

# Platforms for Creative Excellence Programme Evaluation

Interim report

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—  
**BOP**  
Consulting



# Credits

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## Cover image

Imaginate/Edinburgh International Children's Festival in partnership with Punchdrunk Enrichment (photo by Paul Cochrane and Stephen Dobbie)

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# Executive Summary

The Platforms for Creative Excellence (PlaCE) programme supports strategic development activity across Edinburgh's festivals. It is funded by a unique three-way partnership from the Scottish Government, the City of Edinburgh Council, and the Edinburgh festivals and is supported and administered by Creative Scotland.

The programme is structured around three strands with the following intended impacts:

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

This interim report reflects what happened in the first year of the PlaCE programme and before the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., the change between a baseline year (2018/19) to March 2019/20).

## Key findings

### **PlaCE has enabled festivals to expand and develop as organisations**

In some cases, PlaCE funding has had a transformative effect on festival delivery models, enabling some to transition from a seasonal offer to a year-round programme for the first time and others to develop completely new strands of work, engaging communities directly for the first time.

This is reflected in audience and participant data, with a small number of festivals doubling or trebling the number of audiences or participants reached in a year

Not all programmes delivered with PlaCE funding represented new activity or activity that can be separated from 'core' activity. In some instances, it has been

used to bolster and develop existing programmes, expanding their size, reach or quality.

The multi-year commitment of the PlaCE funding has allowed some festivals to take a longer-term approach to planning.

Around half of festivals updated their quality assurance or impact measurement approaches. The same proportion reported an improvement in their approaches to understanding the needs of their stakeholders (i.e., participants, audiences, and partners).

### **PlaCE has stimulated innovation and enabled festivals to take programming risks**

Festivals reported that the PlaCE programme has enabled them to innovate their products and outputs in several ways:

- Allowing festivals to experiment and take risks with programme content and format without putting box office income streams at risk
- Funding and resources to programme international artists and cultural professionals
- Introducing festivals to new models of engagement and partnership
- Providing the headroom capacity to support diversification objectives

263 cultural professionals and practitioners from outside of Scotland contributed to the festivals, which represents 47% of the total number of practitioners engaged. There was insufficient data at this stage of the evaluation to further interrogate the impact the fund has had on diversifying festival contributors and partners, however there was broad agreement that the PlaCE programme has provided festivals with the capacity to diversify.

### **Engagement with communities has significantly increased, but it took time to find ways of working that worked for both festivals and communities**

70% festivals increased the number of community groups they were engaging with and 88% increased the number of schools they were engaging with in the

first year of PlaCE. Postcode data from reported activities map closely to the SIMD-ranked most deprived areas of Edinburgh.

Feedback from community partners frequently identified 'opportunities their communities would not have otherwise had' as the most valuable aspect of the partnership. 48% of community groups reached were engaging with the festival partner for the first time.

Qualitative feedback from community partners indicated that the engagement activities have helped to make the festival more accessible to minority groups although some partnerships encountered initial problems where festivals had less experience working with communities and needs and expectations were not aligned.

### **Collaboration has increased and festivals have grown their national and international networks**

The total number of festival projects co-created in the baseline year was 73, increasing to 252 in the first year of PlaCE. A total of 160 partnerships were reported as having been developed through PlaCE, although the number of partnerships formed per festival varied considerably, ranging from 3 to 51.

For most festivals, international partnerships, which require additional time and resource, have not been a primary focus for the first stage of the PlaCE programme: 88% of new partnerships reported were with Scotland-based partners and the remaining 12% with international partners. That said, 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.

Within Scotland, there is not consistent programme-wide evidence of partnerships emerging beyond Edinburgh or the Central Belt. The expectation for impact beyond Edinburgh was not always clear to festivals and funders are encouraged to clarify this moving forward.

### **Festivals have created opportunities for cultural professionals to develop skills and make connections**

Cultural professionals reported improvements in their skills and knowledge through participating in festival-led development activity, and that they had made connections that were likely to benefit their work. 80% of professional development beneficiaries were Scotland-based and 66% were 'emerging practitioners' (working in their field for less than five years).

Not all festivals reported direct professional development work and few festivals reported monitoring statistics about who was accessing these offers. The extent to which this work is strategically developed and monitored in the PlaCE programme should therefore be considered a priority in the next phase.

### **Key recommendations**

#### **For funders**

- Clarify expectations for Scotland-wide impacts
- Facilitate ongoing exchange between festivals to share emerging approaches and learning
- Ensure festivals and community groups/broader cultural organisations can be brought together to explore mutual needs

#### **For festivals**

- Continue to develop strategy and processes (organisational strategy, impact measurement, needs analyses etc) as a way to maintain focus and to clarify the need for new programming strands
- Ensure promotion of professional development activities is broad and inclusive and monitor the demographics of those attending
- Actively share emerging plans and approaches with peers and stakeholders
- Work with BOP to ensure exhaustive and accurate data can be fed into the evaluation in a timely manner

## **COVID-19 Adaptation**

This evaluation presents findings of progress for the period before the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of the data collection and the production of the report took place during the pandemic period (i.e., Year 2 of PlaCE). The final section of this report presents some considerations for the programme and evaluation considering the first few months of the pandemic and its apparent impact. We have agreed with Creative Scotland to produce an addendum to this report presenting a summary of programme changes and a number of further case studies highlighting COVID-19 adaptations in the first quarter of 2021.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.2 This report

In September 2019 BOP Consulting was commissioned to undertake a programme-wide evaluation of the Edinburgh Festivals Platforms for Creative Excellence (henceforth PlaCE) fund. This interim report represents a mid-way point in this evaluation of the three-year programme.

While the context in which the programme is operating has changed significantly as result of the COVID-19 pandemic, this report examines the processes, development and direction of travel of the programme during its initial phase (October 2018 to March 2020).

**Figure 1 PlaCE Programme timeline**



Source: BOP Consulting, 2020

The timeline above highlights the programme milestones covered by this report. It should be noted that as core festival periods fall at different times throughout the year, the way festivals understand their own programme in relation to the evaluation timeline differs slightly (e.g. some festivals understand their 'Year 1' to have started and ended at different points).

However, for the purposes of this evaluation, retrospective baseline data was collected between April 2018 – March 2019 and 'Year 1' activity data reporting

between April 2019 – March 2020. This timeline recognises that little activity in the initial three months after contracts were signed (January – March 2019) as festivals used this time to develop their programmes.

The findings are used to explore the emerging impacts during this phase and the implications of the pandemic for the future of the programme and its aims. We will also consider the findings in relation to the ongoing relevance of the programme Logic Model (Figure 3, p. 9).

## 1.3 Platforms for Creative Excellence

### 1.3.1 Overview

Launched in 2018, 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.

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

PlaCE is 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

These impacts inform the shorter- and longer-term outcomes, which are the focus of this interim report. They can be found in the programme Logic Model, which was developed in collaboration with the festivals in October 2019 (Figure 3, p. 9).

Funding was awarded to festivals by programming strand following an application process. Most participating festivals cover all three strands as part of

their PlaCE activity. Figure 2 below shows the PlaCE funding awardees and corresponding programming strands:

**Figure 2 PlaCE programme awards<sup>1</sup>**

| Festival                                     | Award      | Programme strands |
|--|------------|-------------------|
| 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  | £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                          | £197,000*  | 1, 2, 3           |

\* inclusive of £57,000 programme management costs

Source: Festivals Edinburgh

Each programming strand covers a very broad range of activity, with great diversity in size, scope, geography and delivery model of activities. While many new projects have been developed through PlaCE (see section 2.1.2), in some cases the fund has been used to bolster existing projects and work streams. Each festival developed and agreed bespoke workplans with Creative Scotland.

## 1.4 Our approach

### 1.4.1 Evaluation framework

This evaluation is structured around a Logic Model (Figure 3, p. 9), 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 is 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 where they understood the additionality of the programme and explored and challenged the assumptions underpinning relationships between outcomes in the Logic Model (see Appendix 2).

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 have been designed to interrogate attribution (e.g. 'to what extent would this have happened without PlaCE?') and provide evidence of additional impact.

### 1.4.2 Research

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

To summarise, the findings in this report were generated from the following data sources:

<sup>1</sup> Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo did not apply for PlaCE funding

- Retrospective baseline (2018/19 pre-PlaCE) and ‘Year 1’ (2019/20) Festival Data Logs of management, delivery and attribution data, submitted by all festivals
- Core festival staff survey exploring internal assessment of organisational capacity and strategy (n = 25 from 7 festivals)
- Cultural professionals survey for artists and practitioners who engaged in professional development activity delivered by festivals (n = 16 from 3 festivals)
- Two festival partner/stakeholder surveys: one for community groups (n = 26 from 6 festivals) and one for programming partners (n=11 from 4 festivals)
- Two in-depth case studies exploring festival activity
- Two ‘process review’ workshops with festivals (n=6) and interviews with the fund managers, Creative Scotland, (n = 3)

data, some submissions were partially complete. Therefore, some findings should be understood as indicative rather than fully representative of all ten festivals.

### 1.4.3 Limitations

This evaluation was commissioned 10 months after the initial PlaCE awards were made, at which point there were no standardised monitoring and evaluation processes in place across the programme.

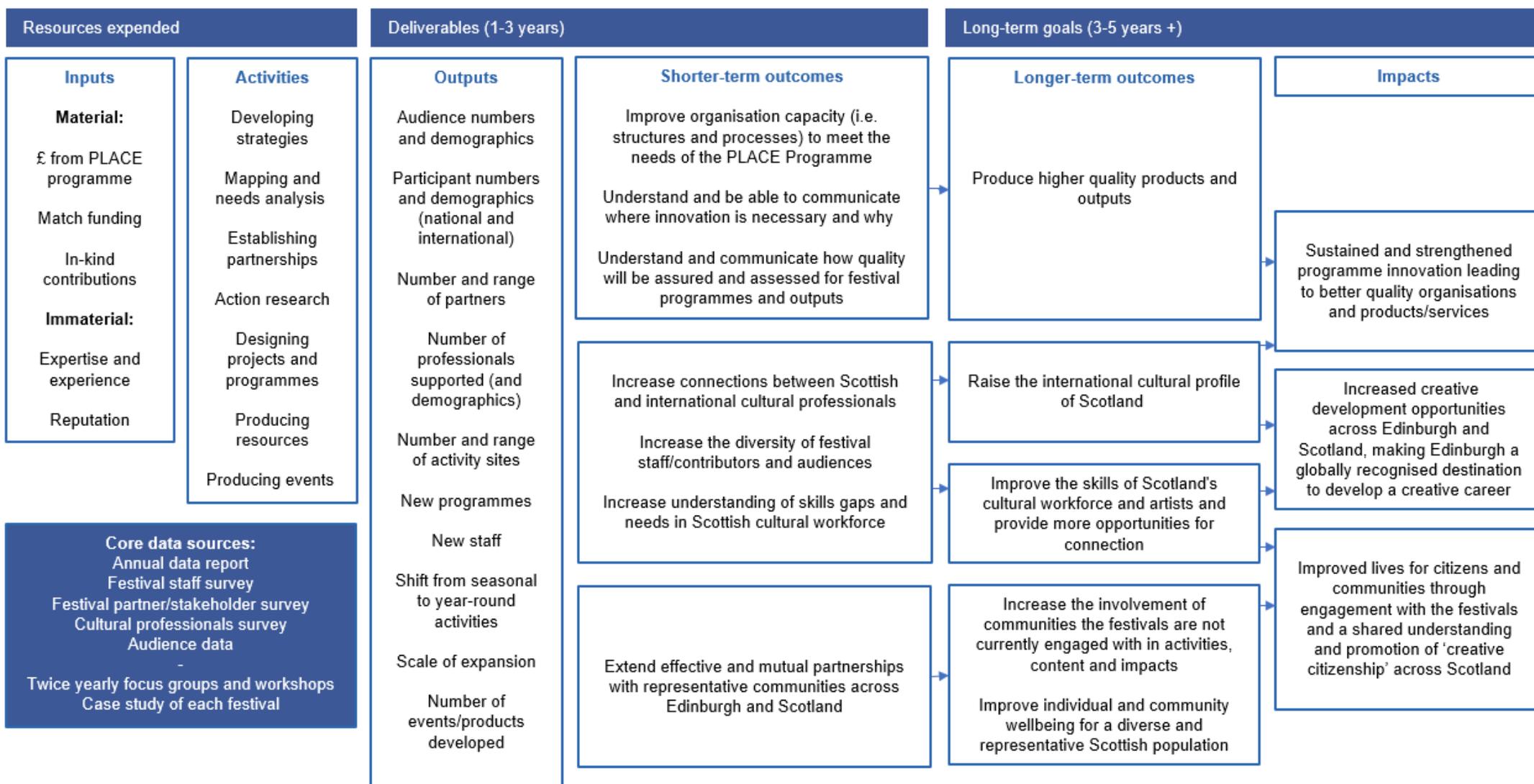
This means there are some gaps where it was not possible to gather data retrospectively, specifically:

- Audience data: perceptions of quality or change in programming
- Demographic data relating to audiences and festival contributors

Standardised approaches are now in place and will contribute to the final programme evaluation in Year 3.

Additionally, festivals were asked to submit data by the end of June 2020 for work taking place in financial year 2019/20. The implications of the pandemic for festivals meant that key staff were not available and while all festivals submitted

**Figure 3 Logic Model**



## 2. PlaCE has enabled festivals to expand and develop as 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

### Intended outcomes - longer-term:

Produce higher quality products and outputs

### 2.1 Festivals expanded their capacity to meet the needs of the programme

#### 2.1.1 Organisational capacity

- On average overall, festivals saw a 19% increase in staffing capacity and an 8% increase in turnover following the first year of the PlaCE fund
- Smaller festivals (those with an annual turnover under £1million) increased their staff by an average of 23% and turnover by 20%<sup>2</sup>

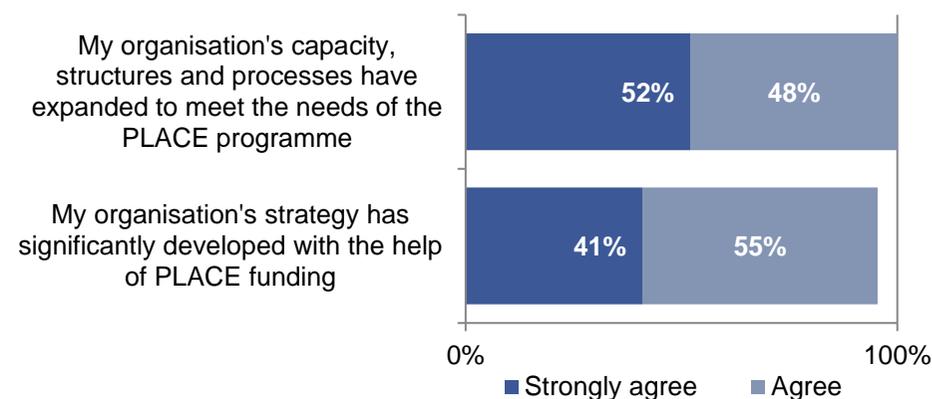
Organisational growth was not even across the board; the fund had a greater impact on the capacity of smaller festivals, whereas two of the larger festivals saw a drop in both their staffing and turnover in the first year of the programme.

<sup>2</sup> BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020, n = 10

Festivals described a competitive funding environment and declining public funding prior to PlaCE, which should be considered when interpreting the impact of the programme in relation to growth as measured by these indicators.

Despite this, festival staff agreed that their organisation had expanded their capacity, structures and processes in order to meet the needs of the PlaCE programme (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 Capacity and strategy



Source: BOP Consulting 2020, Festival staff survey n = 25

## 2.1.2 Operational capacity

- A total of 41 bespoke programming strands have been created or significantly developed in the first year of PlaCE: an average of 5 activities per festival<sup>3</sup>
- Festivals largely attributed the development of these activities to PlaCE, meaning they would not likely have happened without the funding (an average attribution score of 3.4 out of 4)<sup>4</sup>
- 75% festivals grew their total number of audiences reached in the first year of PlaCE funding. On average, festivals saw an 11% increase in audiences<sup>5</sup>
- 64% festivals increased the total number of community participants reached in the first year of PlaCE funding. On average, festivals grew the number of participants they engaged with by 80%<sup>6</sup>

In some cases, PlaCE funding has had a transformative effect on festival delivery models, enabling some to transition from a seasonal offer to a year-round programme for the first time and others to develop completely new strands of work, engaging communities directly for the first time. This is reflected in audience and participant data, with a small number of festivals doubling or trebling the number of audiences or participants reached in a year.<sup>7</sup>

Festivals were conscious of the need to maintain the quality of their core festival offer amid expansion. Some described their initial concerns that introducing new areas of work might overstretch the organisation, compromising the standard of the festival.

“ Now that we have a year-round programme of work, we’re trying not to lose sight of the fact that the festival is our main area of engagement and if anything were to happen to that it would impact the whole organisation.  
Festival staff

Another challenge for some festivals has been increased expectations from peers and across the sector in terms of what the organisation can offer, which has put added pressure on the development phase of the PlaCE programme.

This does not apply to all festivals, as expansion in activity varied depending on prior delivery models, size, other income streams and the nature of the PlaCE funding agreement (e.g. not all festivals received funding towards community engagement programmes and each prioritised strands in different ways).

Festivals felt it was important to stress that not all programmes delivered with PlaCE funding represented new activity or activity that can be separated from ‘core’ activity. In some instances, it has been used to bolster and develop existing programmes, expanding the size, reach or quality.

## 2.2 . Festivals have developed their capacity for strategic planning and partnerships

For most festivals, the PlaCE programme has led to new understandings of their value and potential value to communities and practitioners, that goes beyond their economic contribution.

Larger festivals in particular have experienced some tension around the ‘growth agenda’ when it is framed in purely economic terms, as it can lead to negative

<sup>3</sup> BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020. N = 8 : two festivals did not submit data for this indicator

<sup>4</sup> Festivals gave each activity an attribution score between 1 (would have happened in exactly the same way) and 4 (would not have happened at all).

<sup>5</sup> BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020. N = 8 : two festivals did not submit audience data and one outlier has been removed from this average, therefore this be understood as indicative and not fully representative of all festivals

<sup>6</sup> BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020. N = 8 : two festivals did not submit participant data and one outlier has been removed from this average, therefore this be understood as indicative and not fully representative of all festivals

<sup>7</sup> BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020

responses from local residents and communities who may not see 'festival growth' as desirable or beneficial.

The PlaCE programme has enabled these festivals to (re)evaluate their local and national impact beyond economic metrics and to further interrogate how they can add social and cultural value to their communities and the wider sector.

“ We now have a strong focus on attracting international excellence and developing the skills of Scottish artists which would not have happened to the same extent without the support of PlaCE

Festival staff

Over half (55%) of festivals used PlaCE funding to undertake mapping exercises and/or needs analyses to refine their strategies and to better understand the social and cultural ecosystem within which they sit.<sup>8</sup>

Accordingly, there is strong consensus among core festival staff that the PlaCE fund enabled the development of their organisational strategy (see Figure 4, p. 10 above).

“ PlaCE has been a crucial catalyst in allowing the festival to recalibrate its strategy in the short term and review its strategy in the long term.

Festival staff

Strategic development has been more challenging for those festivals which have undergone a greater degree of growth through PlaCE, as some found that they did not have existing strategies in place for the new strands of work enabled by the fund.

“ We've had to retrospectively build a learning and participation strategy. It's been tricky, because so much of this is directly tied

to the PlaCE fund.

Festival staff

### 2.2.1 Long term planning

The multi-year commitment of the PlaCE funding has allowed some festivals to take a more long-term approach to planning. Long-term funding has been particularly significant when it comes to new strategic partnerships, as festivals have been able to engage new groups and partners in more depth and with the confidence that they can make a longer-term commitment as opposed to a 'festival-only' offer.

“ It has enabled us to make a year-round offer to schools as opposed to a festival specific only offer. This has dramatically strengthened our school relationships and seen school bookings also increase.

Festival staff

“ The multi-year nature of PlaCE funding is critical in allowing us to build longer term strategic partnerships, with confidence and certainty that we will have the resource to deliver.

Festival staff

### 2.2.2 Quality assurance and impact measurement

- 55% of festivals developed new quality assurance strategies, policies or approaches<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020, N = 10

<sup>9</sup> BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020, N = 10

— 59% of core festival staff agreed that the PlaCE fund had helped their organisation to measure success<sup>10</sup>

“ This project has given the company some different tools and a deeper way to engage with how we measure success.  
Festival staff

“ It has helped to move the need to assess and measure our work more comprehensively up the agenda.  
Festival staff

Given the focus of PlaCE funding on organisational strategy and capacity, these findings indicate that those festivals who have not revised their quality assurance approaches or impact frameworks may wish to revisit these activities in the second stage of the programme.

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<sup>10</sup> BOP Consulting 2020, Festival staff survey n = 25

### 3. PlaCE has stimulated innovation and enabled festivals to take programming risks

#### Intended outcomes - shorter-term:

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

#### Intended outcomes - longer-term:

Produce higher quality products and outputs

Festivals overwhelmingly agreed that the PlaCE programme has enabled them to innovate their products and outputs. It has done so in a number of ways:

- Allowing festivals to experiment and take risks with programme content and format without putting box office income streams at risk
- Funding and resources to programme international artists and cultural professionals
- Introducing festivals to new models of engagement and partnership
- Providing the headroom capacity to support diversification objectives

“ PlaCE has resourced us to try out some completely new programme ideas, as an organisation  
Festival staff

It was also reported that the ability to ‘hit the ground running’ varied across the festivals when the PlaCE funding was made available and that not every new strand of work was entirely successful. In retrospect an officially mandated ‘year 0.5’ (i.e. October 2018 to March 2019) would have enabled the festivals to

better plan their ‘new’ PlaCE activities, and ensure they were meeting need (e.g. by enabling needs analyses with the workforce and communities). Similarly, the relevance of some earlier PlaCE-funded festival activities to the programme aims, or to the vision of the festival, was not always clear.

The responsibility of this sits with the festivals individually and with the funders who may have been expecting to see activities and ‘results’ in line with the new funding before the festivals had been given enough time to scope and plan to ensure best fit and strongest impact.

In the long-term, the PlaCE programme aims to enable festivals to improve the quality of their output through facilitating an environment in which they can innovate. Although it is not possible draw conclusions at this interim stage, initial data suggests that the trajectory of the programme is towards a higher-quality festival offer:

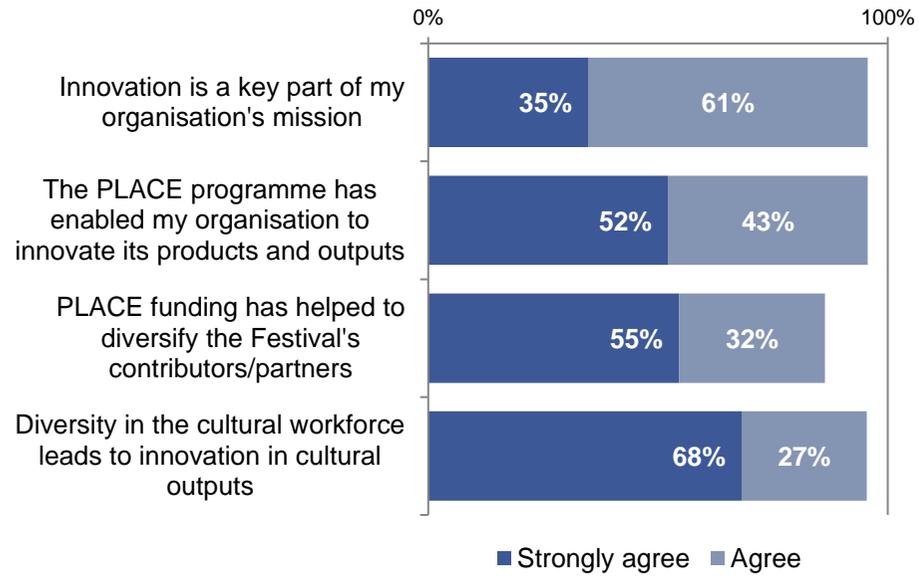
- 100% of programming partners surveyed agreed that the cultural outputs produced by their partnership with a festival were of a high quality
- 73% core festival staff agreed that PlaCE funding has enabled the organisation to produce higher quality cultural products and outputs

#### 3.1.1 Diversity

There was consensus among festival staff surveyed that diversity in the cultural workforce is a key driver of innovation (see Figure 5). Festivals stressed that diversifying required an investment of time and energy and can bring additional complexity, but felt that this was to be embraced, alongside new approaches and perspectives, rather than pushed away.

There was insufficient data at this stage of the evaluation to understand the impact the fund may have had on diversifying festival contributors and partners, however there was broad agreement that the PlaCE programme has provided festivals both the capacity and the tools to diversify.

**Figure 5 Programme innovation**



Source: BOP Consulting 2020, Festival staff survey n = 25

## Case Study - The Lost Lending Library (Imagine - Edinburgh International Children's Festival)

“ 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.

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. Librarians know about books, so the Head Teacher calls him back to help pupils



The Lost Lending Library. Photo by Louise King

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.

From the point of view of the artists involved this 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.



Artist in residence, Craigroyston. Photo by Kat Gollock.



Immerse, St. Ninians. Photo by Brian Hartley.

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 imaginations.

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

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.

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, 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.

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.

## 4. Engagement with communities has significantly increased, but it took time to find ways of working that worked for both festivals and communities

### 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

### 4.1.1 Engagement activity

The level of community engagement activity delivered by festivals significantly increased in the first year of the PlaCE programme:

- 70% festivals increased the number of community groups they were engaging with
- The total number of engagements with community groups rose from 65 in the baseline year to 212 in the first year of PlaCE (an increase of 231%)

<sup>11</sup> Engagements is not the same as total number of schools worked with as a large number of schools work with several festivals.

- Of the festivals working with schools in the baseline year, 88% increased the number of schools they were engaging with in the first year of PlaCE
- 48% of community groups reached were engaging with the festival partner for the first time
- The total number of school engagements<sup>11</sup> in Scotland increased from 497 in the baseline year to 743 in the first year of PlaCE (an increase of 49%), however Edinburgh International Book Festival, who significantly expanded their schools programme, accounted for 147 of the additional school engagements
- 3 festivals working with schools and 2 working with community groups had not been doing so prior to PlaCE

The data provided by the festivals indicates that the festivals are succeeding at increasing their involvement with communities. However, reflecting on this as a goal for the programme, festivals expressed concerns that local community organisations had at times been overwhelmed by the expansion of activity in a relatively short timeframe.

While the festivals were working towards a set of common aims and objectives for their community engagement work, they were all coming from very different starting points. There was an additional risk that festivals with less prior experience of working with community groups, and therefore less understanding of their needs and operating models, could be seen as ‘parachuting in’ to the detriment of their partners.

One community group reported feeling that the collaboration had not been mutual, and that community participation had been at the periphery of their festival partner’s activity and not at the core.

Over a year into the programme, there is a sense from festivals, strategic stakeholders and community groups themselves that these issues were beginning to be resolved. Surveyed in mid-2020, there was broad agreement

from community partners that the partnerships developed were effective, equal and even (see Figure 6).

The experience has been a valuable learning point for festivals with regards to engaging the wider community. If the programme were to run again, the festivals said they would invest more time in developing partnerships and making sure their aims for the collaboration matched the needs of the community.

The fund administrators should also consider whether funding conditions for festival and community partnerships (e.g. community co-commissioning) could help to ensure effective and equal partnerships.

#### 4.1.2 Quality of engagement

The festivals were engaging in a valuable, meaningful way, with strong consensus across community groups that the partnership had benefitted their work and their service users.

For communities, the benefits reported ranged from new artistic experiences; increased sense of creative agency; opening up new conversations and new ways of thinking; the chance to experiment and the chance to have their voice heard.

For organisations, reported benefits included the opportunity to work with international artists; the chance to learn something new and being included in networks and conversations across the city and further afield.

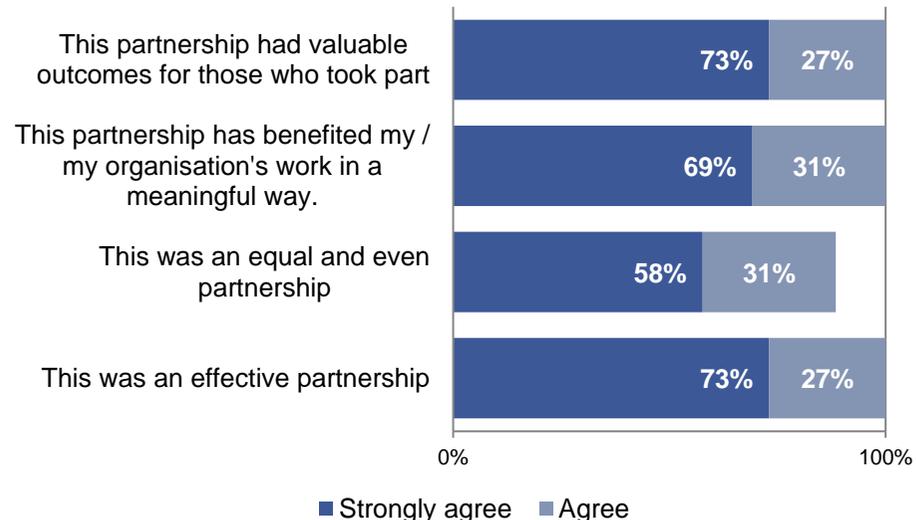
When asked what the most valuable outcome of the partnership for those who took part was, community groups frequently identified the creation of opportunities their communities would not have otherwise had.

“ The most valuable outcome for the young people we support was the opportunity to have a cultural experience which would not normally have been open to them.  
Community partner

- “ It helped to make the festival accessible to BAME groups in Edinburgh, and work to address inequality for minority communities accessing cultural and creative activities  
Community partner
- “ Opportunities for citizens of Edinburgh from areas that are often overlooked to tell their stories and be heard  
Community partner

These testimonies indicate that certain communities who have not historically engaged with the festivals have been reached through PlaCE-funded programmes.

Figure 6 Community partnerships



Source: BOP Consulting 2020, Community partners survey n = 26

### 4.1.3 Communities reached

A key objective behind the community engagement strand of the PlaCE programme was to reach communities that were representative of Edinburgh and Scotland and that the festivals had not previously been engaging with.

Due to not receiving complete postcode data from each festival we cannot present a precise analysis of how many unique schools and community organisations within Edinburgh are being engaged by the festivals<sup>12</sup>. From the data we were provided with we know that 23% of schools were working with at least two festivals, 8% were working with three festivals and 2.5% were working with four festivals.

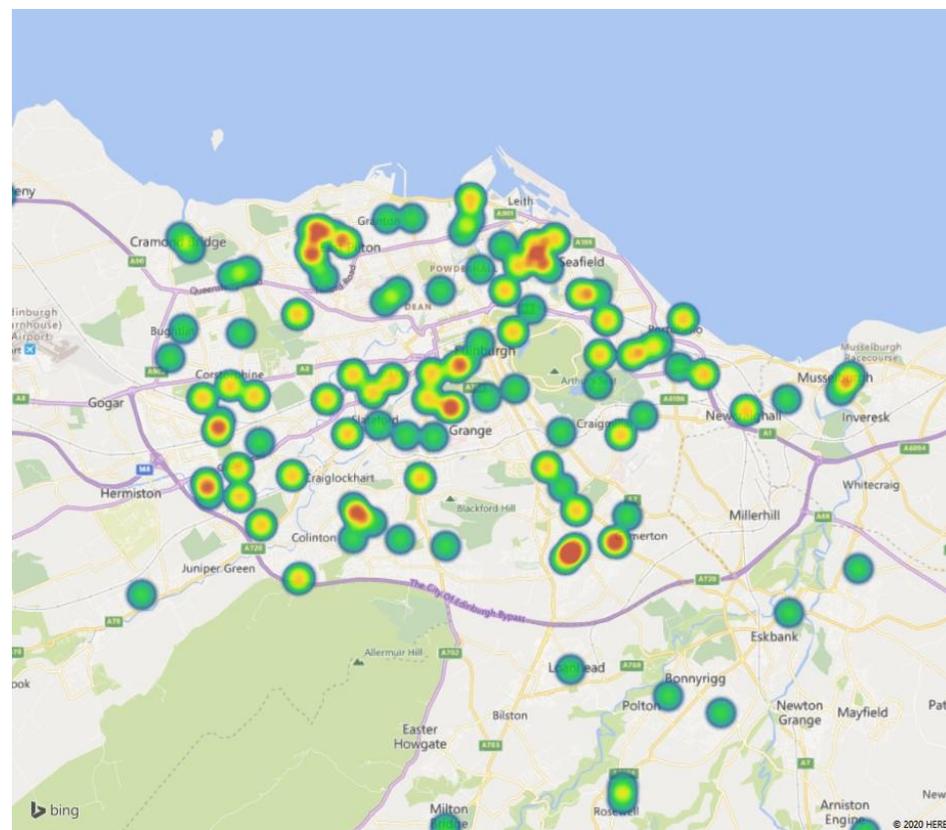
To explore how this coverage looks across the city the following maps show:

- i. The location of schools being engaged in the first year of PlaCE funding
- ii. The location of community organisations engaged in the first year of PlaCE funding
- iii. These two layers combined
- iv. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation map of Edinburgh where red indicates the most deprived areas and blue the least deprived

The heat maps show a darker red colour where multiple festivals are working with schools (as well as indicating the proximity of delivery at this scale).

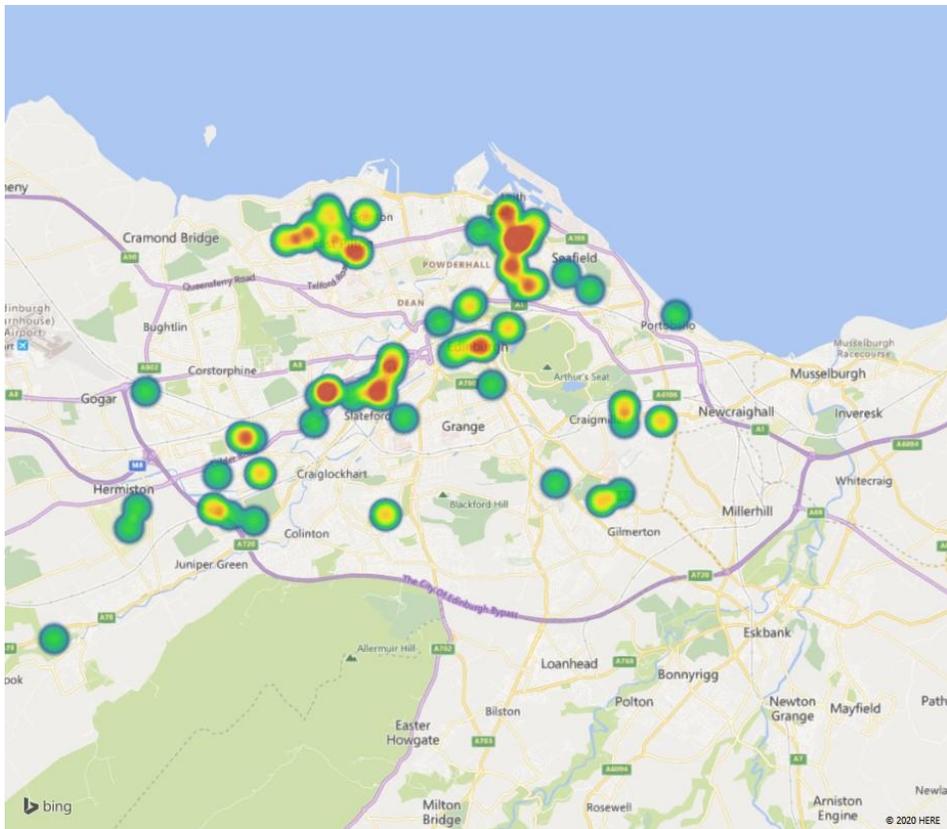
We can see that overall, the reported activities map closely to the SIMD-ranked most deprived areas of the city. The exception may be Craigmillar (an area which had been the focus of significant activity across multiple festivals immediately prior to the PlaCE programme) and Niddrie, with slightly less reported activity than other highly deprived areas, although this should be verified if full postcode data from all festivals can be obtained.

**Figure 7 Schools worked with in Year 1 (160 unique settings, 236 observations)**

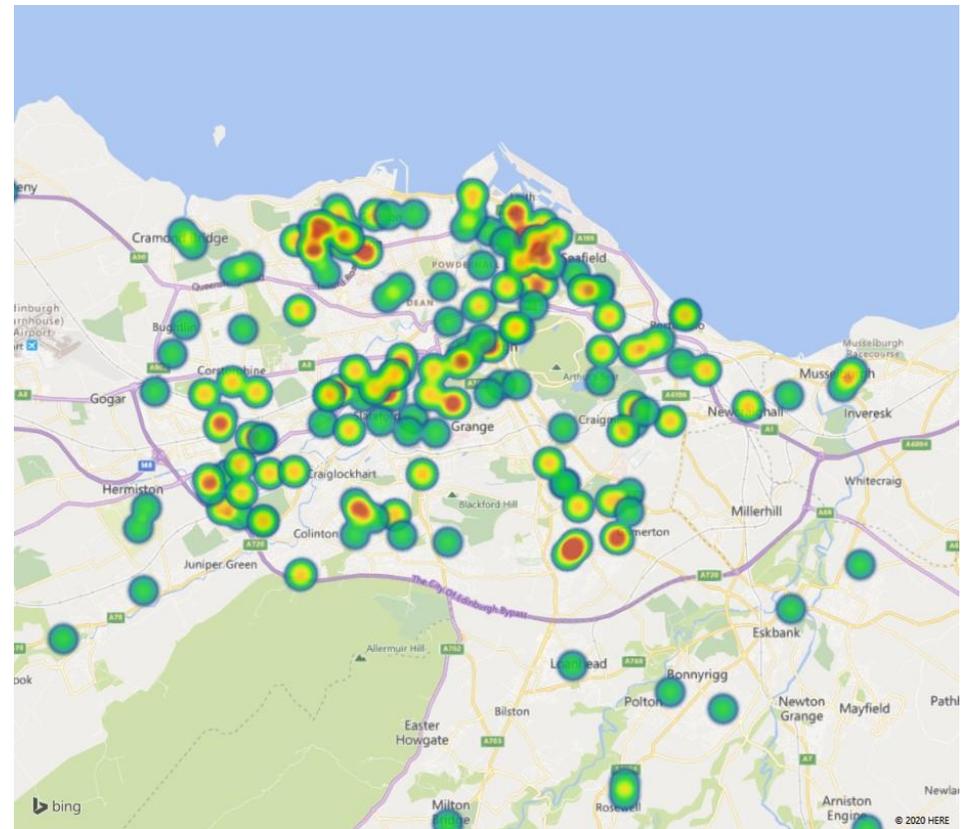


<sup>12</sup> Two festivals did not work with any schools and two festivals did not provide postcode data. The latter includes a festival we know worked with a significant number of schools in the city as part of their PlaCE Funding. This analysis should therefore be considered with these caveats in mind.

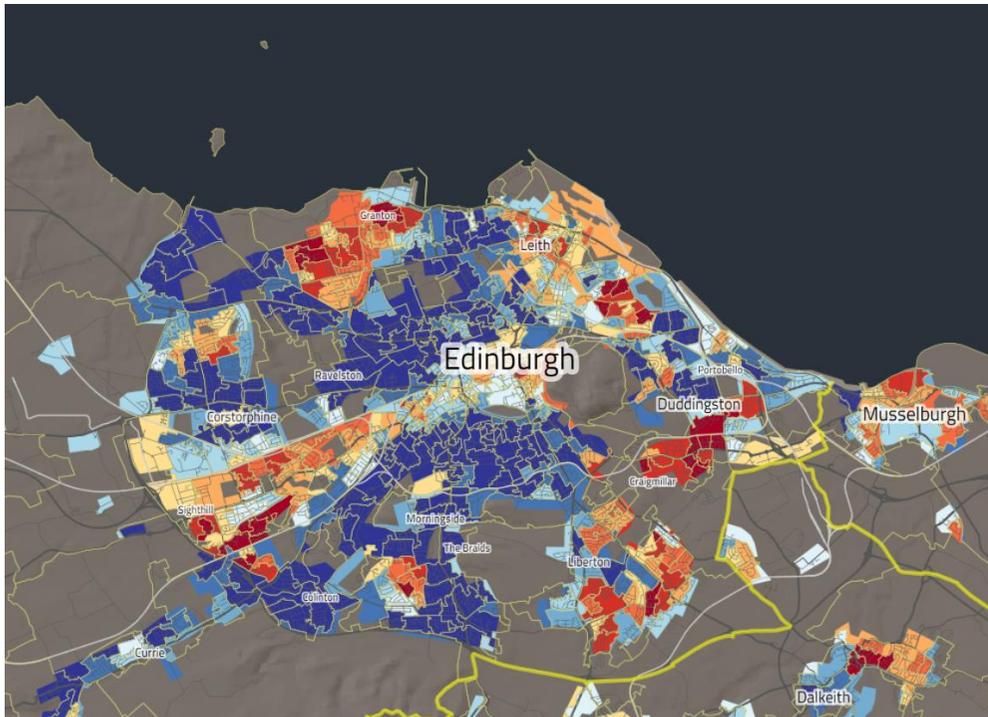
**Figure 8 Community Organisations worked with in Year 1 (95 unique settings, 141 observations)**



**Figure 9 Schools and Community Organisations worked with in Year 1 (255 unique settings, 377 observations)**



**Figure 10 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Map of Edinburgh**  
([www.simd.scot](http://www.simd.scot))



## 5. Collaboration has increased and festivals have grown their national and international networks

### Intended outcomes - shorter-term:

Increase connections between Scottish and international cultural professionals

### Intended outcomes - longer-term:

Raise the international cultural profile of Scotland

- The total number of festival projects co-created in the baseline year was 73, increasing to 252 in the first year of PlaCE, with an average increase of 223% in co-created activity per festival<sup>13</sup>
- Festivals largely attributed the development of these projects to PlaCE, meaning they would not likely have happened without the funding (an average attribution score of 3.4 out of 4)<sup>14</sup>
- A total of 160 partnerships were reported as having been developed through PlaCE, although the number of partnerships formed per festival varied considerably, ranging from 3 to 51<sup>15</sup>
- Development of these partnerships was also largely attributed to PlaCE (an average attribution score of 3.3 out of 4)<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020, N = 9: one festival did not submit co-creation data. 'Projects' refers to a broad range of activity, including one-off events, and is distinct from bespoke programming strands.

<sup>14</sup> Festivals gave each activity an attribution score between 1 (would have happened in exactly the same way) and 4 (would not have happened at all).

<sup>15</sup> BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020

- 88% of new partnerships reported were with domestic partners and the remaining 12% with international partners<sup>17</sup>

Partnerships were formed with a broad range of organisations, including cultural institutions, touring companies, universities and tourist boards.

### 5.1.1 National partnerships

At the national level there were mixed responses to how much genuine partnership was emerging beyond Edinburgh or the Central Belt. Three festivals described clear and concrete partnerships that had been established as a result of the PlaCE funding and others spoke of more nascent national partnerships in the first year.

Most indicated an intention to further develop partnerships outside of the capital, although it was also expressed that with City of Edinburgh Council being one of the core funders the expectation for impact beyond Edinburgh was not always clear; particularly regarding the community and programming elements of the programme.

The aims to be of service to a Scotland-wide cultural workforce were recognised more clearly - 80% of professional development beneficiaries were Scotland based<sup>18</sup> - however it was also indicated that this was most likely to be successful through forming stronger networks and partnerships: A few festivals mentioned directly how the PlaCE funding renewed their understanding of their organisation's national remit and catalysed new partnerships, although these were the minority.

“ The idea of bringing together local partners in Scotland that maybe had not worked together before, PlaCE has allowed that to happen, and we would hope that that that would still be able

<sup>16</sup> BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020

<sup>17</sup> BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020

<sup>18</sup> BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020

to carry on, even once the PlaCE funding has stopped.  
Festival staff

from above [i.e. funders and publics]  
Festival staff

## 5.1.2 International partnerships

- 60% festivals have developed international partnerships through PlaCE, with a total of 19 new international partnerships across 6 festivals

International partnerships have not been a focus for most festivals in the first year of the PlaCE programme, with festivals highlighting the additional resources needed and challenges that come with nurturing effective collaborations with international institutions. Despite this, the festivals continued to engage a high proportion of international individuals:

- 263 cultural professionals and practitioners from outside of Scotland contributed to the festivals, which represents 47% of the total number of practitioners engaged<sup>19</sup>

The value of international collaboration was widely acknowledged and remained part of festivals' overall ambition for the PlaCE programme in the longer-term. Festivals also recognised the broader value that being outward-looking, open and international can have for Scotland's culture sector and Scotland as a whole.

“ And particularly in the last 18 months with everything that's been happening with Brexit and all of that stuff, it's just really pushing forward the message that [festival] is a forward-thinking event. Scotland is a forward-thinking country. We're not inward-looking. We want to welcome international performers. We want to welcome an international audience. I feel what we're doing is supporting a broader agenda really. And hopefully, that is seen

Although data is limited at this stage, where international collaboration has taken place the emerging outcomes have been positive:

- After working together, all international partners surveyed agreed that their Scottish partner festival delivered innovative cultural products and that their collaboration with a Scottish festival produced high-quality outputs<sup>20</sup>
- All international partners reported having increased their knowledge and understanding arts and culture in Scotland through the collaboration
- 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.<sup>21</sup>

“ The whole company loved our Scottish adventure and loved the approach of developing a new performance piece with our Scottish counterparts rather than just performing one our standard shows. We hope we can and do it again!  
International partner

“ Developing a new collaborative performance together to be performed at the festival was very exciting. The quality of the performance is testament to the balanced partnership between us. It has changed our approach as a company to look for future collaborative projects such as this.  
International partner

<sup>19</sup> BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020

<sup>20</sup> BOP Consulting, International partners survey n=5

<sup>21</sup> BOP Consulting, International partners survey n=5

## Case Study - Outriders (Edinburgh International Book Festival)

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 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.

With bespoke development support, Outriders Africa 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.

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 and 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.

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.



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.

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.

For Outriders Africa a pan-Africa publisher, Cassava Republic, will produce a publication of travel writing in all its forms but 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.

## 6. Festivals have created opportunities for cultural professionals to develop skills and make connections

### Shorter-term outcomes:

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

### Longer-term outcomes:

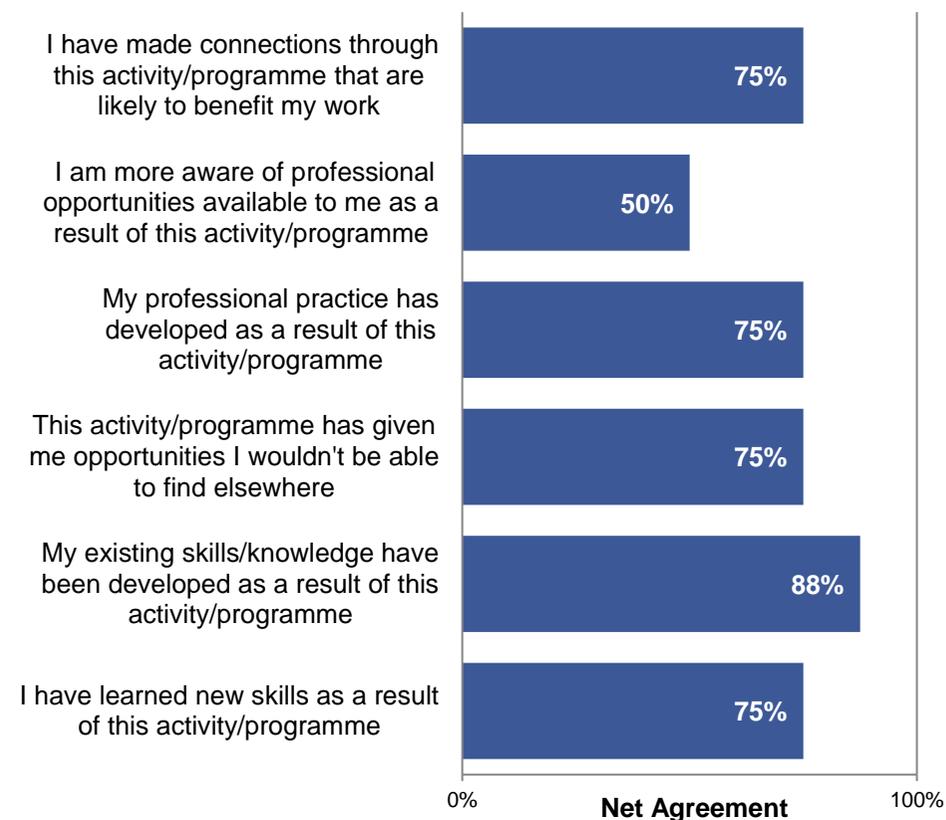
Improve the skills of Scotland's cultural workforce and artists and provide more opportunities for collaboration

### 6.1.1 Professional development outcomes

- A total of 4,057 cultural practitioners participated in professional development activities (e.g. skills development, networking) delivered through PlaCE, although Edinburgh International Film Festival accounts for 3,687 of these <sup>22</sup>
- 80% of these were based in Scotland and 20% internationally
- 66% were 'emerging practitioners' (working in their field for less than five years)
- 60% of festivals delivered some kind of professional network / networking platform, 50% delivered professional development courses and 40% delivered an artistic exchange or residency programme through PlaCE.

The figure below shows the outcomes reported by cultural professionals engaged by Hogmanay, Edinburgh International Festival and Edinburgh International Film Festival.<sup>23</sup>

**Figure 11 Professional development outcomes**



Source: BOP Consulting 2020, n = 18. Net agreement = (total % agreement – total % disagreement)

<sup>23</sup> All festivals worked with cultural professionals, but feedback was either not captured or submitted

<sup>22</sup> BOP Consulting, Festival Data Logs, 2020

Feedback from participants was broadly positive, although one participant highlighted a perceived lack of gender and ethnic diversity among fellow participants in the programme. We do not have consistent access to monitoring data on workforce development participants across festivals at this stage to further interrogate these findings but recommend that festivals are considering and monitoring the diversity of participants taking up the workforce development programmes to ensure they are representative of the target sectors and populations.

“ A brilliant lab, very supportive environment and I think that relationships formed there will continue on throughout my career.

Cultural practitioner

“ The workshops in Paris and Edinburgh were fascinating and it was invaluable training with French choreographers and circus performers who are leaders in their field.

Cultural practitioner

“ In the future, I encourage more diversity in the artists that are selected for these activities - both racial and gender.

Cultural practitioner

There was broad agreement among participants that these activities had helped them to make connections, to learn or develop skills and to access opportunities they wouldn't have found elsewhere (See Figure 11).

There was weaker consensus was around the indicator 'I am more aware of professional opportunities available to me as a result of this activity/programme'. Festivals could address this by building more consideration of 'what next' into their activity.

## 7. Findings and recommendations

The findings of this interim report are considered against the shorter-term intended outcomes as well as longer-term intended outcomes where there is evidence emerging.

### 7.1 Evidence of shorter-term intended outcomes:

#### — **Improve organisational capacity to meet the needs of the PlaCE programme**

Festivals expanded their organisational and operational capacity, with the greatest level of expansion among the smaller festivals. Some festivals were able to offer a year-round programme for the first time. In addition to staffing and turnover, the numbers of audiences, participants and programmes delivered all increased through PlaCE.

There is also strong evidence of strategic development across all festivals, although this has been more challenging for those festivals which have undergone a greater degree of growth through PlaCE and who found their strategy needed to 'catch-up' with their increased operational output. Other challenges reported were changing expectations from stakeholders the need to maintain the quality of the core festival offer amid expansion.

Ultimately, however, PlaCE has enabled festivals to (re)evaluate their local and national impact and to explore new ways to add social and cultural value to their communities and the wider sector.

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

Evidence that festivals have developed their capacity in relation to quality assessment and assurance is mixed. Just over half of festivals developed new quality assurance strategies, policies or approaches and under two thirds of core festival staff agreed that PlaCE had helped their organisation

to measure success. The latter may reflect the short (and disrupted) period of time for which the evaluation framework has been in place.

#### — **Understand and be able to communicate where innovation is necessary and why**

Festival staff clearly understood innovation as a key part of their organisation's mission and the new programmes and strands of work developed over the past year and a half indicate that they used the PlaCE funding to respond to this mission.

It was reported that not all new strands of work were entirely successful and that outcomes could have been strengthened by more time spent developing activities and understanding need (e.g. of workforces and communities). Similarly, the relevance of some earlier PlaCE-funded festival innovations to the programme aims, or to the vision of the festival, was not always clear.

#### — **Extend effective and mutual partnerships with representative communities across Edinburgh and Scotland**

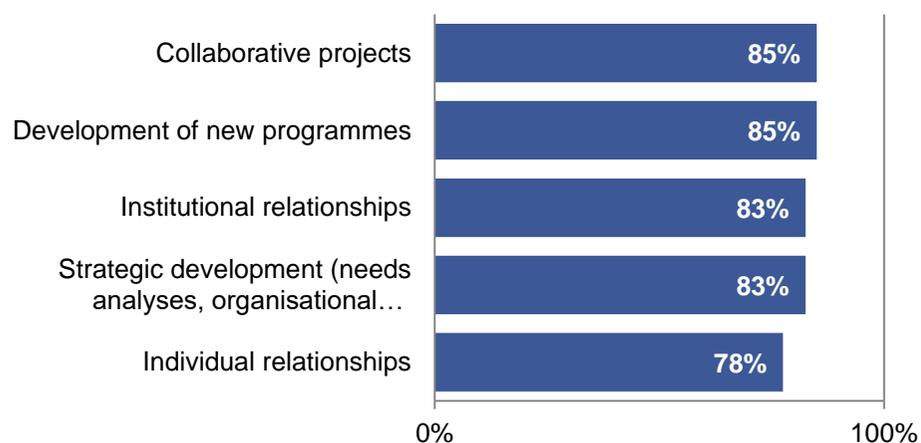
There is strong evidence that the PlaCE fund has increased the level of engagement between festivals and communities across Edinburgh and Scotland. There have been significant increases in the numbers of engagements with community groups, schools and participants reached by festivals. Some festivals engaging in this work had not been doing so at all prior to PlaCE.

At participant level, there was insufficient demographic data submitted to understand if those who participated were representative of communities in Edinburgh and Scotland. However, qualitative feedback from community partners indicated that the engagement activities have helped to make the festival more accessible to minority groups. Furthermore, the available postcode data shows that the schools and communities engaged in Edinburgh map closely to the SIMD-ranked most deprived areas of the city.

There was strong consensus from community partners that festivals were engaging in a valuable, meaningful way and that the partnership had benefitted their work and their service users. Although still broadly positive, outcomes were more mixed when it came to the mutuality of the partnership. This aligns with feedback from festivals, strategic stakeholders and community groups themselves, who reported initial challenges faced by festivals when it came to understanding and adapting to the needs and ways and working of their community partners. This primarily arose where there was less prior experience of working with community groups.

However, over a year into the programme there is a sense that these issues are beginning to be resolved. Surveyed in mid-2020, there was broad agreement from community partners that the partnerships developed were

**Figure 12 Average activity attribution to PlaCE (i.e. festival staff responses to the question ‘to what extent is PlaCE the reason this activity took place?’)**



Source: BOP Consulting 2020, Festival data logs, n = 10. Festivals gave each activity an attribution score between 1 (would have happened in exactly the same way) and 4 (would not have happened at all).

effective, equal and even.

- **Increase connections between Scottish and international cultural professionals**

Collaboration developed significantly on both an individual and institutional level through PlaCE, with an increase in partnerships and co-created projects from festivals. Cultural professionals who took part in festival-led professional development activity largely agreed that they had increased their professional networks as a result.

For most festivals, international partnerships have not been a primary focus for the first stage of the PlaCE programme, with festivals acknowledging the additional time and resource required to work with overseas partners. Despite this, where international collaboration has taken place the outcomes have been positive, and festivals have expressed intentions to continue to develop this area of work.

Within Scotland, there have been mixed responses as to how much genuine partnership was emerging beyond Edinburgh or the Central Belt. It was expressed that with City of Edinburgh Council being one of the core funders the expectation for impact beyond Edinburgh was not always clear; particularly regarding the community and programming elements of the programme.

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

Evidence that festivals increased their understanding of gaps and needs in the Scottish workforce is mixed: just over half undertook needs analyses or mapping exercises as part of their PlaCE activity.

Some qualitative feedback from one respondent indicated that festival professional development activity was not reaching a diverse range of participants, but demographic data reported was not sufficient to investigate this further.

## 7.2 Additionality

PlaCE added significant value across all areas of programme activity (see Figure 12). Additionality was particularly apparent in the development of new projects and programming strands.

## 7.3 Recommendations for funders and fund administrators

- An officially mandated 'year 0.5' (i.e. October 2018 to March 2019) would have enabled the festivals to better plan their 'new' PlaCE activities and ensure they were meeting the needs of communities and the workforce. It would also have allowed smaller festivals more time to develop their internal strategies to incorporate new areas of activity and make sure their programmes remained relevant to both the programme aims and the vision of the festivals. This should be considered in relation to future programmes.
- Funders should consider the most effective way to invest in creative opportunities for communities and to ensure need is being met. This may include alternative funding models (e.g. community organisations co-commissioning with festivals) to ensure mutuality.
- Creative Scotland should continue to support festivals to develop effective and mutual partnerships with community groups through regular community engagement board meetings in which attendance from festivals' community engagement lead is strongly encouraged.
- Beyond this, Creative Scotland should consider other ways they can facilitate communication between festivals and create opportunities to share learning and experiences. This could take the form of a peer learning forum or events.
- Funders should offer more clarity around what is expected from festivals in relation to the Scotland-wide ambitions for the programme, especially in terms of partnerships and communities.
- Having a Logic Model and standardised evaluation framework in place from the start of the programme would have decreased the likelihood of data gaps and contributed to the establishment of a stronger baseline from which the impact of the programme could be tracked and measured.

- The funders and fund administrators should revisit logic models and indicators in light of the coronavirus pandemic. More detail can be found in Section 7.6.

## 7.4 Emerging evidence of longer-term intended outcomes:

### — Produce higher quality products and outputs

Emerging evidence from programming partners and core festival staff indicates that the cultural output enabled by PlaCE have been of a high quality. This indicator will be tracked across the programme to see if perceptions of quality among these groups increases.

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

Mapped alongside SIMD data for Edinburgh, postcodes of festival activity indicate that the PlaCE programme enabled festivals to reach communities that might typically have had less engagement with core festival activity.

This is supported by qualitative feedback from community partners, who frequently identified 'opportunities their communities would not have otherwise had' as the most valuable aspect of the partnership.

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

There was strong consensus from community partners that festivals were engaging in a valuable, meaningful way and that the partnership had benefitted their work and their service users.

### — Raise the international cultural profile of Scotland

Where international collaboration has taken place, international partners increased their understand of arts and culture in Scotland and confirmed that they would recommend their festival partner to peers. PlaCE activities

have been covered in international media outlets, although the reach and impact of this is not known at this stage.

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

There was broad agreement among cultural professionals that participation in festival-led professional development activities had helped them to make connections, to learn or develop skills and to access opportunities they wouldn't have found elsewhere. However, there was weaker consensus that the programme had made them more aware of professional opportunities available to them.

- Festivals should work with BOP to make sure that evaluation tools and processes are in place over the next year, especially where there were data gaps in year one reporting. In particular, festivals should make sure they are monitoring and reporting on the diversity of their audiences in a consistent way (e.g. through Audience Finder).
- Festivals should also ensure that they are considering and monitoring the diversity of participants taking up the workforce development programmes to ensure they are representative of the target sectors and populations. Promotion of activities and targeting of cultural professionals should be considered against festival's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans and appropriate alterations made to ensure full participation in opportunities.

## 7.5 Recommendations for festivals

- Festivals should continue to develop their strategy and processes (organisational strategy, needs analyses etc) as a way to maintain a strategic focus and as a foundation for the development of new programming strands. In particular, festivals who have not revised their quality assurance approaches or impact frameworks may wish to revisit these activities in the second stage of the programme.
- When pursuing new partnerships and collaborations, especially with community groups, festivals should make sure adequate development time is committed to make sure expectations and objectives are aligned.
- Festivals should also communicate with each other to make sure community engagement activity is well-distributed and responding to the needs of communities. Where this has not taken place, postcode data across all community groups and schools engaged with should be recorded and reported to BOP.
- Where partnerships have been established in year one, festivals should focus on consolidating and embedding these relationships. Festivals should also start to consider the legacy of their work – how do they understand their roles during and beyond the PlaCE programme?

## 7.6 Considering the PlaCE programme in light of the coronavirus pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has had major consequences for the Edinburgh festivals since March 2020, leading to cancelled events and programmes and a significant loss of revenue. For many festivals, a large part of the year has been focused on securing survival, and while a minority of activities and programmes have moved online, there has been a necessary reduction in activity of all kinds - including PlaCE activity.

As things stand, there remains considerable uncertainty regarding next year and what will be possible within the constraints of public health restrictions, a weakened arts and culture sector and changing consumer behaviours.

While the overall aims or 'spirit' of the programme have not lost relevance, there may be a need for the fund administrators to work with festivals to adjust or reinterpret some of the agreed indicators and outcomes in light of a dramatically shifted context.

### **Strand 1: Sustained and strengthened programming innovation**

In its first year, the PlaCE programme facilitated an enabling environment for innovation, allowing festivals to experiment with their programming without

putting box office income streams at risk and to connect with and learn from artists and cultural professionals from outside of Scotland.

Loss of income and restrictions to international travel create new obstacles when it comes to programming, however the pandemic has also created new opportunities and incentives for festivals to innovate, not least in relation to their digital offers.

Going forward, PlaCE should continue to support festivals to adapt their programmes and delivery models, digitally or otherwise, in order to safely reach audiences and communities during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Strand 2: Increased creative development opportunities across Scotland**

Emerging outcomes for cultural professionals engaging with festivals in the first year of PlaCE have been positive, however the pandemic has brought about a new, urgent set of needs for the cultural workforce.

The PlaCE programme gives festivals an opportunity to reflect on their role in the cultural ecosystem and to think about how they can support both the welfare and development of cultural practitioners through the pandemic. Indeed, the objectives around artistic quality expressed in Strand 1 are directly linked to working with artists, professionals and organisations who have been able to maintain operations during this phase. Adapted programme activities may have to focus on supporting this infrastructure.

### **Strand 3: Improved lives for citizens and communities through cultural engagement**

In a number of cases, community engagement work delivered through PlaCE has been a valuable area of development for festivals. While the pandemic has created clear obstacles to intended activities, many of the festivals have reported innovations and adaptations in their work to meet the needs of the communities and individuals they were working with.

These adaptations look set to continue as restrictions change in relation to the progress of the pandemic in the coming year. Festivals and funders recognise the need to maintain the momentum in community activity that PlaCE has enabled, through both schools and organisations, particularly when this has

clearly focused on the communities and individuals likely to suffer most acutely from the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic.

At a broader level the innovations made by festivals in their 2020 programming have also shown how the population more generally can be 'encouraged into' festival experiences at a time of high incidences of isolation (among all populations, but particularly those shielding due to additional risk-factors). This core purpose of festivals offering communities opportunities to come together and think, celebrate, relax, explore or otherwise engage in 'exceptional' experiences is acutely needed as long as pandemic adaptation is taking place across (and beyond) Scotland.

### **7.6.1 COVID-19 specific considerations for the PlaCE programme**

- How can PlaCE be used to support festival resilience and recovery in line with the three core strands of the programme?
- Recognising the significant shifts in public programming, is there an argument to remove audience metrics from the PlaCE indicator suite altogether?
- How can festivals support artists, partners and the cultural workforce, without being overburdened with responsibility (i.e. they clearly have a support role to play within the parameters of the programme but are obviously not solely responsible for artists' and organisations' survival)?
- Festivals play a crucial role as global touchpoints, moments of convergence, collaboration and showcasing for their respective sectors. How can they continue to play this crucial international and globally-leading role in the new context?

# Appendix 1

**Figure 13 Shorter-term outcomes and indicators**

| Short-term outcomes   | Output indicators   | Outcome indicators   |
|---|---|--|
| Improve organisation capacity (i.e. structures and processes) to meet the needs of the PlaCE Programme  | # staff<br>Turnover<br># and range of programmes<br># and range of audience and participants              | Internal assessment of organisational capacity (e.g. staff survey)<br>External assessment of organisational capacity (e.g. partner survey) |
| Understand and be able to communicate in what aspects of programme innovation is necessary and why      | New policies<br>Needs analyses<br>Mapping<br>Strategy documents   | Internal review of organisational strategy and priorities (e.g. staff survey)  |
| Understand and communicate how quality will be assured and assessed for festival programmes and outputs | Quality assurance policies<br>Quality assessment strategies   | Internal review of quality assurance and assessment (e.g. staff survey)  |
| Increase connections between Scottish and international cultural professionals                          | # and range of partners<br># and range of domestic and international professionals engaging/participating | International partners and professionals' assessment of quality of relationship  |
| Increase the diversity of festival staff/contributors   | Diversity of festival staff (permanent and freelance)   | Perceptions on diversity and value of it (e.g. staff survey)   |
| Increase understanding of skills gaps and needs in Scottish cultural workforce                          | Mapping/needs analysis documents or strategy for understanding skills needs and gaps                      | Evidence of understanding needs of the sector (e.g. ability to present and summarise this in a peer forum)                                 |
| Extend effective and mutual partnerships with representative communities across Edinburgh and Scotland  | # and range of community partnerships<br># and range of schools partnerships                              | Evidence of 'effectiveness' and 'mutuality' from partners (e.g. partner survey or consultation)  |

**Figure 14 Longer-term outcomes and indicators**

| Long-term outcomes  | Output indicators   | Outcome indicators  |
|---|---|---|
| Produce higher quality products and outputs   | Audience numbers and diversity<br>Participant numbers and diversity   | Results of quality assurance and assessment processes<br>External review of quality assurance and assessment (e.g. partner survey)<br>Audience/participant satisfaction indicators<br>Content analysis of media reviews |
| Raise the international cultural profile of Scotland  | # and range of international partners/staff<br>International media/social media engagement                        | International partners and professionals' assessment of quality of relationship/outputs   |
| Improve the skills of Scotland's cultural workforce and the talent pipeline   | # of cultural professionals engaged<br># of schools/pupils engaged  | Perception of skills development of those involved in professional development/education programmes   |
| Increase the involvement of communities the festivals are not currently engaged with in activities, content and impacts | # and range of communities engaged<br># and range of schools engaged<br># of co-created programmes or initiatives | Perception of community partners around added-value created by programming  |
| Improve individual and community wellbeing for a diverse and representative Scottish population                         | Audience and participant demographics   | Measures of wellbeing (set by festival according to dimensions targeted) from participant populations   |

## Appendix 2

Figure 15 PlaCE Programme assumptions and provocations

| Assumptions/provocations   | Additional notes   |
|--|--|
| PlaCE comes in context of declining public funding therefore 'growth agenda' in programme aims and evaluation should be considered accordingly | Recognition that in some cases PlaCE funding will catalyse further investment but should be considered alongside further information on organisation funding and constraints   |
| Cultural participation improves lives of communities   | Existing literature supports this assumption but need to explore ways in which PlaCE programming specifically develops aspects of individuals and communities lives (or not)   |
| Community organisations and partners are not overwhelmed by expansion of festival activity   | Recognition that community partners already struggle with capacity and do not want to be involved in tokenistic projects.  |
| Expansion to year-round offer will not compromise quality of programme or dilute festivals' offer  | Evaluation explores the extent to which additional activity is offered within organisational strategies that accommodate quality and whether creating a 'stretch' for organisations in terms of capacity and mission |
| Diversifying staff/professionals/partners will lead to better quality and more appealing programmes  | Existing literature supports assumption that greater diversity of offer leads to greater appeal and stronger representation in programmes  |
| What is the relationship between impact at local, national and international levels?   | Need to analyse data that links impact from local to national to international levels. Will also be explored in peer discussion sessions and with broader stakeholders   |
| The Scottish market and economic conditions support expertise and freedom to innovate  | Assessment of changes in market/context/political environment at interim and final reporting stages and review in peer discussions   |

# **BOP** Consulting

BOP Consulting is an international consultancy specialising in culture and the creative economy.

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