Towards cultural democracy

Promoting cultural capabilities for everyone
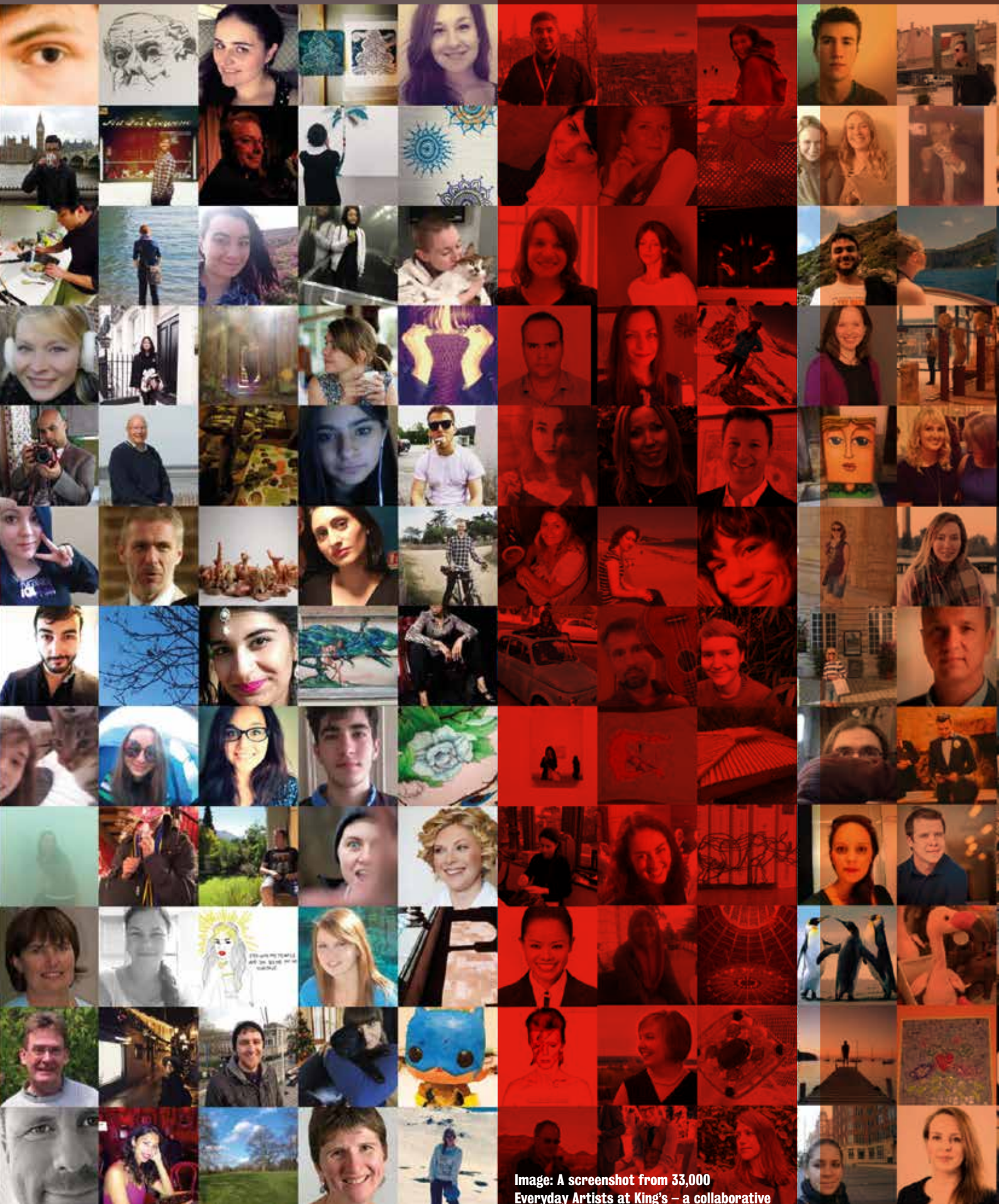
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Image: A screenshot from 33,000
Everyday Artists at King's – a collaborative
project between 64 Million Artists and
King's College London.

FOREWORD

This report presents an exciting vision for an alternative way of thinking about, and building, a vibrant shared culture that is meaningful and valuable for everyone. Building on a 15-month research project it makes the case for cultural democracy, specifically in terms of promoting everyone's cultural capability – the substantive freedom to co-create versions of culture.

As Director of Hull UK City of Culture 2017, I am no stranger to the transformational power of culture. I have been lucky enough to see how arts and cultural activities can both help to celebrate what makes a city, a people, its history and culture so special and unique, whilst also being the means of bringing people together.

It has long been recognised that only a small proportion of the UK population makes regular use of publicly funded cultural organisations and activities. And yet, there has also been growing recognition of the extraordinary diversity of creative and cultural activities that are taking place on an 'everyday' basis.

A number of influential recent reports have raised important questions concerning how we can be more rigorous in our understanding of cultural value and the distinct ecosystems in which culture and creativity exist. Picking up on these vital concerns, and showing what more we can do to realise the creative potential of every citizen, *Towards Cultural Democracy* makes a distinctive contribution by asking what *could* be the case, rather than what we can measure or evaluate today.

The report is launched at a time when there are many questions in the public sphere concerning how best to sustain and support our democracy and the democratic freedoms of people across the globe. It is one of the most exciting features of the approach taken here: that we might be further emboldened to see culture not simply as an 'end' that can be achieved once we have secured democracy, but rather as a contributory 'means' that nourishes and supports democracy itself.

Towards Cultural Democracy has taken a big step towards a more thorough understanding of the relationship between everyday creativity, arts and creative industries. It has also opened up a means of thinking creatively about the place of culture in our world, and that of our children.

I believe there is much in this report that we all, whether policymakers, cultural organisations or 'creative citizens', will find valuable.

Martin Green
Director of Hull UK City of Culture 2017
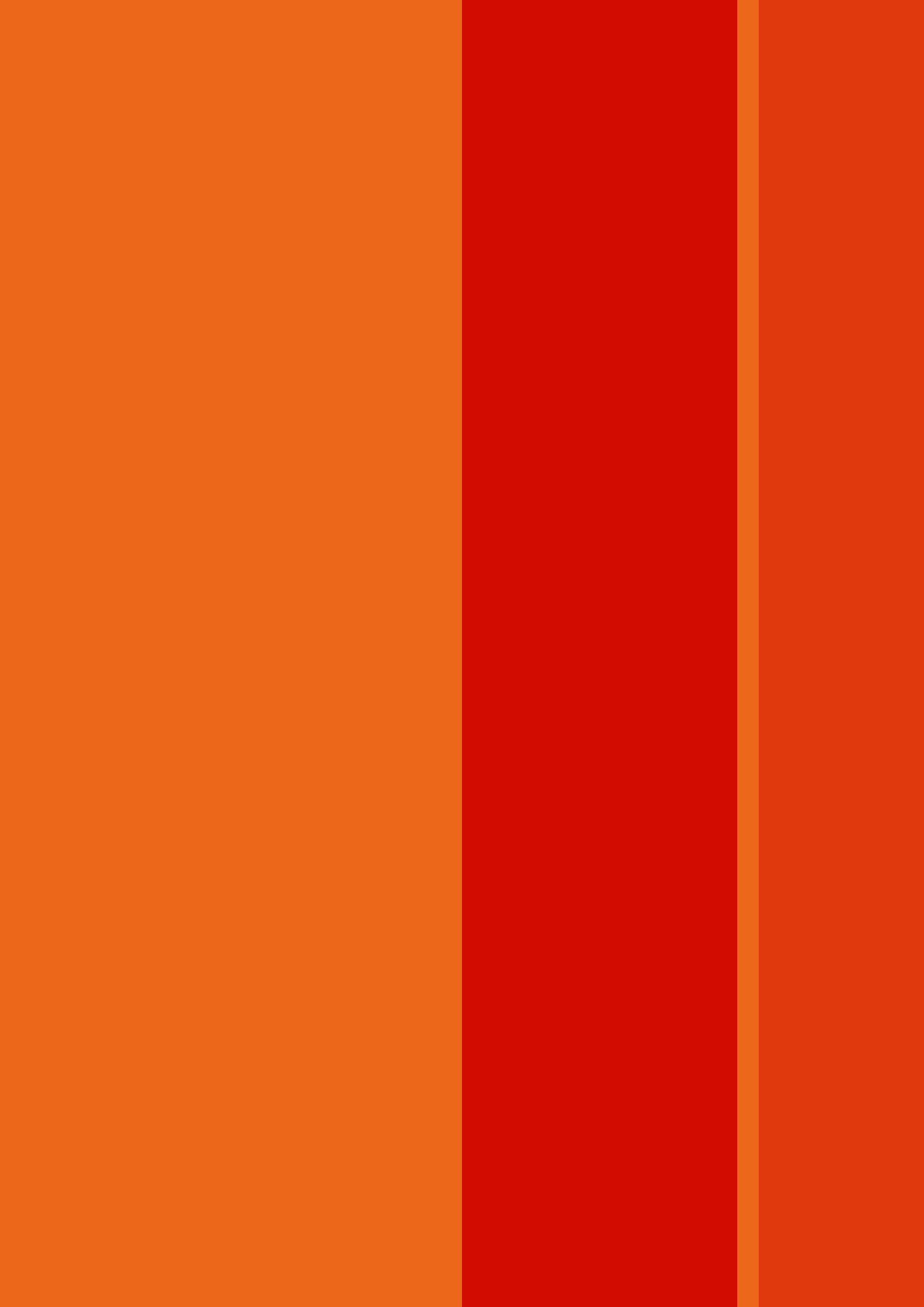
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A vision of the future

Imagine a world in which opportunities to try a wide range of cultural and creative activities are available to all young people. From playing an instrument, to designing a website; from writing poetry to learning to breakdance. Imagine that this is made possible not only by classes at school, and visits to galleries, theatres and cinemas with parents, but also because every neighbourhood is one in which young people and their families have easy access to information about cultural and creative opportunities nearby, free or affordable for all.

Imagine, too, that within each neighbourhood there are opportunities for young people to make their own culture – to have access to materials, time, space and support (if they want it) to build things, draw things, write things, sing things, dance things and invent things. Imagine that this is actively enabled by a wide range of organisations, groups and individuals who are familiar with each other's work and services – regularly sharing information, resources and expertise in support of young people as they try things and make things on their own and with (new) friends.

Now imagine that these opportunities to try a wide range of cultural and creative opportunities – with easy access to information, materials, time, space, advice and support – do not come to an end at the age of 18. Imagine, instead, that throughout adult life, all people in the UK – whether in city centres, suburbs, or in the countryside – live in places where a wide range of cultural and creative opportunities exist. Opportunities to see and hear things; new things, old things, strange things, beautiful things, fun things and ferocious things; things that mobilise, confuse and move; things that comfort, and things that inspire. A world with opportunities to see and hear, yes. But so much more: a world of opportunities to *create* – where everyone has substantial and sustained choices about what to do, what to make, what to be; with everyone drawing freely on their own powers and possibilities; their (individual and collective) experiences, ideas and visions.

This is cultural democracy. This is when people have the substantive social freedom to make versions of culture. It is a state of the world that is possible. And this report invites you to help make it a reality.

A call to collaboration

Based on a 15 month research project, in this report we present findings that call for a radical but pragmatic new approach to supporting the UK's arts and culture in all its diversity and richness. Whilst continuing to recognise the vital importance and significance of much existing publicly supported arts and culture, and profitable creative industries, we cast a spotlight on the everyday cultural creativity[1] that is happening around the UK but is often overlooked. We then go significantly further in arguing the case for the cultural creativity that *could* be happening if everyone had the real freedom to co-create versions of culture – conditions of cultural opportunity that we call *cultural capability*. It is by setting a new ambition for cultural policy – not only investing in great art and audience development, but also promoting cultural capabilities – that the UK can move, as it needs to, towards cultural democracy.

The findings and recommendations we present here are addressed to policy makers, arts leaders, people who run creative groups – choirs, writing circles, knitting clubs and

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1 We define 'cultural creativity' in terms of a broad range of human creativity that is in some shape or form about 'doing art', rather than some other mode of human creativity such as science or education.

anything besides – and the millions of people who simply go ahead and create culture every day, in bands with their mates, hand-making birthday cards at the kitchen table, and putting on a karaoke night at the local pub. It is, ultimately, a call to collaboration: to work together to promote sustained and varied cultural opportunities in every neighbourhood across the UK. Our research shows that there is great potential for cultural democracy to flourish, and there are ways that we can all help to bring it about.

Understanding the UK's cultural ecology... and its possibilities

We present these findings in the context of two major reports that have recently called for fuller appreciation of the range of culture that exists in the UK. The Warwick Commission called for 'our cultural landscape to be made more visible to the public, and to reconnect the public with culture at national and local levels'.[2] Similarly, the AHRC Cultural Value Project concluded that the 'evolving ecology of commercial, amateur, interactive and subsidised engagement needs to be better understood'.[3] Our findings build on these publications, in demonstrating the need to recognise the enormous range of cultural creativity across the UK, including the 'everyday creativity' and 'everyday participation' that already takes place across the country, and we fully support the goal of better understanding what is already going on.

Furthermore, and building on the work of John Holden,[4] this report clearly articulates the benefits of understanding how the many different elements that collectively comprise the cultural ecology – whether the arts, the creative industries, or everyday creativity – are interrelated. But we can go much further than this, still. For all the merits of such a widened understanding, conceptions of the cultural landscape continue to be constrained by what is possible *now*, ie, subject to existing cultural and policy institutions.

FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

1 Beyond the professional arts and profitable creative industries, there are many versions of culture being created together around the UK – often in ways that go unnoticed. This is an ecological process: visible and hidden versions of culture from across the arts, creative industries and *everyday creativity*, are deeply interconnected and interdependent.

2 The substantial social freedom – what in this report we call *cultural capability* – to co-create versions of culture is enabled and constrained by people's environments. There is huge potential for going further to ensure that each neighbourhood of the UK is one in which varied and sustained opportunities to co-create versions of culture exist, for everyone.

3 Recognising the full diversity of *cultural creativity* in society – and its ecological nature – is an essential step in addressing an intractable problem of democratic legitimacy facing cultural policy and practice: that only a small proportion of the UK population makes regular use of publicly funded cultural organisations and activities. Our findings establish the foundations for a new approach to cultural policy and practice in the UK that builds on the riches of the funded sector, in combination with the creative industries and everyday creativity, to promote the opportunity for everyone not only to see and hear wonderful things, but also to co-create versions of culture. This is *cultural democracy*.

What then if cultural policy could take account of what is not being realised, but *could be* if things were different?

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2 Neelands et al., 2015: 39.

3 Crossick and Kaszynska, 2016: 29. It is also worth noting that one of Arts Council England's stated aims for its experimental action research programme *Creative People and Places* is 'to encourage partnerships across the subsidised, amateur and commercial sectors' (Simpson, 2016: 9).

4 Holden, 2015; 2016.

> *... it is only when 'substantive freedom' is realised in relation to culture – real, concrete freedoms to choose what culture to make, as well as what culture to appreciate – that people are genuinely empowered in their cultural lives. It is this substantive social freedom to co-create versions of culture that we call cultural capability.*

Promoting cultural capabilities

Through a series of detailed case studies, we demonstrate that people can have greater or lesser freedom to create, together with others, versions of culture. Our argument draws on the 'Capabilities Approach' of Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen; and in the language of that important framework, it is only when 'substantive freedom' is realised in relation to culture – real, concrete freedoms to choose what culture to make, as well as what culture to appreciate – that people are genuinely empowered in their cultural lives. It is this substantive social freedom to co-create versions of culture that we call *cultural capability*. Whilst much policy interest has legitimately focused on the unequal funding share of arts and culture across various socio-economic variables – including location, class and ethnic group – we suggest that re-positioning the cultural policy agenda in terms of promoting cultural capability will help address issues of parity and fairness in a much more comprehensive and locally adaptive fashion.

Our research shows that cultural policy has the potential to move beyond a 'supply side' model.[5] Continuing to provide investment via the National Portfolio and Grants for the Arts is crucial. Publicly supported organisations play a vital role in helping the UK's cultural ecology[6] to flourish. But by engaging in a deep and sustained way with how the large majority of people actually go about their cultural lives (not, principally, by attending publicly funded organisations), policy makers, funders and practitioners have the opportunity to go much further in supporting the kinds of access to information, space, expertise and networks that increase everyone's freedom to actively reproduce and transform their cultural lives. This approach has the potential to achieve a goal that many already share – to achieve and sustain cultural democracy. To do so would be to nourish the UK's cultural ecology, and to enable it to flourish in ways that are more equitable, more empowering and, ultimately, more creative.

Collectively, there is enormous potential to go further in recognising and actively supporting the full diversity and interconnectedness of the cultural creativity that currently takes place across the country. Our research shows that policy makers, cultural organisations and 'creative citizens' of many kinds have a vital role to play in this. It is important to stress that *there are many existing examples of good practice* – ways in which cultural organisations and informal groups of many kinds are actively enabling people to make culture. Some of these examples are visible to policy makers, whilst many others take place under the radar – all the while having tremendous value, and harbouring possibilities for expanding cultural capabilities still further in the future. Our research leads to the conclusion that promoting cultural capabilities for everyone should be made an explicit *objective of national cultural policy*, and an explicit *strategy of local policy makers and cultural policy stakeholders* of all types. This has the potential to enable the UK's cultural ecology to flourish even further – and to do so in ways from which we all, individually and collectively, stand to benefit.

Experiments are happening

This report builds on a research collaboration with Get Creative, a campaign which began in February 2015 as 'a celebration of the world-class arts, culture and creativity that happens every day across the UK'. Responding to a recommendation of the Warwick Commission, and conversations between What Next?,[7] the BBC and others, Get Creative is led by a consortium of cultural organisations.[8] From the outset it was clear that the campaign had several, potentially competing objectives. On the one hand, 'celebrating "world-class"

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5 Holden, 2016.
6 Holden, 2015. 'Public funding' should not be equated solely with the Arts Council, vital though this is. Local Authorities, lottery distributors, health commissioners, amongst others, also have a key role to play.
7 http://www.whatnextculture.co.uk/ [accessed 20th January, 2017]
8 The organisations represented on the Steering Group are: 64 Million Artists, Arts Council England, the Arts Council of Wales, BBC, Crafts Council, Family Arts Campaign, Fun Palaces, Voluntary Arts, What Next?, Creative People and Places and Creative Scotland.

arts, culture and creativity', whilst also 'showcasing the enormous range of diversity and creativity across the UK'.[9] Subsequent to recommendations arising from the first stage of the research, a year in to its operation the campaign established its primary objective, to 'celebrate and support the everyday creativity happening in homes and public spaces'.[10] This revised focus – and the connections of Get Creative to a series of related initiatives in cultural practice, policy and research – forms the backdrop to the report presented here.

Several of the organisations involved in leading Get Creative are actively involved in enabling cultural opportunities in new ways. Experiments in expanding cultural capabilities are taking place now – though without yet using this language. Amongst the series of findings it presents, this report demonstrates the value – for the UK's cultural ecology as a whole – of developing initiatives of this kind, as (just) one important part of a plethora of existing and potential ways to enable the expansion of cultural capabilities for all.

Towards cultural democracy

The picture of cultural creativity emerging through our research strongly challenges the underlying logic of the prevailing approach to UK cultural policy – what its critics call the 'deficit model'. Within this paradigm, dominant for the past 70 years that the UK has had an arts council, the leading ambition has been to widen access to a particular cultural offering that is publically funded and thereby identified as the good stuff. This report argues that promoting cultural capabilities for everyone offers a new overall approach. In doing so, we are not suggesting that 'great' art or profitable creative industries shouldn't continue to be the focus of cultural policy attention. Putting cultural democracy at the heart of national cultural policy does not mean abandoning, diluting or somehow dumbing down the arts. On the contrary, we believe it holds significant

WHY DO WE NEED THIS REPORT? THE TIME IS NOW

In the context of the deep and widespread political division expressed through the 2016 EU referendum campaign and vote, it is increasingly clear that new approaches to many of the UK's political processes require urgent and radical attention. This includes how cultural policy operates – and who and what cultural policy is for. Questions about how culture is made and by who, and which creative activity gets recognised and supported, are matters in which we all have a profound and ever more urgent interest.

potential for building bigger, more diverse, and more committed audiences – as well as enabling a more widely-engaged and diverse community of artists – and a UK cultural ecology that is not only more equitable but also more creative.

The full implications of cultural democracy are unknowable in advance, of course. We are living in times in which long-established ways of doing representative democracy are under intense scrutiny, and more participatory forms may need to be developed if the democratic legitimacy of public institutions is to be sustained. In this context, the role that cultural democracy could play within an overall revitalisation of political democracy is an important and bigger question for further attention. As a prominent analyst of participatory democracy has written, democracy is literally 'the power of the people'; and if democratic institutions 'do not in fact draw on the capacity of every member of society, then the people do not in practice have control, and society is poorer as a result'.[11] In the context of a crisis of representative democracy – in which new ways are needed to connect the power of the people to the shared processes and institutions with which we live – supporting the substantive

9 http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3P7n390cZc3VBpn7cPn0F5T/about-get-creative [accessed 22nd December, 2015]

10 http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3P7n390cZc3VBpn7cPn0F5T/about-get-creative [accessed 23rd November, 2016]

11 Wainwright, 2003: 1.

> **What we are proposing here is an approach to cultural policy that moves beyond the deficit model (taking great art to the people, 'the democratisation of culture') and instead seeks to achieve cultural democracy.**

> **...we are not calling for a separate and additional area of policy interest and investment; but for a root and branch re-evaluation of all cultural policy.**

freedoms to co-create versions of culture may well have an important part to play[12].

Recommendations

We outline 14 recommendations in all. The first nine are aimed at supporting the encompassing policy objective of promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy), and are targeted at national government departments and agencies. The following five recommendations are targeted at a broad set of stakeholders, including private trusts and foundations, local cultural policy makers, arts and cultural organisations, and cultural creativity initiatives,[13] and aim to support the development of integrated strategies. Although presented separately we see the two sets as interlinked: *national level objective and locally specific strategies* must go hand-in-hand in order to be successful. As such, the process being proposed is both top down and bottom up in its approach. A coordinated and co-creative response to these recommendations is needed, requiring open dialogue.

Recommendations to national cultural policy makers & funders

RECOMMENDATION 1
Promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy) needs to be made an interlinked policy objective, across a range of national government departments and agencies. This is the most important long-term recommendation we make. At present, the UK has *de facto* arts and creative industries policies. It does not yet have a cultural policy of the kind that we are calling for. Crucially, there are ways that the principle of democracy in culture might be realised in practice, beyond the prevailing focus on widening access to publically funded organisations, or responding to regional inequalities in arts funding. What we are proposing

here is an approach to cultural policy that moves beyond the deficit model (taking great art to the people, 'the democratisation of culture') and instead seeks to achieve *cultural democracy*. Within this approach, great art is just one part of a flourishing cultural ecology wherein the arts, creative industries and everyday creativity are recognised to nourish each other, and are actively supported in doing so; thereby realising *widespread, sustained and substantial opportunities for people to make versions of culture*. In making this key recommendation we are not calling for a separate and additional area of policy interest and investment; but for a root and branch re-evaluation of all cultural policy to take account of this meta-level policy objective across its entire remit. A range of government departments and agenices – beyond the DCMS and arts councils – need to be actively involved in achieving this objective.

RECOMMENDATION 2
Investigate the best institutional arrangements through which to promote cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy) as a national level policy objective. Moving towards a fairer use of limited public funds for cultural investment – in ways better able to meet the cultural interests of all sectors of society – has been held back by the deficit model of cultural participation. Re-focusing on the *cultural capabilities* of everyone offers a model of fairness and equality that is more locally responsive and adaptive to the cultural interests, practices, needs and potential of people around the UK. The range of national level institutions involved in supporting this objective transcends the jurisdiction of the DCMS and ACE, so conversations across government departments will be needed. Exactly what the most effective institutional arrangements in support of cultural democracy will look like – nationally, regionally and locally – requires much futher investigation and discussion. As just one example of what the institutional arrangements may involve at a national level, we suggest investigating the possibility of a 'What Works'

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12 What we are suggesting here is that an important part of the potential value of cultural democracy is that it is a condition in which people have greater opportunity to articulate values, experiences and points of view, and this may have implications beyond the 'cultural' sphere as such. Here we note the important argument of Amartya Sen that different types of freedom can support and protect each other. (Sen, 2001). Sen makes this argument in respect of political, civic and economic freedoms (or capabilities), but does not extensively address the question of *cultural* capability, which is a significant conceptual contribution of this Cultural Enquiry.
13 Such as Get Creative, Fun Palaces and 64 Million Artists.

centre[14] (or similar) for cultural capability and cultural democracy: a national centre to explore the most effective means for policy makers to promote cultural capabilities and realise cultural democracy in the UK, on an ongoing basis, working across government departments and their agencies.

RECOMMENDATION 3

National policy makers – in collaboration with researchers and a wide range of stakeholders – should investigate how the proposed policy objective of promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy) can work alongside existing core cultural policy objectives. The central thrust of this report in no way invalidates the underlying commitment cultural policy has currently, and should continue to have, to much existing publicly supported arts and culture. Moreover, our research brings particular attention to the ecological nature of the cultural landscape: the arts, the creative industries and everyday creativity are highly connected. Change in one area can have effects in another. For this systemic reason alone, and in the spirit of an ecological approach, policy makers must of course exercise caution in making substantive changes to policy. However, a sustained and explicit commitment to promoting cultural capabilites may have a very significant and positive impact on the range and depth of nationwide involvement in the arts and creative industries, as well as in everyday creativity. Developing a better understanding of the interconnections in the cultural ecology represents a major first step. This can be achieved, in the short-term, by raising awareness of the issues discussed in this report; and in the longer term, through a number of the subsequent recommendations, below.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Make the case for investment in promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy). Any re-direction of limited public funds represents an opportunity cost. However, in recommending the case for investment in cultural capabilities we do not believe that this should or would result in a zero sum game, where investment in one area automatically leads to a reduction in another. As is implicit in **Recommendations 2 & 3,** promoting cultural

capabilities as an integrated policy objective should begin with a commitment to better understanding its significance across the entire cultural policy spectrum, rather than any short-term re-direction of funding. The nature of cultural investment will develop over time, of course, and this needs to be investigated by national policy makers through ongoing conversations with stakeholders of many kinds, across the country. But this report indicates that introducing a new overarching policy objective – promoting capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy) – has the significant potential to realise a much greater return on investment for every pound spent on culture in the UK. When that investment takes place within an overall commitment not only to great art and access to it, but to the promotion of cultural capabilities through an integrated cultural ecology of the arts, creative industries and everyday creativity, it has the potential to generate many kinds of value (economic, social, cultural) exponentially. In this context, we strongly enourage the Industrial Strategy for the Creative Industries – as part of the UK government's new overall Industrial Strategy – to take full account of the central argument of this report, and to make the case for investment in support of cultural capabilities.

RECOMMENDATION 5

National policy makers should support the co-creative activities of creative citizens and pillar organisations whose cultural creativity takes place across a range of visible and invisible sites, and who make connections and develop informal networks across these sites of practice. Our research has highlighted the pivotal – though often invisible – role played by a wide array of individuals and organisations in connecting up people and opportunities across the cultural ecology. We recommend that policy makers pay particular attention to the current and potential value of these creative citizens and pillar organisations, and look not only to support them in their practices through appropriate investment (**Recommendation 4**), but to support more people to take on this co-creative role in their communities. An important step for national cultural policy makers in the short- and medium-term is to build on current initiatives, including best practice from the arts sector, and emerging

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14 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-works-network-membership-requirements
[accessed 19th February, 2017]

interventions such as the Get Creative campaign, to pilot ideas raised. This might involve actively drawing together lessons from current initatives in order to inform the practice of organisations and initiatives elsewhere in the UK. This could include assisting publicly funded organisations to become pillar organisations within their communities: not only presenting art and inviting participation, but acting as community hubs, through which people can make their own culture. It may also involve supporting organisations to empower creative citizens – for example, supporting organisations to 'use individual volunteers as an effective way to develop voluntary and amateur arts activity.'[15]

RECOMMENDATION 6

National level policy should be informed by the development of new methodologies to investigate cultural capability and cultural functionings.[16] Impact and evaluation studies, which are used to justify cultural policy interventions, inevitably focus on what can be measured. *Towards Cultural Democracy* takes an innovative step in arguing for the significance of creative potential and cultural capability over and above what is fully realised at present. In doing so, however, we recognise that this raises a very real challenge in being able to evidence such 'semi-visible' concerns. The approach being advocated here may well require the development of new methodologies to respond to this challenge effectively.[17] Part of this may well involve the development of methods to study (local, regional and national) cultural ecologies – and the range of substantive and sustained cultural opportunities within them. Beyond this, and in the longer term, new methodologies will be needed to investigate the ways in which a policy approach explicitly focused on cultural capabilities leads to an expanded range of cultural *functionings* – the realised 'beings and doings' of culture. In other words, new methodologies are needed to investigate changes in both the nature and extent of cultural potential (cultural capabilities), and the realisation of this potential (cultural functionings).

RECOMMENDATION 7

In the medium-term we recommend that all publicly funded arts organisations be required to develop an explicit, integrated cultural capability strategy. A statement of this strategy would be a requirement for funding. Organisations (and individual practitioners) would be required to think carefully about – and show evidence of – how they promote cultural capabilities now, as well their plans for the future. Crucially, this is not about bolting on an additional policy aim; nor should it be construed as an additional bureaucratic hoop to jump through – a paper exercise to complete in order to secure funding. Rather, it should be seen as part of the process of gently re-orienting all organisations towards fulfilling their potential roles in co-creating cultural democracy, characterised by cultural capabilities for all. The exercise of reflecting on how an organisation will deliver on its strategy becomes part of the process itself, informing future practice. Following **Recommendation 6**, arts and cultural organisations should be supported (for example, by their arts council relationship manager) to understand the ways in which they already enable cultural capabilities, and the ways in which they could do so further in the future.

It is important to stress that many individuals and organisations across the ecology are deeply committed to a more democratic cultural landscape, and there is much to learn from them. To take just one important example, Arts Council England's Creative People and Places (CPP) programme, we recommend that this action-research initiative explicitly considers a) to what extent promoting cultural capabilities is already happening, at a local level; and b) how knowledge of innovative schemes, approaches and networks, currently being amassed through CPP evaluation, could be built on further, to help better understand and move towards cultural democracy.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Ensure sustained and broad knowledge exchange between organisations of many kinds and current Arts Council schemes throughout the UK, which have the potential to promote cultural capabilities, particularly those focusing on young people and cultural learning. It is imperative that

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15 Simpson, 2016: 22.
16 'Capabilities' and 'functionings' are terms referred to within the Capabilties Approach (see Nussbaum, 2011).
17 Dr. Nick Wilson and Dr. Jonathan Gross are doing some initial further work on this through the research project, 'The Cultural Learning Ecology in Harrow', in collaboration with A New Direction. https://www.anewdirection.org.uk/

current and future activities in support of cultural democracy learn from, and inform, initiatives already taking place under the remit of the Arts Councils in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (including, of course, CPP, mentioned in **Recommendation 7**). Arguably, this is particularly important in respect of policies and programmes relating to children and young people. Stories of successful artists and musicians being denied opportunities to co-create versions of culture in their formative years (eg in the school choir, the art class etc.) are all too common. We can only imagine how many more such stories there are that are never brought to light. Clearly, the role of primary and secondary education in promoting cultural capabilities is hugely important. But children and young people don't only learn about art and culture in formal education; indeed, many opportunities are developed between friends and peers, and with family. There is much yet to understand about this wider context of 'cultural learning'. This report also points to the fact – all too easily overlooked – that cultural learning is a life-long pursuit. To this end, opportunities for adult (cultural) education and learning are vital too. National government departments and agencies have the opportunity to collate and share widely the insights generated across a wide range of initiatives, for children and adults, and to explicitly employ these insights to support initiatives, organisations and individuals seeking to promote cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy).

RECOMMENDATION 9

Policy makers should give careful consideration to how all stakeholders can be supported, on an ongoing basis, in using digital technologies and platforms for both sharing stories about and promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy). As identified by the Warwick Commission, 'the digitial revolution has increased levels of participation in informal cultural and creative activity and has expanded the universe of artists.'[18] The use of online fora and platforms for creative activities is widely heralded as a major democratising influence in contemporary culture. Children and young people are growing up with the confidence and skills to adopt and adapt this space for an enormous variety of

cultural ends. To the extent that a major 'first step' in promoting cultural capabilities and cultural democracy involves shifting mindsets and raising awareness of a more inclusive way of thinking about arts, culture and creativity, it is important both to ensure that stories of digital co-creation are widely shared, but also that more individuals, young and old, are actively enabled to use digital media creatively. As part of this, we recommend that the government's Digital Strategy[19] take explicit account of this report's focus on promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy).

Recommendations to private trusts and foundations, local cultural policy makers, cultural organisations, individual cultural practitioners and cultural creativity initiatives

RECOMMENDATION 10

All cultural stakeholders in the UK, across all 'scales' of operation, need to consider their own local responses to the shared objective of promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy), and make it a strategic priority. This is the most important long-term recommendation for this group of stakeholders. The emphasis here is on responding positively and pro-actively to the proposed cultural policy objective outlined in **Recommendation 1**. Whilst some indications of how this can be done have been introduced in **Recommendations 2 – 9**, it is crucial that individual stakeholders develop their own distinctive and context-specific strategic responses to this shift in thinking about the cultural landscape; and this report identifies a number of approaches for doing so.

RECOMMENDATION 11

Investigate possibilities for further collaboration with local authorities, and how initiatives promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy) might be embedded within city-wide cultural strategies. There are a range of other cultural creativity interventions, beyond Get Creative, which are currently pursuing a variety of strategies that implicitly promote

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18 Neelands et al. 2015: 15.

19 The UK Digital Strategy, published on 1st March, 2017 calls for an 'ongoing conversation' in regards to 'how government and industry can collaborate to enable growth in new sectors of the future...' https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-digital-strategy/executive-summary [accessed 2nd March, 2017.]

> **There needs to be a much broader conversation that follows up on the value of cultural capability and cultural democracy and the ways in which this extends beyond traditional arts and culture.**

cultural capabilities. Some of these are working with local authorities, which are pivotal to developing an integrated strategy going forward.[20] In addition to many local schemes and projects run by arts organisations, 64 Million Artists, for example, are looking to develop collaborations with local authorities to support this kind of work, including their current collaboration with Hull 2017, the UK City of Culture. We strongly support this kind of initiative, and in doing so, highlight the vital need for city-wide information, and data collected in the course of such projects to be learnt from in a systematic way.[21]

RECOMMENDATION 12

Develop mutually beneficial relationships with local radio as a key channel for the promotion of everyday creativity. An important potential benefit of cultural creativity initiatives that include the BBC, such as Get Creative, is their capacity to draw upon its unprecedented reach across the UK (96 per cent of households). Such reach is not of a blanket nature; national and local broadcasting services complement each other, whilst playing distinctive roles. Our research indicates the particular significance of the local radio network – being well placed to share examples and stories of everyday creativity, which can inspire others, and provide up to date and locally relevant information about opportunities in the area. Currently, the Up for Arts scheme is operating in three BBC stations in the North-West of England. We see considerable potential in expanding on this scheme across the whole of the network, in the service of cultural democracy, and would recommend this be given serious consideration. We also recognise the importance of other media platforms from noticeboards and free newspapers to local television, which will also play an important role at local levels.

RECOMMENDATION 13

Continue, and go further, to develop collaborations with non-arts groups – including sports, entertainment, and community groups – and share knowledge with each other of the challenges and opportunities in these collaborations. Our penultimate recommendation acknowledges, once again, that promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy) is dependent upon a wide range of conditions and practices that are not all under the purview of the DCMS or ACE. There needs to be a much broader conversation that follows up on the value of cultural democracy as we characterise it here, and the ways in which this extends beyond traditional arts and culture. This conversation overlaps with concerns about cultural value, cultural participation, and democracy in general.

RECOMMENDATION 14

Help make the case for promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy). At the heart of these recommendations lies a call for better understanding of what enables opportunities for co-creating versions of culture; and a provocation to change the traditional mindset – enshrined in the Arts Council's over-arching commitment to 'great art for everyone'. The case for promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy) is one that can be made on ethical and political grounds of equity and empowerment.[22] However, the detail of just how such a policy can be implemented requires a great many voices to contribute on an ongoing basis. The recommendations provided here offer an initial set of proposals.[23] Moving towards cultural democracy is both an urgent agenda and a long-term one. We therefore invite readers to engage in discussions of our recommendations as part of an ongoing, collective project of realising substantial and lasting change.

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20 Fun Palaces, for example, have been working with the Local Government Association, libraries, and the Society of Chief Librarians, leading to 59 per cent of Fun Palaces taking place in libraries in 2016 (from a total of 292 Fun Palaces, involving 124,000 participants).

21 We also note Voluntary Arts' warning that 'There is a real danger of CPP being seen by voluntary arts groups (and other cultural organisations) as replacing local authority Arts Development Officers (where those posts have been lost). This is clearly not a sustainable solution...' (Simpson, 2016: 14)

22 And the broader values (and benefits) of political democracy with which it is interlinked, and to which it may potentially contribute.

23 The authors of this report are also planning a further piece of research, Making Cultural Democracy, working with four case studies across the country to investigate what is needed – at local, regional and national levels – to achieve cultural democracy.

1

Introduction to the report

The case for promoting
cultural capabilities and
cultural democracy is one that
can be made on ethical and
political grounds of equity and
empowerment. However, the
detail of just how such a policy
can be implemented requires
a great many voices to
contribute on an ongoing basis.

1.1 Get Creative

The findings of this report derive from the work of the Get Creative Research Project (GCRP). The GCRP ran between July 2015 and October 2016, and was integrated within the Get Creative campaign.[24] The research team, based in the department of Culture, Media and Creative Industries at King's College London, evaluated Get Creative, producing an interim and final report (both internal). This report is the primary public output of the GCRP.

The Get Creative campaign began in February 2015 as 'a celebration of the world-class arts, culture and creativity that happens every day across the UK'. Led by BBC Arts, in collaboration with other stakeholder organisations from the arts and cultural sector who together form the Get Creative Steering Group,[25] during its first year over 1,000 organisations and individuals across the country signed up to participate in the campaign as Get Creative Champions.[26]

As the BBC Arts Get Creative homepage explains, the campaign 'came about in part as a result of the Warwick Commission's year long investigation into the Future of Cultural Value; a politically neutral and independent study into the kind of investment needed to ensure all forms of culture are inclusive and accessible for all.' The Warwick Commission report proposed 'Celebrating everyday arts and cultural participation', calling specifically for 'A popular campaign...to celebrate Britain's arts in order to make our cultural landscape more visible to the public and to reconnect the public with culture at national and local levels.'

This recommendation was in part a response to the stark finding, derived from an analysis of the Department of Culture Media and Sport's *Taking Part* survey, that it is the 8 per cent wealthiest, whitest and most formally educated proportion of the population that makes greatest regular use of Arts Council funded organisations. An important context for the launch of Get Creative, then,[27] was the problematic use of public funds to subsidise the cultural life of the already privileged. Exactly how Get Creative – or similar interventions – might help address this slow-burning crisis in the democratic legitimacy of UK cultural policy is a key question, the answer to which is elaborated over the course of this report. Get Creative, we suggest, should be understood as a de facto policy intervention – a different way of supporting cultural creativity and opportunity.

A mixed methods research approach was necessary to both evaluate Get Creative and investigate the wider questions for cultural policy and practice that the campaign raises. We therefore made use of questionnaires, interviews, group conversations, and observation (ethnography). Specifically, our approach comprised:

- Interviews with members of the Get Creative Steering Group
- Interviews with 28 Get Creative Champions, in eight regions of the UK
- Group conversations at six What Next? chapters
- Two rounds of questionnaires, distributed to all 1,000+ Get Creative Champions

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24 http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/sections/get-creative [accessed 20th January, 2017]

25 The organisations represented on the Steering Group are: 64 Million Artists, Arts Council England, the Arts Council of Wales, BBC, Crafts Council, Family Arts Campaign, Fun Palaces, Voluntary Arts, What Next?, Creative People and Places and Creative Scotland.

26 The Champions are the means through which the campaign operates on the ground, with organisations and individual practitioners offering at least one event, free of charge, through which people can take part in a creative activity. See http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/11KvJFv5JWNGNzKSk5rZpKD/how-to-be-a-champion

27 Though not an explicit motivation for all partners.

- Ethnographic fieldwork at four sites of cultural creativity in London and East Anglia[28]
- Workshops in five locations around the UK, with cultural practitioners and academics, sharing and testing our provisional findings.

Through our research with the Get Creative campaign we had access to a very wide range of cultural stakeholders across the country; and it is via the depth and quality of their responses that the findings of this report are established.

1.2 Challenging hierarchies of cultural value

Get Creative has evolved alongside a range of recent initiatives to support and promote cultural creativity outside the professional arts and profitable creative industries. In some cases, long-established arts and cultural organisations are thinking in new ways about how they not only present performances and exhibitions, but also provide new opportunities for members of the public to exercise their own creativity. ACE's Creative People and Places is an important largescale experimental action research project that is enabling and encouraging significant activity in this respect. In others cases, such as 64 Million Artists and Fun Palaces – each of which was set up within the past four years – the *raison d'être* of these organisations is to support unrecognised cultural creativity wherever its happening, as well as in new places and new ways, outside of the recognised system of *the arts*.[29] Get Creative represents just one manifestation of this rising tide of interest, which is observable in academic research too, where recent projects have begun to investigate not only everyday participation[30]

but also amateur theatre[31] and creative citizenship.[32]

This report therefore takes its place within fast developing challenges to hierarchies of cultural value. If the second half of the twentieth century saw a sustained undermining of the hierarchy of popular and high culture, we are currently witnessing a number of challenges to the hierarchy of amateur and professional culture. As the authors of the AHRC's recent Cultural Value report point out, 'giving greater research visibility to the value of amateur and commercial engagement forces us to reject the hierarchical modes of provision where the subsidised forms are assumed to be superior'; and '[t]he evolving ecology of commercial, amateur, interactive and subsidised engagement needs to be better understood'.[33]

1.3 Beyond the deficit model

Recognising the diversity and interconnectedness of the ways people create versions of culture together is a key step in addressing the major problems that continue to beset an approach to cultural policy primarily focused on increasing access to – and 'participation' with – professional arts. After 70 years of the Arts Council, and many years of outreach initiatives, the inherent limitations of this approach have now been demonstrated. Not only does it remain stubbornly the case that only a small proportion of the UK population makes regular use of publicly supported culture, but recent research shows that people participate in places and in ways that, on the surface at least, have little or nothing to do with publically funded cultural organisations.

This constitutes a sustained challenge to prevailing approaches to cultural participation. Miles and Sullivan,[34] Jancovich

> **Long-established arts and cultural organisations are thinking in new ways about how they not only present performances and exhibitions, but also provide new opportunities for members of the public to exercise their own creativity.**

28 The Old Vic Community Company, an evangelical church in East Anglia, a disability theatre company in Essex called Razed Roof, and a network of break dancers in North East London. At each site we combined participant observation with interviews (with both organisers and participants) and group discussions.

29 In June 2016, 64 Million Artists published an ACE commissioned report *Everyday Creativity: From Great Art and Culture for Everyone, to Great Art and Culture by, with and for Everyone*. This included three areas of recommendations focusing on i) valuing everyday creativity in arts and culture; ii) supporting existing and encouraging more grassroots activity; and iii) democratising an existing funded infrastructure.

30 http://www.everydayparticipation.org/ [accessed 20th January, 2017]

31 http://amateurdramaresearch.com/ [accessed 20th January, 2017]

32 http://creativecitizens.co.uk/ [accessed 20th January, 2017]

33 Crossick and Kaszinska, 2016: 29.

34 Miles and Sullivan, 2012.

and Bianchini,[35] Belfiore,[36] Stevenson[37] and others have criticized attempts to increase participation in the funded arts and culture for operating according to a 'deficit model', in which those who are positioned as non-participants are told, implicitly or explicitly, that they should participate more. The deficit model disregards the wide range of ways in which people are involved in cultural creativity at times and in places that ostensibly have little or nothing to do with publically funded organisations. It relegates many of these activities (and the people who do them) to second-class cultural status, or simply renders them invisible, sustaining dubious hierarchies of cultural value.

As part of the critique of the deficit model, the idea of cultural 'cold spots' is in the process of being systematically debunked. The work of the Understanding Everyday Participation project, based at the University of Manchester, is beginning to demonstrate the rich variety of cultural activity that takes place around the country, including in places where publically funded arts and culture are not highly visible or made much use of. As the criticisms of the deficit model imply, the long-standing emphasis on widening participation – to the exclusion of other understandings of what cultural policy might achieve – is borne of an overall approach primarily focused on the cultural offer made by those organisations supported by arts councils, and the need to justify public expenditure on these organisations. As the Warwick Commission's 8 per cent figure shows – and despite all the considerable effort that has been put into it – this approach to cultural policy has reached a dead end.

These arguments are a crucial starting point. But there is a danger that critiques of the deficit model that stress what is already taking place (outside of publicly funded cultural organisations) do not go far enough. They risk being constrained by current limits on everyday creativity, describing what is possible *now* – subject to existing social conditions and institutions. We need to go further in understanding the creative *potential* that is present but not yet exercized, and which could be if things were different.

This report therefore provides a new way to understand creative potential: the substantive freedom to co-create versions of culture. We call this *cultural capability*. This conceptual framework, and the empirical material which supports it, takes us beyond the initial, hugely important critiques of the deficit model. The idea of cultural capability – a substantive freedom that is socially emergent but individually exercised – not only enables new insights into how cultural creativity happens, it also helps identify a new direction for cultural policy: supporting the cultural capabilities of everyone. We call this *cultural democracy*, and it offers a clear and progressive path beyond the deficit model.

1.4 The argument

One of the key difficulties that besets discussion of cultural policy and related debates over cultural value, cultural participation and everyday creativity is the slipperiness of the central concepts involved. We have been at pains throughout the Get Creative Research Project (GCRP) to ensure that we develop a rigorous conceptualization.[38] In now clarifying the argument introduced in this report we introduce each of the main points together with an explanation of the related key terms.

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35 Jancovich and Bianchini, 2013.
36 Belfiore, 2012.
37 Stevenson, 2013 and 2016.
38 In keeping with Belfiore (2016) we believe that critical research of this nature can and should play a role in policy debates by way of exerting 'conceptual' influence.

Culture

Culture[39] is bigger than 'the arts'[40]; but notwithstanding the enormous contribution made by cultural studies since the late-1950s to our understanding of this fact, there remains a strong tendency to treat culture and the arts as synonymous. In this report we explore the possibility of a more inclusive and 'personalist'[41] understanding of culture – that takes its cue from the following indication of what *persons* are:

One of the amazing things about human persons is the ability to engage beliefs and ideas in ways that interact with bodies and the material world in order to creatively form patterns of actions, interactions, and collective social environments…a great deal of human social existence is not directly determined by genetic codes or instinctual species behaviors. Instead, human persons are free to use their manifold capacities for representation, belief formation, language, memory, creativity, identity development, and so on variously to shape the meanings and structures of their social existence together. The result is the immense variety, richness, and complexity of human cultures and subcultural meaning systems evident in history and the world today.[42]

Culture is what 'shapes the meanings and structures of [our] social existence together'. It defines who we are and who we might become; furthermore, it does this by virtue of our 'customary difference'[43] from others – which is where debates over 'high', 'low' and 'popular' culture have been fought, and why we see value in referring to 'versions of culture' (in the plural), that may compete with each other for resources and approval. Culture is then the ever-present condition and the continually reproduced outcome of our capacity as human beings to act with creativity.

Cultural creativity

Creativity is everywhere. Human beings possess the capacity for creativity,[44] which they realise (or not) in many contexts – not just in the arts. Unfortunately, the way in which we think and talk about human creativity tends to be *overly* restrictive. Whilst it is sensible to broadly distinguish between the creativity involved in 'doing science' as opposed to 'doing art', for example, (this report is concerned with the latter not the former), it is nonetheless problematic to imply that it is only in 'the arts' (ie a particular sector of professionalised creative and cultural practices) that human beings create the conditions that give rise to valuable and meaningful 'aesthetic' experiences (this being what art affords).[45] Taking this into account, in this report we adopt the term *cultural creativity* to refer to this broad range of human creativity that is in some shape or form about 'doing art',

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39 The term 'culture' has famously been described as 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (Williams, 1958). At least three dominant usages have gained common currency – i) as a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development; ii) as a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general; and iii) as a description of the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity, including music, literature, painting and sculpture, theatre, film, and so on. In referring principally to the 'cultural landscape' it is the third of these which initially appears most relevant. However, there is an obvious danger here of limiting culture to a certain set of human activities and their outcomes that are visible and legitimised by the 'art world'. All too easily this reinforces an exclusivist position – where some artworks and artforms are considered, but not others.

40 For the purposes of this report we take 'the arts' to refer to a particular sector of professionalised cultural activity, encompassing the 'fine arts', and including literature (poetry, novels, short stories), performing arts (music, dance, theatre), visual arts (drawing, painting, ceramics, sculpture, also photography and film). There are, of course, many blurred boundaries here (eg participatory arts, architecture, design, culinary arts) and overlaps with the 'cultural and creative industries' (see DCMS, 1998; Hesmondhalgh, 2007 for discussion).

41 'Personalist theory claims that all adequate understanding of human life must take seriously the fact that human beings are *persons* and not something else. This requires that we understand what persons are, what distinguishes them from nonpersonal entities.' (Smith, 2015: 8)

42 Smith, 2010: 119.

43 See Mulhern (2009) for further discussion.

44 Whilst generally understood in terms of novelty and value, we follow Martin and Wilson (2014) in also seeing creativity as discovering the possibilities of the world and bringing them into being.

45 We have chosen not to highlight discussion of 'art' *per se* in the report, despite its centrality, as further detailed and comparatively lengthy conceptual justification is necessary (one of the co-authors of this report is currently working on a book-length study that aims to fulfill this function). However, it may well be that in making the case for cultural capability at policy level this becomes necessary.

> **By showing how cultural creativity happens as part of an ecology, and indicating how easily these examples of cultural creativity could not have happened – had particular environmental conditions been ever so slightly otherwise – our research demonstrates that there are potentially all sorts of arts, creative industries and everyday creativity that are not currently happening, but *could*.**

rather than some other modes of human creativity such as science or education.[46]

The UK's cultural landscape is then dependent on the 'plethora of creativity'[47] that happens up and down the country, and its being shared. There is much cultural creativity taking place around the UK that is neither directly publicly funded nor commercially profitable. Some of this is 'visible' to policy makers and cultural organisations. This includes, for example, the many amateur choirs and orchestras represented by Voluntary Arts. Other forms of cultural creativity are 'invisible' to cultural policy and cultural organisations, such as the examples of music making in an evangelical church, and the break dancing in a shopping mall, that we discuss in this report.

Everyday creativity

Whether visible or invisible, we call all cultural creativity which is neither part of the publicly supported arts or the commercially supported creative industries *everyday creativity*. By referring to everyday creativity, we emphasise that these instances of cultural creativity:

- are characterised precisely by not being recognised or directly supported through public subsidy (the arts) or profitability (the creative industries).
- are, nonetheless, often very important to those involved in co-creating their version(s) of culture.

As the term suggests, these activities can be part of our everyday lives, as well those special occasions of performance or exhibition, and they can take place in every space, location and context imaginable. Our conception of everyday creativity here embraces the notion of culture being 'everywhere, resistant, hardy' and 'shared'.[48] At the same time it avoids the problematic terms 'homemade'[49] and 'amateur', which

carry potentially belittling connotations with them. A key feature of our particular account is that it enables investigation of the inter-relationships and connections *between* the arts, the creative industries, and everyday creativity.

Cultural ecology

The work of the Get Creative Research Project shows that these three domains of cultural creativity – the arts, creative industries and everyday creativity – are deeply interconnected and interdependent. Cultural creativity takes place *ecologically*.[50] We cannot fully understand the one (say, the arts), without reference to the others (ie the creative industries and everyday creativity).[51] Moreover, the relationship between the arts and the creative industries on the one hand and everyday creativity on the other is dynamic. As our case studies illustrate, previously unrecognised, un-institutionalised cultural creativity can come to be recognised, legitimised and supported by arts organisations and funders, or become profitable within markets.

People's potential to pursue and realise cultural creativity is enabled or constrained by their particular environments. By showing how cultural creativity happens as part of an ecology, and indicating how easily these examples of cultural creativity could *not* have happened – had particular environmental conditions been ever so slightly otherwise – our research demonstrates that there are potentially all sorts of arts, creative industries and everyday creativity that are not currently happening, but *could*.

Cultural capability

Bringing analytical attention to this is not a matter of abstract theoretical speculation. Rather, it has profound implications for making cultural policy, and undertaking

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46 We recognise that there are blurred boundaries here and some readers may reject the notion that their cultural creativity is connected with art at all (see previous footnote).
47 Buber, 1962: 383-86.
48 Willis, 1990: 1-2.
49 Holden, 2015.
50 Holden, 2015.
51 Recent research on Creative People and Places (CPP) includes these two telling observations from CPP respondents: 'People are doing [everyday participation] but don't see it as 'arts'. It is important for ACE to see this as part of the continuum.' (Simpson, 2016: 5); and 'We need to be clear that CPP is part of the arts ecology – it is not the arts ecology.' (Simpson, 2016: 14)

cultural policy research. So long as evaluations and impact studies only focus on what can currently be observed and/or measured they will never begin to properly account for the creative potential of human beings, or grasp the ways in which current policies and institutions are constraining practice. When cultural creativity is understood to be ecological in nature, and very much dependent on surrounding conditions, radically new answers may be opened up to the key question, 'What is each person able to do and to be?'[52]

Following Martha Nussbaum's capabilities or 'human development' approach, our research explores the 'substantive freedoms' that people have (or not) to pursue *and* realise cultural creativity. For Nussbaum, the idea of substantive freedoms – or capabilities – provides a framework through which to assess the basic justice of a nation state.[53] Importantly, to have a capability is not the same as choosing to exercise it. For example, the freedom to have good health is one that depends on access to decent healthcare, conditions of public sanitation, and information about nutrition, exercise and hygiene. Politicians and citizens may judge this to be a 'core capability' that governments need to ensure. This does not, however, in and of itself, mean that everyone living in those conditions will in fact have good health. It means, rather, that they have real opportunities available to them to live a healthy life.[54]

Our research shows that cultural creativity requires a number of enabling conditions which, in combination, constitute the substantive freedom to co-create versions of culture.[55] What is required for cultural creativity varies considerably across circumstances. But it very often involves the substantive freedom to play (and try things), to spend time with other people (to affiliate), and to make sustained use of our imagination, senses and capacities for thought.[56] Taken together, substantive freedoms such as these enable people to pursue and realise cultural creativity, thereby co-creating a version of culture. This condition of substantive, social freedom is what we call *cultural capability*. Importantly, and to re-iterate, it remains an individual choice as to whether or not to exercise this capability.

In demonstrating the ecological nature of our cultural landscape, and showing that, in many cases, cultural creativity could easily not have happened if the right environmental conditions had not been in place, our research identifies the significant potential both for more cultural creativity, and for developing a much stronger grasp of the types of conditions, structures and institutions that constrain cultural creativity from being realised. This is why the idea of cultural capability is so important: it provides a conceptual framework with which to address what kinds of *culture-as-conditions* (constituted by both immaterial and very concrete elements, including, for example, the activities and policies of cultural organisations, the availability of materials and information, and the place of art in schools), are needed in order to ensure that the substantive, social freedom to co-create *culture-as-outcome*, is shared by all.

> So long as evaluations and impact studies only focus on what can currently be observed and/or measured they will never begin to properly account for the creative potential of human beings, or grasp the ways in which current policies and institutions are constraining practice. When cultural creativity is understood to be ecological in nature, and very much dependent on surrounding conditions, radically new answers may be opened up to the key question, 'What is each person able to do and to be?'

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52 Nussbaum, 2011: 18.

53 States, through their public policies, should ensure the substantive freedom of their populations across a number of core capabilities. For example, the substantial freedom of bodily health, 'including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter'. Or the substantial freedom to play, '[b]eing able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities'. Nussbaum, 2011: 33 and 34. To fail to support the core capabilities is to fail in the duty of government – a duty, Nussbaum argues, derived from the dignity of what it means to be a human.

54 Nussbaum provides a helpful account of these ideas in a video that can be viewed here: http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674050549 [accessed 20th January, 2017]

55 In this report we are introducing the idea of *cultural creativity* as both the 'broad range of human creativity that is in some shape or form about ''doing art'' (p.1, above) and 'co-creating versions of culture'. These are alternative descriptions of the same process. The report demonstrates the dialectical nature of this process, as culture is both a condition and an outcome. This insight is one of the key reasons that the idea of *cultural capability* is so important. The idea of cultural capability carries the potential for opening up crucial discussions about the concrete conditions needed to ensure everyone has the substantive, social freedom to make culture. In other words, *we need to think much harder about co-creating the cultures in which culture can be (democratically) created*. Our accounts of cultural creativity and cultural capability offer new conceptual tools with which to do this.

56 Here we are employing the language of Nussbaum's ten 'central capabilities'. Nussbaum, 2011: 33-34.

Promoting cultural capabilities

Conceptually, cultural capability can indeed be understood as a single capability. Empirically, however, cultural *capabilities* are referred to in the plural to indicate that they are always more or less present (or absent) within the very particular set of circumstances of each and every person in society. Furthermore, an important insight from the GCRP is that versions of culture are very often co-created by people coming together rather than made by any one individual on their own.

Although the sheer diversity of people and organisations involved defies simple analysis, the research brings particular attention to two essential modes of co-creative activity, involving **creative citzens** and **pillar organisations**, respectively. Creative citizens are typically both organisers and participants, involved in cultural creativity in ways that contribute to their neighbourhoods and communities. Pillar organisations similarly play a vital role in nurturing and supporting people's cultural creativity. However, they are able to use their organisational resources, and extensive collaborations with other arts and non-arts-based organisations, to catalyze both amateur and professional creative practice. In calling for *promoting cultural capablties* as a new policy objective, we are not just appealing to a novel abstract theorisation, but highlighting these very tangible resources and relationships within the cultural landscape that can be, and should be given more attention.

Cultural democracy

Currently, UK cultural policy primarily addresses itself to the arts and the creative industries, and increasing access to each of these areas. What is missing is a broadly inclusive approach to supporting the cultural creativity of all. Our research shows that much more could and should be done to ensure everyone has the substantive freedom to co-create versions of culture. A serious and sustained commitment to promoting

cultural capabilities is central to what we define as *cultural democracy*.

Promoting cultural capability for everyone constitutes a bold new aim for cultural policy in the UK. Building on a number of important precedents,[57] this report strongly advocates a policy approach aimed towards achieving *cultural democracy*. This contrasts with 'the democratisation of culture', which is the prevailing approach of the deficit model: taking great art to the people. Cultural democracy, by contrast – as we characterise it here – is when everyone has the power (whether or not they choose to exercise it) to pursue and realise cultural creativity, thereby co-creating versions of culture. The possibility of cultural democracy (variously defined) has been of interest to people working in the tradition of community arts since at least the 1960s. Now is the time to bring this approach to the heart of cultural policy in the UK.

More fully realising cultural democracy is important not only because it provides the most promising way to redress the democratic deficit at the heart of UK cultural policy, so starkly demonstrated by the 8 per cent figure. Its implications may be many and varied. It may, for example, increase cultural vitality;[58] contribute to individual and collective wellbeing; and even have broader implications for the quality of democratic life in the UK. In short, this is about enabling everyone to speak, to be heard, and to share in the creation of the versions of culture with which we all live. Clearly, this is a over-arching vision that is already widely shared. Taking ACE's flagship cultural participation project Creative People and Places (CPP) as an example, however – with its mission of 'enabl[ing] and encourag[ing] innovative approaches to increasing participation in the arts, in particular in areas of the country that currently have the lowest levels of arts participation (Simpson, 2016: 2) – it is also apparent that there remains a very real danger of sustaining a deficit model approach and the 'democratisation of culture' (taking 'the arts' to the people, as it

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57 Particularly practitioners and researchers working in the tradition of community arts. See, for example, Adams and Goldfarb, 1990; 1995.

58 Jackson et al suggest that 'cultural vitality' is indicated by 'evidence of creating, disseminating, validating and supporting arts and culture as a dimension of everyday life in communities'. Jackson et al, 2006: 4.

were) at the expense of promoting cultural capabilities and cultural democracy.[59]

1.5 Urgent questions – the broader political context

We are living in times of change. This is a situation of opportunity as well as risk. In the context of the deep political divisions expressed through the EU referendum campaign and vote in 2016, it is increasingly clear that new approaches to many of the UK's political processes – including, potentially, how cultural policy operates and what it is for – require urgent and possibly radical attention. These questions – of how culture is made and by who, and what gets recognised and supported – are matters in which we all have a profound and ever more pressing interest.

As an ongoing process, sustained by, and in turn sustaining, human creativity, cultural democracy is not to be understood as some utopian 'end', but rather as an on-going 'means' of fostering self-actualisation through mutuality. The benefits of cultural democracy are potentially very wide-ranging indeed, being experienced across arts and culture, education, creativity, industry, health, wellbeing and fulfilment, and impacting individuals, organisations and communities in many different ways (including self-expression, recognition, voice, transferrable skills, career development, friendship and community). Crucially, by highlighting possibilities as well as outcomes cultural democracy promises to make a real and positive difference for everyone, from playground to pension.

Our findings – most importantly, that under the radar and highly visible cultural creativity are interconnected and interdependent, and that there are major possibilities for promoting everyone's cultural capabilities – raise possibilities for a new overall approach to cultural policy and practice, capable of supporting cultural creativity much more broadly and inclusively. Our research identifies new ways in which cultural democracy, characterised

by cultural capabilities, can be more fully realised in the UK, and in **Chapter 6** we summarise some first steps in the form of 14 recommendations.

> **The benefits of cultural democracy are potentially very wide-ranging indeed, being experienced across arts and culture, education, creativity, industry, health, wellbeing and fulfilment, and impacting individuals, organisations and communities in many different ways (including self-expression, recognition, voice, transferrable skills, career development, friendship and community).**

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59 ACE's £37 million CPP scheme has funded consortium-led projects in 21 locations around the UK. This comment from one CPP interviewee is revealing in this context: 'We want to enable the community to be more active in putting on the small and the regular but the community don't necessarily want to collaborate: they have no sense of ownership. They want to be supported in their own events – then they would be more up for collaborating. But they are being asked to collaborate while they are struggling to do the stuff they want to do.' (Simpson, 2016: 9)

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Making versions of culture
Three portraits

Our research illustrates some of the many ways in which cultural creativity takes place outside the arts and creative industries.

This chapter presents three portraits of people co-creating their own distinctive versions of culture. These portraits illustrate:

1 the plethora of cultural creativity outside the arts and the creative industries (ie everyday creativity)

2 the interconnections between the arts, creative industries and everyday creativity

3 how cultural creativity can move in and out of institutional visibility

4 ways in which people and organisations facilitate co-creative conditions for their own and other people's cultural creativity

5 the value that cultural creativity has for people

6 that the freedom to co-create versions of culture is a social condition

Portrait | 1

CJ – UNDER THE RADAR

CJ[60] always sang at church in Zimbabwe, where she grew up. She is now in her mid-20s and lives in a small city in the south-east of England. She is deputy worship leader at the charismatic evangelical church she attends, a team of around 40 people who lead music at services. Having studied bio-medical science at university, she now works part-time as a healthcare assistant so that she can have time to participate in a training programme with the worship team at the church.

She sings to worship God and to help others in their worship, but as well as this spiritual purpose to her creative practice, she wants to have fun, whether that's singing in a karaoke competition or leading a jam session. Singing and jamming with friends is also part of her everyday life, such as having jam sessions over Skype.

CJ describes the music at her previous church, an all-black church in a city in the Midlands. There the emphasis on communal musical and spiritual practice was even stronger. The church had a gospel choir who would sing at services, and sometimes they would have all-

night prayers or all-night rehearsals, for example on a Friday night starting at 10pm and going right through until 7am.

...so we meet and we just sing all night. Whereas if it's prayer it's usually there's something that we're praying for, like the Paris bombings […]. And then during the night then they'll flip it to more of a worship, just so that people don't fall asleep. […] Start with the slow stuff. Then when it gets to 2am when people are getting tired, that's when you're [doing] praise songs and people are dancing all night, it's amazing.

CJ's singing is communal, and continuous with prayer. It is in many ways a part of CJ's everyday life, integrated into her spiritual practice, as well as something she shares with friends and has fun with. Whilst some of the enjoyment she takes in her creativity is similar to our research participants in secular contexts – including experiences of fun, community, and confidence – the development of her spirituality through her singing, and using that to support others to get in touch with God, shows a different value that can be attached to cultural creativity, and which may be shared by many of the 51 per cent of people in the UK who follow a faith.[61] This extremely committed involvement in cultural creativity takes place almost entirely outside the system of publicly funded arts, and would not register on official statistics of cultural participation such as the DCMS *Taking Part* survey. Nonetheless, her cultural creativity plays a major part in CJ's life, and contributes to the life of her church.
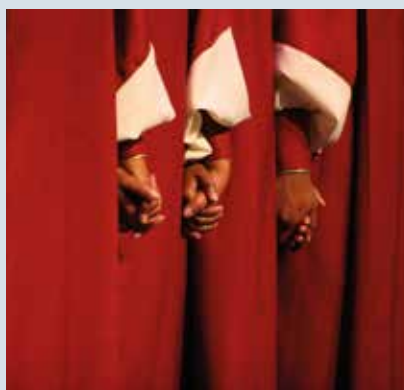
60 Some names have been changed.
61 The British Social Attitudes Survey, 2016. http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-28/religion.aspx [accessed 24th May, 2016]

Portrait | 2

FLO – THE BLURRED LINE BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL AND EVERYDAY CREATIVITY

Flo is in his early thirties and a couple of times a week does breakdancing ('breaking') in the central square of the Stratford Centre, a shopping mall in East London. Flo grew up in a small town in the French Alps, and at the age of 15 a friend began to teach Flo and his friends a few basic steps. Flo has danced ever since and says 'it's had a massive influence in my life'. From dancing together on the street, he and his friends began to take lessons with teachers in a community centre. When he moved to Grenoble to study for a degree in Business and Marketing, his teachers at the community centre put him in touch with informal groups of dancers he could join in the city. As part of his degree, Flo had the opportunity to study for a year in Coventry. There, continuing to train several times a week, he was approached by a company that places dance teachers in schools and community centres. For the next eight years, Flo worked full time as a dancer: teaching breaking in schools, community centres, prisons, with homeless people, and at children's birthday parties. He also performed as part of a troupe – often at corporate events.

Having lived in Coventry and then Leeds, two years ago Flo moved to London to be with his girlfriend. In London he found it more difficult to make a living as a breaker, and took a job as an administrator at the Royal Academy of Dance. Whilst working full time he continues to train three times a week, for two to four hours each time. The sense of community in breaking was one of the things he first liked about it. At the same time, breaking involves personal commitment to improve and achieve steps which at first seem impossible. When he was young, dancing was important for Flo 'psychologically', as it made him feel he was 'somebody', through the praise and recognition he received for his dancing from people in his town. He says that the positive effects for his 'ego' continue to be an important part of why he dances, but his motivations and enjoyment have changed over the years, and 'now I just dance to keep fit, see my friends, have a good time and forget about my worries. I just put the music on and just let go and that's it.'

Flo's dancing has been the central passion of his life. Even though he is now doing another type of paid work, he takes aspects of his approach to breaking – such as his creative use of humour in his dance, and his commitment to incremental improvement – and integrates this into his day job. He continues to train for his own enjoyment, to teach and to compete in breaking 'battles'. The role of breaking within Flo's life has changed, but it continues to be a prominent part of his weekly activities, and is part of the structure of his life. Whilst his job is located in South West London, he lives in North East London – and one of the main reasons for this is so that he can be close to the Stratford Centre, which gives him the opportunity to train after work and then get home in time to see his girlfriend.

Flo's story illustrates how cultural creativity – his co-creating a version of culture, breaking – can move between sites of greater and lesser institutional visibility. His relationship with breaking is also an example of the way in which people's creative activities can weave in and out of professional and amateur status, with a passion becoming a profession, and professional practices – such as devoted training – being a source of satisfaction in themselves. **[A case study of the network of dancers and dance sites of which Flo is a part is provided in Chapter 3.]**

> **His relationship with breaking is also an example of the way in which people's creative activities can weave in and out of professional and amateur status, with a passion becoming a profession, and professional practices – such as devoted training – being a source of satisfaction in themselves.**

> **The choir is run by a committee of members who volunteer to undertake a range of administrative roles. This is an example of people whose commitment extends not only to their individual cultural practice, but to the reproduction of the organisational conditions in which their practice takes place.**

Portrait | 3

LINDA & ROSE – BEHIND THE SCENES

Linda and Rose sing in a large choir in the north of England. They are in their sixties and retired. Linda's creative activities have been a continuous thread running through her adult life. She joined the choir in 1969, at the age of 21, and has only missed 'two and a half concerts' since. She liked to sing at home when she was growing up, with members of her family singing at the piano on Sundays. Her aunt suggested that she join the choir, and she has been an active member ever since. This has included 25 years taking minutes at choir meetings, drawing on her skills as a secretary. Rose has had a more intermittent relationship with her creative interests, though they have always been present. She had a very busy working life as a nurse, managing wards and doing hugely long shifts. She lacked confidence in her singing (as well as time), and it was only with a friend's encouragement that, once retired, she joined the choir. Rose was quickly recruited to the organising committee, and within six months was made the General Secretary.

Linda and Rose both describe the enjoyment they take in contributing to the large sound that the choir's 70 voices make together. 'Singing with a group of people and [...] just making that overall sound – when it's right [...] there's nothing like it is there, really, and you know that you're part of it.' They also emphasise the social aspects and 'camaraderie' of the choir. But Linda and Rose also highlight the challenges the choir faces. The membership is dwindling and ageing. Recruitment is an on-going concern and, as General Secretary, it is something that Rose is always actively working on. The choir faces financial challenges, which are inseparable from the issue of recruitment, as the organisation's primary income is membership fees – a not inexpensive

cost of £120 per year. With these funds, supplemented by a small income derived from programme sponsorship and jumble sales, the choir is currently able to put on three concerts a year.

Linda and Rose's cultural creativity takes place within a large group, requiring significant commitments of their time and energy – taking on administrative responsibilities. The choir is run by a committee of members who volunteer to undertake a range of administrative roles. This is an example of people whose commitment extends not only to their individual cultural practice, but to the reproduction of the organisational conditions in which their practice takes place. The choir has been active for nearly a hundred years, and the way in which the organisation operates is a classic example of the kinds of formerly constituted voluntary arts groups that up to 10 million people participate in each week in the UK.[62]

A recent challenge has arisen for the choir's organising committee, as the management company that administers the town hall on behalf of the council has 'trebled' the hire price. This is the hall that the choir usually performs in, and it is a space the members love. It is uncertain how they can meet this increased price for their 2017 concerts. Whilst Linda and Rose indicate that the organisation is not deeply dependent on the support of other organisations, it is, nonetheless, dependent on local infrastructures such as the availability of suitable and affordable performance and rehearsals space. The effort and commitment of its membership, then, is not the only factor in the reproduction of the conditions through which Linda and Rose get creative.

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62 Dodd, 2008.

What are people (and what is each person) actually able to do and to be?

3

Introducing cultural capability

Our research shows that
people's lives are subject to
conditions of greater or lesser
cultural capability — as at
different times and places,
they have greater or lesser
substantive freedom to
co-create versions of culture.

3.1 The capabilities approach

Our research illustrates some of the many ways in which cultural creativity takes place outside the arts and creative industries. At the same time, it shows that not only is everyday creativity interdependent with the arts and creative industries, but a whole range of social conditions play an important part in enabling and constraining people's freedom to co-create versions of culture.

The prevailing model of 'access' and its language of 'barriers' and 'widening participation' is woefully inadequate in explaining how cultural creativity does or does not happen. This language is of course integral to the deficit model, which takes as its starting point the aim of increasing levels of engagement with arts organisations that have been deemed sufficiently 'excellent' to receive public money. Once we recognise the enormous diversity of cultural creativity beyond those organisations – and make the case that it is no longer defensible for cultural policy to make increasing participation in the publicly funded arts its primary ambition – a key question for policy makers becomes: 'how does cultural creativity happen, and how does it fail to happen?'

In answering this question, and addressing its implications for cultural policy and practice, there is much to learn from also asking, 'What are people (and what is each person) actually able to do and to be?'.[63] This is the central question of Martha Nussbaum's 'Capabilities Approach' to development economics. The starting point for the Capabilities Approach is that the long-standing focus on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has provided a very poor indicator for how well a state's public policy is doing in improving the lives of its people. GDP can often rise and things in no way get 'better' for much of the population. It is often the case that GDP soars but the

benefits are distributed very unequally amongst the population. Similarly, citizens of a country may have access to basic goods and services, but if their legal and civil rights are tightly constrained by repressive legal and political conditions, their ability to flourish is significantly constrained. Crucially for Nusbaum, GDP serves as a poor indicator of whether the people of a country are in a position to live a life commensurable with the 'dignity' of what it means to be a human. This, for Nussbaum, is what public policy should ultimately be for: to ensure people live in conditions in which their core capabilities – a set of substantive freedoms – are protected. These are basic conditions in which people can make meaningful choices about how to live their life; and whether or not these conditions are ensured is, for Nussbaum, the key test of the basic *justice* of a nation state.

By shifting the attention of policy makers to the question of substantive freedoms – *What is it that people can do and be?* – the Capabilities Approach provides a powerful set of intellectual tools for our purposes here. It not only helps to sharpen our focus in addressing the question of how cultural creativity comes about or fails to come about. It also helps us to articulate the fundamental challenge our research is making to the basis of cultural policy in the UK. Drawing on Nussbaum's language, which identifies capabilities as socially dependent freedoms, but which are exercised (or not) individually, our research shows that people's lives are subject to conditions of greater or lesser cultural capability – as at different times and places, they have greater or lesser substantive freedom to co-create versions of culture.

Drawing on our fieldwork and on the insights of the Capabilities Approach, we can begin to understand the diverse range of factors that are influential in supporting

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63 Nussbaum, 2011: 18.

or undermining the substantive freedom to create versions of culture together – not only in the domain of everyday creativity, but also within and across the boundaries of the arts and creativie industries, with which everyday creativity is inextricably linked. As we suggest in **Chapter 6**, much further research is needed to in order to understand what enables cultural capability – and indeed the answer to this key question will vary considerably across time and place. But our research to date is able to provide initial indications of a number of potentially crucial factors.

3.2 Pathways and networks

In our fieldwork, research participants told us they developed their creativity through school, university, arts and cultural organisations, churches or extra-curricular groups. For others, it was through more informal routes, including family or friendship groups. Brown et al[64] helpfully introduce the idea of 'vectors of engagement', which include:

1 Family-Based Engagement
provides a measure of arts activity occurring in a family social context.

2 Faith-Based Engagement
provides a measure of arts activity that occurs on the context of faith or in a place of worship.

3 Heritage-Based Engagement
provides a measure of arts activity that serves to celebrate or sustain a cultural heritage or ethnic identity.

4 Engagement in Arts Learning
captures the level at which a respondent is actively acquiring skills, either formally or informally.

5 Engagement at Arts Venues
serves as an aggregate measure of use of purpose-built arts venues for activities in all disciplines.

6 Engagement at Community Venues
serves as an aggregate measure of use of parks and outdoor settings, restaurants, bars and coffee shops, and community centers as venues for activities in each discipline.

But these vectors of engagement do not give sufficient emphasis to the *interdependence* of sites of cultural creativity. Our research shows that even many comparatively independent, self-organised, invisible instances of everyday creativity are often interdependent with much more visible sites and structures of creativity, including those provided by the arts or the creative industries. It is often from highly visible organisations that self-organised versions of culture spring – and, vice versa, the highly visible often emerges from the everyday. This point can be illustrated through the example of the break dancers in East London (**Case Study 1**) with whom we conducted ethnographic fieldwork.

> **... much further research is needed to in order to understand what enables cultural capability – and indeed the answer to this key question will vary considerably across time and place.**

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64 Brown et al, 2008.

CASE STUDY **1**

Break dancing In North London

In Chapter 2 we met Flo, who dances in the Stratford Centre shopping mall several nights a week.

ISTOCK.COM/ZORANM

On Tuesday evenings, however, he joins a group of 10 to 15 other dancers in an upstairs room in a church in Hackney. The room is provided by Alex, a 23 year-old friend of Flo he met through breaking. Alex teaches school children breakdancing in this room on Tuesday afternoons, and as part of his payment is allowed to make use of the room to dance with friends from 19.00 – 22.00. Alex first began breaking when a school friend invited him to the Stratford Circus Arts Centre (an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation), where a programme funded by Newham Council offered weekly breaking classes for young men. Alex enjoyed the classes and was keen to dance more often. The teacher, Mike, invited him to a weekly training session held elsewhere, with much more experienced dancers. Alex's dancing progressed, and now, 6 years later, Mike attends a training session run by Alex, as do two 17 year olds Alex has taught at their school, who he invited to come and train with more experienced dancers.

Alex and Flo now mentor Zain and Jahan, just as Mike mentored Alex. And Zain and Jahan, even though they are only 17, have their own 'protégés' at school who they teach, informally, in the school gym. These networks of break dancing involve mentoring as a standard part of how the practice works. Training sessions are simultaneously communal and individual, with dancers working hard on their individual moves and capacities while receiving advice and guidance from fellow dancers.

Breaking may not be a traditionally 'legitimate' art form. And yet there are clear systems of authority and expert judgement in operation – internal to 'b-boy' culture – through the ways in which more experienced dancers provide mentoring,

and through the system of 'battles' (dance-offs) that are a feature of the scene, in which dances are assessed by a panel of judges. Moreover, whilst breakers put an explicit value on originality, dancers make clear that developing new steps is first dependent on building your 'foundational steps', and this takes time. Even after dancing for a number of years, every Wednesday Jahan travels for over an hour across London to visit his first breaking teacher to 'get drilled in basics and footwork and just the foundational steps'. These foundational steps are a key part of the 'general rules' of breakdancing, as Zain puts it. Dancers 'follow those rules', but the expectation is that each breaker will bring their own idiosyncrasies and creativity to the steps.

In each of these ways, the break dancing scene moves in and out of self-organised spaces – with dancers training at home, in the street, in shopping centres – and highly organised opportunities, such as those provided through school-based or local authority projects, and commercially

run jams and battles. Break dancing is an exemplary case of everyday creativity for the way it illustrates the deep interdependence between self-organising, unrecognised creativity and organised infrastructures that enable it; and for the ways in which everyday creativity involves creative citizens: people developing a set of conditions in which they and others can get creative.

> " **In each of these ways, the break dancing scene moves in and out of self-organised spaces – with dancers training at home, in the street, in shopping centres – and highly organised opportunities, such as those provided through school-based or local authority projects, and commercially run jams and battles.** "

Examples of making versions of culture such as this highlight how forms of cultural creativity can move in and out of the institutional visibility of arts (and educational) organisations. All the while, they contribute to the UK's culture, and are of value to many. A further example of the interdependence of visible and everyday versions of culture – and the important role played by creative citizens – is a network of self-organising craft groups we learnt about in Norfolk (see **Case Study 2**, below).

Aldridge Crafts is a shop and online business in a small market town. Something of a local community hub, co-owner Jane Aldridge knows many of the people who come into the shop, and runs evening and weekend classes in a local hall, as well as taster sessions in the store. She describes how 'there's a whole world out there, mixed media and journalling and scrapbooking and jewellery making', of 'skills that people can learn very quickly and very easily and get real pleasure from'. There are also a range of under-the-radar, grassroots groups. We see here the possibility that cultural capability may grow exponentially, as people develop conditions for themselves and others to get creative on an everyday basis.

Cultural capabilities are often developed by watching others do creative things and being inspired to have a go; this, of course, is an enormously important factor in the case for supporting high quality arts provision. In crafting, breakdancing and across our fieldwork, examples of co-creating versions of culture involve imitating, copying and mirroring more experienced practitioners, with demonstration an important part of the process. This is often distinct from more formal teaching, but may take the form of leading or modelling, thereby facilitating others. When it comes to individuals exercising their cultural capability, having a leader, mentor or demonstrator to follow is often key.

Whilst some practices require cultural creativity to be facilitated through a close personal relationship in keeping with the master-apprentice model of conservatories and art colleges, technology increasingly

enables such mentoring to happen from a distance (eg YouTube videos and podcasts). In many cases, however, we found that being in the same room (or outdoor space) with others in a supportive social environment is often crucial for people to realise their cultural capability. And whilst cultural creativity is often practiced alone, even solitary creative practice has a social aspect: whether it is being inspired by what other people have done, employing technologies as part of the creative process, or sharing work online and receiving feedback.

3.3 Creative citizenship

As our three portraits illustrate, individuals often make versions of culture in groups or through organisations. Access to space can be very important; and in some cases, an essential enabling condition is the support of paid staff with experience and expertise in providing a particular kind of supportive environment. This is of increased significance for some demographic groups, such as people with disabilities. At the same time, community, friendship and being together are common features of the value of cultural creativity. One particularly striking observation regarding the social conditions that enable cultural creativity is that people are often both participants and organisers. Indeed, frequently there is no clear distinction between the two roles.

This finding has a number of implications. It extends understanding of 'creative citizenship' and its potentially transformative effects. The Media, Community and the Creative Citizen[65] project contends we are living in the age of the creative citizen. People are increasingly involved in cultural creativity in ways that contribute to their neighbourhoods and communities. For example, through 'hyper-local' journalism, or setting up online platforms to profile local musicians.[66] Our findings – regarding the frequent crossover between developing one's own creativity and contributing to the conditions in which others can get creative too – extend the applicability of the term 'creative citizen' to a wider range of people and their cultural practices; and

> **Cultural capabilities are often developed by watching others do creative things and being inspired to have a go; this, of course, is an enormously important factor in the case for supporting high quality arts provision. In crafting, breakdancing and across our fieldwork, examples of co-creating versions of culture involve imitating, copying and mirroring more experienced practitioners, with demonstration an important part of the process.**

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[65] Hargreaves et al., 2016.
[66] See also Gauntlett, 2011 on (digital) 'platforms' of creativity.

CASE STUDY **2**

Crafting in Norfolk

"There's lots of little […] independent crafting groups. […] Obviously you've got the WI [Women's Institute] groups, quite often you'll get people branching off from that.

It tends to be mainly local ladies' groups, crafting groups […]. It'll start together with just a few friends getting together round someone's house on a Monday morning and it gradually expands. So you tend to find lots of these little crafting groups pocketed about […]. You know, people get round somebody's house. We know that there's a beading group that meets up locally cos there used to be a beading shop over in Wymondham – the next town along – which unfortunately closed last year. So, where they were running something, they've basically just started their own group. To sort of fill the gap. And quite often they'll come and tell us – because that way if we know anybody who's interested we'll send them along there. And it's very reciprocal. It's the same with the haberdashers down the road, Susan's Workbox. She caters for the fabric crafters. So she does the basics of fabric and cross stitch and knitting and everything else. And we bat people back and forth, because what one doesn't have the other one does. **Jane Aldridge, Get Creative Champion**

P. SMITH

> **And quite often they'll come and tell us because** that way if we know anybody who's interested we'll send them along there. And it's very reciprocal. It's the same with the haberdashers down the road just down here …

DARIA NEPRIAKHINA

open up new ways of understanding the contributions that creative citizens can and do make to cultural capabilities.[67]

Creative citizens often develop micro-conditions – creative environments – that are conducive to their own and other people's cultural creativity: for example, access to a space, and a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. But they also provide introductions, recommendations and information that create pathways for people beyond that immediate environment. It may be particularly through the ways in which people *cross social boundaries* of different kinds – as creative citizens often do, and as they make possible for others – that opportunities to co-create versions of culture can be expanded. Agencies seeking to create cultural capabilities together should consider how to mobilise creative citizens such as Flo and Alex, just as much as they mobilise theatres, choirs and dance schools. It may be precisely by recruiting creative citizens, moving between visible and invisible sites of cultural creativity – helping bring into being conditions for themselves and others to get creative – that cultural capabilities can be most effectively co-created and expanded across the UK.

It's also important to note that versions of culture are not merely administered or facilitated by creative citizens, but rather, cultural creativity is, in part, constituted by their actions. In other words, organising is a key aspect of cultural creativity. Culture is reproduced and transformed, in part, by many acts of more or less visible organisation, networking and management. Making the teas for the choir is a key part of cultural creativity. Creative citizens – and the environments, relationships, groups and organisations they bring about and sustain – are part of what cultural creativity *is*.

This potentially has implications in a number of areas of policy making. As mentioned above, funders should consider investing in individual creative citizens, who have the potential to leverage the cultural creativity of people in their neighbourhoods and networks in ways that many cultural organisations may not be able to. It is also striking that creative citizens manifest behaviours often attributed to entrepreneurs (eg networking; innovation; risk-taking). In the context of schools, colleges and universities thinking in new ways about how they prepare students for life beyond formal education, and increasing interest across many areas of education in the figure of the entrepreneur, giving consideration to the skills, behaviours and practices of creative citizens may provide a closely related but importantly distinct twist to these emerging aspects of education in the UK. In other words, young people – and mature students – could be trained and prepared for creative citizenship as part of their education.

3.4 Pillar organisations

Our research indicates that there are many arts and cultural organisations playing a vital role in actively supporting and nurturing people's cultural creativity. Previous research has drawn attention to 'pillar organisations'. These are organisations (including arts centres, schools and community organisations) acting as a mainstay for diverse cultural participation and community activity in an area, thereby playing a crucial role in enabling a community's 'cultural vitality'.[68] Conducting research in California, Jackson et al found these organisations to be 'key catalysts for both amateur and professional arts practice', as they 'collaborate with a range of arts and non-arts organisations as part of their programming'.[69] Through our research, we encountered many organisations that can usefully be understood to function as pillar organisations. However, whilst in the research of Jackson et al pillar organisations are typically well-established, medium-to-large institutions, our research suggests that there is a strong case for also highlighting the possibilities of micro-sized organisations

> **Creative citizens often develop micro-conditions – creative environments – that are conducive to their own and other people's cultural creativity: for example, access to a space, and a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. But they also provide introductions, recommendations and information that create pathways for people beyond that immediate environment.**

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[67] Research on CPP has also emphasised this role played by individuals. For example, one CPP interviewee observes 'It's individuals that make change – the go-to people that like to make stuff happen.' (Simpson, 2016: 14) Another notes 'by forming a relationship with an individual that can lead to a relationship with a group. Approaching group committees can be quite slow. Whereas one keen person can sell it back to the group.' (Simpson, 2016: 16)

[68] Jackson et al. 2006.

[69] Jackson et al., 2006: 15.

CASE STUDY **3**

The Old Vic Community Company (OVCC)

When Kevin Spacey took over the running of the Old Vic theatre in 2003 he said that 'every theatre should be a community theatre' and that he wanted to make the Old Vic 'London's local theatre'.

As part of Old Vic New Voices – the education and community programme that developed – the theatre's first community productions were held over a three-year period. But Alexander Ferris, director of Old Vic New Voices, took the decision that in order to fully realise the value of these community productions to their participants, it was necessary to establish a continuity between one production and the next, rather than disbanding the group each year. This led to the creation of the Old Vic Community Company (OVCC), which in August 2016 presented its third production.

The OVCC's participants have been recruited through open auditions. At the 2016 auditions, held over four days, more than 1,000 Londoners came forward to be actors, choir members, or part of the backstage team. The auditions take the form of a carefully planned (but relaxed and fun) two-hour workshop, with the idea that all participants will have an enjoyable and valuable experience even if, as will be the case for the large majority, they do not become members of the company. For both the auditions and the productions themselves, the OVCC hires professional theatre makers with a demonstrable interest in and facility for working closely with community participants, to ensure that members of the company have the best possible experience in the best possible conditions in which to develop their skills.

The OVCC is supported by a range of charitable trusts and foundations, and the company's relatively substantial budget allows Ferris and his team to commit themselves not only to giving participants the opportunity to work with highly skilled theatre professionals, but to making the production values of the performances as high as possible. The plays the OVCC performs are commissions from professional playwrights. They are asked to develop a piece that gives interesting creative opportunities to all parts of the company, and which responds to material developed through public workshops exploring topical themes such as housing, ageing, and, for the 2016 production, climate change. Ferris and his team make an explicit commitment to building a diverse company that reflects the population of London. They have developed a number of strategies to achieve this, including working closely with third sector organisations, and appointing three members of the company to be 'community activists' – letting people in their neighbourhoods know about the OVCC and the range of opportunities it offers.

> **" At the 2016 auditions, held over four days, more than 1,000 Londoners came forward to be actors, choir members, or part of the backstage team. "**

(eg Susan's Workbox in **Case Study 2**), which are plentiful, playing just this kind of role too.

One of the things that is notable about pillar organisations is their ability to provide an interface between amateur and professional activity. Our research illustrated a variety of ways in which organisations create spaces for people with different levels of expertise to work together on a project, and for people to learn from professionals in their field, whether through formal classes or informal exchange of knowledge and skills. These kinds of interactions could be described as amateurs learning from professionals. However, this terminology is problematic given evidence both from this study and others of the blurred line between these categories.[70] To promote cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy), the arts and creative industries require a rejection of any false dichotomy between amateur and professional. At the same time, opportunity for new participants to work with experienced practitioners, such as through the Old Vic Community Company (see **Case Study 3**), is one important way in which people can be enabled to create versions of culture together.

The OVCC is an example of a high-profile 'presentational' pillar organisation developing an unusually large-scale community project, and presenting it – through season brochures and press releases – as integral to the organisation's creative life. The Old Vic draws on its considerable expertise, resources and reputation to support the creativity and skills development of a large number of participants (now over 150) who bring with them a diverse range of backgrounds, abilities and ambitions – whilst laying particular emphasis on the voices of participants being heard. The project is striking for the breadth, depth and volume of creative opportunities it offers, and for the extent to which the team running the initiative have developed a particular workshop model – and a mode of collaboration between professionals and company members – through which participants are supported in developing

skills together. There is an explicit reflexivity to this. The way the OVCC works involves presenting back to all those involved how it is that cultural creativity – in this case, putting on a community theatre piece to 'professional' standards – works. Making the process visible has potential implications for the participants in their future creativity activities: as, for example, Alexander and his colleagues hope that the OVCC will ultimately be run by its members – or that some members of the OVCC will set up their own community theatre companies.

> **To promote cultural capability and to facilitate cultural democracy, the arts and creative industries require a rejection of any false dichotomy between amateur and professional. At the same time, opportunity for new participants to work with experienced practitioners […] is one important way in which people can be enabled to create versions of culture together.**

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70 See for example Finnegan, 1989; Whiting and Hannam, 2015, and Holden, 2015.

4

Why cultural capability matters

Our research reveals an important sense in which cultural capabilities are not just 'a means to an end' … They often have significant value in their own right.

4.1 Freedoms and functionings

The three portraits of people making versions of culture introduced in **Chapter 2** are indicative of the range of interviews at our ethnographic sites and with participating Get Creative Champions. Through in-depth interviews we explored not only people's creative practices today but how cultural creativity came about within the course of the individual's life. What we discovered can helpfully be explained once again through reference to the Capabilities Approach (as introduced in the previous chapter). In particular, what we find highlighted is the relationship between substantive 'freedoms', ie, capabilities, and the 'functionings' that can happen as a result. As Nussbaum explains, a 'functioning is an active realisation of one or more capabilities.'[71]

To the extent that existing cultural policy and the research that supports it largely focuses on what can be observed actually happening (here and now), it is an approach that is based on our undersanding of functionings, rather than freedoms. However, this report highlights the significance of also giving attention to *freedoms* – opportunities, or capabilities – for co-creating versions of culture. Our research reveals an important sense in which cultural capabilities are not just 'a means to an end', however. They often have significant value in their own right. For example, 'self-expression, recognition and voice', which we discuss below, can be understood *both* as a key condition (means) *and* a valuable outcome (end) of cultural capability. As both means to an end and valuable ends in themselves, cultural capabilities matter not just in respect of enabling cultural creativity to happen, but, more broadly, in terms of the *flourishing* they enable within people's lives. Through our research, we identified

the following elements of why cultural capabilities matter:

a) Self-expression, recognition & voice

The enjoyment and value of self-expression and recognition were emphasised across our fieldwork, by a diverse range of participants. Flo, for example, who we met in **Portrait 2**, stressed the on-going importance to his sense of confidence and social identity that breakdancing has had, starting from the time at the age of 15 when people in his village first came to know him for his dancing. Closely connected to the experience and value of self-expression, a wide range of research participants identified the opportunity to have their voice heard – and to be listened to – as a central part of what they value about their creative activities.

b) A contrast to challenging aspects of working life

Our research participants described how their creative activities can be a welcome contrast to challenging aspects of life, such as the stresses of preparing for exams, the demands and habits of work, and organisational environments (such as school and work) that feel constraining. For some interviewees, part of the value of their creative activities lies in the opportunities they provide to suspend means-ends rationality and judgements of value.

c) Improvement, challenge & the development of (transferrable) skills

Our fieldwork found many instances in which one of the conditions that enables cultural creativity is the temporary setting aside of judgments of value – allowing people to feel relaxed and to develop the confidence to have a go (and keep

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71 Nussbaum, 2011: 24-25.

going).[72] At the same time, our informants also expressed the enjoyment they take in gaining new knowledge and developing new skills. There is pleasure to be had in having a go, but also in learning new techniques and developing specific capabilities.

Participants in the Old Vic Community Company, for example, (see **Case Study 3**) strongly emphasised the importance they place on learning and developing knowledge and skills through participation in the company. They are not just rehearsing to prepare for a performance – they are developing skills and capacities, which may equip them for different roles or greater creative independence in the future.

d) Developing a career

A minority of our research participants are involved in aspects of cultural creativity which are specifically related to their career. For example, some participants in the OVCC are seeking to begin a career in professional theatre. We also met people supplementing their working life in the arts or creative industries with participation in a creative activity that satisfies them in ways their paid employment does not. A volunteer member of the backstage team at the OVCC, for example, is a professional set designer. She was unsure whether she should commit time to doing unpaid 'work' as part of the OVCC, but it has given her the opportunity to contribute to kinds of production that she is not involved with through her paid employment, and which she thinks she will enjoy. Here, as we saw with Flo's dancing career above, and as we found in several of our fieldwork sites, clear distinctions between professional and everyday creativity are difficult to sustain.

e) Friendship & community

Research participants across a broad range of creative sites strongly emphasise the pleasures of taking part in a practice that is collective: to be part of the 'overall sound' of the large choir in the north of England, of a cast, or of a crew of break dancers. Friendships can provide the routes in to a creative activity, and the conditions that continue to enable it. Many of our research participants also strongly emphasise the friendships they have made and the diversity of people they meet – explaining that this is one of the most valuable and enjoyable parts of their cultural creativity. Our fieldwork documents a range of examples of everyday creativity helping to bring a sense of community into being. Both individual research participants and Get Creative Champions lay emphasis on the value of this. Moreover, this is a key component in understanding how the co-creation of versions of culture actually emerges.

f) Reproducing & transforming culture

Flo provided an account of break dancing as a public culture, deriving from the streets of Brooklyn. In doing so he gave a description of a particular culture and how (in his view) it should work. In describing his breaking, and his preference for dancing in public spaces, Flo was in effect explaining how his own creativity reproduces and potentially transforms a culture (break dancing), but also the culture-within-a-culture that is the group of people that he dances with. Similarly, Fiona and Rose are conscious of themselves as part of a tradition of choral singing – and a particular choir, with its own traditions and history – that they are contributing to. Our fieldwork shows that part of the value of cultural creativity is often the experience people have of themselves as, in this sense, actively reproducing (and sometimes transforming) culture. This observation is particularly telling in respect of how 'sub', 'counter', or 'common'[73] cultures relate to 'Culture' with a capital C, ie that Culture which many (often young people) perceive to be a hegemonic mainstream culture they don't belong to. Arguing for the substantive freedom to co-create versions of culture places no obligation on anyone to conform to a preconceived model of what culture *is*; but it does embrace diversity.

> **Friendships can provide the routes in to a creative activity, and the conditions that continue to enable it. Many of our research participants also strongly emphasise the friendships they have made and the diversity of people they meet – explaining that this is one of the most valuable and enjoyable parts of their cultural creativity.**

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72 This finding confirms the accounts of creativity made by a number of theorists – from Henri Poincaré in the nineteenth century to Chris Bilton, 2007, – who argue that creativity involves the combination of rational and irrational processes, constraint and freedom, deliberate action and openness to the unplanned.
73 See Willis, 1990.

4.2 Cultural capability and cultural democracy

As our research shows, cultural capability is enabled – or undermined – socially. People's freedom to co-create versions of culture is conditioned by their environment. Situations in which everyone has cultural capability (whether or not they each choose to exercise it) we describe as *cultural democracy*.

The extent to which cultural capability is deliberately enabled and promoted within the cultural lives of neighbourhoods, cities, regions and nations will vary greatly. In drawing attention to this, our research poses fundamental challenges to the deficit model and the prevailing ambitions of cultural policy. This is outlined in more detail in **Chapter 6**. Before this, in **Chapter 5**, we look in more detail at some of the strategic challenges involved in promoting cultural capability.

> **Situations in which everyone has cultural capability (whether or not they each choose to exercise it) we describe as *cultural democracy*.**

Right: Community Painting at Kirkcudbright Arts Trail

5 Making cultural capability a strategic priority

Our research suggests that cultural organisations have the potential to go much further in co-creating cultural capability, and to do so more *strategically*.

5.1 For cultural organisations

Cultural creativity takes place 'unseen' all over the UK. At the same time, as demonstrated in previous chapters, cultural organisations play important roles in enabling people to create versions of culture together. But our research suggests that cultural organisations have the potential to go much further in co-creating cultural capability, and to do so more *strategically*. Of course, every organisation is different, with its own specific (tangible and intangible) resources to offer – be it information, equipment, space, expertise or networks. Through our research we documented many ways in which cultural organisations are already actively involved in promoting cultural capabilities (and enabling creative citizens), even if this is not the language they currently use to describe their work. By presenting some of these approaches here, drawing on examples from the Get Creative campaign and its Champions, we seek to inform the development of more self-aware and strategic approaches to the ways in which cultural organisations promote cultural capabilities across the UK, and encourage organisations to get creative in thinking about how they might do this. Whilst such strategic activity might be construed as going above and beyond the immediate artistic remit of the organisation concerned, we suggest that the potential benefits for the organisation and its local community – in the medium and long term – are very likely to outweigh the immediate costs involved.

a) Enabling voices to be heard

Get Creative Champions demonstrate a variety of ways in which they recognise and give visibility to the versions of culture created by the diverse groups they work with. This includes providing space for people to tell their own stories (metaphorically, and sometimes literally), and providing support for people to set up their own creative groups. These approaches are common to many Champions, reflecting the high proportion of community arts groups who have signed up to the campaign. It is typical of community arts approaches that activities are led by professional artists and facilitators, and that the value of participants' voices is central.

b) Recognising and enabling the creativity of different groups

For some cultural organisations a major aim of their work is to change public perceptions of who can be creative and how. One such group of organisations are those specifically working with people with physical and learning disabilities. Around a quarter of Get Creative Champions who filled out our questionnaires indicated that they work with these groups,[74] in the context of 11.6 million people in the UK identified as having a disability.[75] One Champion described their mission as changing representations of disabled people, and working with people to 'be creative within their own physicality, whatever that might be'. This is an example of cultural democracy in action, as this creative work – through interventions in both practice and in discourse – contributes to the expansion of opportunities to co-create versions of culture.

c) Going on the road

Many Get Creative Champions run courses or events in areas away from their main building in order to attract a different demographic who would not otherwise

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74 In the GCRP questionnaire in November 2015, 28 per cent of Champions said that their activities specifically targeted learning disabled participants and 22 per cent worked with physically disabled participants. In the April 2016 questionnaire, 25 per cent of Champions worked with each category. This may not be representative of all Champions.
75 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/321594/disability-prevalence.pdf [accessed 21st May, 2016]

be willing or able to attend their venue. For some organisations, an important aspect of this process is understanding the demographic of the area in which they are embedded, and in some cases, Champions have undertaken extensive consultation in advance. If initiatives of this kind are to expand, providing genuine opportunities for people to co-create versions of culture, careful attention to local specificity and difference is essential. One community arts organisation, for example, described a scheme they run in which they set up short-term informal spaces for cultural creativity in disused shops, building links with local community groups to find out what people are already doing and what they might be interested in. In this way, the organisation tries to support and showcase work that is 'entirely related to the town […] and we hope that people have a sense of pride and belonging through art'. Promoting cultural capabilities here involves providing conditions in which people can exercise their voices – individually and collectively – and do so in a way that is explicitly connected to considerations of place making and local identity.

d) Taster events

Taster events, demonstrations and open days are employed by many of the Champions. Importantly, some reported that unless taster events are held in a different location to an organisation's usual activity and/ or are carried out through links with third sector, community or educational groups in the area, they may not attract new participants. To the extent that taster events are an effective approach to expanding opportunities for co-creating versions of culture, our research suggests that they need to be carefully embedded within an overall strategy that will often, if not always, involve collaboration with third sector, community and educational organisations with the capacity to draw on their own established relationships across a diversity of communities and populations.

e) Pathways & elevators

Many Champion organisations expressed the need to strike a balance between recruiting new participants and supporting longer-term engagement, which provides people with the opportunity to develop their skills, develop their voices (metaphorically) and be heard.

These pathways are often provided through partnerships between organisations. One adult education organisation, for example, described how people move from their organisation onto a university, to pursue their interest at a higher level. Alternatively, with other Champions these pathways took the form of 'elevators' within a single organisation, offering opportunities for people to move to more advanced levels of practice.

f) Good quality experiences

Linking all of the approaches Champions take to working with new participants, our interviewees emphasized that quality of experience is a key factor. The director of a circus school, for example, explained that they have consistently high demand despite doing no advertising for their classes. He suggests this demand is a consequence of providing inspiration and motivation through the quality of the workshops offered, giving people opportunities to work with experienced professionals, and offering showcases and public platforms through which the general public can see what they do. The quality of the experience is, of course, likely to be comprised by a variety of elements, including the skilfulness of practitioners in responding to and working with groups, as well as their skills in the creative form in question.

Notwithstanding all this good work, our research suggests cultural organisations could go much further in promoting cultural capabilities. There is particular potential to do this by developing new partnerships and networks, as this is a crucial way in which new opportunities for people to co-create versions of culture can be opened up. At present there are significant limitations to the ways that partnerships and networks across different domains of cultural creativity operate; and this is an area where a more concerted, strategic approach could yield significant benefits across the UK.

> **Promoting cultural capabilities here involves providing conditions in which people can exercise their voices – individually and collectively – and do so in a way that is explicitly connected to considerations of place making and local identity.**

5.2 For interventions (campaigns, coalitions and networks)

Get Creative is an important example of an intervention seeking to develop new kinds of collaboration in order to recognise and support a wide diversity of cultural creativity across the country; and even though the campaign itself has never articulated its aims in this way, we would suggest it is an experiment in the promotion of cultural capabilities. But what is the context of collaboration in which it is seeking to operate? A 2008 study estimated that 10 million people are involved in voluntary arts groups, and a more recent study of the Perthshire and Kinross area of Scotland found one-third more groups than this estimate would suggest, as many of these groups are informal and unaffiliated.[76] Voluntary arts groups are therefore a hugely important part of (everyday) cultural creativity in the UK, and yet it seems that a relatively low number of them have signed up for the Get Creative campaign so far.[77] This is likely to be due to a combination of factors, including that there is often little appetite for networking across art forms among these groups. Understanding why this is the case requires further research. It is important to investigate whether, under current ways of thinking about cultural policy, this kind of networking across art forms does not appear relevant or worthwhile; and whether this might change if there was a new approach to cultural policy along the lines being pointed towards in this report.

Our research is consistent with work that has found that much of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) cultural creativity occurs in private or community-facing organisations which do not form themselves into national institutions or umbrella bodies, and/or may not label themselves as the arts, and are therefore often overlooked by cultural policy.[78] Jasjit Singh, in his literature review on British South Asian arts, distinguishes between those activities among this group that are 'public-facing' and those that are 'community-facing'. The former are publicly funded and may carry a public function in relation to diversity or community cohesion objectives.[79] Community-facing groups, by contrast, are usually privately funded and take place in relatively hidden events, often advertised within community networks and in venues owned or run by members of minority ethnic communities such as religious institutions and cultural centres. This invisibility is especially pronounced for craft activities, as they are more likely to be women's activities that occur in private space.

Jeanette Bain-Burnett, in carrying out mapping studies of BAME voluntary arts groups in Plymouth and Liverpool, found that there are (particularly in Liverpool) plenty of BAME cultural and creative arts groups, but they are not linked into wider networks. Furthermore, she found that people would often come together in order to organise an event such as a carnival or mela, getting involved for the purposes of putting on the event, and then disband when it was over, until the next year. She could not find any national umbrella organisations among BAME arts of the kind that Voluntary Arts is used to representing, other than PanPodium, the British Association of Steel Pans.[80] There are, however, informal networks such as the Gospel Choir movement which have a strong showing within BAME spaces.

What each of these examples points towards, in detailing important aspects of the context in which Get Creative is operating, is the possibility of pro-actively addressing and promoting the mechanisms by which

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76 Dodd et al., 2008; Kirkhill Associates, 2015.

77 While 25 Champions (17 per cent) in the November 2015 questionnaire indicated they designated themselves as voluntary arts groups and 19 (13 per cent) indicated they were part of Voluntary Arts, many of these also indicated another category, such as community arts, arts education, or venues. However, in our analysis of all of the Champions who had signed up for the campaign during its first six months in two areas of the UK (Wales and the East of England) and subsequent interviews with Champions in eight areas of the UK, we could only identify two voluntary arts groups. It is possible that most of the Champions that indicated this category are umbrella organisations representing different parts of the voluntary arts sector. In addition, it seems likely that some Champions have selected 'Voluntary arts' in error, misunderstanding the category.

78 Bain-Burnett, 2014; Singh 2015.

79 As Penrose, 2013, describes in relation to the Edinburgh mela, and Hodgson, 2013, in relation to the Bradford mela.

80 Bain-Burnett, 2015.

cultural capabilities are enabled. This will require a strategic approach to any national-level intervention that not only more fully recognises and actively supports a wide diversity of cultural creativity (including everyday creativity), but makes promotion of cultural capabilities an explicit and strategic objective.

In many ways, cultural organisations have developed effective strategies for working with groups who do not usually participate in the recognised, legitimised and institutionalised arts. But despite the important existing approaches of individual organisations, such as those documented above, there remains the danger that any intervention seeking to promote cultural capability that primarily operates through organisations that are already an established part of the arts reinforces the inequality summed up in the Warwick Commission's '8 per cent' figure. Without partnering more widely, any such initiative puts significant limitations on its ability to expand cultural capability and realise the value of doing so. In order to radically increase cultural capability in the UK, it is necessary to go beyond networks and organisations within the arts, whilst seeing them as making an essential contribution. Other important places where versions of culture are co-created include, for example, self-led voluntary arts groups; online creative forums; creativity as part of spiritual practice; and ethnic and cultural groups who carry out their creative practice in community-facing rather than public-facing groups.

Reflecting on the successes and the limitations of the Get Creative campaign so far, there are grounds for cautious optimism that strategic interventions of this kind can really make a difference. Particular strengths of Get Creative include the range of organisations involved, the extent of goodwill expressed by over 1,000 organisations and individuals signing up as 'Champions', and the potential reach offered by the involvement of the BBC, including the opportunity for a wide range of genres, groups and sites of creativity to be featured on the BBC Get Creative homepage. Our research indicates that there is also considerable potential in the campaign's current steps towards a more devolved model that seeks to actively support the development of local Get Creative networks in several locations around the UK, each with links to their local media, and autonomy as to how their network operates.

At the same time, we have to be realistic about the significant challenges involved. The experience of Get Creative so far points to the crucial importance of this kind of intervention in cultural capability and cultural democracy (including campaigns, new coalitions and networks)[81] having clear objectives. Moreover, these objectives need to be persuasively communicated in such a way as to foster engagement and ownership from the individuals and organisations invited to be involved. Top down policy on its own cannot deliver on the promise of cultural democracy, not least because it raises questions about whose vested interests are being served. But it also seems unlikely that entirely bottom up interventions can achieve the required scale to genuinely reach across the UK and to affect broad and lasting change. Both top down and bottom up change-making are needed in combination

This report shows that cultural democracy – cultural capability for all – is already supported in a number of ways, even if not described in these terms. It also shows, however, that there is much more that could be done to support everyone in co-creating versions of culture; and this includes, in particular, the development of a more *strategic* approach to promoting cultural capabilities – both on the part of individual cultural organisations, and across cultural policy as a whole.

The final chapter of this report summarises the key findings of the report, and then looks to the future, providing a set of 14 recommendations for how cultural democracy can be supported in the UK, at multiple sites of policymaking and practice.

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81 These can be understood as interventions at the meso level, mediating between the micro level of individual organisations and creative citizens, and the macro level of national cultural policy.

6 Towards cultural democracy

The possibility of a new
approach to cultural policy
is emerging in the UK – one
characterised by promoting
cultural capabilities and
cultural democracy.

6.1 Summary of findings

At the heart of this report are six key findings.

1 Cultural creativity – a broad range of human creativity that is in some shape or form about 'doing art' – takes place both inside and *outside* the professional arts and creative industries.

2 The cultural creativity that takes place *outside* the professional arts and creative industries, referred to variously as 'amateur' or 'homemade', but which we call **everyday creativity**, is inextricably linked with publicly-funded and profit-making culture. We don't yet know enough about these relations to explain precisely how they work and what all of their consequences and potentials are.

3 People have greater or lesser freedom to co-create versions of culture and, in so doing, pursue cultural creativity. We call this substantive freedom **cultural capability**, and our research shows it to be a socially emergent power that people exercise individually, but which is dependent on their environments.

4 Co-creating versions of culture takes place within **cultural ecologies** of mutually supportive (and sometimes competitive) cultural activity. Interventions enabling and promoting the cultural capability of everyone need to consider how best to work across boundaries – of the arts, creative industries and everyday creativity – and operate ecologically: guided by the cultural practices and interests of local populations.

5 The role of **creative citizens and pillar organisations** within cultural ecologies is crucial in providing opportunities for people to co-create versions of culture. Initiatives enabling cultural capability need to consider how best to work with and support individual actors and outward-facing pillar organisations who operate across sites of visible and invisible cultural practice.

6 In the light of recent initiatives, including Get Creative, the possibility of a new approach to cultural policy is emerging in the UK – one characterised by promoting **cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy)**. The goal is not only to provide universal access to 'great' art, but the conditions in which everyone has the freedom to co-create versions of culture. This new approach is at an experimental stage, and needs to be nurtured if it is to fulfil its potential.

In presenting these six findings, this report demonstrates that there are opportunities for cultural policymakers, arts organisations and creative citizens of all kinds to work together in new ways. Our research shows that these new ways of working together have the potential to address the slow-burning crisis of democratic legitimacy in cultural policy and practice in the UK.

6.2 Summary of recommendations

We make 14 recommendations in all. (These are described in detail in the Executive Summary, and are here restated in brief.) The first nine are aimed at supporting the encompassing policy objective of promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy), and are targeted at national government departments and agencies. The following five recommendations are targeted at a broad set of stakeholders, including private trusts and foundations, local cultural policy makers, arts and cultural organisations, and cultural creativity initiatives[82] and aim to support the development of integrated strategies. Although presented separately we see the two sets as interlinked: *national level objective* and *locally specific strategy* must go hand-in-hand in order to be successful. As such, the process being proposed is both top down and bottom up in its approach. A coordinated and co-creative response to these recommendations is needed, requiring open dialogue.

Recommendations to national cultural policy makers & funders

RECOMMENDATION 1
Promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy) needs to be made an interlinked policy objective, across a range of national government departments and agencies.

RECOMMENDATION 2
Investigate the best institutional arrangements through which to promote cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy) as a national level policy objective.

RECOMMENDATION 3
National policy makers – in collaboration with researchers and a wide range of stakeholders – should investigate how the proposed policy objective of promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy) can work alongside existing core cultural policy objectives.

RECOMMENDATION 4
Make the case for investment in cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy).

RECOMMENDATION 5
National policy makers should support the co-creative activities of creative citizens and pillar organisations whose cultural creativity takes place across a range of visible and invisible sites, and who make connections and develop informal networks across these sites of practice.

RECOMMENDATION 6
National level policy should be informed by the development of new methodologies to investigate cultural capability and cultural functionings.[83]

RECOMMENDATION 7
In the medium-term we recommend that all publicly funded arts organisations be required to develop an explicit, integrated cultural capability strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 8
Ensure sustained and broad knowledge exchange between organisations of many kinds and current Arts Council schemes throughout the UK, which have the potential to promote cultural capabilities, particularly those focusing on young people and cultural learning.

RECOMMENDATION 9
Policy makers should give careful consideration to how all stakeholders can be supported, on an ongoing basis, in using digital technologies and platforms for both sharing stories about and promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy).

> *... there are opportunities for cultural policymakers, arts organisations and creative citizens of all kinds to work together in new ways. Our research shows that these new ways of working together have the potential to address the slow-burning crisis of democratic legitimacy in cultural policy and practice in the UK.*

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82 Such as Get Creative, Fun Palaces and 64 Million Artists.
83 'Capabilities' and 'functionings' are terms referred to within the Capabilties Approach (see Nussbaum, 2011).

Recommendations to private trusts and foundations, local cultural policy makers, cultural organisations, individual cultural practitioners and cultural creativity initiatives

RECOMMENDATION 10

All cultural stakeholders across the UK, across all 'scales' of operation, need to consider their own local responses to the shared objective of promoting capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy), and make it a strategic priority.

RECOMMENDATION 11

Investigate possibilities for further collaboration with local authorities, and how initiatives promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy) might be embedded within city-wide cultural strategies.

RECOMMENDATION 12

Develop mutually beneficial relationships with local radio as a key channel for the promotion of everyday creativity.

RECOMMENDATION 13

Continue, and go further, to develop collaborations with non-arts groups – including sports, entertainment, and community groups – and share knowledge with each other of the challenges and opportunities in these collaborations.

RECOMMENDATION 14

Help make the case for promoting cultural capabilities for everyone (cultural democracy).

> **Cultural democracy – ensuring the cultural capability of all – is not about directly providing people with access to specific means of self-expression. But it may well involve, amongst many other things, informing everyone as to how they can train to be an actor, learn to use a camera, try breakdancing, or whatever else it might be.**

6.3 Concluding thoughts

An ecological approach

There is an enormous and amorphous grassroots of individuals and groups who are going ahead with their cultural creativity with little or no concern for arts policy discourse or state support. In order to know how best to support cultural democracy, we need a fuller understanding of cultural ecologies. We strongly echo John Holden's call for more research in this respect.[84] A key lesson of ecological approaches is that without addressing the complexity of the systems within a location, interventions are likely to have unintended consequences. For this reason, amongst others, it is crucial that local knowledge and interests guide the development of investments and initiatives in support of cultural democracy. Much can be learnt from the approach of Asset Based Community Development, as explored in the Media, Culture and the Creative Citizen project.[85] Moreover, what is needed may well not be large amounts of additional resources – though in some cases this might be the case, but rather greater visibility of activities and opportunities for information sharing. Cultural democracy – ensuring the cultural capability of all – is not about directly providing people with access to specific means of self-expression. But it may well involve, amongst many other things, informing everyone as to how they can train to be an actor, learn to use a camera, try breakdancing, or whatever else it might be.

A variety of initiatives

There is scope – and need – for different kinds of initiative in support of cultural democracy. Some may focus more on self-expression and individual agency; whereas others are more explicitly concerned with community-building. A variety of interventions in policy and practice, of these kinds, is necessary, and is in keeping with the insight that cultural creativity – how versions of culture are co-created – is itself enormously varied.

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84 Holden, 2015.
85 Hargreaves and Hartley, 2016.

The openness of cultural democracy

The results of promoting cultural capabilities for everyone cannot be fully known in advance. François Matarasso has written recently that cultural democracy is an inherently open process.[86] As people co-create culture, we will not know what will result. Promoting cultural democracy may well involve funders and policymakers being prepared to live with greater degrees of uncertainty than is typically the case: supporting activities in ways such that outcomes and outputs are far from knowable in advance.[87]

A new language for new coalitions

A major consideration is finding the right language – both to carefully communicate complex arguments, and to tell convincing stories that bring about positive change. We have introduced a series of terms: cultural creativity, everyday creativity, creative citizens, pillar organisations, cultural capability and cultural democracy. Our primary aim in doing so is to provide analytical and conceptual rigour to support the arguments presented. However, cultural democracy will be constrained unless everyone is empowered to understand and contribute to it on their own terms. We recognise that this will require creativity in order to adopt new terms that move us beyond the status quo, but which may, ultimately, not rely on the vocabulary introduced here.

An on-going process: invite everyone

Recent initiatives seeking to recognise everyday creativity and promote cultural capabilities may be the expression of broad shifts in cultural practice in the context of the digital revolution and the slow-burning challenge to the authority and privileged funding of high culture. Cultural funders and policymakers are only at the earliest stages of working out how to respond to these socio-cultural shifts, and to the new directions that are coming out of progressive arts organisations as well as initiatives such as Get Creative,
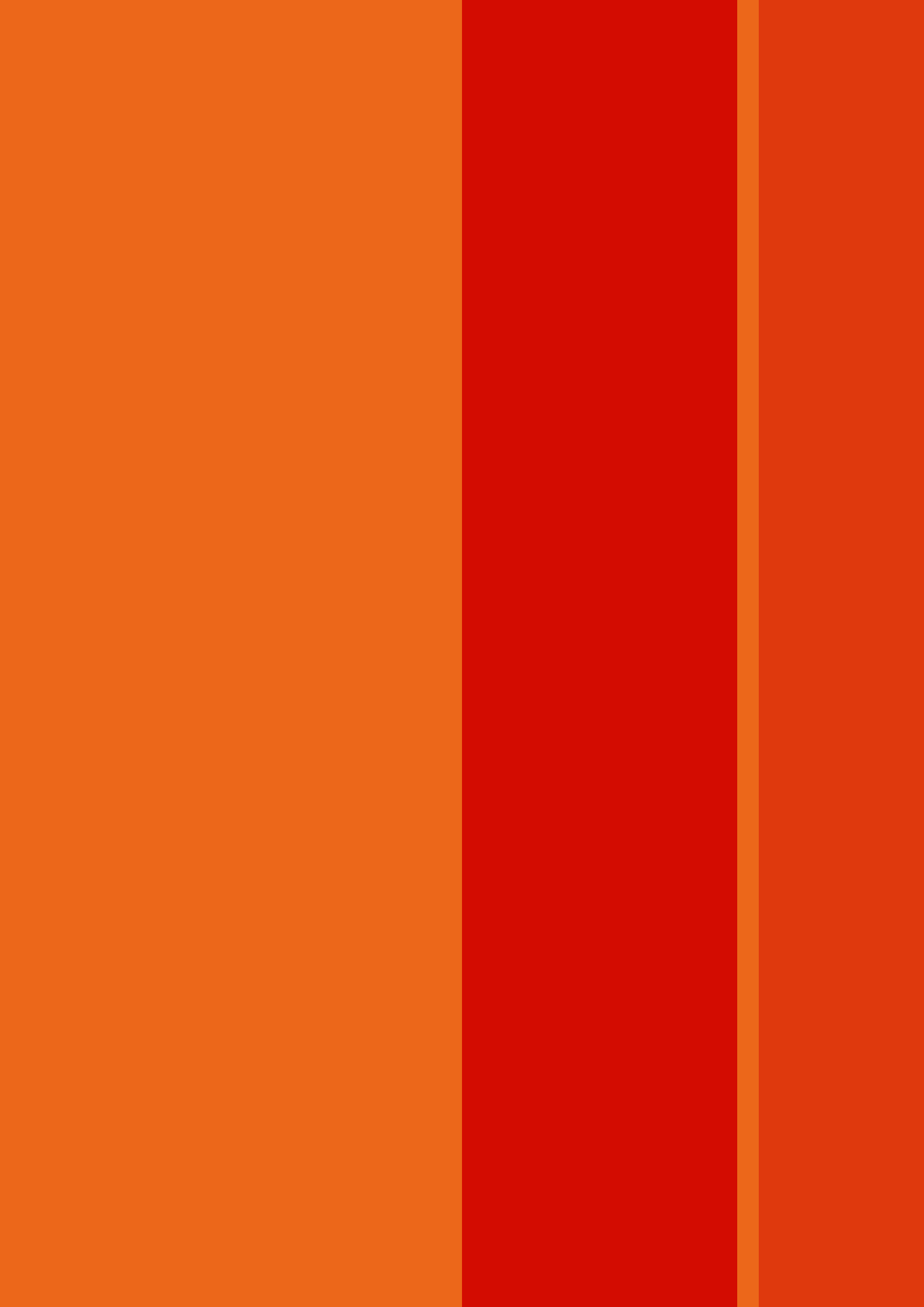
Fun Palaces, Our Cultural Commons and 64 Million Artists. The evidence presented in this report helps to identify new strategic goals for funders and cultural policymakers of all kinds in responding to these challenges and opportunities, as well as recommendations directed specifically towards the development of initiatives in support of cultural democracy. But this is a conversation that ultimately requires many voices to be heard within it, and much greater understanding of the cultural ecologies within which future attempts to enable cultural democracy will be taking place. The process of developing a new vision of cultural policy and practice, aimed at cultural democracy – and working out how it can operate in practice – is only just beginning.

> **Promoting cultural democracy may well involve funders and policymakers being prepared to live with greater degrees of uncertainty than is typically the case: supporting activities in ways such that outcomes and outputs are far from knowable in advance.**

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86 https://arestlessart.com/2016/10/07/what-next-it-depends-whos-asking/ [accessed 20th January, 2017]

87 This calls for collective critical reflection and developing communicative tolerance, as outlined in Nick Wilson's account of social creativity (Wilson, 2010).

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