

## **Appendix 2**

### **CML Impact report: Culture Mile Schools Visits Fund**

#### **Cultural and Creative Learning Goals, Aims and Outcomes**

Goal 1: Every cultural institution in the City is a learning institution and every educational institution in the Family of Schools is a cultural institution

Goal 1: The School Visits Fund maximises access to the City's cultural venues by London's pupils and at least 100 schools/year use the fund through improved publicity, staff development and targeting of those schools and other learners who have not used the fund previously

Goal 3: There is evidence of the effective delivery of initiatives which encourage London schools, especially in disadvantaged areas, to engage with the cultural life of the Square Mile, for instance the Culture Mile School Visits Fund

Goal 6: Culture Mile is regarded as a successful learning destination

#### **Summary of the project including significant changes from the original action plan**

The Schools Visits Fund has been running for six years with the aim of helping schools in disadvantaged areas of London make visits to the cultural venues supported by the City of London Corporation, all of which are Culture Mile Learning partners. From April 2018 eligibility was widened to include not-for-profit educational organisations that work with school-age children (age 4-18) who face barriers to cultural engagement, to enable even more children to benefit from the fund. Schools or organisations must be in Greater London (within the M25) and at least 35% of pupils at the school must be eligible for Pupil Premium. Special schools do not need to meet this requirement.

Demand for the fund over the last year has been low on account of the Covid-19 pandemic and its resulting impact on cultural venue closures and school closures/ability to make visits. However, demand did pick-up over the summer and autumn, most notably to the Open Spaces venues. Since September 2020, to help stimulate schools to return to cultural venues, the grant size was increased from £300 to £600, particularly to support increased transport costs for schools wishing to avoid public transport and to counter the temporary rescinding of the free travel offer for schools by Transport for London.

As in 2020/21 when demand for the fund was low and we repurposed a proportion of the funding to support the Culture Mile Play Packs, this year we were also looking for ways to shift the focus of our work to be able to continue to support disadvantaged children and young people through access to cultural experiences and venues. At the end of August 2021, the Corporation welcomed a group of 450 refugees from Afghanistan including 80 children under 5 years old and 100 primary school aged children. This number grew over the following months and the two groups were housed in two hotels in the City. The CML partners galvanized to support the groups in three key ways;

- colleagues from across the partnership volunteered to staff the playroom that was set up in one of the hotels
- tailored and existing creative activities in partner venues were offered to the families
- permission was sought to use the fund to enable translation and transport for these activities

The City of London's Early Years Team quickly established a playroom for the younger refugee children to attend on weekday mornings. Following a call-out from the CML core team, our partners gathered a selection of toys, materials and books to enhance the space. Staff members from the Museum of London, Barbican, City Libraries, Bank of England Museum, London Metropolitan Archives, Guildhall Art Gallery, and Culture Mile Communities Team volunteered their time to help staff the playroom, supporting the safeguarding aspects of the space as well as designing and delivering a range of creative play activities on-site.

In early September the CML team established weekly meetings with our partners to share information and plan activities for the Afghan families. In these meetings logistical information was disseminated, partners received support and advice as they coordinated their offer, and guest speakers provided cultural insights which helped to enhance the programme of activities, ensuring that activities were appropriate and impactful.

The CML team supported our partners by helping to forge links within the hotels to advertise activities, providing coordination support, and helping them to access funding via the Visits Fund. We quickly identified a significant skills gap around language and placed an advert to find Persian language speakers to support the activities and the playroom. The group of translators that we formed have been integral to the successful delivery of the programme. Another issue that arose was the distance from the hotel to many of our partners, too far for mothers and babies to travel on foot. We were grateful to be able to offer the Visits Fund to enable the additional translation services and funding for transport.

The Afghan families have consistently voiced their gratitude for the activities, which provided some variation from the significant time they spend at their hotel, as well as some fun play and respite from stressful circumstances. The opportunity to explore the local area, and to express themselves creatively, e.g. through crafts, dance and drawing, was valuable for both the children and their parents.

<b>Proposed cost</b>	£16,000
<b>Actual cost (include breakdown)</b>	£6,740 was paid out in 20 grants £135 in marketing costs c£1.5k spent to date to support activity with Afghan refugee families. In keeping with the aims of the fund, grants were provided for costs to reduce barriers to visiting, chiefly for travel and interpretation.
<b>Delivery period</b>	Year round
<b>What outputs/activities were delivered?</b>	
<p>Between April and November 2021:</p> <p>109 applications have been made to the fund to visit 14 different cultural venues set to benefit 4,610 children and young people. 45 of these applications were made to visit Open Spaces venues</p> <p>Applications were made from:</p> <p>27 primary schools 12 secondary schools 2 not-for-profit organisations 16 different boroughs</p>	

### Support for Afghan children and their families:

As most children became enrolled in school the playroom activity wound down in December, but while it was open CML partners supported 52 Play Mornings which were attended by more than 35 children every session (i.e. 1,820 attendances).

The Afghan families were welcomed to 18 separate activities within our cultural venues between mid-September to mid-December. 367 refugees attended the programme, which consisted of:

- Weekly Sketch & Chat at Guildhall Art Gallery
- Weekly Story Telling at Guildhall Art Gallery
- Weekly Early Years Soft Play at Barbican
- Children's Concert at LSO St. Luke's
- Lantern Making workshop run by Culture Mile Communities
- A tour of Tower Bridge
- Outdoor activities run by the Open Spaces Team
- Dance and Crafts workshops at Bloomberg Mithraeum

### How has the project improved wider educational outcomes, e.g. wellbeing, confidence, aspiration, etc.?

#### Personal impact:

Applications to the fund this year have highlighted how the pandemic has made cultural visits even more important, given how much children lost out on during school closures.

*'At George Mitchell, we have a higher than the national average of students in receipt of Pupil Premium funding and where English is spoken as an additional language. There are also many children who are not eligible for Pupil Premium funding but are experiencing financial hardship and deprivation. This, alongside the Covid-19 pandemic, remains a strong barrier to why many of our students are unable to access and participate in cultural visits that undeniably enrich their learning and wellbeing. In the last 18 months, we have experienced budgets being restricted and limited access to educational and cultural visits; we are keen to recover our curriculum and ensure that the inequality gap does not further widen.'* Application to visit Museum of London Docklands, secondary school in Leyton

*'Children at our school have missed out on opportunities to be in, play in and engage with nature due to spending lockdown in over-crowded inner city flats. Many have not been to the park in many months. As year 6 children, their opportunities to interact socially with each other and with the natural and cultural world around them have been hugely limited by Covid, and as they go to secondary this may be the last chance they have to play so freely in London's parks. We will be taking the children on a natural survivor experience in Hampstead Heath, where they will work and play collaboratively, build resilience, and grow to understand the benefits of nature and what London has to offer.'* Application to visit Hampstead Heath, primary school in Camden

*'As a cohort with a particularly high Pupil Premium percentage we welcome every opportunity to enable our children to have experiences beyond the national curriculum, especially due to the impact of the Pandemic. We have been learning about painting portraits in Art and we have studied the Romans in our History lessons, so we believe the Guildhall Art Gallery is a particularly suitable destination. Unfortunately, London Transport do not currently accept school groups so we are very*

*hopeful we will be supported to make this trip.'* Application to visit Guildhall Art Gallery, primary school in Ealing

**Educational impact:**

*'We are in an area of extremely high levels of deprivation with no gentrification. Almost all of our families live in overcrowded accommodation with little or no access to outdoor spaces. Our children do not routinely access parks, libraries, museums, pools, etc. Enriching and memorable experiences such as these will only ever come via school so we see it as our duty to give them as much as we can as we know their impact can be life-changing.'* Application to visit Tower Bridge from a Lewisham primary school

**Social impact:**

*'We are running a weeklong holiday club for Pupil Premium children within our school. The week will be made up of a mix of engaging educational sessions in school, as well as exploring the cultural capital that our surroundings have to offer, many of which the children would otherwise not be exposed to. As part of the week, we would love to take the children to the theatre, an experience we know that most of them have never had before! If successful, we would take the children to a matinee performance at Barbican, providing them with a lasting memory and hopefully introducing them to the world of music and dance that they will enjoy for years to come. Funding will cover the cost of the majority of the tickets, which our school will top up.'* Application to visit Barbican, primary school in Camden

*'The groups were curious to explore the gallery and for some of them it was the first experience in life to go to a gallery. The children enjoyed the workshops. Also, I've witnessed that a lady was really sad at the beginning of a session, and she even cried as she was talking about her daughter and granddaughter that she had left behind in Afghanistan but at the end of the session she was feeling much better and the visit to the gallery was a good distraction for her.'* Maliheh Zafarnezhad, Persian speaking freelancer who supported Guildhall Art Gallery activities for Afghan families

**Cultural impact:** new and improved ways of working, including stronger partnerships

*'The CML partners, including the staff from the communities library and Museum of London were key in staffing the playroom originally set up on 7th September 2022 for the Afghan Refugee children newly arrived in the UK. Without their help, resources and commitment, we would not have been able to carry on providing this essential service to the families. I am very grateful for their support and dedication as it made a real difference to young children in difficult circumstances.'* Isabelle Britten-Dennie, City of London Early Years Team

*'Every Thursday afternoon in November Squish Space has welcomed Afghan families to come and play in the space and learn more about what the Barbican has to offer if they want to come again. Rosemara and the CML Team have supported the project and found a brilliant interpreter to help, who joins the group each week. Having this support, both financially and with project planning & logistics has been great. The funding has helped us to provide refreshments, an interpreter and to book travel - all crucial elements in delivering a successful project with this audience.'* Josie Dick, Barbican

*'I have genuinely loved getting involved in supporting Afghan families. It had a significant impact on our employees as it made all of them come together to help a community with which they have so much in common. It was a valuable experience, and thank you so much for all your support,*

*leadership and guidance. I appreciate that you were open to listening to our feedback, incorporating so many ideas, and coming up with so many great solutions to improve our experience in communicating with them and ensuring we reach the target audience.'* Alina Avasilichi, Bloomberg

**Will the outputs/activities continue?**

Our priority this year for the fund overall will be to continue to stimulate schools to return to cultural venues and, in particular, to reach schools in the most disadvantaged areas of London and which have not previously made use of the fund. We'll continue to monitor whether grants need to remain at the higher level of £600 to cover increased participation and travel costs due to the requirements of COVID-safe procedures.

We are currently working to understand what, if any, activities would be of continued value to the Afghan families now that most children are enrolled in school. Having seen first-hand the appreciation of the programme last year we are keen to continue engaging with the group whilst they remain in the City but we remain mindful of ensuring that partner capacity is being used in the most impactful ways.