

Preliminary recommendations towards a quality assurance mark for excellence in musical progression for children and young people living in challenging circumstances in London

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1. Introduction

This research report explores excellence in musical progression for children and young people living in challenging circumstances in London. It also seeks to make preliminary recommendations for a quality assurance mark around excellence in progression for children and young people living in challenging circumstances in London.

The report takes as its starting point the Fairbeats! 2014 research project 'Pathfinders: A research report on musical progression routes for children and young people from refugee, asylum seeker and new migrant families' (henceforth 'Pathfinders'), commissioned by Sound Connections. The Pathfinders project identified a model for progression based on partnership work between musical and non-arts-based community organisations. Building on the 2014 research, this report seeks to interrogate and extend the Pathfinders model through consultation with three London-based organisations identified to be experts in the field.

Expert consultant organisations were identified through the 2015 Sound Connections mapping project, *Taking Off*. Fairbeats! acted as research consultants for *Taking Off*, gathering feedback and perspectives from over 50 London-based organisations on musical progression, investigating how progression is best defined, what it is for and where it is happening for children and young people living in challenging circumstances across London. The research report and map can be accessed at <http://www.sound-connections.org.uk/taking-off/>

Based on their extensive work in supporting progression, staff from three organisations (and a number of the organisations' active participants) were invited to share perspectives on progression and to contribute to a discussion on what excellence in supporting musical progression looks like. These research consultants were also asked to respond to the idea of creating a 'quality assurance mark' to support progression routes for children and young people living in challenging circumstances.

This research was conducted through discussion and interviews with staff and participants from three organisations:

- **The Midi Music Company** works with diverse communities in South East London including children and young people not in education, employment and training (NEET), from refugee, new migrant and asylum seeking families, with special educational needs (SEN), at risk of offending and in care.
- **Roundhouse** is based in Camden, North West London and has a particular focus on working with young people who have been excluded, marginalised or disadvantaged by society. These include young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, NEET, or are at risk of offending.
- **Making Tracks** is a project run by the Irene Taylor Trust targeting young people in Lambeth, South London at elevated risk, including those on the fringes of the criminal justice system and NEET.

This report first explores the work of these three organisations through a series of case studies, offering an overview of each organisation's approach to musical progression supported by participants' accounts of their personal experiences of progression.

There follows a more detailed discussion of participant perspectives, which unpicks the ingredients that the various project participants consulted deemed to be central to a positive progression experience. The report then outlines responses from managers from these three organisations on the key tenets of the [2014 Pathfinders toolkit](#), in order to develop a comprehensive model of successful

musical progression. The report begins with its executive summary, and a series of recommendations for quality assurance in musical progression for children and young people living in challenging circumstances.

2. Executive Summary

- Progression should be **young person responsive and tailored to individual needs**. This was repeatedly emphasised by both participants and project managers as the key ingredient to success.
- **Participants call for a ‘no-judgement space’** Emphasising equality between participants enables relationships between staff and young musicians to develop.

“Creating an environment where anything is accepted, and even if it’s not tailored to someone, be accepting of something, being able to adjust and change within reason.”
(Making Tracks participant)

- **Participants value opportunities to re-engage with programmes:**

- Continuing development
- Mentor
- Work experience
- Internships

“Along the way you kind of need that consistent support and conversations, just coming to the building and saying oh this is what I’m up to now, or catching up with Wozzy, or having access to just the internet you know” (MMC participant)

Participants are not expected to move on to new environments before they are ready and are able to keep coming back as long as they need to.

- **Participants place long term progression as central to success or failure of participation**

“I want to say this as well, they make you feel very welcome and included which is the reason why they shouldn’t let you go after.” (Making Tracks participant)

Getting involved with music was seen to be a proactive choice to widen horizons and find pathways into employment and training – when this didn’t materialize participants were left with a sense that the staff had been somehow ‘false’ or ‘dishonest’ undoing much of the good work that takes place during a project.

- **Participants value genuine employment and development opportunities**

“Having the opportunity to talk to people who are accomplished in their desired field and understanding how they got there, but also, other routes to become accomplished, as it’s just not something that is widely documented in the arts.” (Roundhouse participant)

Once participants feel ready to move on they are keen to meet and work with other musicians in professional environments.

- **Music organisations work in partnerships with non-music based organisations to reach young people facing challenging circumstances in their lives**

- All three organisations see themselves as **versions of a ‘musical intermediary’** within the context of the Fairbeats! model
- They **work actively with non-music specific partner organisations** and the **local community** to recruit participants who may not have been involved with music before

- **Organisational Mission statements and prior experience matter**
 - Managers agreed that when **missions, aims and objectives diverge, particularly with regards to inclusivity, there may be some challenges** for progression partnerships but it is important not to limit participants' options, as Phil Greenwood at MMC says:

“Someone might blossom in a different environment that you wouldn't imagine.”
 - At **Roundhouse specific targets relating to challenging circumstances** within the mission influence programming on both the participation and artistic programmes
- **Personal relationships between staff at partner organisations support progression**
 - **Personal contacts, friendship and prior history** of working together between project staff is an ingredient of some of the most successful progression partnerships
 - **Co-leading projects** (between organisations) may be a good way to embed and establish progression routes on from one to the next
- **Both the 'Intermediary' and 'Next step' take responsibility for progression**
 - The **additional practical support that is required from both 'intermediaries' and 'next steps'** is substantial for progression to be successful for some young people
 - **A lack of understanding or experience of these issues from some 'next steps' can be a major barrier to progression**
 - Relying on intermediaries to provide the financial support alone limits the number of young people who progress
- **The Welcome matters and is not just at the door**
 - **Ensuring that diverse communities are represented at every level** (at the door, in the bar, in the studio, on stage, in the board room) reduces the capacity for people to feel singled out and ostracised
 - **Setting targets, gathering information and proactive monitoring** enables organisations to change patterns in artistic and participatory engagement
 - **Signposting participants towards entry level employment opportunities is one way to diversify the workforce** and foster a feeling of familiarity between young people on programmes and staff at projects and venues.
- **Internal progression fosters external progression**
 - By maintaining long term contact through development opportunities project managers were able to **sign post participants on to next steps at appropriate stages in their musical and personal development**
 - Organisations become like **'second homes'** with participants returning for a number of years

3. Recommendations for quality assurance badge

Based on the research including the testimony of participants and project managers we are making the following preliminary recommendations towards creating a quality assurance (QA) badge around supporting excellence in progression for children and young people facing challenging circumstances in their lives. Creating such a badge was seen to be a worthwhile endeavour and should be:

Flexible and Tailored

- To be useful and valuable any QA badge would need to accommodate and reflect the differing needs and experiences of all the participants that come under the umbrella term 'challenging circumstances'.
- There should be different levels (e.g. Bronze; Silver; Gold)

Young People directed

- *"The project experience explained through the eyes of young people rather than someone from the organisation saying how awesome the project is. So many projects from the outside look incredible but you hear from a young person who has taken part and it really changes your opinion."* (Hermione Jones, Making Tracks)

Both young people facing and organisation facing: who is it for?

- A version for both young people (created and assessed with young people so that the information reaches and speaks to them e.g. a recognisable and communicative badge on door/promotional material)

AND

- Project manager facing (an in-depth database which goes into detail of what an organisation has in place and does to support progression and for who, etc.)

Both sensitive to organisational capacity and a robust measure

- Extra work
- They also emphasised the importance of the measure being robust, difficult to get and retain
- Perhaps there could be funding streams specifically attached to the work of achieving a QA badge of this nature
- Project managers emphasised that many small organisations don't have the capacity to take on **Training to be included in attainment of QA badge**
- It was suggested that the need to achieve such a QA measure would be helpful in promoting an awareness of and commitment to the issues around progression with all staff (not just those working in community engagement)
- The QA would be a proactive tool for embedding 'the welcome' throughout an organisation.

Potential criteria for achieving QA badge:

- Participant experiences 'mystery shoppers'
- Participant retention over a number of years
- Evidence of targets, monitoring and adjustment based on findings (relating to uptake from YP in challenging circumstances)

- Evidence of robust referral processes and appropriate staff relationships with participants
- Evidence of progression within programmes
- Evidence of progression beyond organisations
- Evidence of active partnerships with other organisations

Other Quality Assurance models to consider:

In conducting the research, the following QA badges and projects were mentioned as potential models or alternatives to a QA badge around musical progression for young people facing challenging circumstances. In creating a new badge it is recommended that further work be done in investigating such measures including what can be learnt from them, how they work practically and what they already cover.

London Youth: Quality Mark

London Youth is a quality assurance accredited by City & Guilds for voluntary and community organisations running youth activities. It measures organisations' performance in nine quality areas including governance; leadership and management; user-centred service; and results. By achieving the London Youth Quality Mark organisations have successfully demonstrated qualities such as:

1. Effective and responsible governance.
2. Outcomes for young People.
3. Safeguarding and protecting young people.
4. Diversity, equality and inclusion.
5. Implementing new ideas and improvement.
6. Building good relationships with other organizations.

Arts Council: quality principles

The aim of the quality principles work is to raise the standard of work being produced by, with and for children and young people.

Seven quality principles have been developed as a result of close collaboration between the Arts Council England and arts and cultural organisations that work with children and young people.

- Striving for excellence and innovation
- Being authentic
- Being exciting, inspiring and engaging
- Ensuring a positive and inclusive experience
- Actively involving children and young people
- Enabling personal progression
- Developing belonging and ownership

Alongside the Quality Principles work, Quality Metrics is a sector-led metrics framework that will support National Portfolio Organisations to better understand the quality of their work through self, peer and public review. It uses self, peer and public assessment to capture the quality of arts and cultural work. It has the potential to offer arts and cultural organisations greater insights into what people value about their work, as well as allowing them to benchmark against similar organisations

Attitude is Everything, Mystery Shopper:

Attitude is Everything improves Deaf and disabled people's access to live music by working in partnership with audiences, artists and the music industry.

Having begun as a pilot project in 2000, Attitude is Everything are now a fully independent charity and part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio of Organisations. Attitude is Everything encourages events producers to go beyond the legal obligations set out in the Equality Act and implement best practice, providing a fair and equal service to their Deaf and disabled customers.

The Mystery Shopping project is the keystone of the work. A dedicated team of Mystery Shoppers who are Deaf and disabled music fans report back on the accessibility and overall experience at UK music venues, clubs and festivals, in return for free tickets and travel. This is vital for identifying each venue's strengths and areas for improvement.

Investors in People:

Set up in 1991 Investors in People is a Quality Assurance badge for better people management. The internationally recognised accreditation is held by 14,000 organisations across the world. The Standard defines what it takes to lead, support and manage people well for sustainable results.

Based on 25 years of leading practice, the Investors in People Standard is underpinned by a rigorous assessment methodology and a framework which reflects the latest workplace trends, essential skills and effective structures required to outperform in any industry.

The Investors in People framework provides 27 scales for comparison. Using online assessment data, it compares an organisations performance year on year, to ensure it has a clear benchmark for performance.

Successful accreditation against the Investors in People Standard is a sign of a great employer, an outperforming place to work and a clear commitment to sustainability.

Tate 'Circuit' programme (with and for young people)

Circuit is built on Tate's long-term work with young people, often in vulnerable situations. It recognises that a successful programme, one that has real impact on young people's lives, offers: varied entry points, differing levels of support and progression, the ability to influence the arts organisation in a visible and tangible way, the role of visual art as a catalyst to expression and production across art disciplines and a co-learning environment nurtured by participating artists and gallery staff.

Circuit is designed with and for young people at each gallery, through four main delivery strands:

- Festival – a large scale event to attract a wide and diverse new audience
- Partnerships – with colleagues in the youth sector to support those with least access to the arts
- Peer – led – artistic programme delivered by and for young people
- Digital – creating new work and sharing our learning

Research and evaluation are embedded throughout Circuit. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation has provided Tate and Circuit partners with a rare chance to investigate, measure, develop and inspire ways of working through culture for the benefit of young people, over a four-year period.

Working with artists, the youth sector and a diverse range of young people, Tate are exploring how:

- To make a positive difference with and for young people
- To improve access and opportunities for 'harder to reach' young people through extending and developing sustainable networks between the arts and youth sector
- To develop and change practice within and across cultural organisations
- To change attitudes and behaviours towards and about young people

2. Case Studies

2.1 The Midi Music Company

Based in Deptford South East London, the **Midi Music Company (MMC)** was established in January 1995 and provides a space for all children and young people aged 5-30 to be inspired to get into music and the creative industries.

MMC has a collaborative approach to its programme, ensuring access to experienced industry professionals, musicians, producers and songwriters who deliver cutting-edge creative and inspiring projects in a safe and welcoming environment. The organisation's industry connections allow for vocational and enterprise development into the music business.

MMC works with children and young people from diverse communities and also provides opportunities for parents, family members and adults to participate in music-making with an aim to enrich the creative process.

At MMC we spoke with Philip Greenwood (Programme Co-ordinator), and Tamsin Kayembe who has been working with MMC as a participant, music leader and artist over the past ten years.

Tamsin's story:

"I had found the whole idea of A-levels didn't work. I did A-levels for a year and a half and because I am such a creative person it was really hard for me. I think some people find those structures really hard and we need alternatives. You need something else you can channel and work with.

The first thing I did with Midi was when I was 19 or 20 years old. It was called 'Arco Music and Media', a two-year course [costing] about £50 for the whole year (or termly, I forget) for two days a week. It was basically learning how to play a musical instrument: I chose keyboard. I also did some basic midi skills, how to do production. There were various aspects you could look at in terms of music production and everyone went with what were their strengths: songwriting, learning an instrument, learning to play songs – there were various disciplines, artistically. While I was doing that I was at Greenwich College doing some music business and recording-studio engineering, but their recording studio was the 'old school' one so they were like tape-to-tape and patching in. Midi was the first time I was encouraged to at least try and play. That was about 10 years ago and I'm still in contact with a lot of people that were on that course with me, and they've all gone in their different directions musically.

I was also involved in the Break Out Club. I performed at one or two and then I got the opportunity to host a few of them which was great. I got the opportunity to work with so many different artists at different levels. Another thing is this thing called CICAs [Creative Industries Careers Advice] which they do. These radio interviews online and I do that as well: that's a chance to ask artists how they got to do what they're doing.

Since Arco, it took me a long time to get confident in my musical skills and ability so I was doing a creative leadership course at Second Wave, down the road from Midi. I did that and it allowed me to combine my musical talents and writing talents with working with young people, so I kind of got into the whole freelancing as a practitioner and working with young people devising music, songs and plays and drama – all that kind of stuff. It kind of put me in that world of theatre and musical theatre. I was working in that for about 3 years, and then I went to Goldsmiths and did my degree in youth work. I taught on various projects they were doing while I was at university, including a DJing and lyric-writing course in Peckham for young people. Then, leaving Goldsmiths I was still freelancing and along the way I was still involved

with stuff at Midi. Midi did this big project about the history of Grime music. I was involved in that quite extensively.

Now, at the moment, I'm doing the internship with Midi. It's a production internship where I get to work specifically on my own music and produce my own music which is amazing. A lot of my stuff has been MCing and spoken word and poetry based – now I get brush up my skills and make the accompaniment to it by doing this internship.”

2.2 Roundhouse

Founded by Sir Torquil Norman CBE in 2000, **Roundhouse Trust** is a registered charity with an objective to provide ‘space to create’ for 11 to 25 year olds.

The trust has a particular focus on those young people who have been excluded, marginalised or disadvantaged by society and works to enable them to find pathways back into education, work or simply to enjoy a wider cultural life. In 2012-13 60% of all the young people Roundhouse reached were experiencing some form of personal, social or economic disadvantage.

Roundhouse offers an open-access programme of projects for young creatives including a full complement of music, performing arts and media projects. Projects run year-round at all levels through a range of termly, holiday and year-long programmes, and the organisation maintains ongoing relationships with local schools and pupil referral units through curriculum-linked activities and after-school programmes.

The trust works closely with a range of youth services to introduce young people to the venue through partners such as Connexions, Youth Offending Teams, local community centres and clubs, and also works with creative, educational and youth organisations from across London, to explore new partnerships, develop creative networks and support innovative projects.

Roundhouse enhances its creative programme by offering opportunities to build skills for employment and personal development. These opportunities range from paid work in broadcasting, workshop assistants and administrative roles, traineeships in the Creative, Marketing and Youth Engagement teams, along with artistic opportunities such as the Online Film Fund, Roundhouse Rising festival and their pioneering station, [Roundhouse Radio](#).

Roundhouse Youth Advisory Board is a group of young people who advise Roundhouse on decisions particularly around the programme for young people and work with young audiences.

Two positions for members of Roundhouse Youth Advisory Board are maintained on the Board of Trustees ensuring that young people are at the heart of decision-making at Roundhouse.

At Roundhouse we spoke to members of staff Lucy Scott (Music Programme Producer) and Cathy Weatherald (Community Engagement Manager). We also spoke with James Hunter, a participant at Roundhouse who has been involved for 18 months and is now working as Trainee Station Manager for the organisation.

James' story:

“I first got involved about 18 months ago through a Producer Surgery course. It was a three-day course for intermediate producers to either work on a track they wanted to develop, or create an entirely new track which would then be showcased at a party on the last day. It was run by the CDR (Create, Define, Release) crew, headed up by Tony Nwachukwu. I was also part of the Nandos Music Experience, which was incredible. There were about 16-20 artists/producers on the course and we were split into groups of four and tasked with creating a track in a day. Nandos invited Example and a South-African producer, Muzi, to

come along and give a talk in the morning then advice on our tracks throughout the day. We were also given stems of Example's and Muzi's tracks which we had to use in ours. Stormzy then casually dropped by during lunch, did a little free-style while we ate chicken and then joined the afternoon sessions. At the end of the day, we all went to a party in a Nandos as it seems parties at the end of the day are essential. I am now Trainee Station Manager for Roundhouse."

2.3 Making Tracks

The Irene Taylor Trust's **Making Tracks** programme targets young people in Lambeth at elevated risk, including those on the fringes of the criminal justice system and those who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). The programme expands the horizons of these young people through an intensive week of creative sessions, culminating in a live performance to the local community, and followed up by a series of music sessions over four weeks. Working in partnership with The Prince's Trust Fairbridge Programme, the young people receive pastoral support and bespoke guidance to further development opportunities.

During an intensive five-day project, led by the Irene Taylor Trust's project team, the young people taking part learn how to play instruments, form a band and write their own original songs. The participants are also supported by musicians from the Irene Taylor Trust's ex-prisoner programme, 'Sounding Out'. As well as performing their original songs live, the new band records their tracks, which are then professionally mixed for a CD for participants to share with friends and family.

After taking part in the five-day intensive project, the young people are given the opportunity to hone their skills in twice-weekly sessions, over the course of which they can earn an Arts Award accreditation.

Central to Making Tracks is guiding the young people on to further opportunities. Personal Development Manager Hermione Jones works closely with the young people to help source suitable progression routes and development opportunities, and has recently helped young people on to courses with Ovalhouse, National Youth Theatre, Pathways SE11 and the Royal Academy of Music.

At Making Tracks we spoke to Hermione Jones (Personal Development Manager) and to project participants 'Alex' and 'Joe' (names have been changed). Both participants have been working with Making Tracks over a number of years and were referred to the project via The Prince's Trust.

'Alex's' story:

I've been involved with the Irene Taylor Trust and Making Tracks for 2 years. I first got involved through a referral from The Prince's Trust. It was my first musical experience. I've also come back as a mentor. Since getting involved I've done lots of other activities. I've actually done a music project with Roundhouse – it was called 'On Track'. I wasn't nervous at all, not at all, because really and truly this – Making Tracks – started off my feeling for music. How great this Making Tracks course is. It doesn't matter how good you are in 'levels', I'm talking about if you're not that great – if you don't feel like you're that great – it's a way to get into it. Before I did Roundhouse I did a project with National Youth Theatre called J-up [and] I was also involved with Dance United and Ovalhouse theatre. I'm a performer so I do performing arts in theatres, recently I auditioned for a show called Meta and I got a call this morning and she said I got it.

'Joe's' story:

I got involved through Fairbridge and The Prince's Trust. I was there last year and this came up as one of the things I could do whilst there. I was into music and so I came along. I hadn't really done a lot with a live band before. It's definitely improved my confidence: having good reviews and feedback raises your confidence. As well, I've come back on other courses as a mentor, those were my most enjoyable experiences because of being able to help people in the same position as I was in when I did it.

After Making Tracks I was brought back to go to the studio and get a recording started, for ten weeks or so, and every week we got to go to the studio and have lessons on guitar, singing and piano. This event we're doing tomorrow, I wouldn't be doing it if I didn't go to Making Tracks. I'm going to be performing at Southbank soon: I'm going to rap, I'm going to write something. It's for the Irene Taylor Trust.

I feel like in general one of my complaints is that there's not enough of things like this going on – if there is I don't know about it. Obviously I was kind of lucky to find this and all the things I can get involved in musically. I've been building up connections as I go on. I meet more and more people, Hermione being one, The Prince's Trust being one. I go to a studio in Brixton called Raw Material – through them I've travelled to America.

I think money and opportunity are the biggest challenges I face. I think about the future much less than do I about now. I'm facing problems now and I have to deal with them now. I've just said to myself in a few years I'm going to be performing in big places.

3. Excellence in Progression: Exploring Participant Perspectives

3.1 Overview

All three organisations consulted place progression at the core of what they offer:

“We try to facilitate a journey into, through and on from Roundhouse – it’s not about people getting stuck here.” (Cathy Weatherald, Roundhouse)

“[It’s] fundamental to our service – the fact that we are about how do you make a living, a way with your music, with your creativity.” (Phil Greenwood, Midi Music Company).

“That’s really the aim of the project: not to have to hand-hold but [to] get them to a point where they can do the process [of finding new opportunities] themselves. But if they need extra help they are able to call up and ask because they know we are there.” (Hermione Jones, Making Tracks)

In creating and facilitating progression routes, the staff we spoke to kept returning to the same point: **listen** to what participants want.

“[Progression should be] shaped by the young person’s needs – it’s not a case that all of you are going to get referred to this project afterwards – it is a case of I sit down with young people and find out what they are interested in doing and then search for bespoke projects for that young person.” (Hermione Jones, Making Tracks)

“[It’s] not fitting projects to people – but working with these young people to find what would suit them that is out there... We respond to what they feel are their requirements.” (Phil Greenwood, Midi Music Company)

“It depends on the young person, if they come to me for advice and guidance we talk about things they could do.” (Lucy Scott, Roundhouse)

Staff consulted emphasised how important it is to know participants well enough and over a long-enough period of time to find out what they really want and to support them to access those opportunities when they are ready:

*“For me it is really about [asking]: is that opportunity **the right opportunity** for that young person **at that time**? It’s really just **involving the young person in the decision-making**. I’ll say: ‘what do you want to go onto at the moment? Where are you living? Where are you happy travelling to?’ Sometimes with gangs and stuff they’re not happy going to certain areas; sometimes I say what time commitment are you able to realistically give at the moment [as] sometimes they just want a distraction, [i.e.] just two hours a week, and it’s just really listening to what they say and not saying go on this intensive two-week course, you know, if they’ve just had a baby or they are sorting out housing issues. It’s just not going to be the right time to happen.” (Hermione Jones, Making Tracks)*

*“We have to be aware about young people coming and what they might need. So if a young person came to an open-access programme that we thought would need a lot more support, we might direct them towards a more targeted programme and then once they’d done the targeted programme and **they got to know us, we got to know them**, they might be able to **go onto the open access programme and take the next step... With the more targeted work we would do an extra face-to-face and we would have quite a thorough referral process.**” (Cathy Weatherald, Roundhouse)*

*“What we are trying to do at CICAS [Creative Industries Careers Advice] is make sure they are getting the right connections who are going to help them stay on a focused path. **You need to have a strong enough relationship with the student for them to be able to tell you about how they feel... interpersonal trust.**” (Phil Greenwood, Midi Music Company)*

With this advice in mind, we now share the perspectives of participants themselves on what makes some projects more successful than others in facilitating progression.

3.2 ‘Feeling part of something’: Team, community and acceptance of difference

All of the participants we spoke to talked about how successful projects emphasise equality between participants, offering a ‘no-judgement space’ where relationships between staff and young musicians can develop and are adaptable to the varied needs and experiences of participants.

In conversation with Making Tracks participants:

*‘Alex’: “The reason why this one works so well is because **it’s not judgemental, everybody is learning, everybody is helping, everybody is ready to support each other**, so it’s not like, ‘oh you’re rubbish and this one’s better’. Basically **there’s no favouritism.**”*

CC: What advice would you give to arts leaders?

*‘Joe’: “Look past people’s past, **treat everyone as equal 100%**, cos if someone feels they are not treated as equal they are not going to want to come back...”*

CC: Do you think it’s important for us to know a bit about the past?

*‘Joe’: “It depends on the person, for example I may not mind but another person might not like it – I think just knowing that everyone is different and adjusting to how everyone is... being able to adjust to how they think or feel... **creating an environment where anything is accepted**, and even if it’s not tailored to someone, be accepting of something, being able to adjust and change within reason.”*

In conversation with a Midi Music Company participant:

CC: How did you get involved with Midi?

*MMC participant: “I did a music and media course (Arco music and media) - a two-year course. There was a whole group of us and we were encouraged to work **collaboratively**... There was a cost but I don’t think it was an expensive cost – about £50 for the whole year or termly – the course was two days a week. I’m still in contact with a lot of people that were on that course with me... three or four people from that course I still speak to.”*

CC: What advice would you give to arts organisations hoping to support progression?

*MMC participant: “**Giving artists community**, and just **community in general** – artists deliberately, voluntarily engaging with community – cos that can feed your art, feed your voice, feed everything – it’s all connected and art should really serve community and artists should think like that.... understanding how complex and varied life is.”*

In conversation with a Roundhouse Participant:

CC: What do you think made them work so well for you?

Roundhouse participant: *“I think they worked well because I was given the opportunity to work and interact with other producers who were at similar stages to myself, which is definitely something I struggled to find beforehand.”*

3.3 Access to opportunities that nourish the realisation of artistic identity

The participants we spoke to talked about how getting involved with music through the Midi Music Company, Roundhouse and Making Tracks had enabled them to realise and discover their personal artistic identities. These were identities that may have existed prior to this engagement but had perhaps not had an opportunity to flourish previously.

In conversation with Making Tracks participants:

‘Alex’: *“[At Roundhouse I felt comfortable because] **I’m a performer**. I love being in a space with loads of people you know, joining in **to do something creative**, that’s just what I do so, I never felt uncomfortable in them situations – I more feel like I’m at home.”*

‘Joe’: *“Before Making Tracks I hadn’t really done a lot with a live band. At that time **I was trying to find exactly what it is that I wanted to do, so it’s propelled me and helped me to have more interests...**”*

In conversation with a Midi Music Company participant:

CC: What barriers did you face, what external factors helped you overcome them?

MMC participant: *“For me the whole idea of A-levels didn’t work. I did A-levels for a year and a half and because I am such a creative person it was really hard for me... I think **some people find those structures really hard and we need alternatives**, you need something else you can channel and work with... As I was growing up **getting access to different kinds of artists that were different, and looked different and sound different** and still have a huge fan base and are gigging and touring and doing all these wonderful things, I didn’t have those kinds of artists immediately around me to tell me, you know this person does this, this person does that. I think at the time I only had access to mainstream narrow artists. Obviously I started searching for it... Working with MMC, was a very positive thing, they can tell you go and check this out, maybe you’ll find some stuff you’re into, go here, all that kind of stuff is really important.”*

In conversation with a Roundhouse Participant:

Roundhouse Participant: *“As a producer in general I feel too much freedom can be immobilising, so it was actually quite useful to be set parameters when approaching a project, e.g. create a track using these samples in the style of... by the end of the day. It just gives you more focus, and then having the support to do that is, of course, essential... and having access to quality producing and recording equipment is important to the overall experience as it’s not the everyday norm for most.”*

3.4 Long-term access to a safe environment where there is time and opportunity to build up confidence

The participants we spoke to emphasised how each of these three organisations continued to offer them opportunities to re-engage with projects after first contact, through continuing development programmes as well as mentoring opportunities, internships and work experience. In offering these opportunities, organisations signal that participants are not expected to move on to new environments before they are ready and are welcome to return to this 'safe' environment for as long as they need.

In conversation with a Midi Music Company participant:

CC: What was the influence of Midi being available to you over the past ten years?

MMC participant: *"The **consistency** and the **access** is really important. Because everyone arrives when they arrive – obviously some people get into it and know exactly what they want to do and what they want to get out of it, but **along the way you kind of need that consistent support and conversations**, just coming to the building and saying 'oh this is what I'm up to now', or catching up with Wozzy, or having access to just the internet you know, and space to rehearse and practise and really take yourself seriously as an artist."*

In conversation with Making Tracks participant, 'Joe':

'Joe': *"Making Tracks, definitely improved my confidence – when you come you start on Monday and perform on Thursday – **performing in that short time and having good reviews and feedback raises your confidence**. It did raise my confidence a bit... I've come back on other courses as a **mentor**, those were my **most enjoyable [times] because of being able to help people in the same position as I was in when I did it.**"*

CC: Before you go to do a new activity – how do you feel?

'Joe': *"Usually I'll just jump at anything new or different or looking challenging, I like challenging myself."*

CC: Have you always felt like this?

'Joe': *"Not always, it's been like that for me maybe a year or two?"*

CC: What's made the change?

'Joe': *"It's been a mixture, music, being able to perform, a lot of the things I've done **I've been pushed to do something I usually wouldn't do** and I think **that's helped.**"*

3.5 Actions speak louder than words: Making sure progression happens

Participants emphasised that progression onto new opportunities (once they felt ready) was crucial to their sense of whether a project had made any real impact on their lives. This was seen to happen when staff took a genuine interest in building relationships with them, a process voiced by participants as being when the staff 'really care' and are 'good people'. Getting involved with music was seen to be a pro-active choice to widen horizons and find pathways into employment and training, and when this didn't materialize participants were left with a sense that the project staff had been somehow 'false' or 'dishonest', undoing much of the good work that might have taken place during the project.

When discussing this theme, participants placed being supported to secure a long-term progression route as central to the value of participating in music.

In conversation with Making Tracks participant, 'Alex':

CC: How has this particular project made you ready for further experiences?

'Alex': *"Well I think people like Hermione – because she wouldn't stop calling us, not like nagging, to see how we were doing and what's going on – I felt like it was a team, **I didn't feel like they were discarding us afterwards**, because usually, not usually, but some projects I have done in the past they would be 'oh yeah it's all good, yeah' and then after the course is done it's like there's no more contact, so there's no contact afterwards. With this one they call and ask if you're doing anything. With this one I was like 'Oh Hermione, I've got nothing else to do' and she's like 'look, this came up, an audition that you should do.' Which was for National Youth Theatre and she was like 'try it out', and I did it and I was like 'Wow, this is amazing!'"*

CC: Have there been activities you have taken part in where you didn't want to come back and why?

'Alex': *"Yeah I did a course, I'm not going to say the name, but it was like 'oh you're going to get a job at the end of this, it's 80% guaranteed.' And I was like 'oh yeah, I need a job. I'd like to do something that's good.' So I did it. Everyone on the course was nice, all the young people were great as well but then **at the end all it was, was that you get a certificate** and then they basically don't really contact you. You get emails now and then. But **it just felt like a complete waste of time cos I'm still unemployed**, so it was a kind of disappointment."*

CC: So most of these projects people make you feel very welcome and included but it's crucial that something happens after?

'Alex': *"**I want to say this as well, they make you feel very welcome and included which is the reason why they shouldn't let you go after.** Because it felt like – so you're just doing it because we're on the course at this moment in time? It's just false. It's just to make money or something... and what I think is good [at Making Tracks] is the calls like, 'how you doing?' or like checking up basically, and yeah if somebody doesn't want to come in that day maybe call and see but never just throw them away, kind of try to persuade them, because we're all growing and it just helps that way."*

CC How does Hermione **support you with new experiences?**

'Alex': *"**The most important thing is to be a good person** and the people here are all good people and for me personally **that's what helps me to take their advice.** I'll take their advice if they are a good person."*

In conversation with a Midi Music Company participant:

CC: What external factors have helped you overcome challenges?

MMC Participant: *"Working with Midi was a very positive thing – the environment they create as an organisation, with the people that work there and the access that they have. The ethos, **you build relationships with staff there, you start seeing how they asked you what you are up to. They can give you advice**, they can tell you go and check this out, maybe you'll find some stuff you're into, go here, all that kind of stuff is really important."*

In conversation with a Roundhouse Participant:

CC: Have you ever taken part in an activity where you didn't want to come back, if so what do you think made it feel less positive.

Roundhouse Participant: *"Not really, but I feel the only time that that would happen is if I felt I didn't achieve what I was there to achieve."*

CC: What would your advice be to people running music projects with regards to making them feel as welcoming and positive as possible – what makes you want to keep coming back to a project and take part in more activities?

Roundhouse Participant: *"There's the part of being given the opportunity to do what the project advertises (which goes back to the whole thing of feeling like I achieved what the project advertised initially)."*

3.6 Offering networking and opportunities to gain exposure

Once participants feel ready to move on, discussion found that participants are keen to meet and work with other musicians in professional environments that open up genuine employment and development opportunities.

In conversation with Making Tracks participants, 'Alex' and 'Joe':

'Alex': *"I've actually done a music project with Roundhouse – it was called 'On Track' and that was quite awesome. It was live instruments, we all worked as groups to come up with a piece for a final performance and that went well. **There was some funders and stuff.** Actually one of my friends got told, asked if she would go on X Factor and she was like no – but yeah, **it felt like really important people was watching...** It was very **valuable** because **it's Roundhouse and loads of big artists perform there.**"*

'Joe': *"I've been building up connections - as I go on I meet more and more people, Hermione being one, [The] Prince's Trust being one. I usually go to a studio in Brixton called Raw Material, through them I've travelled to America... This event we're doing tomorrow – I wouldn't be doing it if I didn't go to Making Tracks. I'm going to be performing at Southbank soon. I'm going to rap, I'm going to write something."*

In conversation with a Midi Music Company participant:

CC: Which projects have you particularly enjoyed?

MMC participant: *"I was also involved in the Break Out Club, that was an amazing thing for me to be involved in. I think I performed at one or two and then I got the opportunity to host a few of them. **I got the opportunity to work with so many different artists at different levels.** You'd have artists that maybe started out early on in the year and then two years later they'd maybe come to do Break Out Club and they'd kind of done all this stuff and you think to yourself 'Well how did you do that?' And **you talk to them and ask them the questions.** Another thing is this thing called CICAs which they do these radio interviews, online, and I do that as well and that's **a chance to ask them how they got to do what they're doing, how***

they got into it, almost like little models of how you can get into the industry in different ways, and that was very beneficial to me.”

In conversation with a Roundhouse Participant:

Roundhouse Participant: “With the Nandos project, meeting people who were more accomplished and being given the opportunity to talk to them in an informal manner really made a difference.”

Summary

- Both staff and participants powerfully emphasised the importance of any progression opportunity being fundamentally **participant-led** in design and operation;
- Participants highlighted how a successful project needs to build an **inclusive, judgement-free community** among participants and staff;
- Participants consulted spoke about the importance of feeling that one’s **artistic identity** was nurtured, realised and valued in such opportunities;
- Being provided with **long-term access to opportunities**, not being expected to move on to new environments before feeling ready and being welcome to **return to a ‘safe environment’** were all highlighted by participants as central to a good model of progression;
- **Integrity** was central to participants: promises need to be kept, relationships need to feel ‘real’ and any progression opportunities offered need to be tangible, worthwhile and realistic;
- When participants were ready, opportunities to **network** and **gain exposure in genuinely professional environments** were viewed as particularly valuable.

4. Responding to the Pathfinders toolkit: Managers' perspectives

We spoke to staff at each organisation about how progression worked for them and what they thought of some of the models and approaches outlined in the 2014 Pathfinders toolkit (available at <http://www.sound-connections.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Pathfinders-Executive-Summary.pdf>).

4.1 Grassroot – intermediary – next step: A useful model?

The 2014 Fairbeats! Pathfinders toolkit proposed a model of progression moving across three types of organisation:

*“Our toolkit tracks the potential progression route of children and young people from initial contact with a **grassroots, non-arts-based organisation** (i.e. Action for Refugees in Lewisham) **which targets particular communities directly**; through an **arts-based ‘intermediary organisation’** (i.e. Fairbeats!) and onto a mainstream **‘next-step’ organisation, programme or venue that offers broader musical (or participatory) activity** (i.e. Animate Orchestra at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance).” (2014: 6)*

In this phase of the research, we were keen to find out how relevant this model proved and so asked each consultant organisation:

How do you respond to the idea of ‘grass roots’, ‘musical intermediary’ and ‘next steps’ organisations?

Where would you say your organisation fits into this picture – or do we need a different picture for your organisation?

All three organisation consulted saw themselves primarily as versions of **musical intermediaries** (despite being quite different in size, target demographic and musical offer). Roundhouse can also be seen to operate as a ‘next step’ for many young people, while the Midi Music Company encompasses all three stages of the journey, from ‘grassroots’ to ‘intermediary’ to ‘next step’.

Making Tracks works in partnership with grassroots organisations such as Fairbridge and The Prince’s Trust in Oval to recruit participants and offer access to music courses:

“We are definitely an intermediary organisation: the participants we work with are recruited through partner organisations, so they are already involved with programmes with them that aren’t necessarily musical... they are then recruited onto our project and we do act as a middle-point for them then moving onto next steps.” (Hermione Jones, Making Tracks)

Roundhouse works with numerous grassroots organisations in Camden and Islington, and has built referral partnerships over the past ten years.

“We have a kind of range of, depth of partnerships in place from formal partnership agreements to informal referral organisation agreements and that ranges from local council estates, youth clubs, homelessness hostels, mental health, leaving care and ex-offenders.” (Cathy Weatherald, Roundhouse)

“We do a lot of different stuff on different layers. We offer beginners engagement on core programmes – and at the other end we have an artist development scheme... We’re really aware of what young people do when they leave and what’s out there for them as a profession from here... I would say we are a musical intermediary.” (Lucy Scott, Roundhouse)

At Roundhouse, working with grassroots organisations includes inviting

“local Camden and Islington schools and community groups to come in to find out what’s coming up, sometimes we have a theme and a guest speaker and then you know everyone networks and shares best practice in a practical session. So it’s about up-skilling youth workers who would like to deliver X Y Z in their grassroots context where they have the relationship with the young people on the ground.” (Cathy Weatherald, Roundhouse)

Phil Greenwood, at **Midi Music Company** saw the organisation as both a grassroots and intermediary organisation.

“[In terms of] grassroots, the Budding Musicians Club ‘access to music’ opportunity is our young persons’ flagship programme. We also have beginners’ courses for [people aged] 16+, guitar classes for adults, and music production. We have a creative choir not just for beginners, but musical people who can hold a tune: that’s grassroots. As an intermediary there’s CICAS [Creative Industries Careers Advice]; that’s our main strand.”

Summary

- All three organisations see themselves as versions of a ‘musical intermediary’ within the context of the Fairbeats! model;
- They work actively with non-music specific partner organisations and the local community to recruit participants who may not have been involved with music before and may face challenging circumstances in their lives. At Roundhouse this includes up-skilling youth workers at grassroots organisations.

4.2 Mission statements: The value of ‘inclusivity’ and ‘artistic excellence’

The Fairbeats! Pathfinders toolkit proposed the importance of organisations’ overall stated missions in shaping the progression structures and experiences which tend to be on offer:

*“While missions may diverge considerably between organisations, a practical and concerted commitment to **inclusivity** in a ‘next-step’ organisation is a good indicator of a successful progression route... A primary emphasis on **‘artistic excellence’** in the ‘next-step’ organisation may signal potential barriers to engagement among some children and young people in such challenging circumstances. However, these barriers can be overcome through honest and open discussion between organisations.” (2014: 5-6)*

In this phase of the research, we examined how far these different emphases impacted on organisation’s progression routes, asking:

We found that a strong emphasis on inclusivity alongside artistic excellence in a mission statement was a good indicator that a ‘next step’ organisation would be a positive receiver for participants from Fairbeats! Do you have any thoughts on this?

Lucy Scott explained how concrete targets within Roundhouse mission statement directly impact on the way the organisation is run and their capacity to work with over 1,500 young people from challenging backgrounds per year:

“[It’s in our] mission statement that we work with 3,000 young people and a certain percentage of that would be from challenging backgrounds. 50%: that’s the floor target and

we do exceed that every year. From the artistic programme to the studios, we always have conversations in producers' meetings about how to get participation at the heart of the artistic programme work... Young People are genuinely at the centre of what we do. We have Roundhouse Youth Advisory Board which is a group of studio members who advise on what they want and need and how we can shape the programme around what people in the studios want and need – so we're not just imagining – we've also got Young People on the Board of Trustees, the senior management board."

In terms of assessing the opportunities offered to those young people whom Roundhouse works with, Lucy talked about carefully scrutinising the suitability of (and motivation behind) other such projects/project facilitators:

"We're super-protective about who we forward opportunities to. We're quite good at checking how well thought-through [they are], whether they have any experience. It happens with artists who want a participation element, which comes from a good place, but maybe they haven't got the experience."

At Midi Music Company, staff discussed how artistic excellence and inclusivity are central to the organisation's mission:

"From the start, our vision has never changed. Our core aims were to create opportunities for children and young people to enter further and higher education; to support them to further their own enterprises; to develop technical skills; to develop a platform for mixed-ability learning, particularly in terms of combating racism and promoting equality; and to develop international youth arts initiatives." (Wozzy Brewster, OBE, Midi Music Company)

Phil Greenwood talked about how this impacts on the way sessions run:

"Whatever instrument they are coming to study we spend ten minutes together in the performance hall, ten minutes enjoying each other's company, doing basic music skills, together, they start off together, welcome everybody – so everyone has an idea that they are part of something larger than the room they are in."

However, Phil also discussed the challenges sometimes thrown up when organisations working together to provide progression routes for participants have differing definitions of and expectations about musical aptitude, different understandings of inclusivity, or a different emphasis on artistic excellence. Where MMC, he says, is about 'inclusivity in the extreme', partners may not always be so willing to be flexible in their approach. This has sometimes presented challenges in relation to progression routes:

"[but] you can't second guess people and someone might blossom in a different environment that you wouldn't imagine. You can't be too prescriptive but you do need to know a little bit about the environment that you are sending them to."

Hermione Jones at Making Tracks agreed that mission statements (particularly with regards to who organisations work with and what kind of projects they run) could be a good indicator of whether or not referral to a project would be appropriate:

"I look at what sorts of projects they are doing and what groups they work with because often I've found it is easier for me to refer our young people to other projects for young people who are NEET because the other participants are going to be in the same situation, usually the same age group and the organisation has tailored the project to that group. If they work with lots of different groups and run lots of projects they have more understanding of how to adapt things for certain groups of people."

We also asked Hermione whether she would refer participants to an open-access, non-targeted project. She responded:

“Good point. I’ve been talking to people about being labelled as NEET and what it feels like to have that label attached to you – they don’t like it at all – it’s very difficult because the benefit of those projects is there are no financial problems because its free and they are aware they have to cover travel and food – but the case with a lot of young people is they go from one project to another and how do you break the cycle – because if it goes on for long enough it can be quite damaging.”

Except where Hermione has prior experience of a project or trusted personal contacts within an organisation, she uses mission statements, and aims and objectives of projects to exclude those which focus only on artistic content and excellence and show no prior experience of working with young people who are NEET.

“Just by saying this project is open for everyone to take part – well, actually because of these things [financial barriers, location, required levels of musicianship] it’s not open, because of these things that get in the way before they even get there.”

Hermione also mentioned that she tries to get a sense of the motives and real aims of the projects she refers onto:

*“Some projects feel more corporate than others – particularly those working with NEET young people. You can get people saying we started with X number of young people that didn’t have NEET and ended with 100% doing this – and you can sometimes get a sense of whether that is the motive of the project or whether they really want to offer opportunities to people. So I try to get a sense of that and if I feel like it’s **a machine that young people are being fed through**, then I don’t want to go near those projects.”*

Summary

- All three organisations agreed that mission statements give an indication of how an organisation functions day-to-day but it was also found that critically assessing a project’s **motives and experience in working with targeted groups of young people** was key to determining successful progression partnerships;
- At Roundhouse, specific targets relating to challenging circumstances within the mission influence both the organisation’s participatory and artistic programming, as well as the way the organisation is run;
- At Making Tracks, staff look at the **mission statement alongside prior project experience** of potential progression partners to make judgements about whether a ‘next step’ will be appropriate;
- Managers agreed that when two organisations’ **missions, aims and objectives diverge**, particularly with regards to **inclusivity**, there may be some challenges for progression partnerships, but it is important not to limit participants’ options.

4.3 Preparation: Before progression to a ‘next step’ happens what needs to be done

The Pathfinders toolkit outlined a number of preparatory steps often required to support successful progression, as recommended by the organisations consulted:

“Allowing time to establish brief but personal contact between project managers, for example, in order to plan additional support needed and exchange general participant information as required. It was noted that relaying individual/personal details about participants tends not to be particularly appropriate or necessary, but that broader contextual information may be useful to share.”

*“Sharing information and expectations between organisations enables ‘intermediary’ organisations to brief participants so they arrive with **clear expectations** and a sense of the ‘ground rules’. This assists **positive behaviour** and helps put young people in control of their learning.”* (2014: 8)

In this phase of the research, we were keen to develop these recommendations, asking:

What do you do in preparation for a young person to go to a new opportunity – both in terms of the young person and in terms of the receiving organisation?

Hermione Jones at Making Tracks noted how “the most successful [progression routes] are where I have had pre-existing contacts.” To illustrate, Hermione described the process of supporting a young person who was an asylum seeker to take part in an Open Academy vocal weekend at the Royal Academy of Music:

*“Because I have contacts there I could explain the situation before. I explained the situation to them and they understood the background of the young person and I had spoken to the young person a lot about what to expect before he arrived: we’d gone through the application process and worked through the materials he’d be covering. **I think the key with that is them knowing the names of people that are going to be there and if they have any problems those are the people to talk to...** For me that is a key thing: **not wanting them to be singled out on the day, but them knowing things are under control** and the organisation knowing it in advance - having it **on the radar** of everyone [e.g. organisational staff], [but] if you were another participant on the course you might not know what is going on. That would be the ideal.”*

At **Midi Music Company**, Phil Greenwood talked about a particularly successful progression route with Groundwork London. This came about via a project co-led between the two organisations. When asked about why it had been able to be so successful, Phil emphasised the preparation and prior personal contacts between MMC and Groundwork:

*“**The tutor team were familiar with each other from other projects** – the senior youth leader was a former tutor for Midi, the assistant youth worker and videographer I had met [through work I had done before] – so we all got on really well. It was a well-integrated team – familiar rather than having to get used to each other. We also did lots of planning and showing each other generative techniques – **we had a fairly good idea of how we could work together before the project started...we had history.**”*

The project, which was part of MMC’s Beatz Family programme for 11-18 year olds involved MMC participants working with Groundwork and MMC leaders to create seven original songs, a documentary and promotional videos, and experience working in the studio including using lip-synching and green screens. After the project ended, two or three participants went on to join

Groundwork's 'All About the Band' project (Southwark's music academy which aims to develop participants' vocal, instrumental, song writing and performance skills). Phil said:

"Subsequently one of those students came back to us aged 17 and joined CICAS. He's now on CICAS and is very serious – busking and selling CDs. He will make a great part of the creative youth forum – right at the centre of the organisation and working as a peer mentor."

At Roundhouse, Cathy Weatherald emphasised the value of personally knowing project staff as one key to a successful progression route:

*"We refer onto Amy's Yard for many of our NEET young people. **We know them very well, we know they are going to be looked after**, the referral process is very clear and in depth, and they are really good at keeping in contact with us about young peoples' progress."*

Cathy also talked about the time and energy that goes into working with young people during projects to think and prepare for moving on:

*"We deal with progression routes in one-to-ones, **we give them advice and guidance when they first come into the programme** then they'll keep meeting with those people for a good month after the programme."*

Summary

- **Personal contacts, friendship and prior history of working together** between project staff is a key ingredient of some of the most successful progression partnerships;
- **Preparing both young people and staff for opportunities in advance** enables any required support to go 'under the radar' and limit the risk of individuals being singled out as 'different' on the day;
- **Co-leading projects (between organisations)** may be a good way to embed and establish progression routes on from one organisation to the next;
- Supporting participants to **think about and plan for progression from the start and throughout projects** supports successful progression.

4.4 Acting 'in loco parentis'

The 2014 Pathfinders research project highlighted the hugely positive role organisations can play when acting 'in loco parentis' for young people:

*'Intermediary organisations often need to act in **loco parentis** to support participants' attendance at 'next-step' activities, which may involve:*

- *Filling in forms and/or simplifying enrolment information in order to communicate it to families;*
- *Administering payment of enrolment fees;*
- *Arranging and paying for travel and food (in advance of the day);*
- *Organising routes and transport, which may include creating a map and identifying a bus route from home to the 'next-step' opportunity venue, or arranging a support worker to meet and accompany a child (when a parent is working or unable to travel);*

- *Offering friendly reminders e.g. reminding parents face-to-face in the week before and on the day before by text.’ (2014: 8)*

Organisations consulted in this phase of the research noted similar findings in their work. Hermione Jones at Making Tracks added:

“it’s bit different for older participants – we do it but with humour, asking the question ‘would you like me to do this?’ and giving reminders ‘you’re gonna have to be there at this time, is that going to be a problem? Do you want me to call you at 9 in the morning?’ and then we have a little laugh about me giving them a wake-up call. But [I’d] rather do that than they be late on the first day and set everything off on the wrong foot.”

Hermione also mentioned that the costs involved in supporting participation particularly with regards to fees, travel fare and lunch money are one of the biggest barriers she faces to supporting more young people:

“A lot of the time it is us as the ‘intermediary’ covering the cost; that is one of the biggest problems: that if there is a fee it’s not just the fee. We’ll have to think about food every day and travel and we’re a small charity, we can’t cover those costs all the time; that’s the biggest limitation. For ‘next steps’ [organisations] it’s about being aware of those extra costs – there have been times where people have called up saying ‘we’ve got this amazing opportunity, have you got any young people?’ and I’ll say ‘Are you covering travel expenses?’ and they’ll say ‘Oh we haven’t thought about that.’ So that’s a big thing that for ‘next steps’ organisations is not always a consideration.”

At Roundhouse, when acting as a ‘next step’ opportunity for young people who have been referred to the programme, this kind of practical financial support is factored in so that engagement with the organisation can be maintained over long periods of time. Cathy Weatherald highlighted how:

‘We’ve got this membership offer, £20 a year and the projects are about £20 a time, but if they can’t afford that they can get this bursary to include travel.’

At Midi Music Company, a long-established, funded progression route towards one-to-one lessons at Blackheath Conservatoire is supported in full by Tom’s Trust for the first year and by Blackheath Conservatoire (the ‘next step’ organisation itself) for the second and third years. A detailed selection process for gaining the bursary and thorough preparatory process is offered to young people, to make sure participants and their parents understand the nature of the opportunity (and commitment) itself:

“When we select for bursary there is a long list and a short list. We make sure the children chosen by the panel and offered the award understand what they are getting into: [that] it’s one-to-one tuition. It’s a very different environment. We make sure they are comfortable with the idea. Obviously their parents are delighted because it’s fully-funded for the first year, but it’s important the kids are too.”

Summary

- The **additional practical support** required from both ‘intermediary’ and ‘next step’ organisations is substantial for progression to be successful for some young people;
- A **lack of understanding or experience of these issues** from some ‘next steps’ can be a major barrier to progression;

- **Relying on intermediaries to provide the financial support alone** limits the number of young people who progress;
- **Well-planned, properly funded and long-term progression routes** between organisations are likely to be most successful.

4.5 Who is welcome in this space?

The Pathfinders research examined some of the perceptual barriers to engagement felt by some participants and their families:

“There is a strong perception that families might not feel welcome at some mainstream cultural venues sites, so it may be better to ‘stay away’: “There are places where you go, me personally – I will feel inferior... because of the class of people who are there [and] the way they are behaving, so I feel segregated.” (Parent of a Fairbeats! participant).” (2014: 7)

We here discussed with consultant organisations the importance of creating inclusive and welcoming spaces for participants and their families, asking:

How have you found the welcome received by your participants at other opportunities, how do you approach the welcome you give to young people at your organisation?

At **Making Tracks**, Hermione Jones emphasised that:

“not being singled out is the biggest thing. It’s important for [these participants] not to be an issue, [with] them feeling like they are not part of the group and different from everyone else.”

The ‘welcome’ comes down to ‘a familiarity thing’ and Hermione described how she can sometimes ‘make it more familiar by the time they get there’ by speaking to music leaders and project managers in advance and making sure participants know who to speak to if things are bothering them.

Founder and director of **Midi Music Co**, Wozzy Brewster OBE also emphasised the importance of feeling part of something, not singled out:

“You’ve got to look at where we come from as an organisation and the make-up of our client group... [Young people] are coming into an environment here which doesn’t single them out because of their social or economic background and doesn’t make them stand out, because the nature of the majority of our client group is that it is diverse... A lot of our clients are from low income families, but we know that regardless of one’s background, it’s about the goals and aspirations: it’s about inspiring the individual.”

At Roundhouse, project managers are proactive about welcoming in participants from diverse backgrounds.

“We think about it loads: we’ve got a diversity action group which we are both on, we look at the data from who is coming to shows, projects and studios and ensure that we are targeting work to areas that aren’t engaging. We are constantly thinking of ways to encourage the community around here to come in, not necessarily to buy tickets, but for example we have the beach in the summer that is free and [the] Rising Festival for emerging musicians is a really amazing opportunity for us to open the doors and have a more civic role in the cultural landscape – an accessible part.” (Cathy Weatherald, Roundhouse)

Roundhouse has received excellent feedback from Arts Council England concerning their engagement programme, and has current areas of focus around women in music and disability access. Lucy Scott explained:

“Every project and every engagement with the studio if you want to sign up to be a member you have to fill out an enrolment form or a membership form so we’ve got all that info and we use Tessitura to track the journey and engagement... Certainly the women in music thing came from realising that in projects uptake between men and woman was equal but in the independent music programme its mainly lads. So we’re ensuring we are thinking about women in terms of the artists we work with in the studios, tutors and programmed in the main space.” (Lucy Scott, Roundhouse).

This commitment to working with people from diverse backgrounds throughout the organisation and at every level of Roundhouse’s work directly impacts on the welcome that people receive as they enter the space:

“[In] the reception area, it’s really important that [participants] feel welcomed into the building and that there are familiar faces. We’ve got an amazing youth support worker Angus who’s been here for yonks and was a young person himself at Roundhouse. We take a lot of care that the training opportunities and the entry-level opportunities are open to people who have come through our youth programmes, so a lot of the people who work in the studios they have that relationship as well.” (Cathy Weatherald, Roundhouse)

Summary

- The welcome at an organisation takes place both **at the door** and **throughout the programme**;
- Ensuring that **diverse communities are represented** at every level (at the door, in the bar, in the studio, on stage) reduces the capacity for people to feel singled out and ostracised at a ‘next step’ organisation;
- **Setting targets, gathering information** and **proactive monitoring** enables organisations to **change patterns** in artistic and participatory engagement;
- Signposting participants towards **entry-level employment opportunities** is one way to diversify the workforce and foster a feeling of familiarity between young people on programmes and staff at projects and venues.

4.6 How to support progression in the long term

The 2014 Pathfinders toolkit outlined how it is crucial to develop and structure potential progression routes beyond the ‘next-step’ opportunities in order to continue to motivate and energise young participants:

“How, when and by whom this information is shared with participants should be clearly agreed by both the ‘intermediary’ and ‘next-step’ organisation to ensure clarity and coherence for participants and their families.” (2014: 10)

We explored how consultant organisations set about securing these kind of more far-reaching progression opportunities by asking:

Do you know if any of your participants have progressed beyond the 'next step' music-making opportunities you supported?

And if so how has this manifested and do you have a sense of what has made these particular journeys so successful?

Rather than necessarily formally structuring progression beyond 'next-step' opportunities at an organisational level, all three organisations talked about the importance of maintaining an open-door to participants beyond their first engagement as key to long-term progression. Developing internal progression pathways for returners was seen as a great way to continue to informally facilitate and support participants' engagement with other organisations over the long term. For instance, at Roundhouse:

"[Participants] can take up membership for free or get a bursary so they can keep on coming into the building so they can find out what's going on with us and in our partnerships organisations. So they can keep working and meet each other, that's a big deal for a lot of our studio users – they feel like they belong and it's their space, for a lot of them it feels like a second home, or a first home! Because we have those studios young people do come back and tell us what's been happening so we do have an idea of which referral routes come recommended." (Cathy Weatherald, Roundhouse)

At Midi Music Company the participant we spoke to talked about maintaining a relationship with the organisation over a period of ten years. While also going off to do other courses and beginning to work professionally in the industry, she continued to return to Midi to take part in The Break Out Club, CICAs and, most recently, to take up an internship which has enabled her to spend dedicated time focusing on creative work. Phil Greenwood mentioned that one of the key ways to measure the success of an organisation when thinking about supporting the musical progression of young people facing barriers to accessing music-making was retention rates:

"I've seen it happen where children come to the Budding Musicians Club, then over the transition years they go to secondary school and their social life blossoms and adolescence kicks in and they sleep in – you might not see them for six years then they are back doing the CICAs programme. Or they're back doing a creative course or music production – it can be quite a long timeframe you are looking at. When that happens it's really gratifying."

Hermione Jones explained an approach which involved maintaining contact with participants for a year or longer after Making Tracks:

"There might be someone who desperately wants to keep involved with music but they might not be at a level that would be suitable for a lot of other projects or it's finding a project where they can be involved in a meaningful way and not feel like they have taken a step down and that's why I have created roles for them to return within our organisation so they can come back as mentors, ambassadors and volunteers. It means I can still be involved in their musical journey, keep a close eye on their strengths and the things they find more difficult... Often I've found if they've come back as a mentor, when I do signpost them they are ready to take more control themselves. That's really the aim of the project, not to have to hand-hold but to get them to a point where they can do the process themselves. But if they need extra help they are able to call up and ask, because they know we are there cos they are still involved as a mentor... Over time you're made redundant, which is brilliant because they don't need you to do it anymore and they are able to do it for themselves. So it is always really good to hear and go and see them in performances that you've had nothing to do with."

Summary

- Developing **internal progression routes** within an organisation was seen as a great way to facilitate further progression beyond an organisation over a number of years;
- By maintaining **long-term contact** through development opportunities, project managers were able to signpost participants on to 'next steps' organisations and beyond at appropriate stages in their musical and personal development;
- Participants might continue to return for ten years, sometimes with large gaps during this time: the organisations we spoke to had become like '**second homes**';
- **Keeping in touch** with participants long-term was also a great way for project managers to get a sense of **which referral routes were most successful**.