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SHAPES Lewisham and the shape of Lewisham

Connectivity, Communication and Construction in a Creative Enterprise Zone

Goldsmiths
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MAYOR OF LONDON

Lewisham

Contents

Executive Summary

This work has been conducted to better understand the experiences, needs and challenges of creative practitioners living and working within the Lewisham Creative Enterprise Zone.

Several themes pervade the research findings and cut across the multiple, distinctly specified, aims of the Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ) articulated by SHAPESLewisham. Many of these aims overlap and are analytically hard to separate, suggesting some reformulation might be appropriate. These deeply interconnected aspects of creative work and its community contexts, not explicitly articulated in existing CEZ literature, are newly emphasised through the evidence of this project in which we make ten recommendations to inform the development of the CEZ, and which can be summarised as:

- **CONNECTIVITY**
  Interaction between creatives who are long-term Lewisham residents and more recent arrivals is identified as a clear need.

- **COMMUNICATION**
  Information about knowledge, skills, and funding provision, and their access routes can be more widely and clearly disseminated by intermediaries. Availability and access are noted challenges, but additionally, engagement is also vital; outreach to ensure potential beneficiaries know about provision is key.

- **CONSTRUCTION**
  The establishment of well signposted pathways for creative support through primary, secondary, and tertiary education, continually interacting with creative enterprises, is required.

1. Introduction

THE CREATIVE ENTERPRISE ZONE

The borough of Lewisham, located South East of London's city centre, is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in the UK and is marked by its unique cultural offerings (Lewisham Council, 2021b, p6;). Claiming more than 70 nationalities on the electoral role, with more than 170 languages spoken across a community that is 46% BME, Lewisham Council (2021b, p6) highlights its diversity as an important factor within its own corporate strategy.

London's 14th largest borough is typified by rapid development and change, with new residents moving to the area each year (London Councils, 2021b). The area is also growing economically; ONS figures analysed by Lewisham Observatory (2021e) suggest that since 2010 the number of businesses has nearly doubled, and Lewisham has a higher-than-average number of businesses in arts, entertainment, recreation and other services – as well as information and communication – than the rest of the UK (ONS data presented by Lewisham Observatory, 2021e). A significant number of creative businesses cluster around the areas of Deptford and New Cross and SHAPESLewisham has identified the cultural richness of the area (SHAPESLewisham, 2021c), which helps to drive its status as a 'Creative Enterprise Zone'.
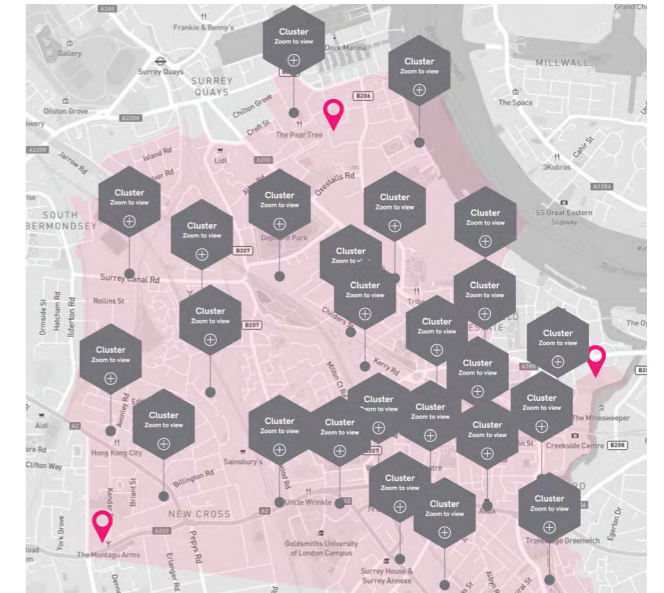

Figure 1
Creative Clusters in Deptford and New Cross
(Screenshot from: SHAPESLewisham, 2021c)

Creative Enterprise Zones are an initiative by the Mayor of London aiming to boost the creative economy of chosen London boroughs and areas through various forms of government support. First implemented in 2018, the initiative has awarded grants to six boroughs that successfully demonstrated their willingness to provide affordable workspace, skills and support (especially regarding business know-how), commit to local pro-culture policies and to embed cultural businesses within the local community (GLA, 2021b). The boroughs are now engaging local stakeholders (such as creative businesses, educational or cultural institutions or community groups) to determine best practices for supporting the local creative economy (ibid; GLA, 2017, p16).

While each Creative Enterprise Zone (henceforth "CEZ") has their own specific aims (see Lewisham London (2021)), each implementation sets out to better creative businesses' standing by achieving a wider set of goals. One aim is to provide incentives for artists to both move to and stay within local communities (GLA, 2017, p8). Another is to consider the local creative community in policymaking and therefore to understand needs specific to the community, and ensure that the support offered should benefit all creative practitioners within the zone, regardless of their social background (ibid). Beyond facilitating collaborations and building partnerships, the implementation of a Creative Enterprise Zone in London also entails financial support on behalf of the Mayor of London and expectations of investment of the borough's own assets (ibid, p16-28).

Among the six CEZs – Croydon, Haringey, Hounslow, Lambeth, Tower Hamlets and Lewisham – Lewisham is distinguished by its connections to educational institutions (e.g. Goldsmiths, University of London) and connected pool of creative talent (GLA, 2021b; Lewisham London, 2021). In the context of the CEZ, and to provide a platform for the local talent-base to connect, the community initiative SHAPESLewisham was founded. Its online presence provides a directory of a wide range of creative practitioners enabling connections across various disciplines and it has held online panels in the wake of COVID-19 to discuss themes such as creative work within the community, and the impacts of the pandemic on creatives' work and mental health. In the context of the Creative Enterprise Zone, the following aims have been identified (Lewisham Council, 2020):

- to support creative businesses to connect and collaborate (A1)

- to increase access to affordable workspace so creatives can put down roots and stay in our community (A2)

- to link creative enterprises to the skills, expertise and facilities of our education and cultural institutions (A3)

- to provide career pathways from school into further education, higher education and a career in the creative sector (A4)

THE RESEARCH

This paper provides a deeper understanding of the challenges and needs of creative workers in Lewisham in order that the CEZ's aims can be successfully pursued. Through thematic, analytic examination of academic literature and direct evidence from creative practitioners – via both original primary case studies, and wider peer group expert reflections (SHAPESLewisham Talks) – this research provides a rich grounding for the CEZ to:

- support growth needs, as well as recognise, celebrate and leverage cultural capital created in, and by, those of the CEZ;

- identify key issues of risk management (societal and economic) that can ensure the CEZ retains its diverse talent and builds scale, and;

- work collaboratively with local educational settings to better understand and develop existing relationships between creative practitioners and organisations such as Goldsmiths, University of London.

This interrogation of the reflective, subjective understandings of workers within the community, in the context of the extant academic evidence base, seeks to provide rigorous foundations for the CEZ to inform the trajectory of future research projects, and help inform educational institutions within the locality. In short, we want to use the framework provided by SHAPESLewisham to hear from creative practitioners in order to develop and articulate an initial set of recommendations to shape the CEZ in Lewisham.

2. Methodology

Using a qualitative research design this research seeks to provide an insight into the needs and challenges of creative practitioners within the CEZ of Lewisham. Driven by the CEZ aims and informed by a related literature review, a thematic analysis of practitioner evidence – from SHAPESLewisham Talks panels, and in even further detail, via two new case studies – has been conducted.

Our analysis uses themes that not only describe, but also frame the topic in question giving an in-depth understanding that can provide valuable insights for recommendations for the development of the CEZ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p83; Kiger and Varpio, 2020, p3). As this research is focussed on subjective understandings of creative workers' needs and the world they help to bring into being, a constructivist epistemology is adopted which seeks to go beyond a description of the semantic content of the data, into interpretation of the underlying meanings and drives of creative workers in the context of the extant knowledge base. This was achieved by a combination of inductively generating themes from the collected data, as well as deductively utilising the themes of the literature review (Skalski et al., 2019, p212). For the latter, twelve core themes in context of the SHAPESLewisham aims and the SHAPESLewisham Talks videos were identified and reformulated into open ended questions for semi-structured interviews. This allowed, on the one hand, guidance of the conversation through relevant topics, whilst on the other hand, enough freedom to allow the case study creatives to choose their own emphases (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p391).

Case study creatives were identified via purposeful, maximum-variation sampling, aiming to identify shared patterns between varied CEZ workers, with any commonalities being found across a heterogeneity of participants thereby obtaining further importance (Patton, 2015, no pagination; Suri, 2011, p5). Drawing on the researchers' own specialisms (Franklin, 2018; Musgrave, 2017) one participant from the audio-visual industries and one participant from the music industries were chosen from the SHAPESLewisham website, carefully selected to avoid overrepresentation of one gender or ethnic background, as well encompassing differences in residential status within Lewisham (i.e., long-term resident vs relatively recent arrival). Valuable specific insights on key topics were sought and derived from this targeted approach, rather than a sample for representative views of the whole CEZ population. It is further necessary to acknowledge that confirming participants was subject to convenience factors during the Covid-impacted study period, such as replying, scheduling and the ability to use the required technology. The participants are introduced overleaf.

Case study particpants

INTERVIEWEE 1 **MARTINA TRLIK – FILMMAKER** *(SOLE TRADER)*

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Martina Trlik is an Argentinian / Slovak visual artist and producer based in Catford / Lewisham, London. Originally from Buenos Aires, where she completed her degree in Media Studies, she moved to London in 2015. Since then, she has held a variety of positions within the UK creative industries. After starting as a studio assistant in a photographic studio, she moved on to work in creative and post-production for a London-based creative agency, which eventually led to her current position as a post-producer. Alongside this, she has always worked on different creative projects, including freelance work in photography and film. She also participated in the SHAPESLewisham panel talks after the COVID-19 outbreak, in which she discussed the role of reflection within creative practice. She has been a Lewisham resident since moving to Catford in late 2019.

INTERVIEWEE 2: **OGGIE (OGGIE EKARAGHA) – MUSICIAN** *(FREELANCER)*

© Greg Viet Photography

Oggie is a singer songwriter who was born, brought up, and continues to live, in Lewisham. He started out as the voice behind the Garage remake of the classic anthem *Follow Me*. He has run successful nights at venues such as Ronnie Scott's, achieved chart success in both Europe and Japan, and written original music for a number of Channel 4 Films. Currently, he is a backing vocalist for The Jacksons and at the time of writing was on tour with The House & Garage Orchestra alongside Kele Le Roc, MC Neat and Sweet Female Attitude, to support the Orchestra's No.1 Album *Garage Classics*. Previously touring Japan, Korea, Scandinavia, Germany, UK and the London West End stage as a lead in the Michael Jackson Musical *Thriller Live*, Oggie has also done backing vocals for artists such as Amy Winehouse, McFly, and Omar.

"[Lewisham] means culture. It means art. It means diversity. It means home."

OGGIE EKARAGHA

3. Analysis, Findings and Recommendations

The following analytic sections present findings which bring together three distinct strands of research. These interrelated components include: our semi-structured interviews conducted with two creative workers – filmmaker Martina, and musician Oggie; and a coded thematic analysis of an of online video forum event series entitled 'SHAPESLewisham Talks'. These two pieces of primary research are analysed and explored utilising wide-ranging review of key academic and professional work of the themes raised by the aims of the Creative Enterprise Zone (A1-4). Those goals guide a series of recommendations based on our findings.

Creative Enterprise Zone Aim 1: Support creative businesses to connect & collaborate

A1

PHYSICAL SPACE IN A DIGITAL AGE

The role of physical space in creative lives and careers which are increasingly mediated, lived and experienced digitally is an area of great debate, recently intensified by the COVID-19 crisis. Despite the well-publicised challenges of arguably the leading provider in the sector, WeWork (Taylor, 2021), co-working space, or hubs in which creatives work adjacent to each other to enable synergies such as knowledge transfer and innovation (Dovey and Pratt, 2016 p4; Storper and Venables, 2004), have become a central topic of enquiry in creative industries scholarship. Indeed, we will explore workspace specifically in section two (A2) below. Bandinelli and Gandini (2019) argue that such hubs can act as spaces in which a habitus ('rules of the game') of a certain field are learned, and thus can play a key role in the development of creative careers.

However, the future of such hubs as methods of connection and collaboration are open to question in an age of social-distancing and online work. Analysis of the SHAPESLewisham Talks highlights that local creative practitioners have been forced to move their points of collaboration online (Hardcastle, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2020d). While there appears to be a degree of uncertainty regarding the ability to forge meaningful connections without a physical presence, some workers felt that they had

successfully moved much of their practice online. SHAPESLewisham Talks panellists stated that they had adapted their practice to working from home and working digitally, such as by showcasing work on Instagram or holding online discussions. While some interpreted this as exciting and transformative, others stated considerable amounts of insecurity regarding the absence of physical presence and sensory experiences.

This duality of experience was reflected by our interviewees too. Both Martina and Oggie highlighted the need for real life connections beyond the digital world. Each of them argued that, in some respects, social distancing had hindered "meaningful" connections, stating that online working did serve as an alternative, but without serving to fully replace "the real thing", thus corroborating concerns raised in the SHAPESLewisham Talks. Whilst Oggie was notably more positive about his experiences of moving his practice online, there was a sense from both our interviewees that space for in-person collaboration, in order to foster local relationships beyond the digital realm and enable a knowledge transfer to mitigate the legal and business challenges of creative work, is crucial. In this respect, whilst transitioning creative work online can work well for some, physical space for collaboration – particularly between local creatives – remains of key

importance both for creative development but also to nurture and foster strong community relationships.

Our interviewees also shared with us the sense that for certain groups of cultural workers, online work was more challenging (or even impossible). Whilst both our interviewees intended to work increasingly from home moving forward, they highlighted the specific needs of certain creative workers who are less well-able to work from home, such as those working in cutting rooms or recording studios. This corroborates the arguments brought forth by Bingham-Haal and Kaasa (2018) that creative practitioners not only need (affordable) workspace, but also need workspace specific to their jobs. Performers for instance need a place for rehearsal, as well as a distinct place for performances. Others may need production and display space, for example. It is apparent that creative workplaces and local collaborations not only have a significant impact on the production of culture, but also directly impact culture itself.

One of our key findings was *how* this local collaboration is experienced by creative practitioners with two very different relationships to Lewisham. While Martina (who had moved to the area in late 2019) wished for more connection with local creative workers, Oggie stated that there was an abundance of local collaboration already in place. This highlights a key theme; the potential disparity in how local creative economies are understood and experienced by longer-term residents in contrast to those who are new to an area, and the

importance of ensuring that the development of the CEZ brings together both the experiences, understandings and knowledges of local creatives, with the different perspectives, experiences and enthusiasm of newcomers. For Martina, she was passionate that a co-working space would provide the physical space needed to facilitate these connections and strengthen knowledge and skill transfer within the community (Dovey and Pratt, 2016; Storper and Venables, 2004; Bandinelli and Gandini, 2019). Certainly, there are already examples of co-working spaces in the local area – such as Hatcham House or Your Space (within the Stephen Lawrence Centre in Deptford) for example – but, clearly for Martina, the existing provision is either insufficiently known, affordable, welcoming, and/or suitable. Oggie felt that it was key the existing cultural spaces better communicate the brilliant work that they do and ensure that everyone felt welcome to participate. As he told us:

> **"I don't feel there is enough noise to make people aware that [these cultural organisations are] there. Do you know what I mean? All of those organisations can be thriving twenty times more than what they are if the community was really, really fully aware of what it is that they do and what they have to offer."**
> OGGIE EKARAGHA

This presents an interesting point of reflection regarding whether or not new, collaborative, physical spaces for creative workers might be most effective if they are built into the existing cultural landscape, instead of operating as

separate entities. Were a co-working space such as that proposed by Martina, to be hosted within a theatre, music studio, or other cultural space such as those highlighted by Oggie, it might serve to bring together both the need for workspace, collaborations between newcomers and longer-term residents, and the opportunity for existing cultural workplaces to communicate their initiatives, share their expertise, and widen their networks too. Certainly, some highly valuable locations with cultural drivers do provide a variety of work and study locations: PLACE/Ladywell; Catford Dek Studios; Deptford Lounge, for example. Also, we note that The Albany theatre locally offers office space for what they describe as 'Resident Companies'. This is an infrastructure that could be developed (increased in volume) and communicated more clearly – mapping their locations, services, user communities and their connection to creative pathways – and disseminating that information would further the aims of the CEZ. That is, it is worth reflecting on why a creative worker such as Martina does not use, or does not know about, initiatives such as these, and therefore consider how these schemes might better communicate their offering.

WIDER COLLABORATIONS: LOCAL GOVERNMENT, KNOW-HOW AND FUNDING

Much discussion focusses on the ways in which local creative practitioners collaborate *with each other*. However, our findings highlighted other needs and challenges around other forms of networks and collaborations, particularly with local government, which are salient when reflecting on the development of the CEZ. For example, Martina pointed to a desire for mentorship or training provided by local government regarding legal matters for freelance work, especially concerning taxes and international collaboration. She told us:

> **"I think […] I would benefit quite a lot from training or just someone pointing me in the right direction for everything. Even when it comes to the tax return, I spend hours on the phone with these guys!"**
> MARTINA TRLIK

Martina's comment echoes concerns raised in the work of Siepel et al., (2020, p15), Nesta (2020, p3), Dovey and Pratt (2016, p16) and others who see a lack of practitioner knowledge and understanding of the field as key barriers to growth for creative businesses. For example, a panel discussion with creative industry representatives held by Nesta (2020, p3), revealed that creative businesses perceive their lack of ability to navigate relationships with local authorities as a barrier to growth, and therefore increased audiences and revenues. The Nesta panellists also argued that local authorities had a lack of understanding of the creative

industries, a weakness exacerbated by frequent changes of local governments (ibid, p29). This appears to be prominent in London's nightlife for example, whose representatives have recently discussed increases in restrictive laws as a "killer" to their businesses (Morton, 2018). These arguments call for reciprocal understanding between local authorities and creative businesses which may be strengthened through generation of social capital between, as well as within, the two.

A possible way to generate that social capital revealed in our analysis of SHAPESLewisham Talks is the inclusion of a diverse community in public policy decisions, i.e. the need of all groups to be "in the room when decisions are made" (Okwulu, 2020[1]). This position is further evidenced by a repeated wish of participants to be empowered to forge their own decisions, rather than having decisions aiming to better their circumstances made without their consideration (Goode, 2020). The panellists further assessed that growth is also hindered by a lack of understanding of business and legal skills and that local knowledge exchange between creative businesses could serve to fill these voids. This is corroborated by participants in SHAPESLewisham Talks stating that a lack of understanding of bureaucracy (e.g. planning permission or licensing) and public policy was perceived as a barrier to accessing finance and progressing projects (Goode at al., 2020). One participant further perceived this hurdle to be especially prominent for creatives of colour (Okwulu, 2020). In this respect, local authorities (in this case Lewisham) could reflect how they might better support creative

businesses in terms of skills, training, and knowledge exchange, and better communicate the existing methods of support to ensure that workers feel able to take advantage of the help on offer.

In light of COVID-19 limiting creative workers' income, self-employed artists participating in SHAPESLewisham Talks mourned the lack of financial support offered by the government (Hardcastle, 2020b; 2020c; 2020d), especially focussing on eligibility criteria (ibid). Various participants experiencing financial hardship stated they did not meet any of the categories of government support schemes (ibid). Indeed, both Martina and Oggie perceived government support as important, thus corroborating need highlighted in the Nesta (2020, p5) panel for public support. They both, despite having applied for support previously, had only what they considered a relatively basic understanding of the options and opportunities offered by the government. This, combined with uncertainty over eligibility, and often simply a lack of time (potentially further implicating the laborious application processes noted in Nesta, 2020, p4) meant that they rarely applied for funding (even if there might be schemes for which they are eligible). Our findings point towards key barriers between creative practitioners and their relationships with local or national government, and suggests that this relationship is one the CEZ should seek to cultivate and nurture *alongside* developing relationships amongst creatives in Lewisham.

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[1] Nicholas Okwulu, Community Project Manager, speaking at Goode et al. (2020)

Recommendations for Creative Enterprise Zone Aim 1: Support creative businesses to connect and collaborate

1.
Expand (or make more accessible) the existing provision of physical, in-person collaboration to facilitate the bringing together of both longer-term creative workers and newcomers to the Lewisham CEZ

2.
Decision-making which impacts the lives and careers of those within the CEZ should be taken collaboratively with a diverse range of local voices

3.
Local (and ideally national) government should develop initiatives to better communicate with creative workers within the CEZ and support them in easily accessible ways, particularly around skills, training and funding

Creative Enterprise Zone Aim 2:

Increase access to affordable workspace so creatives can put down roots and stay in our community

A2

CREATIVE WORKERS AND COMMUNITY

SHAPESLewisham see access to affordable workspace as being a key driver to encourage creatives to "put down roots and stay in our community". Indeed, as seen in the discussion above, affordable workspaces are felt by many to be key in this ambition and their impact has great potential when combined with local cultural institutions. However, it is also worth considering more broadly the factors that facilitate or hinder the relationship between creative workers and a locality. Exploring the notion that affordable workspaces form one part of a creative's relationship with a community within a broader context will be vital for Lewisham as it develops the remit of the CEZ.

Florida's (2005) influential but much-critiqued (Edensor et.al, 2009; Peck, 2005) thesis on the emergence of a "creative class" represents perhaps the best-known attempt to conceptualise the relationship between creative workers and geographical location. His work sees this 'class' as highly mobile and willing to move to locations that provide the lifestyle and the jobs they wish to pursue. Florida (2005, p68; pp75-77) argues that the main reason for creative practitioners to move to a region is the cultural capital of a region itself, more so than economic benefits. This suggests that certain regions, through their creative culture alone, have the ability to attract and retain creative businesses.

There is also a role for culture in retaining people through strong local networks (Nesta, 2020, p2; Siepel et al, 2020, p10). This in turn could generate economic growth for businesses within the area through an influx of highly qualified workers (Florida, 2005) and avoid an area obtaining 'stepping-stone' status. Indeed, this ability of Lewisham in particular, to attract creative workers was reflected in our interviews. Both Martina and Oggie highlighted the creative buzz of London, and especially of Lewisham and South-East London, as a reason for an emotional bond to the area. As Martina told us:

"It's an area where somehow you feel like things can happen."
MARTINA TRLIK

In this sense, for our interviewees, the community of Lewisham was very much considered a powerful draw.

This relational dynamic between creative workers and their locality is key for economic, social and cultural reasons (Siepel et al., 2020, p10; Porter, 2000, p21; Lee, 2020, p10). In economic terms, Porter (2000, p25) argues that the proximity to local competitors can benefit all businesses involved, e.g. through proximity to local supply chains, the will to outdo local competitors, or local offerings of complimentary goods. In social terms, local creative

businesses can profit from the social value of their community and vice versa: King (2018, p12) found that all proprietors of a shopping centre in Elephant and Castle created forms of social value – the resulting tightly knit network and inclusive nature of the community attracted new market entrants through low entry barriers, as well as enabling synergies between local businesses (ibid). In cultural terms, the benefits of community strength and openness are exemplified by the experiences of SHAPESLewisham Talks participants in which community-led initiatives were perceived as a safe space where underrepresented groups could get together, educate, inspire, collaborate and join forces to build confidence in navigating issues such as systemic racism (Goode, 2020). Participants emphasised the importance of role models and mentors, especially within the Black community, inspiring upcoming generations to pursue similar careers (ibid). Virani, Piza and Shiach (2018, p5; pp51-52) also found that social inclusion practices within the local community (e.g. youth work) were closely correlated with creative business longevity, thus making it reasonable to conclude that creative businesses could strengthen their economic returns by actively embedding themselves within the local culture.

The question for the development of the CEZ, is how these kinds of relationships – and this kind of 'embedding' – between creative practitioners and the local community can be cultivated and nurtured to bring about the kinds of benefits outlined above, and to ensure that these benefits have longevity. Our earlier recommendation regarding in-person collaborative spaces

between both longer-term and newer creative workers within the CEZ speaks to this ambition. Although both participants mentioned the benefits of having a well-connected local community, the importance of a local network was notably more dominant for Oggie – the musician who had grown up and lived in the area all his life. He spoke with great passion and sincerity about the role of the community in his life telling us:

> **"[Lewisham] means culture. It means art. It means diversity. It means home."**
> OGGIE EKARAGHA

While Oggie's perspective corroborates literature suggesting that local businesses thrive on the social value of the community, both economically and mentally, it also further serves to highlight the need for better connections between established creative practitioners and those new to the area, for whom this community might seem less accessible and less part of their daily lives.

Affordable workspaces, particularly those which bring together a diverse range of residents and allow for the promotion of the existing cultural institutions should be part of a package of measures, and not seen as a "one size fits all" approach. Workspace availability as a distinct provision is insufficient in a context where some creative workers will be able to increasingly work from home and thus require other forms of local, in—person, community interaction. Facilitation of creatives' taking root in the community requires a broader, integrated scope of engagement.

COMMUNITY AND AFFORDABILITY

It is worth here reflecting on the use of the term 'affordable'. The term is hugely contentious not only in social and political terms, but is in fact rather terminological ambiguous, even porous, notably in the context of London where 'affordability' means different things when being used by different stakeholders (LTF, 2012). Indeed, nowhere is this debate around affordability more charged than in the context of housing and the cost of living in London. That is, the role and function of affordable workspace is best understood as part of a broader matrix of challenges within the urban economy for precarious, creative workers. The paradox of successful cultural communities attracting newcomers, pricing creatives out of the market and destroying the productive creative conditions (Florida, 2017; McRobbie, 2016, p152) is one that requires attention of the CEZ in the context of their desire for affordable workspace. This process, often referred to as 'gentrification', can be seen across London, exemplified by the large amounts of affordable housing under threat in Elephant and Castle (King, 2018, p8) and arguably in action in Lewisham since the early 2000s (Butler and Robson, 2001). Indeed, these are alarming given the distinctive spatial needs of creative businesses.

Work by King (2018, p10-11) further suggests that immigrant communities and ethnic minorities are disproportionally affected by gentrification in London, arguing that a loss of affordable workspace is causing high barriers to entry. These barriers have particular impacts on certain creative workers, such as musicians like Oggie. For example, in 2012 the Musicians

Union (2012, p5) found that over 50% of UK musicians earned less than £20,000 a year from their work, a figure which has worsened over the subsequent decade, with the Intellectual Property Office (IPO, 2021) recently publishing comprehensive data suggesting that 62% of musicians earned less than £20,000 in 2019. This figure is below London's liveable wage of £10.85 (Living Wage Foundation, 2021) – approx. £22,785 p.a.[2].

In this context, Bingham-Hall and Kaasa's (2018, p25) report calls for CEZs to enable affordable housing as well as affordable workspaces, in order to mitigate conditions of precarious income – an argument supported by King's (2018, p8) suggestion of social value being enabled by affordable retail and recreation alongside affordable workspaces. The London Plan has acknowledged a need for workspace below market rates within CEZs (GLA, 2021a). Interestingly, our interviewees did not in fact report housing affordability as being a key concern for them, feeling that Lewisham represented good value in the context of wider London housing. Both participants considered living in Lewisham reasonably priced. However, the theme of gentrification was notably more predominant our interview with Oggie than with Martina. Oggie saw the process of gentrification in both a positive and negative way, highlighting a reduction in crime and an increase in the overall condition of the area occurring alongside a sense in which long-term residents may be disproportionally negatively

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[2] Calculated as £10.85 x 40 (hours in a week)
    x 52.5 (weeks a year)

affected, suggesting that they are faced with an increase in living costs and an increase of competition within the local job market. Indeed, the challenges of gentrification in Deptford have been the subject of recent academic enquiry (Strasser, 2020), and research has highlighted the phenomenon of creative businesses being forced to move elsewhere due to increasing rents and short-term leases (Nesta, 2020, p4; Coffield et al., 2020). It is crucial therefore that Lewisham reflects on how 'affordability' is defined, and how different creatives e.g. established residents and newer arrivals, experience the impact of increasing unaffordability when developing the CEZ.

Recommendations for Creative Enterprise Zone Aim 2: Increase access to affordable workspace so creatives can put down roots and stay in our community

4.

Develop a series of initiatives (alongside the provision of co-working spaces) which bring together established residents and community organisations with new creative workers in the area to strengthen the powerful bonds of community which make Lewisham such a special place to live and work.

5.

Consider how the term 'affordability' is defined and employed to ensure creative businesses are best able to stay in the area for the long-term and develop the kinds of community relationships required for meaningful engagement.

Creative Enterprise Zone Aim 3:
Link creative enterprises to the skills, expertise and facilities of our education and cultural institutions

A3

Findings by the AEA (2021, p64) and Coffield et al. (2019) suggest that local cultural institutions and spaces can function as an "anchor" for cultural businesses, attracting talent and providing social value. Alongside local festivals such as Deptford X, Lewisham Council has a variety of local cultural institutions – many of which are nationally or internationally recognised for the excellence of their work – dedicated to different forms of culture, some of which are listed below:

- The Broadway Theatre
- The Albany
- The Horniman
- Bearspace
- The Artworks
- The Music Complex
- Bunker Club
- SellADoor
- Goldsmiths, University of London
- Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance

Alongside these, the Mayor of London's office have developed an interactive Cultural Infrastructure Map highlighting the location of cultural offerings in all London boroughs. This map can be accessed by clicking here. The Albany offers an example of calls for local involvement in activities on its website, suggesting that certain cultural institutions are committed to providing the local community

with social opportunities (The Albany, 2021). These include moving online to facilitate communication in the wake of Covid-19 (Lewisham Council, 2020a). However, as discussed in A1, our interviewee Oggie felt that these organisations might *better* communicate the value of what they do in order to maximise their local impact. Systematic and ongoing assessment of communication and marketing could offer great insight on efficiency for the CEZ.

What is the relationship between creative organisations and what SHAPESLewisham describe as "education and cultural institutions"? Bakshi et al. (2013, p62, pp104-105) and Siepel et al. (2020, p10) suggest that workers within the creative industries are likely to hold university degrees, thus suggesting that a core aspect of the relationship between educational institutions and creative businesses is the former's ability to provide talent.

Indeed, this was reflected by our interviewees, with both Martina and Oggie holding university degrees. Both shared with us the benefits they felt their degree programs had provided, with Oggie emphasising the gaining of valuable knowledge of the music industries and the opportunity to develop contacts. In this respect, universities were seen as key sites for the development of our interviewees' careers, particularly in the early stages. These attributes are

well-known; universities and creative degree programs have been seen to be key sites for the development of local network skills (McRobbie, 2016, p43), and the development of the skills needed for innovation (Bakshi et al., 2013, p47) or for creative work itself (Zukauskaite, 2012, p413). What is required for the purposes of this project is a deeper and richer understanding of how creative practitioners within Lewisham understand, negotiate and navigate their relationships with cultural and educational institutions. What is the perceived role of an organisation like Goldsmiths, for example, in the life a local musician or filmmaker, say, and indeed what might a musician or filmmaker *want* or *need* from a local institution such as this?

We know that creative businesses can profit from access to local experts within educational organisations, thus creating economic (through knowledge exchange) (Porter, 2000, pp22-23) and social benefits (such as challenging inequalities within the business) (Oakley, 2013; Allen, 2013, p250; Goode, 2020). Access to local institutions can provide creative workers with opportunities to institutionalise their work, such as through peer reviews, access to high quality information, and funding opportunities (Bingham-Hall and Kaasa, 2018, p33).

However, both our interviewees suggested they had no current links to Higher Education institutions in the area. Whilst Martina suggested she would be interested in exploring the possibility to develop relationships both to learn and, in the future, to teach, Oggie saw the relationship differently, highlighting the importance of Goldsmiths for local culture through its ability to provide an audience and, perhaps, a form of PR. He told us:

> **"If you've got creative types just around the corner, The Albany could be packed with Goldsmiths' students week after week."**
> **OGGIE EKARAGHA**

Both Martina and Oggie felt their relationship to educational institutions could be better, findings which have been mirrored in other research projects which have highlighted the importance of collaboration for students. For example, in a survey by Pollard (2012, p62) creative business graduates stated that they wished for closer links between universities and the professional world. Both the educational body and the SHAPESLewisham community would benefit from clear pathways and routes of exchange between them. We note the emergence of recent initiatives such as the Goldsmiths 'Civic University Agreement (2021-24)' (Goldsmiths, 2021) which certainly speaks to this ambition. An interesting path for further research would be to evaluate how schemes such as this inform the ways in which institutions like Goldsmiths are perceived by local creative workers over the longer-term. While both participants mentioned links to

local cultural institutions, they explicitly noted these relationships have a potential to be *strengthened*. Whilst the CEZ benefits from noted successes in the integration of education, industry projects e.g. The Trinity Laban Ignite Fund (Beech, 2021), those models can be broadened and adapted for other institutions and communicated more fully. Combinatorial models of educational institutional intervention in local creative economies have seen success in other UK settings such as CreativeFuse in the North East (Toal, 2021) and more collaborative models could provide both enhanced resources and clearer pathways. The form the strengthened relationships between cultural and educational institutions might take is examined below in the fourth aim of the Creative Enterprise Zone (A4) where, again, the analytical distinction between the aims of the CEZ are not always easily delineated. However, given the various forms this collaboration could take, it is worth examining an example of innovative practice in this area as a framework or model which might be drawn upon or expanded as the CEZ evolves. For this, we have chosen to take a closer look at the Inspire Lewisham initiative.

INSPIRE LEWISHAM (CREATIVE ENTERPRISE ZONE FUNDED PROJECT)

Inspire Lewisham was launched in September 2021. It is a collaboration between Goldsmiths (University of London), The Albany Theatre (Deptford), Lewisham College, and Do It Now Now (an open innovation organisation committed to the empowerment of Black communities across the globe). Funded by the Mayor of London through the European Social Fund as well the Creative Enterprise Zone Programme, this scheme represents an innovative model of practice to connect young Lewisham residents over the age of 16 to careers in the cultural and creative industries via a collaboration between educational and cultural organisations. Specialist entrepreneur support is provided by Goldsmith's SYNAPSE Programme, and close collaboration with employers seeks to forge both short-term job placements and longer-term jobs. Participants can access knowledge from experts, mentors and peers, skills in Maths and English, support in starting their own business and more.

This project has just begun and therefore has not been assessed. However, by conceptualising the aims and objectives of Inspire Lewisham within the following theoretical architecture, it may offer insights into how this model might be developed in the future. We suggest that Inspire Lewisham positions cultural and educational organisations (in this case Lewisham College, The Albany Theatre, and Goldsmiths) as what Comunian et.al (2022) call 'creative intermediaries', defined in their recent report on creative economies in Africa as: "individuals or organisations that facilitate the growth and development of creative individuals, and/or [creative and cultural industries] and projects" (Comunian et.al, 2021, p12). As per the report's examples, so too within SHAPESLewisham do we see Goldsmiths seeking to position itself as a co-ordinator and facilitator, linking together the wider creative economies, social policy, local development and youth work (ibid, p29). This kind of interventionist approach to intermediation rooted in supporting, sustaining, encouraging, incentivising and managing creative business is also found in the work of Schlesinger et.al (2015) in their study of the Cultural Enterprise Office in Glasgow.

The intermediary framing and Inspire Lewisham model offers a valuable approach for development in how cultural and educational organisations can work together to forge meaningful links to creative businesses, which of course requires long-term collaboration and investment. It strikes us that by acting as creative intermediaries as per the Inspire Lewisham programme, organisations such as Goldsmiths can even more deeply develop the already strong links with local creative businesses, and ensure they feature even more meaningfully in the lives of creatives such as Martina and Oggie.

Recommendations for Creative Enterprise Zone Aim 3:
Link creative enterprises to the skills, expertise and facilities of our education and cultural institutions

6.
Examine the feasibility of building out models to extend youth (16+) provision through to early & mid-career creatives, both supporting them, and leveraging their expertise by folding such knowledge back into the programmes. A full spectrum of support post-secondary education for freelancers and sole traders – from individual creative CV development through to creative business sustainability e.g. the Catalyst model – should be clearly identifiable.

7.
Build on existing research to map not only facilities and hub resources, but develop overlays of user pathways, based on marketing and user data, addressing issues such as who is using the hubs and for what reasons. This continually updated resource can inform policy direction, and also increase dissemination of the opportunities in the CEZ.

Creative Enterprise Zone Aim 4: Provide career pathways from school into further education, higher education and a career in the creative sector

A4

As per the experiences of both Martina and Oggie, creative workers are likely to enter their career after finishing a university degree (Bakshi et al., 2013, p62, pp104-105; Siepel et al., 2020, p10). In this context, there has been a high level of recent interest in how creative graduates manage their transition from FE or HE into work in the cultural sector (Bennett and Burnard, 2017; Ghazali and Bennett, 2017; Bartleet et.al, 2019). Much of this literature has focussed on the challenges faced as graduates seek to find work in a sector has been seen to suffer from financial precarity (Morgan and Wood, 2013), inequality of access (Brook et.al, 2020) sexual discrimination (Conor, Gill and Taylor, 2015), and high levels of mental ill-health (Gross and Musgrave, 2020). Indeed, our interviewees reflected that their experiences of transitioning into work after university had been profoundly challenging. They both suggested that university had provided excellent opportunities in terms of developing skills, building networks and confidence, and developing their knowledge. The benefits of universities in these respects are well understood, as sites of collaboration and relationship cultivation (McRobbie's, 2016, p43) and for the development of entrepreneurial skills both as part of, and outside of, the curriculum (Laudin, 2013). However, as suggested, we found that it was the *transition* into work post-education which proved difficult for our interviewees.

CREATIVE CAREERS POST-EDUCATION: NETWORKS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Oggie suggested that whilst his university did serve to provide many opportunities during his studies, it failed to enable further jobs after university had finished. Likewise, Martina reported the well-known challenges of precarious income, and a lack of time, as a result of multiple day jobs, as hindering her career development, leaving her with less time to gather work experience and gain connections. Central to both of our interviewees was the role of networks for the development of their careers and the gap, they felt, in their university experience, of assisting in the formation and cultivation of these crucial networks. Oggie, for example, told us that one of the core skills of being a musician was:

"...networking. Whether we like it or not, it is. And through creating, that is what we do. We start networking with the type of people that we want to network with so that we can, you know, not even intentionally, but it does move us more in the direction that we want to be in and where we want to be."

OGGIE EKARAGHA

Indeed, social networks have been seen to be central in the careers of musicians such as Oggie (Everts et.al, 2020; Dobson, 2011; Zwaan et.al, 2009) and in this respect, the development of the CEZ might want to consider how cultural organisations might partner with educational institutions to offer networking opportunities, whether this is through guest talks, offering work opportunities/experience, holding networking events which students are invited to, and/or mentorship.

Whilst many students learn key skills and develop knowledge during their degree programs, it is the connections to networks of power and influence with which they often need the most help. Indeed, Lee (2013, p209) highlights that systemic inequalities between class, gender and race further hinder access for many to these essential aspects of creative career development, an experience corroborated by a participant's experiences in SHAPESLewisham Talks (Ravindranath, 2020[3]). These specific concerns of network development demand careful consideration alongside initiatives to structure connectivity; beyond piecemeal events, a model of engagement flows should be developed to increase the endurance and permanence of these initial forms of scaffolding.

Oggie also told us that his period of transitioning into work after education had psychological impacts too. He described to us how he and his friends had experienced what he described as "post-Uni depression" as he struggled to find his way. University services, especially in mental health and wellbeing are increasingly

recognised as an area of vital importance requiring resources, but exist in an environment characterised by cuts. Furthermore, whilst Oggie described the joy and positivity making music brought to his life, he also discussed the negative impacts working in the *music industries* can sometimes have, suggesting that they could, occasionally, be experienced as challenging and toxic. Indeed, this comment chimes both with academic evidence regarding the emotional challenges of working in the creative industries (Gross and Musgrave, 2016, 2017, 2020), but also with our analysis of the SHAPESLewisham Talks series where mental health was a major theme. For example, a recurring issue was the effect of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions on creative practitioners' mental health (Hardcastle, 2020c; 2020d). Some mentioned the increased levels of uncertainty which had detrimental impacts on their creative practice, while perceiving a pressure to remain active (Hardcastle, 2020c). This is further strengthened by a narrative of a "traumatic experience" (Kerr, 2020[4]), "grief" (Osman, 2020), or "feeling overwhelmed" (Boobis, 2020[5]). For Martina, she suggested that living in London could, itself, be emotionally challenging. In addition, a submission of evidence by Lewisham Council to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee on the

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[3] Ellie Ravindranath, local entrepreneur, speaking at (Goode, 2020)

[4] Andrew Kerr, Artist & Educator, speaking at Hardcastle (2020c)

[5] Nathalie Boobis, Curator and Director of Deptford X, speaking at Hardcastle (2020d)

impact of Covid-19 on the DCMS sector highlights the damaging impact of Covid-19 on creative workers' mental health as a key theme (GOV, 2020, p76). Having discovered this, we would therefore suggest that any programs developed by the CEZ to "provide career pathways from school into further education, higher education and a career in the creative sector" should encompasses not only practical skills (such as networking as described above) but also place an emphasis on mental health and offer both education and support for a sector which can be experienced as psychologically demanding, even destabilising, by many.

SCHOOL AND CREATIVE CAREERS

Much of the discussion has focussed on the development of career pathways from FE/HE into careers. However, there is an earlier transition highlighted in the aims of the Creative Enterprise Zone: the movement from school into FE/HE. Here, we would also highlight two issues. Firstly, for some students FE/HE might not represent an educational choice which is right for them. Secondly, fair access to creative education is a significant challenge (Beech, 2021, p12). Relatedly there is also a third transition to consider and foreground more clearly; the movement from school directly into careers in the creative sector.

Evidence from our interviewees foregrounds the importance of *which kinds* of educational institutions should be considered as key figures or anchors in the development of creative careers. Much of the literature, and indeed our primary research, focussed on the role of

universities. However, Oggie highlighted to us that one of the key drivers of his career had been collaborations between a local cultural institution and his primary school. He spoke of how he had been introduced to various local cultural organisations whilst at primary school, and how this had led to lifelong relationships which had been central to his career development, providing support, mentorship and community. It is therefore crucial to consider the powerful role that primary and secondary education (alongside tertiary education) can play in the lives of creative practitioners. This additional finding speaks to the ambition of the CEZ regarding the community remit of the initiative (A2), with Oggie speaking with great passion about how local musicians, business owners and other creative workers had become like a family around which he had grown and developed. The networks, he suggested, were key as he grew as a musician. In this respect, it is right to privilege the development of networks in the aim of the CEZ, but this should not be exclusively reserved for university students or recent graduates.

Indeed, our review of Inspire Lewisham highlights an example of this kind of approach, encompassing as it does people over the age of 16, and in this respect again we can see some analytical overlap between the aims and objectives of the Creative Enterprise Zone. There is clear value in emphasising full life cycle engagement with creativity, and the aim of developing creative career pathways from school should start with primary school and build from there. These can be self-reinforcing relationships positively impacting across multiple CEZ aims.

Children benefiting from early creative engagement would feel more inspired to pursue creative work (A4), more bonded to the local cultural institutions (A3) and the local community (A2), and able to share that knowledge collaboratively with younger pupils when in secondary and tertiary education settings (A1). Whilst many fantastic initiatives exist, bringing a visible and enduring architecture to this work is key, allowing for partnerships e.g. with mentoring schemes, but engendering and retaining a clear identity for Lewisham as a CEZ.

Recommendations for Creative Enterprise Zone Aim 4: Provide career pathways from school into further education, higher education and a career in the creative sector

8.
To assist in the development of creative careers, activities and schemes to encourage and facilitate the development and cultivation of *networks* should be a core focus.

9.
The CEZ should facilitate wellbeing training and mental health first-aid training for creative workers to help both in their challenging transition into work and beyond.

10.
Schemes to bring together cultural institutions and education providers should consider the powerful impact tertiary, secondary, *and* primary education can have on the careers of creative practitioners.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, this research provides deeper, evidence-based insights into the needs and challenges of creative businesses within the borough of Lewisham in order to guide the Creative Enterprise Zone. In doing so, this paper has made ten recommendations informed by primary research consisting of interviews with case study participants and thematic analysis of the SHAPESLewisham Talks series, and a review of academic literature in this area. Our recommendations are as follows:

R1 Expand (or make more accessible) the existing provision of physical, in-person collaboration to facilitate the bringing together of both longer-term creative workers and newcomers to the Lewisham CEZ.

R2 Decision-making which impacts the lives and careers of those within the CEZ should be taken collaboratively with a diverse range of local voices.

R3 Local (and ideally national) government should develop initiatives to better communicate with creative workers within the CEZ and support them in easily accessible ways, particularly around skills, training and funding.

R4 Develop a series of initiatives (alongside the provision of co-working spaces) which bring together established residents and community organisations with new creative workers in the area to strengthen the powerful bonds of community which make Lewisham such a special place to live and work.

R5 Consider how the term 'affordability' is defined and employed to ensure creative businesses are best able to stay in the area for the long-term and develop the kinds of community relationships required for meaningful engagement.

R6 Examine the feasibility of building out models to extend youth (16+) provision through to early & mid-career creatives, both supporting them, and leveraging their expertise by folding such knowledge back into the programmes. A full spectrum of support post-secondary education for freelancers and sole traders – from individual creative CV development through to creative business sustainability e.g. the Catalyst model – should be clearly identifiable.

R7 Build on existing research to map not only facilities and hub resources, but develop overlays of user pathways, based on marketing and user data, addressing issues such as who is using the hubs and for what reasons. This continually updated resource can inform policy direction, and also increase dissemination of the opportunities in the CEZ.

R8 To assist in the development of creative careers, activities and schemes to encourage and facilitate the development and cultivation of networks should be a core focus. These might include guest talks, offering work opportunities/experience, holding networking events which students at all levels of education are invited to, and/or mentorship.

R9 The CEZ should facilitate wellbeing training and mental health first-aid training for creative workers to help both in their challenging transition into work and beyond.

R10 Schemes to bring together cultural institutions and education providers should consider the powerful impact tertiary, secondary and primary education can have on the careers of creative practitioners.

As has been suggested, and four stated aims and objectives of the Creative Enterprise Zone analytically overlap (such as the role of co-working (A2) for facilitating collaboration (A1), or the potential role of primary education (A4) within the remit of (A3)), and as such we would make an 11th recommendation regarding some reconsideration of how these aims are articulated.

We have synthesised the thematic drivers of the recommendations as follows:

Connectivity Interaction between creatives who are long-term Lewisham residents and more recent arrivals is identified as a clear need.

Communication Information about knowledge, skills, and funding provision, and their access pathways can be more widely and clearly disseminated by intermediaries. Availability and access are noted challenges, but additionally, engagement is also vital; outreach to ensure potential beneficiaries know about provision is key.

Construction The establishment of well signposted pathways for creative support through primary, secondary, and tertiary education, continually interacting with creative enterprises, is required.

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