovate and work to a good design standard, ensuring exhibits were attractive and appealing to museums and other exhibitors. Working for the first time with external exhibition designer Richard Firth, the Festival made use of ergonomic design enabling exhibition fit out to take place in as little as half a day, again making the package attractive to venues. In Edinburgh the exhibitions were displayed in the National Museum of Scotland's Grand Gallery where stands must be moveable in 15 minutes to ensure the venue can be used for hospitality. This was possible for the first time with these innovative new designs.

Staff working with designers was another new venture and collaboration provided a good learning experience for core staff. Previously the Festival had tended to run workshops or shows rather than larger scale exhibitions and this has embedded new skills within the team.

Exhibition stands of quality are costly – approximately £150,000 per exhibition - and these were highly facilitated with two people at each stand. This ensured levels of engagement were high with adults and children alike. Without PLACE or equivalent funding this professional and highly popular approach to science engagement could not be undertaken.

¹¹ *Play On* (2017) was a high-profile, family friendly, interactive exhibition, plus associated events and workshops, exploring how technology influences the ways in which we spend our leisure time and play in the Information Age.

This toured to three science centres in Northern Germany and then appeared at the Edinburgh Science Festival in the National Museum of Scotland

Touring Potential and International Collaboration

Whilst in Edinburgh the exhibits were only displayed during festival time (two weeks) whereas in Germany they were displayed for months. The Festival is aware of the potential to tour the exhibitions to museums and cultural venues across Scotland to maximise national impact and engagement. However, the organisation lacks personnel to make the most of this tour potential. Exhibition content has been designed to cover contemporary issues in a way that gives the exhibits a life of approximately five years.

The Festival found German science centres to be good partners, providing translation (at their cost) and visiting Edinburgh for training in exhibition set up and maintenance. They are investigating other partners including Oslo Science Centre. Partnership opportunities with other science centres and museums – there are 20 science centres in Germany alone – offer significant tour potential. Host venues are the key partners for touring exhibits.

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