

City Bridge Trust – Monitoring Visit Report

Organisation: Barbican Centre Trust	Grant ref: 11617 (TW)	Programme area: Exceptional Grants
Amount, date and purpose of grant: 13/02/2013: £250,000 for one year towards the Barbican Centre Trust's Creative Learning projects for East London, focussing on harder to reach groups and building on the programme supported by the City Bridge Trust from 2011-13.		
Visiting Grants Officer: Tim Wilson, accompanied by the Deputy Chairman and Mrs Littlechild	Date of meeting: 25 th February 2014	
Met with: Sean Gregory (Director of Creative Learning), Caroline Harris (Trusts and Foundations Manager, Barbican), Thomas Hardy (Senior Manager, Barbican Creative Learning), several students from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and children from Randal Cremer Primary School, Haggerston.		
1. Introduction to the organisation: The Barbican Centre Trust (BCT) is a registered charity established in 1986 to promote knowledge, understanding, education and appreciation of the arts by communities in and around the City. A significant proportion of BCT's work is delivered through the Creative Learning programme, which uses the arts as a vehicle to enhance lives. The programme engages over 40,000 people each year, offering a range of activities from 'taster events' to professional skills development. Creative Learning activities take place at the Barbican Centre and in schools and communities across East London. Work is delivered in partnership with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.		
2. The project funded: In January 2011 you recommended, and the Court of Common Council as Trustee of Bridge House Estates approved, a grant of £1,501,600 over two years towards BCT's Creative Learning programme. Following a very successful delivery phase, you approved a further £250,000 as an Exceptional Grant to allow BCT to build on the programme and extend its reach in East London. The Exceptional Grant was awarded to fund work in Barking and Dagenham, Hackney, Islington, Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest and the City of London. BCT set ambitious delivery targets, aiming to engage over 4,000 people directly and 14,000 as audience members. Working with school-age children, people in local authority care and local charities, BCT aimed to build the capacity of local organisations to sustain the legacy of the activities funded by City Bridge Trust.		
3. Work delivered to date: The number of projects, partners, and participants BCT has worked with since the grant was awarded is impressive. Over 7,500 people have been directly involved so far. A key part of BCT's work has been pop-up performances, short, interactive performances by professional artists in schools and communities. BCT has reached 1,870 directly people through these sessions with artists from the UK, Germany, and the US through the mediums of music, dance and fine arts. This work has taken place across the target boroughs.		

Barbican Box uses arts activities to help secondary school students develop teamwork, communication and leadership skills. BCT divided this project into three parts: theatre, film and art book. Theatre involved 25 schools, film 3 schools and art book 5 schools. Over 1,000 students participate, and BCT is able to provide professional development support through this project to over 30 teachers. Schools also benefit from free tickets to a performance at the Barbican relevant to the project activity they have undertaken.

BCT has delivered community projects reaching over 700 people across a range of charities and community groups including homelessness, inter-generational and ESOL organisations. Additional outreach activities include: “The Blah Blah Blah Sessions”, music with young people looked after by local authorities; and the Barbican Young Programmers for young people looking to develop skills and confidence in film-making.

BCT has run several activities within the Barbican Centre and Guildhall School, showcasing the work of the schools and community organisations. These have included weekend and evening activities reaching over 4,000 people.

BCT had intended to run a pilot project called “Skype in the Classroom”, connecting secondary school students with international artists from BCT’s music programmes for 15 minute online discussions, and connecting the work to National Curriculum levels. This was intended to allow schools to expand the reach of the Creative Learning programme to those who couldn’t receive an artistic visit. Unfortunately, scheduled calls with folk, jazz and classical musicians had to be cancelled due to changes in the artists’ schedules. In these instances, BCT has worked to ensure the schools receive a pop-up performance.

4. Difference made:

Outcome monitoring has been built into all activities delivered since the start of the grant award, and quarterly reports have included notes on difference made, what has worked well, less well, and what changes might take place. Whilst it is harder to gather impact data from audiences, for participatory workshops BCT has managed good response rates on monitoring forms, and these generally show high levels of satisfaction both with the quality and planning of the work.

It is understandably difficult to aggregate impact data across a broad range of activities, so BCT reports on a per-project basis each quarter. The reports note where there have been difficulties and where projects need to be redesigned or discontinued. Overall, however, the picture is one of success with especially positive feedback from the partner institutions. For example, the CEO of Newham Music Trust commends the Barbican on its collaborative approach:

“it is clear that the artistic and educational experience share equal value. The Barbican goes to extraordinary lengths to consult the east London music hubs at the earliest stages of artistic planning. The relationship allows music services with first-hand knowledge of the communities they serve to shape and inform the educational offer. This means a richer, more meaningful educational experience that addresses the needs of the community and capitalises on its strengths. The value of this relationship to children and young people in Newham is literally ‘priceless’.”

5. Grants Administration:

BCT’s reporting of this, and its previous grant award has been thorough, and to a very high standard. When BCT was first funded by the Trust, a Barbican team spent time with your officers to design a monitoring framework suitable for such a large and diverse programme. At the charity’s own suggestion, and given the number of projects taking place under the Creative Learning programme umbrella, BCT has submitted quarterly progress updates and arranged regular catch-

up meetings where there is opportunity to discuss work delivered as well as future plans.

The grant has been administered and monitored effectively and with no compliance issues arising at any time. BCT has reported its satisfaction with its dealings with the Trust. The Trust has been appropriately acknowledged in line with your Terms and Conditions.

6. Concluding comments:

The Creative Learning Team has delivered an impressive volume of work with its grant from City Bridge Trust. The numbers engaged both as participants and audience is significant, and the commitment to monitoring from the start of the grant means that Barbican has produced useful quarterly reports that provide good evidence of difference made. In addition, this programme has reached boroughs of relatively high deprivation, and has brought Barbican's message to a much wider group of people than had originally been anticipated.

Barbican has built new relationships with charities, schools and community organisations through this grant. It has potential to develop stronger City contacts and the work to develop The Cultural Hub should benefit the Barbican as it engages yet more with arts and education centres in the area.

Despite its considerable achievements in delivery of work, Barbican could tell the story of its Creative Learning work to a wider group of potential supporters. There is scope for the Barbican to articulate more clearly that its work is for both arts *and* learning by describing what it currently delivers, and demonstrating how much is done with local communities. Articles in the Barbican residents' newsletter (Podium) and public activities in spaces such as the Guildhall amphitheatre would help raise profile.

It is not your policy to maintain an open-ended funding relationship with grantees, however successful, and Barbican has understood this from the start of the funding relationship. The Creative Learning Team has used City Bridge Trust funding to build relations with other grant makers which should help sustain much of the work past the end of your support. Assuming satisfactory final monitoring reports are received then Barbican will be eligible to reapply under your *Investing in Londoners* programmes subject to your normal rules on fallow periods.

The work that we observed at Randal Cremer School was impressive. Led by students from the Guildhall School, a class of children with mixed abilities had created an engaging performance piece which they were rehearsing ahead of a concert for parent and friends that week. The Guildhall School students managed the class well, keeping the children involved throughout through clear explanation and by providing a series of goals which could be achieved within the session time. The enthusiasm from both adults and children was evident, and several pupils spoke of their pride in producing the performance.