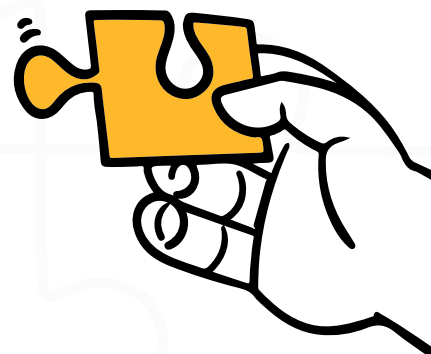
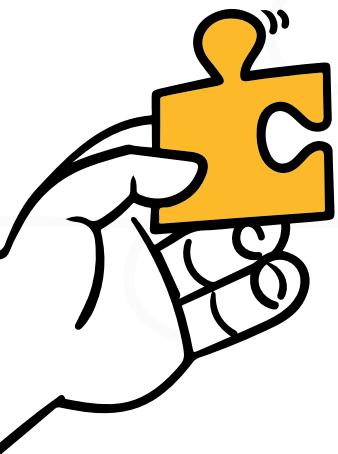




Arts and
Humanities
Research Council

By All, For All: The Power of Partnership

AHRC Creative Communities
Deep Dive Report 2023



Northumbria
University
NEWCASTLE



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GLOSSARY

AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DfE	Department for Education
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
DTP	Doctoral Training Partnership
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
IROs	Independent Research Organisations
IAAs	Impact Accelerator Accounts
R&D	Research and Development
UKRI	UK Research and Innovation



1. Contextualising Creative Communities

Since 2012 there has been an increase in cross-sector research and development (R&D) projects funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) across the UK, involving joint collaborations between community, government, education, arms length, third and private sector organisations. In recent years, this delivery model has been accelerated by contemporary contexts such as Brexit, the covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living and energy crises.¹

The Creative Communities programme takes this context as a starting point for contextualising and capturing the first holistic understanding of what has happened in this area, what is happening today and what is needed to support opportunities for overcoming barriers to engagement for the future.



Using a new evidence base curated from a decade of AHRC datasets 2012-22, this report aims to identify the capacity of Creative Communities as a delivery mechanism, mapping reach, profiling best practice, and identifying potential for future growth.

Through a series of organisational and strategic recommendations, the following deep dive review outlines the value of co-creation to culture and the economy, as well as how and why engaging partners in research, and communities as research partners, can enhance the quality, resilience, and sustainability of our research ecosystem for the twenty-first century.

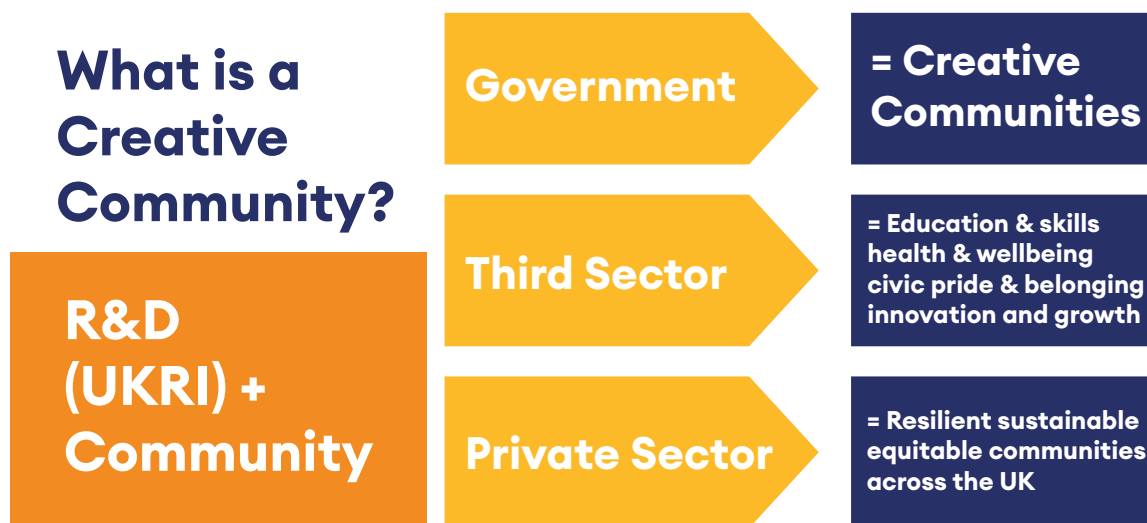


What is a Creative Community?

A Creative Community describes a place based, cross-sector R&D collaboration that brings together diverse partners with the shared objective to generate economic and social value through the delivery of new culture activity.

Partners may include:

- Community Groups & Citizen Researchers
- HEIs and IROs with academic experts funded by UKRI
- Central Government, including DCMS, BEIS, DLUHC, DfE, Local Authorities and Combined Authorities
- Arms length bodies e.g. ACE, Creative Scotland
- Third Sector (Charities/Foundation/Trusts)
- Private Sector



Key enabling features of Creative Communities include:

- Collaborative conceiving and structuring
- Participative shared leadership processes
- Place based focus with an outward looking dimension
- Openness to experimentation and failure, modification and risk taking
- Participation of local communities with cross-sector (sometimes unlikely) allies

Activity often occurs around local spaces like a community centre, heritage or arts site, enabling new social, cultural, digital and economic networks between local industries and organisations that share similar interests. While levels of expertise, forms of engagement, location, depth of partnership and purpose varies region to region, as well as nation by nation, the Creative Communities model provides a flexible and inclusive approach, nurturing new diverse partnerships for long-term sustainable networks.



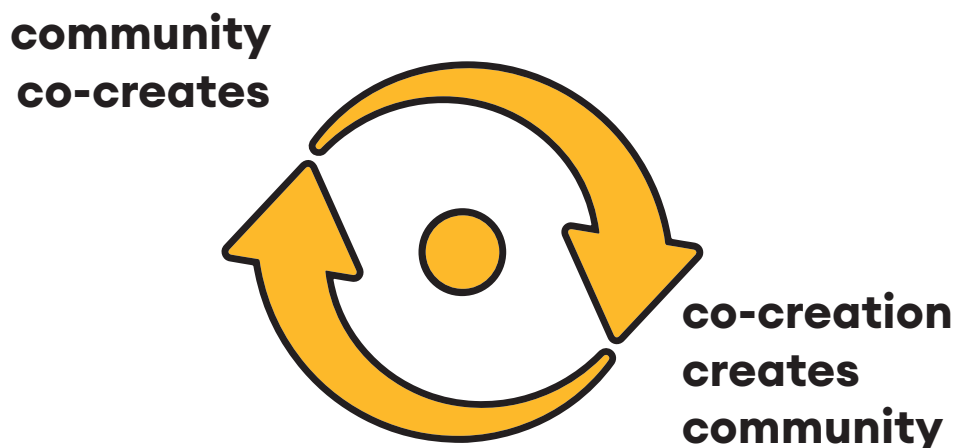
What is Co-Creation?

Co-creation is a collaborative approach whereby the people who use something are empowered to make it.

The central goal of co-creation is innovation and change, supported by values such as equality and diversity, accessibility, mutual benefit and reciprocity between collaborators. There are three elements that are key to co-creation: **community; collaboration; and context**. In co-creation, research is done with a community, rather than to a community; all collaborators are of equal importance in providing individual expertise. These collaborators come together over shared goals to create something meaningful that is dependent upon unique contexts. ²³

While a community of people may come together to co-create something specific, the process of partnership can also help strengthen existing or create new communities by enhancing vital social capital and boosting creative power. ⁴ As such, the relationship between co-creation and community can be seen as cyclical.

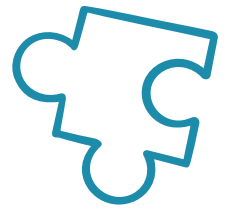
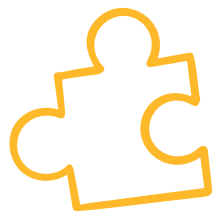
‘Co-creation can do more than just create skills or knowledge: it can be the very glue that creates community’⁵



There are also challenges in using co-creation:

- relationships take time to build ⁶
- differences in language can alienate collaborators ⁷
- uncertainty when defining roles and accountability in multi-partner collaborative teams ⁸
- ‘community washing’ – or ‘co-washing’ – the exploitative adoption of terms like ‘community’ and ‘collaboration’ by those in positions of power to appear equitable ⁹

Co-creation is not a ‘one-size fits all’ solution to tackling shared issues and must be applied thoughtfully, but it can be difficult for existing systems and processes to meet these needs. ¹⁰ While co-creation can help to empower communities, it can also worsen inequalities if context is not properly considered. ¹¹ Investing in overcoming these barriers – by rethinking funding, partnerships, and models of R&D - is crucial to harnessing the innovative potential of Arts and Humanities R&D today.



Arts Councils

Arts Councils play a key enabling role, supporting public artistic and cultural programming through their strategic and organisational objectives.

- Arts Council England (ACE)
- Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI)
- Arts Council Wales (ACW)
- Creative Scotland (CS)

Third Sector

Encompassing charities, the voluntary sector, community organisations, social enterprises, trusts and foundations, and think tanks, third sector organisations offer funding and support.

- UK Community Foundation (UKCF)
- National Lottery Distribution Fund (NLDF)
- National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF)
- National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF)

Who Supports Creative Communities?

Private Sector

Private sector investors include corporate partners seeking to deliver social impact and civic philanthropy and private trusts and foundations that invest grants from private wealth and equity.

Civic Philanthropy

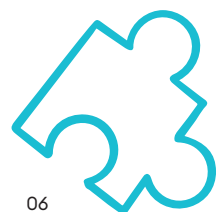
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
- Churchill Fellowship
- Beacon Collaborative

Private Sector Collaborations

- Adobe Creative Communities
- SKY UP
- Google Cultural Institute
- Inspiring Scotland

UK Central and Local Governments

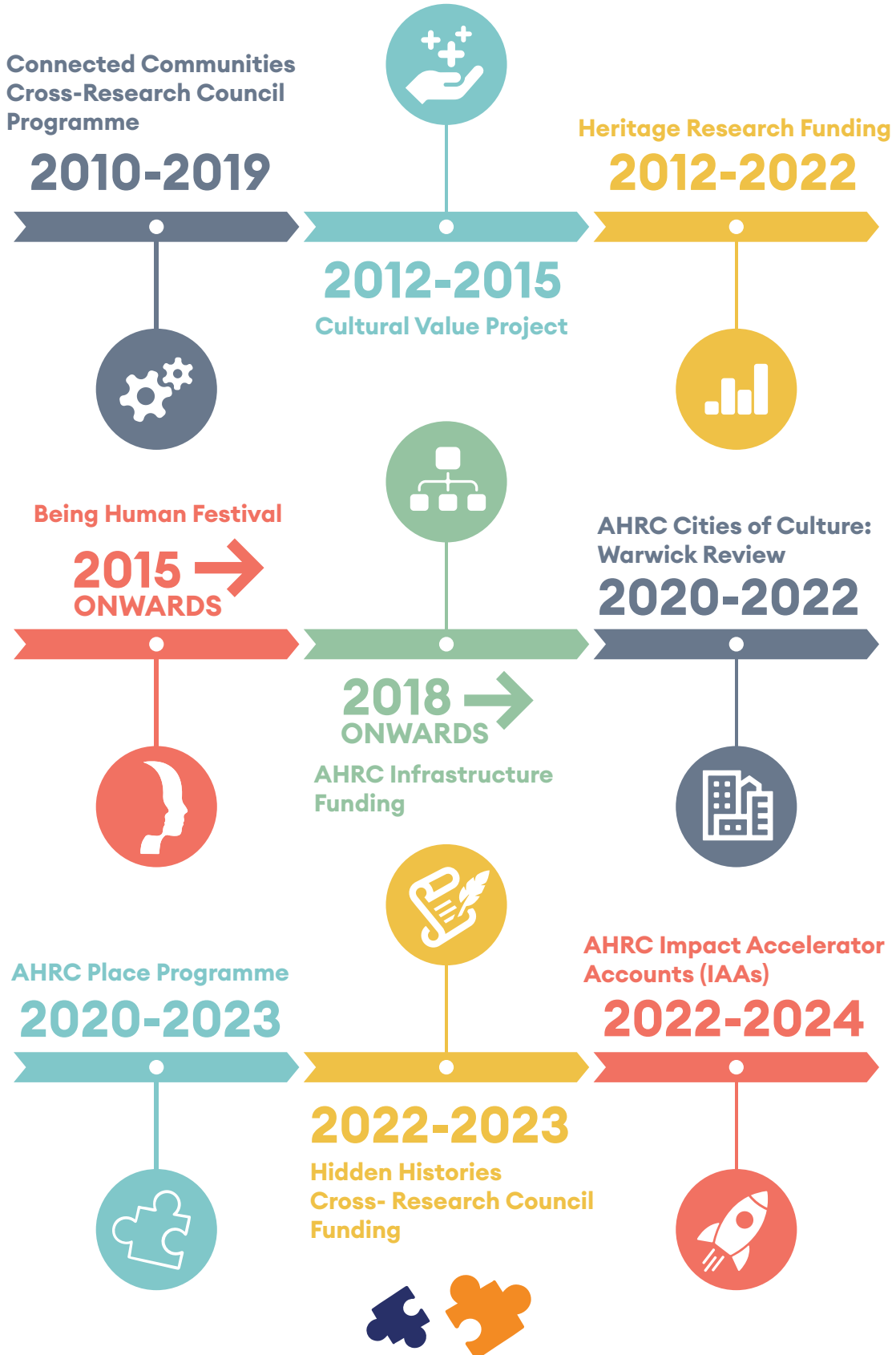
Devolution has expanded the range of government involvement including local authorities and combined authorities, devolved governments across the four nations, and UK central government, each developing their own policy and funding opportunities.



UKRI & AHRC

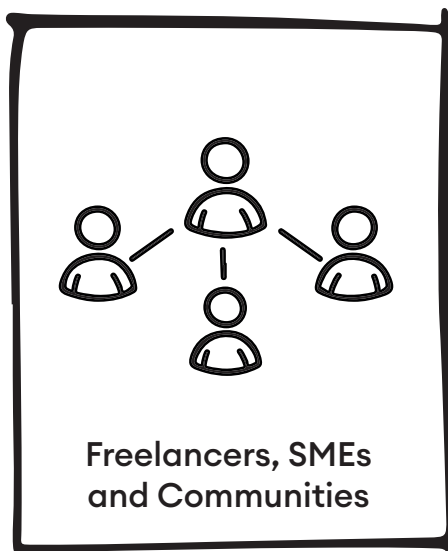
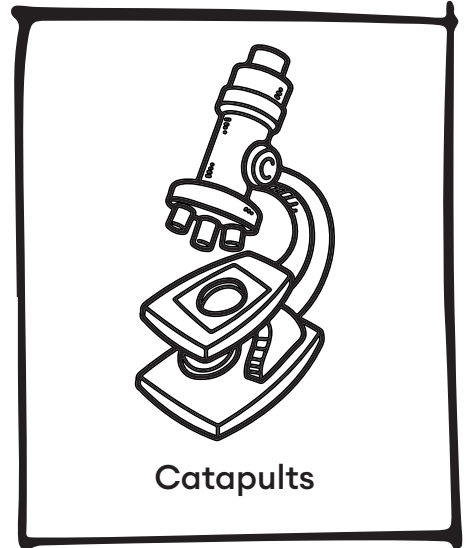
UKRI is made up of seven research councils - including AHRC - plus innovate UK and Research England, representing a collaborative, multidisciplinary network that is dedicated to funding R&D.

Across the last decade, AHRC has developed a legacy of community and partnership research through the design, delivery and evaluation of a series of evolutionary calls:



2. AHRC R&D Infrastructure

Under current AHRC guidance there are limitations on who can take part in funded research. These limitations may prohibit the development of diverse innovation ecosystems, characterised by a lack of acknowledgement of the value brought to research by communities and non-academic partners.



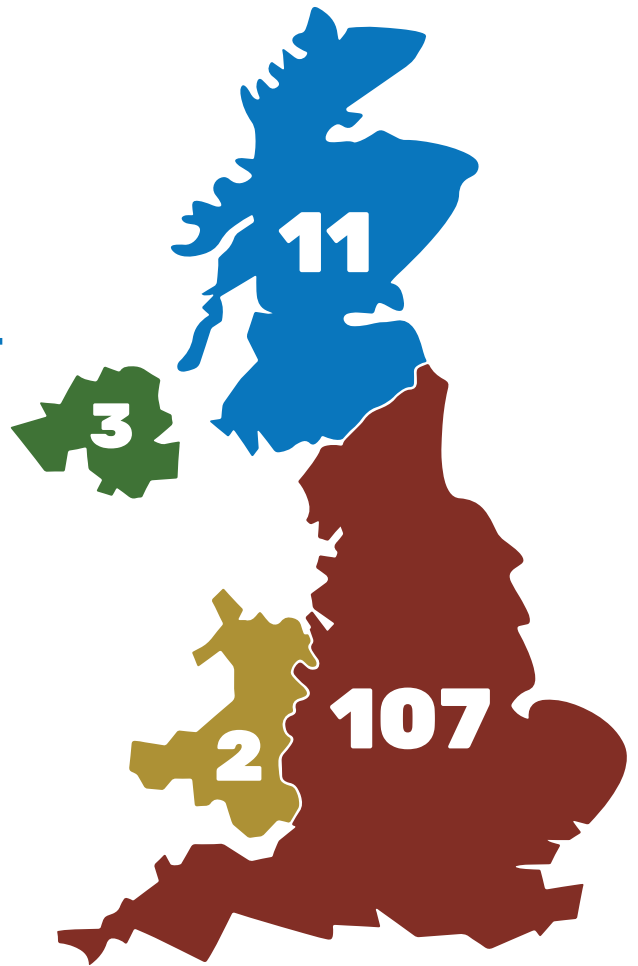
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Eligible Non-HEI Organisations By Nation

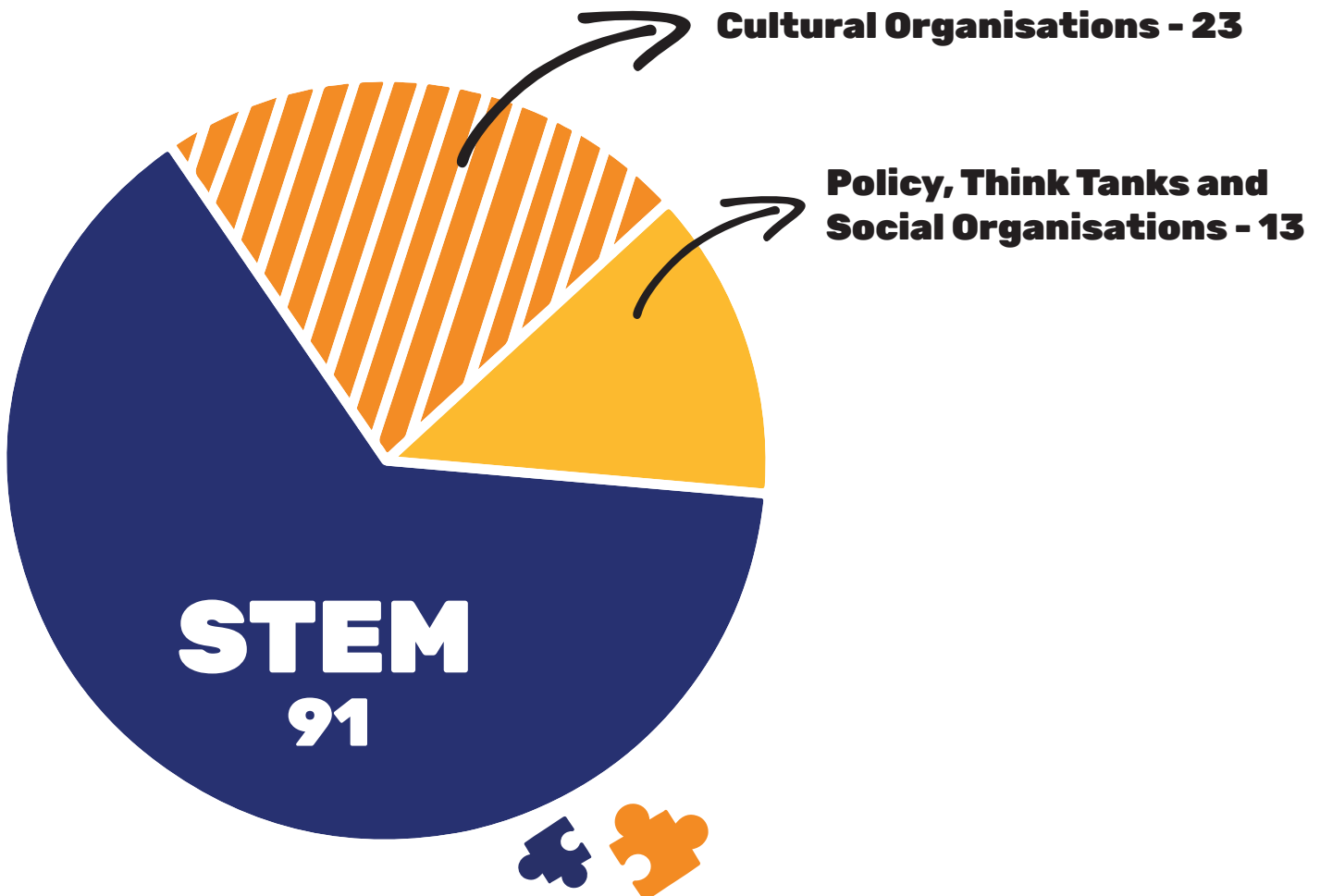
Eligibility for UKRI and research council funding for individuals or organisations outside of HEIs is determined by a formal assessment of organisational capacity.

A current list of non-academic research organisations eligible to make funding bids to AHRC is available on the UKRI website.¹²

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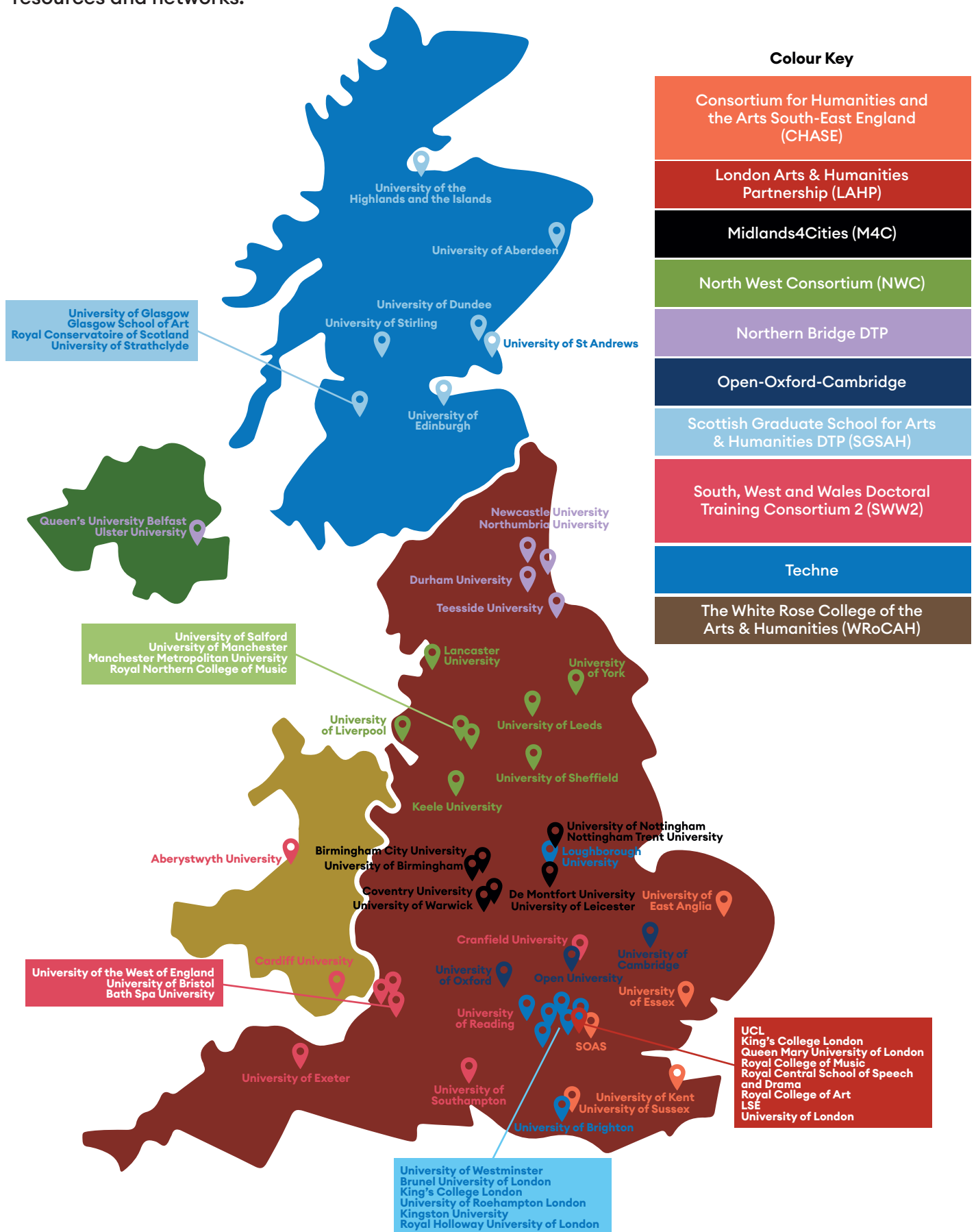


Eligible Non-HEI Organisations By Sector



AHRC Doctoral Training Partnerships

AHRC Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTP) are based in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences [departments across the UK](#). There are currently 10 DTPs, each made up of a network of collaborating universities. DTPs are an important part of the research ecosystem, training researchers, connecting them with non-academic research [partner organisations](#), and opening access to resources and networks.



IAAs

Impact acceleration accounts (IAAs) are funding allocations for research organisations to respond to impact opportunities in creative ways. In 2022 AHRC awarded £450k each to 31 HEIs and 1 IRO across the UK. The IAA model prioritises partnership working and co-creation and aims to engage new stakeholders in R&D. By increasing involvement and movement within the research ecosystem and expanding expertise, IAAs move power away from the central funder to unlock knowledge creation and innovation and move towards a more sustainable and resilient model of R&D.



3. Creative Communities R&D Audit

Research Methods

The research combined a mixed methodology process that began with a broad base of cross-sector listening and stakeholder engagement to inform a deep dive review of a new dataset comprising over 769 projects relating to Creative Communities R&D awarded by AHRC from 2012-2022 including:

Situation Analysis:

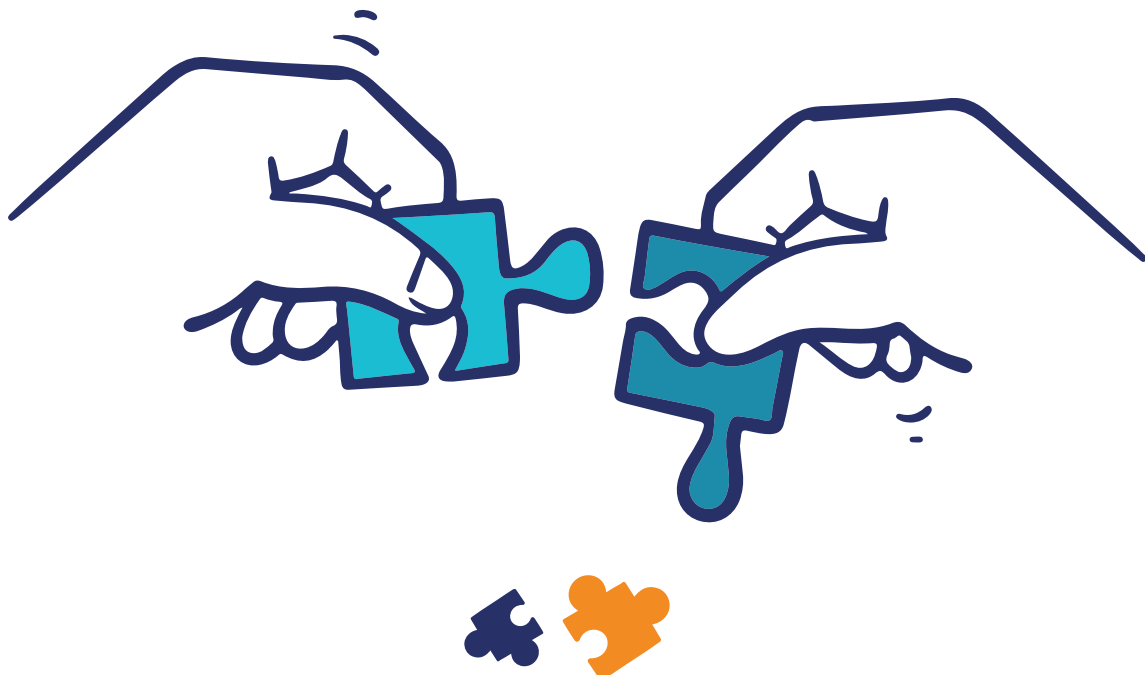
a review of literature and reports informed understanding of the evolution of Creative Communities across sectors and the devolved nations and regions, identifying best practice as well as challenges and barriers to R&D partnership working. This was combined with a systematic review of AHRC-funded programmes involving ‘community’, ‘partners’ and ‘co-creation’ from 2012-22 as well as live funded awards running 2022-26. This new data set was subject to quantitative analysis by nation and sector.

Mapping:

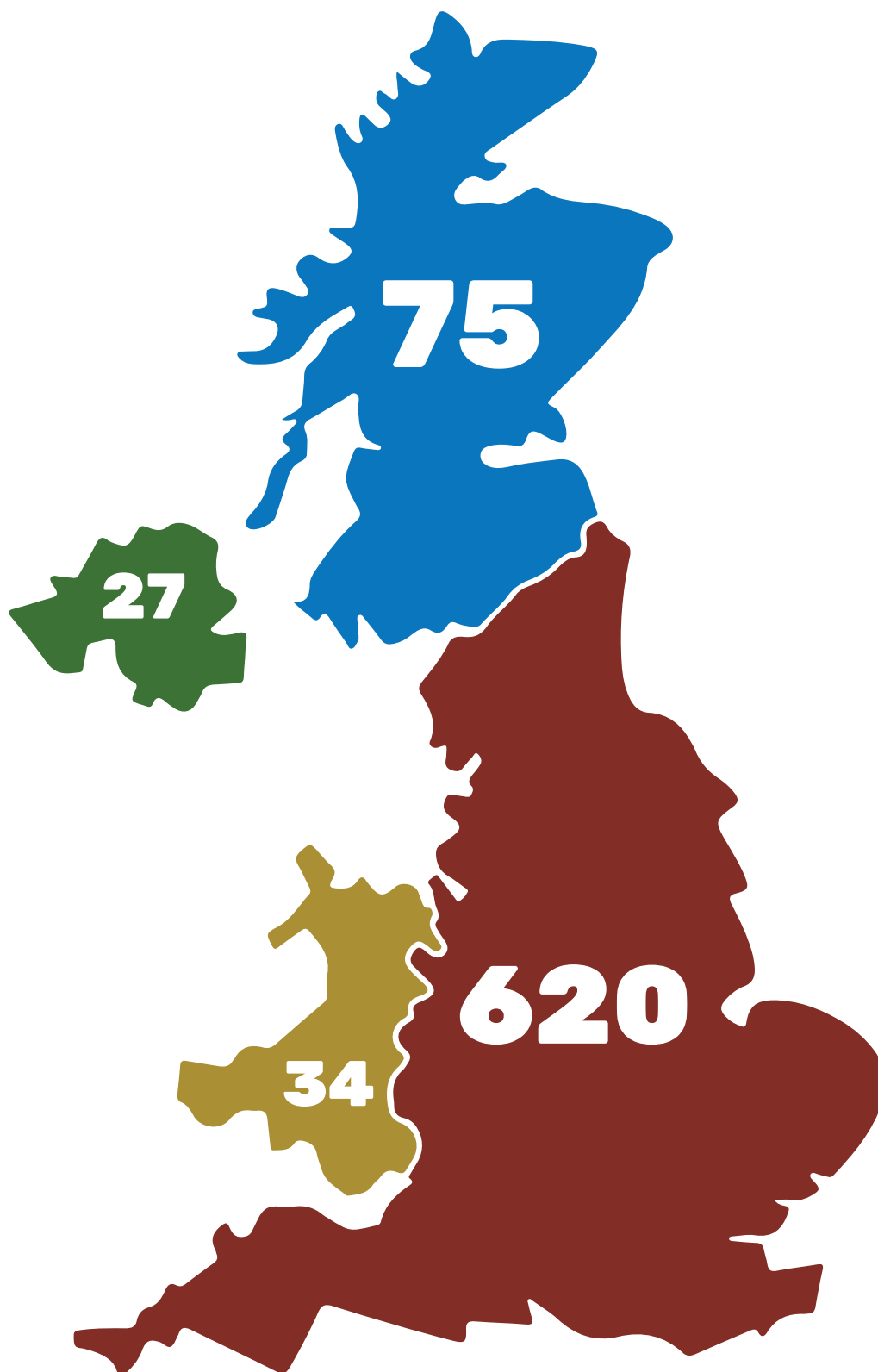
the dataset was mapped for the first time to generate a picture of where Creative Community R&D has been previously funded by AHRC, and where live projects are in progress. Qualitative analysis of project proposals offered insight into what works, challenge areas, and opportunities for scale up or growth, as well as future needs. From the total sift, 16 best practice case studies were selected that demonstrate interventions in key programme thematics: skills, wellbeing, environment and civic identity.

Deep Hanging Out:

is a recognised form of participatory observation where the researcher is embedded in a group for an extended period,¹³ enabling them to build relationships and engage in meaningful social listening in a specific place.¹⁴ The programme team engaged in cross nation and cross-sector listening with leaders in cross-sector Creative Communities, totalling 264 people over a nine month period.



AHRC Awards for Creative Communities Projects 2012-2022

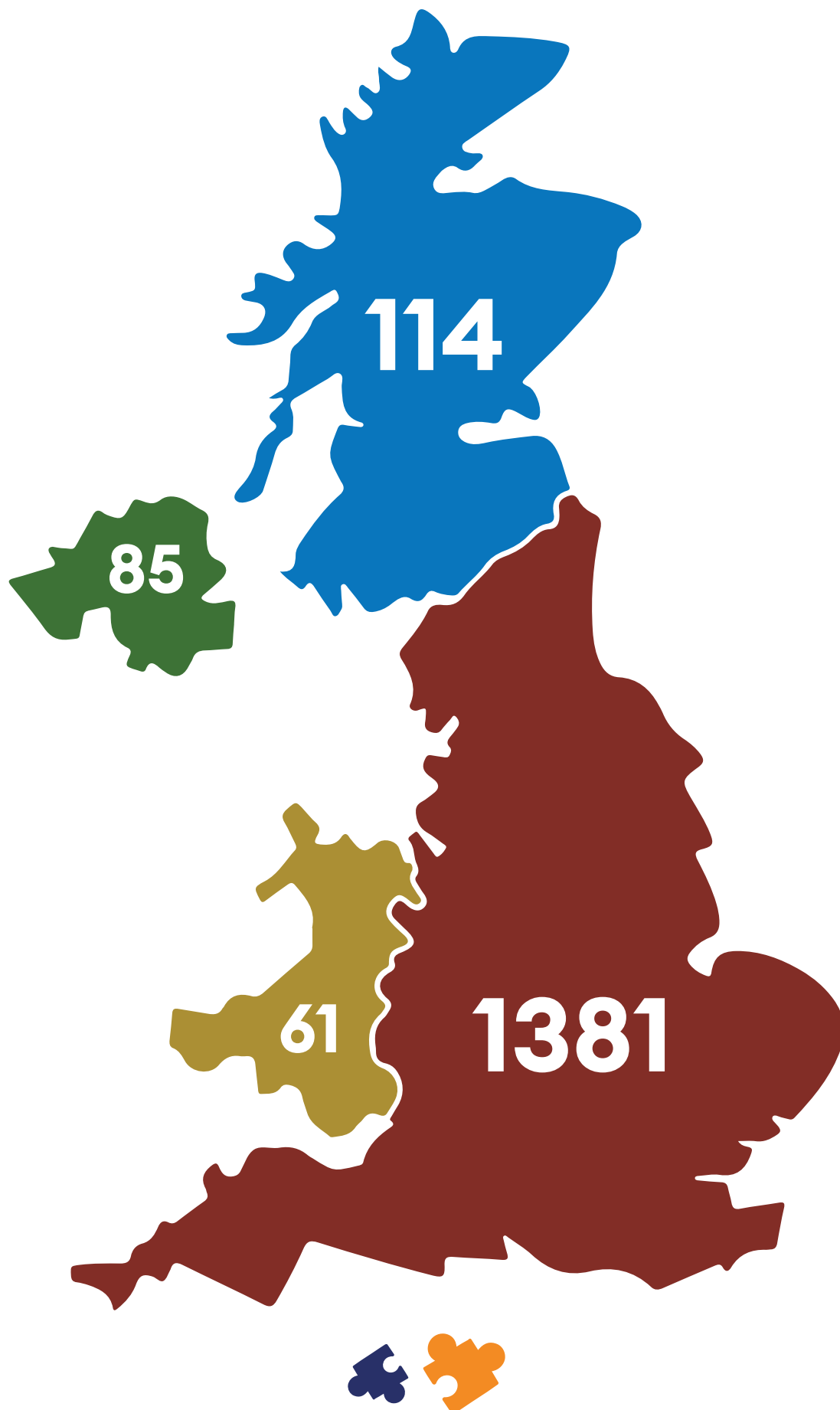


AHRC Funding Calls 2012-22

Calls producing the highest Creative Communities responses



Non-HEI Partners Engaged in AHRC Creative Communities R&D 2012-22



AHRC Creative Communities Partners 2012-22: Sectoral Spread

Partner Organisation Sectoral Spread		
Charities, NGOs, Not for Profits, CICs and Third Sector Organisations	290	17.7%
Galleries, Theatres, Museums, Dance, Music, Historic Sites & Heritage Organisations	269	16.4%
Libraries, Archives, Historic Societies, Non-HE Research & Institutes	216	13.2%
Businesses, Corporate Organisations & Catapults	202	12.3%
Community Groups, Festivals, Religious Organisations and Churches	193	11.8%
Arts Groups, Developments & Collectives	105	6.4%
Media, IT, TV, Digital and Sporting Organisations	99	6.0%
Government Organisations (Local, Combined Authority, Regional, National & Other)	98	6.0%
Primary, Secondary and Further Education Providers	61	3.7%
Health and Wellbeing Organisations, including the NHS	51	3.1%
Environmental, Energy, Water and Housing Organisations	41	2.5%
Think Tanks, Policy Organisations & Advocacy Groups	15	0.9%
Total Unique Partner Organisations	1640	



Top 20 AHRC Creative Communities Project Partners 2012-22

Partner Organisation	No. appearances
National Trust	24
BBC	21
British Council	17
British Film Institute (BFI)	13
National Museum Wales	12
Historic England	11
Imperial War Museum	11
Arts Council England	10
Bristol City Council	9
British Library	9
British Museum	9
Leeds City Council	9
Science Museum Group	9
Tate	9
V&A	9
National Library of Scotland	8
National Museums Scotland	8
Nottingham City Council	8
Welsh Government	8
Historic Environment Scotland	7



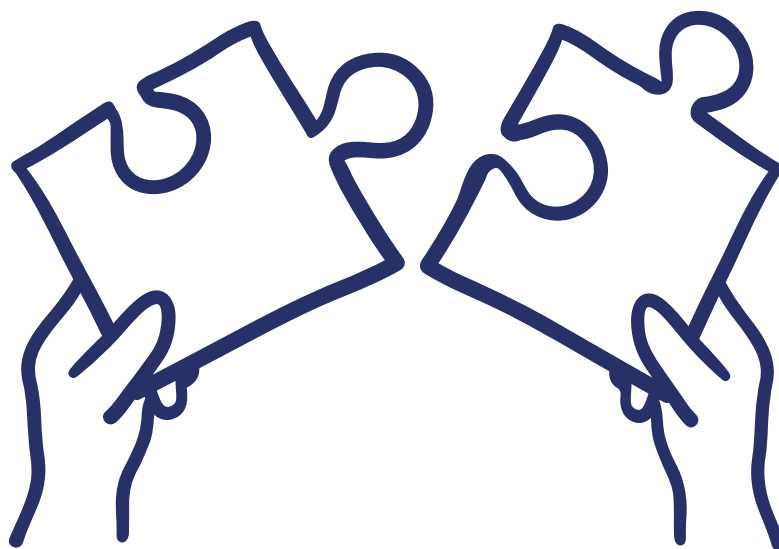
Top 4 AHRC Creative Communities Project Partners 2012-22 By Nation

Partner Organisations - England	No. appearances
National Trust	24
BBC	21
British Council	17
British Film Institute (BFI)	13

Partner Organisations - Northern Ireland	No. appearances
National Museums Northern Ireland	6
Belfast City Council	4
Government of Northern Ireland	3
Linen Hall Library	3

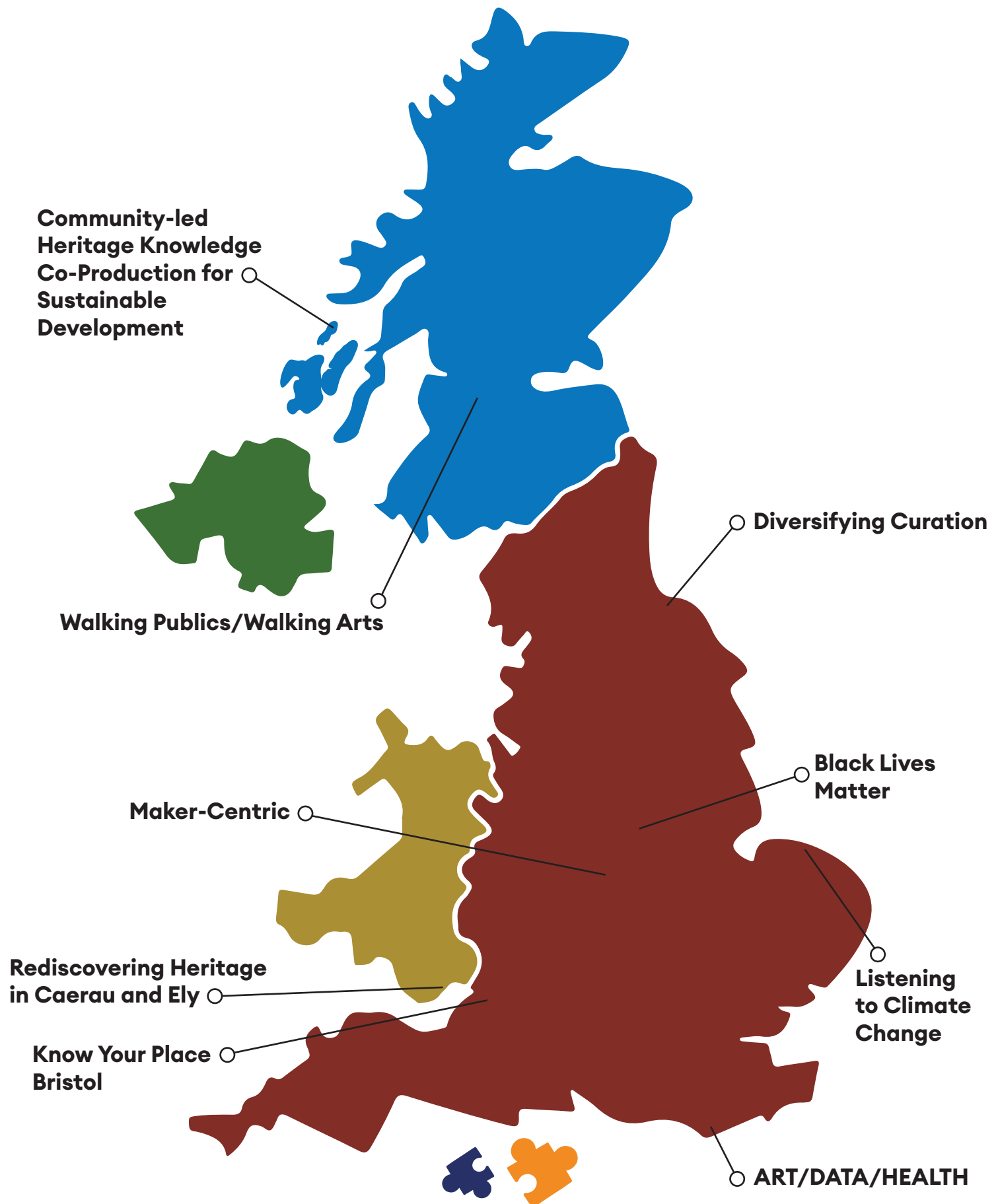
Partner Organisations - Scotland	No. appearances
National Library of Scotland	8
National Museums Scotland	8
Historic Environment Scotland	7
Creative Scotland/Glasgow Life	3

Partner Organisations - Wales	No. appearances
National Museums Wales	12
Welsh Government	8
Action in Caeru and Ely	6
Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust	6

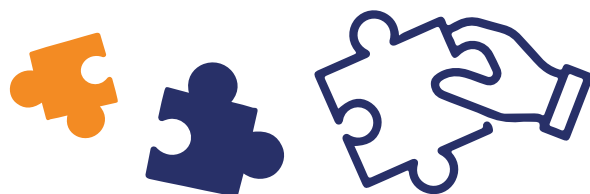


AHRC Creative Communities

Case Studies 2012-22



Education and Skills



Diversifying Curation

Award: AHRC Infrastructure CapCo Award £729,958 (2022)

Location: Middlesbrough

Partners: Teesside University, MIMA: Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Adobe, Middlesbrough Council, National Trust, ACE, Henry Moore Foundation

Centred around the transformation of under-utilised spaces in MIMA into a state-of-the-art conservation suite and collections room, the award accelerated research ambitions and public engagement by training communities in co-curation and research practices, developing new partnerships with cross-sector organisations and creating a new research centre for ceramics, including a digital component delivered with Adobe as part of their Creative Campus initiative. It also catalysed the development of a Higher Degree Apprenticeship in Curating (MA) delivered in partnership with national galleries and museums to diversify who curates UK collections through an applied learning programme that explores decolonisation, diversity, placemaking and sustainability in contemporary curatorial practices.

Community-led Heritage Knowledge Co-Production for Sustainable Development: Community Archaeology in Ulster and the Western Isles of Scotland

Award: Community Heritage Development Grant £18,990 (2011)

Location: Antrim, Mid Argyll, and Colonsay Island

Partners: University of Ulster, Queen's University of Belfast, Kilmartin House Trust, University of Glasgow, Historic Scotland, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Colonsay Heritage Trust, Kilchattan Primary School, Colonsay Bushmills Heritage Group, Ballintoy Community Group, Millstrand Integrated Primary School, Tavvallich Village Community Group, Tavvallich Primary School

Exploring the shared heritage of Ulster and the West of Scotland, this award developed a network of academics, community groups, and schools to co-produce knowledge on their historic connections. Driven by a desire to reaffirm the identity of Ulster as part of its recovery from the impact of the Troubles, the research engaged community groups and schools in Antrim, Mid Argyll, and the Island of Colonsay in archaeological investigations and interpretations. This included a series of researcher-community knowledge exchange events, as well as a co-curated exhibition that toured across the partner sites. A key aim of the project was to build capacity for community-led applications for future Heritage Lottery bids, as well as to develop a new learning facility for community-based teaching and interpretation.



Health and Wellbeing



ART/DATA/HEALTH: Data as creative material for health and wellbeing

Award: RCUK Innovation Fellowship £19,822 (2019)

Location: Brighton

Partners: University of Brighton, Brighton & Hove City Council, Brighton Digital Festival, RISE, Brighton Fringe Wellsbourne CIC, NHS Brighton and Hove CCG, Brighton Festival Fringe

Aimed at addressing digital and health literacy among the public, this research co-created and trialled new processes for artists, designers and creative industry practitioners to transform data into art, developing new participatory and data-driven approaches to health promotion within the care sector. By building links between the use of data, creativity, and storytelling, the collaboration explored creative representations and applications of information on public health and wellbeing, resulting in the co-commissioning of three new creative public works of art. A data skills toolkit was also co-developed, designed to empower community organisations to better understand and take control of their own data, and enabling the creative interrogation of health data within communities.

Walking Publics/Walking Arts: Walking, Wellbeing and Community During Covid-19

Award: Covid-19 Rapid Response £285,133 (2020)

Location: Glasgow

Partners: University of Glasgow, University of East London, University of Liverpool, Glasgow Life, Museum of London Archaeology, Paths for All, Living Streets, Ramblers Association

Critically engaging with the rise in walking and physical activity created by the pandemic lockdowns and allocated exercise time, this award brought together a variety of cross-sector partners to creatively support more people to engage in walking. The research mobilised – metaphorically and literally – active engagement with partners to generate debates about the closure of public spaces and to rethink processes of participation and inclusion in outdoor cultural sites, including how artists can co-design heritage sites and art trails with the public. Embedding co-creative approaches to promoting the benefits of walking for pandemic recovery, the collaboration enabled rapid knowledge exchange, co-creation of new knowledge and the building of new cultural outputs and understandings of best practice in creative walking through a Creative Walking Summit and Walking Toolkit that will help artists and communities co-create inclusive walking programmes in the future.



Environment



Listening to Climate Change: Experiments with Sonic Democracy

Award: AHRC Research Grants Open Call Award £498,533 (2016)

Location: Blakeney

Partners: Open University, University of Dundee, Norfolk Coast Partnership, National Trust, The Pilgrim Federation of Church of England Primary Schools, Blakeney Parish Council, St. Nicholas' Church, Cape Farewell, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Future Radio (Norwich), British Library

Using sound to address social and environmental changes in Blakeney and the North Norfolk coast, this research united human and non-human voices to capture a sonic history of the region. The resulting performances, sound installations, radio broadcasts, sonic exhibitions, interactive online sonic map, documentary, and e-books created a legacy for the area that is accessible for future generations. This work built on the British Library and the National Trust for Scotland's Sounds of Our Shores programme that co-created a map of the UK's favourite coastal sounds through crowdsourcing. The award demonstrated the potential for national initiatives to be adapted to hyperlocal contexts through the application of R&D, giving opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration with cross-sector partners and making use of local assets to deliver new cultural activity.

Rediscovering Heritage in Caerau and Ely: Increased cultural participation, community value, and life opportunities through the CAER Project

Award: Community Heritage Development Grant £19,934 (2011); Community Heritage Follow-up £25,209 (2012); Community Heritage Development Award £71,663 (2012)

Location: Cardiff

Partners: Cardiff University, Fitzalan High School, Gwent Glamorgan School, National Museum Wales, Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, 3G's Development Trust, Cardiff Story, Government of Wales, Andrew Faulker Associates Ltd, University of South Wales, Rhondda Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Action in Caerau and Ely, Gillards Associates Ltd, Glyn Derw High School, University of Lincoln, Cardiff Council, Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff West Community High School, Mary Immaculate High School, Unity, University of Brighton, Wales & West Housing Association, Brilliant Club, Time Team – Channel 4.

Working with over 4000 members of disadvantaged Cardiff communities who faced significant social and economic challenges, this research used co-production and excavation around Caerau Hillfort to engage local people and partners in co-creating new interpretations of the 6,000-year-old story of their community. Through four community-focused archaeological digs and co-researched heritage trails, the project examined how co-creation can transform community engagement with research, the formation of social networks and educational opportunities, as well as promoting pride in place. AHRC funding enabled the research to develop into an independent sustainable heritage centre and community hub funded through cross-sector partnerships. The project has gone on to win several accolades including the NCCPE's Engage Competition 2014 'Celebrating Public Engagement'.¹⁵



Civic Identities



Black Lives Matter: Usable Pasts and International Futures

Award: Research Networking Open Call £32,906 (2016)

Location: Nottingham

Partners: University of Nottingham, BLM Nottingham, Nottingham Black Archive, Nottingham Black History Society, International Slavery Museum

Creatively considering the role of Black Lives Matter (BLM) as a transatlantic movement, six networked projects were co-created in Nottingham to provide a model for future BLM activist-scholar partnerships. This included mapping antislavery murals and memorials; producing an oral history that narrates the work of Ukaidi, a Nottingham-based civil rights and black community organisation; delivering a free five-week community-based BLM course about coalition building and black leadership; developing a BLM roadshow of workshops and resources visiting six other UK cities and creating a digital map of UK organisations that are part of the Movement for Black Lives. This suite of collaborative engagement activities forged new partnerships between cross-sector partners and community organisations by reframing protest histories as a series of co-created interventions. The resulting resources and archives have established a living library of open access activism that can be built on by the community to inform civic identity and pride in place.

Maker-Centric: building place-based, co-making communities

Award: AHRC Connected Communities Highlight notice in Follow-on Funding Scheme £78,792 (2016)

Location: Wolverhampton

Partners: Wolverhampton University, Craftspace Birmingham, Legacy West Midlands, Creative Black Country, Soho House Museum, FabLab Sandwell College

Developed from a 2014 AHRC Connected Communities award, 'Co-Producing CARE: Community Learning Through Collaborative Making', this research took a material placed-based approach to engaging communities in speculative co-design. Through 'making-in-place', the research engaged with excluded groups to harness geographic assets to inform their reimagining of place, heritage, and identity. The collaboration expanded the network of partners engaged in R&D, enhanced cross-sector connections to the community and extended the impact and reach of the research through co-creation and upskilling. As an expression of the ethos of co-production, Wolverhampton University listed the Craftspace Director as Co-I. The project team embedded the research in communities via the creation of a long-term partnership that extended beyond the project term to establish trust and participation in a wider culture of co-creation.





Know Your Place Bristol (inc. Know Your Place, Know Your Bristol; Know Your Bristol Stories; Know Your Bristol on the Move; Mapping LGBT Histories with Outstories Bristol; Single Parent Action Network: A Participatory History)

(2011-18)

Location: Bristol

Awards: Community Heritage Development Grants £19,800 (2011); Community Heritage Follow-up Funding £43,444 (2012); Capital Funding Call: Digital Transformations in Community Research Co-Production £ 479,659 (2013); Follow-on Funding for Impact & Engagement Open Call £78,065 (2015); Research Grants Open Call £340,787 (2018)

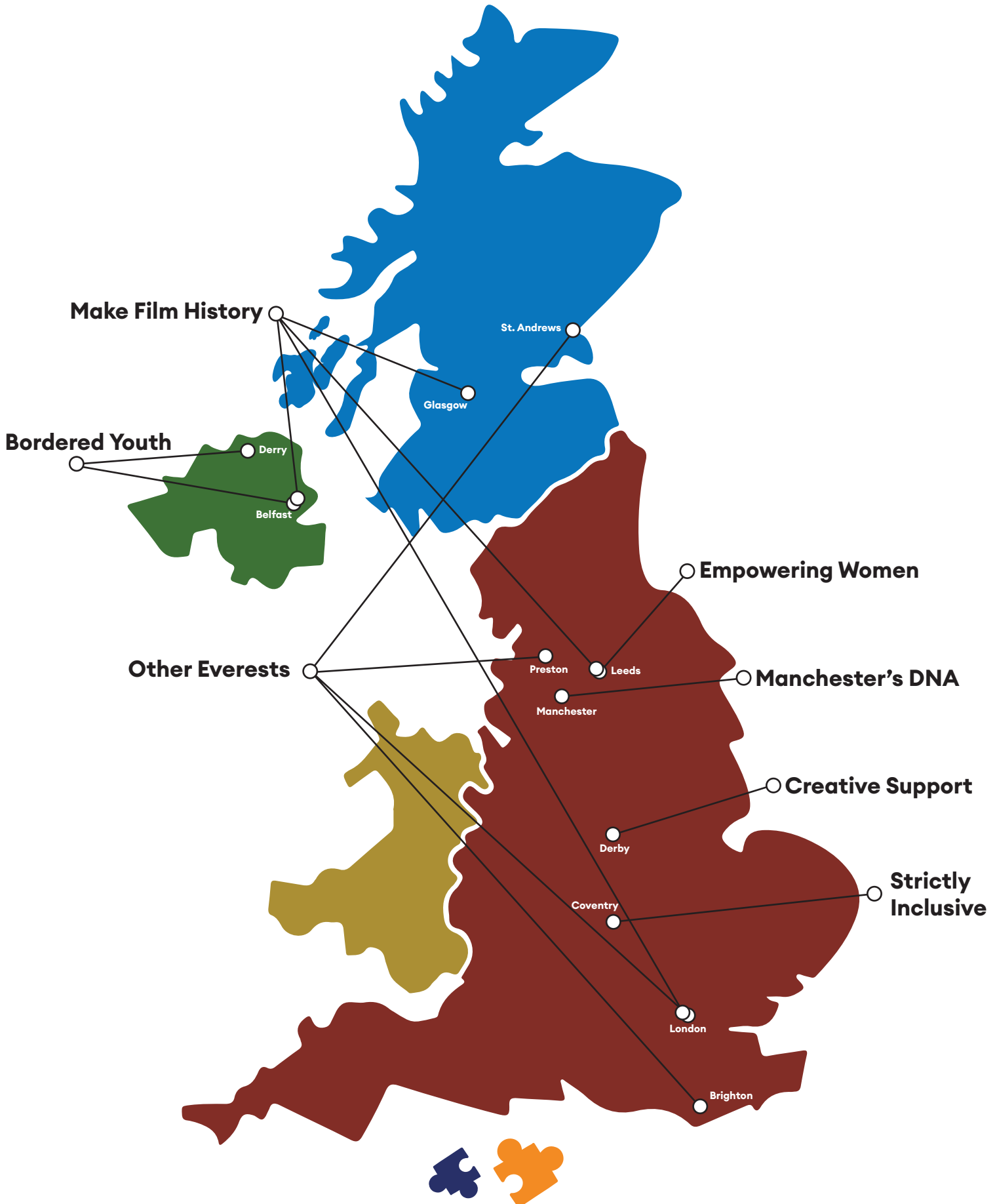
Partners: University of Bristol, Bristol City Council, Brislington Community Partnership, Great Bedminster Community Partnership, Knowle West Media Centre, Bristol Zoo Gardens, Brislington Community Archaeology Project, Reflex Camera Club, Outstories Bristol, Bristol Record Office, Barton Hill Settlement Community Resource Centre

Know Your Place Bristol was a crowdsourced research resource populated with images and stories submitted by citizens about their local history. The research developed from its initial 2011 AHRC Community Heritage Development Grant that established relationships between partners, to a number of AHRC follow-on awards that identified assets and addressed gaps in the historical narratives and skills needs around new media. Two funded projects developed from this work; Mapping LGBT Histories partnered researchers with a community support network to address LGBT inclusion in the Know Your Place mapping process; and the Single Parent Action Network dedicated resources to the participatory development of an archive of resources and activism for single parents in the mapping process. Collectively, these related research projects evidence how co-production processes can evolve if there is investment in the development of longer-term relationships between academics, local authorities, and communities to co-design and co-deliver platforms for engaging and representing marginalised experiences in the process of place-making.



AHRC Creative Communities

Case Studies 2022-25



AHRC Creative Communities Case Studies 2022-25



Education and Skills

Make Film History: Opening Up the BBC Archives to Young Filmmakers

Award: Research Network Grant £23,848 (2020); BBC Public Engagement Development Grant £29,572 (2022)

Location: Belfast, Glasgow, Leeds, and London

Partners: Kingston University, British Film Institute (BFI), British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Irish Film Institute (IFI), Northern Ireland Screen, London Community Video Archive, MFH Research Network (Docs Ireland Belfast; The Glasgow Youth Film Festival, Glasgow Film Theatre; Leeds Young Film, National Science and Media Museum (NSMM); Bertha DocHouse and the Birkbeck Institute of the Moving Image (BIMI) in London)

Awarded two rounds of AHRC funding, the second of these combining funding from the Irish Research Council, this work co-creates a sustainable model for the licensing and creative reuse of archive film in education. Drawing on partnerships to both host events and deliver training, researchers will engage student filmmakers with 200 BBC films to co-produce new narratives of social history. Unlocking the critical field of documentary filmmaking for a new generation and developing skills in editing, co-creation and creative representation, the research won the Excellence in Unlocking the Value and Potential of Archives Award at the FIAT/IFTA Archive Achievement Awards. The models developed by the research have gone on to become an international standard of best practice with global media organisations such as Screenocean and Reuters joining and licensing over one million of their films for similar creative reuse.

Strictly Inclusive: Co-creating the Past, Present and Future

Award: BBC Public Engagement Development Grant £19,820 (2022)

Location: Coventry

Partners: Coventry University, Deaf Cultural Centre, Varyah Ltd, Coventry Pride, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)

Creatively exploring the multiple impacts of Strictly Come Dancing on audiences, this collaborative research aims to measure changes to debates around inclusion and representation of gender, sexuality, and disability in televised dance and teach skills of digital engagement. Engaging dance enthusiasts from D/deaf and LGBTQIA+ communities in the Midlands through partnerships with Coventry Pride, the Deaf Cultural Centre and Deaf Explorer in Birmingham, participants will select examples of how dance has challenged ableist conventions and social norms through inclusive representations in films from BBC archives. Responding to the material, each community group will co-create stop-motion gifs, two 5-minute documentary films, and 1-2-minute interpretative dance films in collaboration with an artist that will be screened at the Deaf Cultural Centre, uploaded to YouTube, and exhibited at the Being Human Festival. The research facilitates speculative reflection on how marginal histories and digital skills might augment the future of communities and support the BBC in engaging wider audiences.

Wellbeing



Creative Support: Building Bonds Through Play for People with Early Onset Dementia and Their Caregivers

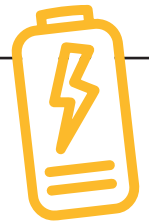
Award: Research Grants Open Call £112,236 (2022)

Location: Derby

Partners: University of Derby, University of Northampton, Dementia UK

Identifying a lack of community-based creative engagement for those with dementia who are under 65 years of age, the research aims to explore the potential for drama techniques such as role-play, storytelling, sound, art and music making, movement and rhythm in building bonds between participants. The workshops will be delivered with Dementia UK to strengthen communication, attachment, and relationships with the participants, as well as providing new knowledge on issues such as quality of life, and resilience. These workshops will enable the co-creation of a drama toolkit to be used at home by people with early onset dementia and their caregivers.

Environment



Empowering Women: Co-producing Histories of Women and Energy in the Home

Award: Research, Development and Engagement Fellowships (Open Call) £201,526 (2022)

Location: Leeds

Partners: University of Leeds, Leeds Museums & Galleries, Preservative Party

Working in partnership with heritage sites and volunteer groups led by young people to reveal the hidden history of women in the home during periods of energy crisis, this research develops co-production techniques for interpreting museum collections in a new context of climate crisis and net zero. The research applies an innovative model of co-production, whereby the young participants select domestic objects from the collections that are not traditionally represented in the histories of science and energy, and critically re-interpret these artefacts to forge new understandings of how energy transformations were historically led by women in the home. The collaboration of a new co-curated physical exhibition as well as digital resources, to be shared on MyLearning.org, tell new stories about the history of gender, the political role of domestic space and the energy future faced by the young people of Leeds today.

Other Everests: Commemoration, Memory and Meaning and the British Everest Expedition Centenaries, 2021-2024

Award: Research Networking Open Call £23,915 (2022)

Location: Preston/Brighton/London/St Andrews

Partners: University of Central Lancashire, University of Brighton, Worcester Polytechnic Institute Massachusetts, Royal Holloway University of London, University of Toronto Canada, University of St. Andrews, Royal Geographical Society, Institute of British Geographers, Kendal Mountain Festival

Set against the 2024 centenary, this co-created cross-sector research critically reappraises British Everest campaigns from 1921-1924. Decolonialising and reframing popular narratives in commemoration, collections, and mountaineering culture, it seeks to uncover the hidden histories of historic expeditions and give voice to the contributions made by indigenous expertise, as well as the considerable damage indigenous communities sustained as a result of mountaineering. Exploring the legacy of British imperialism and the environment as well as social impacts of contemporary adventure tourism, research partners will co-create new models of curatorial best practice with the Royal Geographical Society and the Institute of British Geographers, establishing new standards for the future interpretations of collections and understandings of sustainable tourism, including community-led research from India, Nepal, and Tibet.



Civic Identities

Manchester's DNA: History, Place, Identity

Award: Follow-on Funding for Impact & Engagement (Open Call) £77498 (2023)

Location: Manchester

Partners: University of Manchester, Manchester City Council, Manchester UNESCO City of Literature, Manchester Royal Infirmary NHS Library, Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Race Centre, Science + Industry Museum, Manchester Museum, Manchester and Lancashire Family History Society, George House Trust, Manchester City Libraries, Oxford Road Corridor Partnership, Manchester Histories, Manchester Muslim Writers, Roma Voices Manchester, Womanchester group, Pankhurst Trust, Bright Club Manchester, Olympias Music Foundation, Tameside Local Studies centre

Developed from the AHRC-funded Leadership Fellowship 'Double Helix History', this cross-sector research consortia uses DNA as a metaphor to co-produce new creative perspectives on community, migration, place, and identity. Through a co-created festival of 80 themed events, including exhibitions, school workshops and place-based performances, collaborators and participants will consider the genetic 'building blocks' that created contemporary Manchester. Through its cross-sector approach to partnership working the research will deliver long-term tool kits and establish networks designed to upskill partners in co-production, knowledge exchange, and build out capacity to deliver cultural programming across the city council.

Bordered Youth: Analysing Citizenship and Identities in Post-Brexit Northern Ireland

Award: Research Grants Open Call £301,458 (2022)

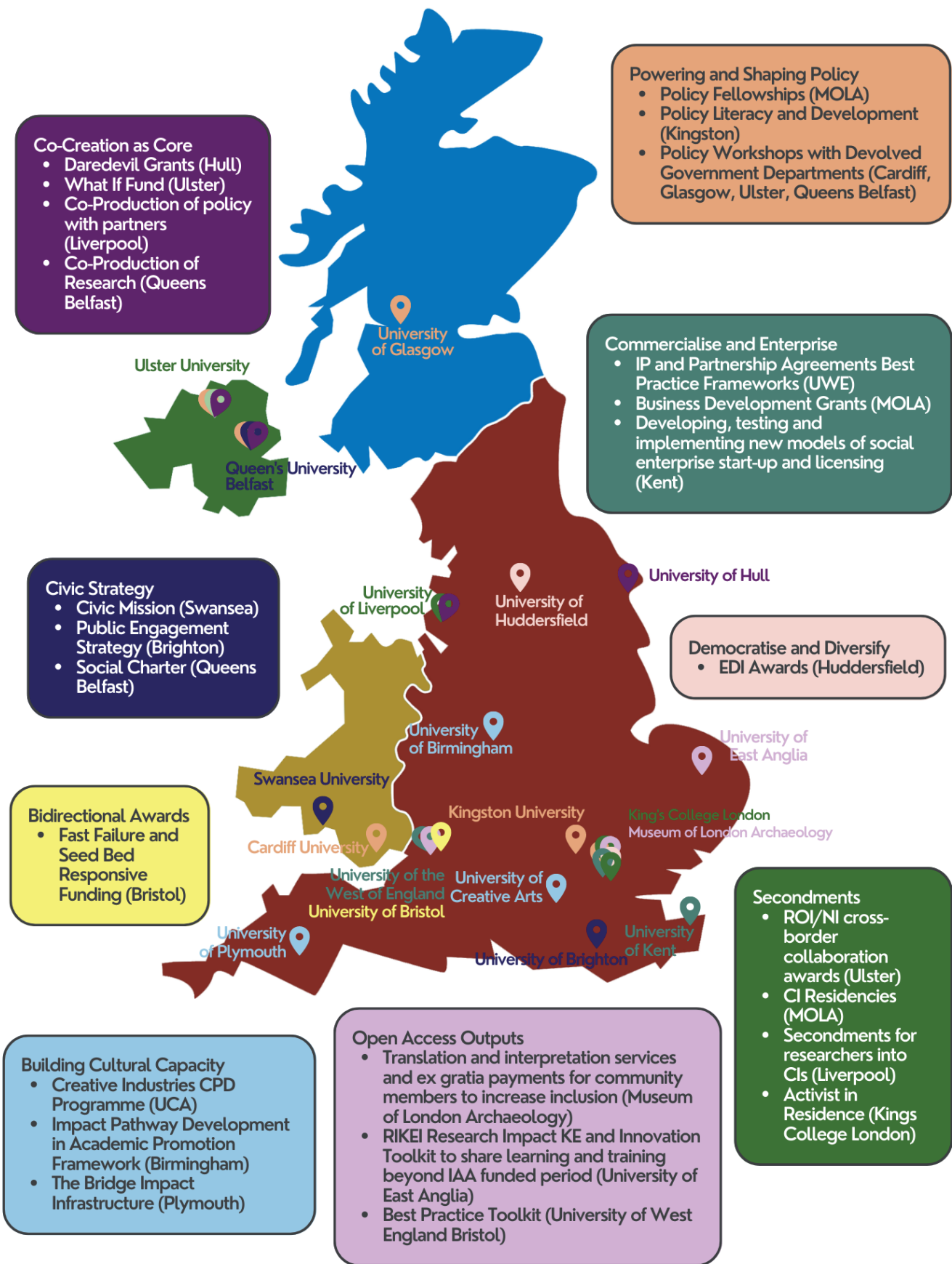
Location: Belfast/Derry

Partners: University of Ulster, University of Plymouth, Northern Ireland Youth Forum, Department of Education Northern Ireland, YMCA Ireland, Nerve Centre Derry

Addressing the complex issues of citizenship and identity in the Irish Borders, this research adopts cross-nation partnership working to connect young people in Northern Ireland with knowledge across the UK. Recognising that in a post-Brexit landscape, the values, beliefs, and relationships of young people living along the Border may have changed significantly from the generations that have gone before them, this research encourages young people to explore and express these ideas through co-creative participatory methods, including training in digital ethnography, filmmaking, and the co-curation of exhibitions and showcases. Representing the perspectives and upskilling members of the next generation of NI, the research co-creates vital new connections between young people and policy makers and will generate new policy recommendations that will inform the future direction of the nation.



AHRC IAA Case Studies 2022



4. What Works

Successful AHRC funded Creative Communities collaborations are:	Partners who engage in AHRC Creative Communities co-creation R&D working have:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Smart● Specialised● Strategic● Sustained	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Curiosity● Confidence● Capacity● Clarity● Co-agency

Benefits generated by working in cross-sector collaboration in AHRC Creative Communities R&D include:

New ways of working
Add value Resilience Awareness
Data gathering Interdisciplinary exchange
Mutual learning Analysis Sharing Risk
Mentoring Networking Pooling of resources
Local and global connection
Knowledge exchange Building resilience
Linking education and industry talent pipeline
Live learning opportunities
Skilling workforce of futures
Competitive advantage
Role modelling Talent Development
Innovation



Effective Creative Communities:

Create Prosperity Partnerships offering social, economic and cultural value for partners and place, sharing information, and give communities a voice on local decision making.

Create Centripetalising Collaborations through attracting partners and developing diverse, cross cluster collaborations to tackle shared challenges, making research something done by anyone, happening everywhere.

Enable Institutional Thickening by co-creating and cross fertilising innovation through cross-sector engagement, offering effective models for networking, knowledge development and investment.

Rally Resource by building relationships to pool resources and networks. In return, Creative Communities advocate for their partners, through fair pay, access, and inclusivity.

Link Leaders by sparking diverse and unexpected networks and connections that create value, embedding co-creation from inception as an opportunity for mutual learning and leadership throughout.

Focus on Process as much as product, using co-creation to deliver new knowledge on ways of working together.

Seed Sustainable Solutions by opening up R&D and communities to opportunities and knowledges in new sectors, enabling mutual understanding leading to more effective delivery.

Pollinate Policy by engaging diverse partners and harnessing local cultures, bringing awareness that improves understanding of policy within a region, and contributes to national policymaking and objectives.

Produce Open Access Resources that help create change and can sustain beyond the lifecycle of the funded research.

Accelerate Impact by building on existing knowledge to extend engagement, add value, and develop opportunities arising from research.



5. Challenges and Barriers

Barriers to engagement:

Distrust of partnerships
Low confidence **Poor accessibility**
Lack of clarity on benefit **Lack of continuity in funding**
Hard to capture value of contribution
Short term funding solutions
Lack of cross-sector government working
Power imbalance

Limitations for AHRC Creative Communities projects include:

Bidding Inequity for funding, creating a structural, cultural, and social barrier that excludes some from R&D opportunity. This limits our understanding of who does research, who leads bids, and how communities engage in R&D.

Connecting Communities that share a vision or interest, making it difficult to bring together cross-sector creative communities.

Disempowering Dynamics that create a power imbalance and a lack of agency for communities. This inequality obstructs the needs and priorities of communities, and the R&D can become extractive.

The Price of Participation is key for many projects that use community volunteers as a source of labour. More consideration is needed so that publicly funded R&D does not risk exploiting partnerships, and values and rewards the contribution of all partners appropriately.

Fit for Purpose Funding is hard to access, as it must be flexible enough to foster partnerships and R&D with communities.

'Hit and Run' short-term funding models within UKRI, arts councils and third sector organisations and the premature 'sun setting' of successful schemes ultimately limits the development of sustainable relationships, community trust, and long-term project legacies.

Lost in Translation, as differences in terminology and practices means the work of Creative Communities can be misunderstood. This demands they create new ways of overcoming the challenge of language and knowledge gaps in partnership working.

Unlocking Innovation for and with communities is rarely prioritised, with Innovation and R&D more common in funding bids from industry than with communities and culture.

Capturing the Value of Creative Communities is not always quick, direct, or easy to measure.

Data Deficits create a lack of evidence to demonstrate the multiplicity of intersectional benefits generated by Creative Communities.



6. Recommendations

Research and innovation are vital in addressing contemporary contexts, challenges and opportunities facing the UK today. The UK R&D system has remarkable strengths, but too many places are not yet fulfilling their potential to create and innovate. While culture is key to the success of communities, communities are also integral to the sustainability and growth of creative industries. There is a need to facilitate closer working between the creative industries and communities, as well as with third and private sector partners and to engage all these actors in R&D.

The contemporary challenges facing the UK today can only be addressed through a collaborative cross-sector culture of innovation. By bringing partners together, we can facilitate closer working and make visible the value of culture and R&D to central and devolved governments, local and combined authorities, the third and private sector, as well as strengthen the capacity of AHRC research to inform others in the ecosystem.

The Creative Communities model creates an agile, resilient and sustainable ecosystem of R&D among all actors through creative cooperation in pursuit of a shared goal or challenge.

Our recommendations focus on:

- Increasing skills, resources, and opportunities
- Enhancing data and evaluation
- Creating sustainable and resilient cross-sector networks
- Providing flexible funding processes
- Supporting, profiling, and rewarding private investment
- Joining up investment opportunities at regional and national level
- Supporting and developing leadership capacity



Short Term Recommendations		
Strategic Area	Targeted Intervention	Who
Devolved Dynamics	AHRC Devolution Engagement Leads x 4	AHRC and UKRI
	Template Partnership MoUs and AHRC Partners Forum	AHRC and UKRI
Invest in Co-Creation	Commission Community Innovation Practitioners	AHRC
Partners Perspectives	Creative Communities Survey	AHRC
Lost in Translation	Review of terminology in calls and communications by the funder	AHRC
Policy Poverty	UK Creative Communities Policy Lab Network	AHRC
	STEAM Policy Lead in POST	AHRC and UKRI
Unlikely Allies Innovation	AHRC Assemble Funding Programme	AHRC
Place Based Funding	Cultures of Place Pilot	AHRC and UKRI
Collaborative Ideation	AHRC Community College of Experts	AHRC

Devolved Dynamics: no one knows regional strengths or nations needs better than local communities and organisations. Funded projects, boards, and award panels often fail to achieve full representation from across the four nations, leaving researchers and partners in the devolved nations outside of funding activities, decision making, and communications. To build better connections, AHRC could develop new memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with partners across the devolved nations and regions. Investment in Engagement Leads in Scotland, Wales, NI and the M10 Mayoral Group in England would better connect central government decision making to devolved contexts.

Invest in Co-Creation: collaboration is a powerful tool for overcoming inequity and creating links. By focussing on what can be learned about the process of co-creation, not just its outputs, R&D can test new ideas and approaches to creating, sharing, and using knowledge to tackle shared challenges. Investment is required to pilot innovation practitioners in place-based R&D to learn more about co-creation.

Partners Perspectives: there is a gap in knowledge around partner experiences in collaborative R&D. This knowledge is needed to strengthen understanding, capture what has been invested, what has been produced, what each partnership leverages, what works and what barriers are preventing growth and success. A survey of past and present AHRC research partners could usefully capture this learning and map engagement needs and opportunities.

Lost in Translation: the language of R&D funding calls can act as a barrier to application, participation, and evaluation of research. Clearer framing of funding calls is required to ensure that opportunities to engage with R&D are widely shared and understood.



Policy Poverty: AHRC R&D is under-represented in policy infrastructure in UK government, limiting the opportunity to amplify and transfer the policy implications of Arts & Humanities research. Funding a STEAM Policy Lead in POST and a Creative Communities Policy Lab Network could ensure greater advocacy for and communication of AHRC R&D to diverse stakeholders and better connect outcomes with policy makers.

Unlikely Allies Innovation Call: testing and trying out is how most innovation happens, but there is currently very little scope in AHRC calls to push boundaries. An Assemble Funding Programme – a responsive mode of funding that allows new research partners to work together for the first time - would bring about innovative partnership, enabling partners to scope, develop, prototype and/or pilot ideas that would not otherwise be funded as established research projects.

Place-Based Funding: functional geography is a popular method of allocating funding from central government to grow location specific strengths and needs in R&D. Piloting new Cultures of Place place-based funding opportunities could strategically respond to areas of identified need or opportunity by devolving resource to a region to deliver bespoke cross-council interventions. This would facilitate greater connectivity and capacity across sectors and generate longer-term structural change and engagement to create greater collaboration in towns and cities across the UK.

Collaborative Ideation: cultivating new cross-sector partnerships can inform the design and delivery of funding calls, providing an opportunity for communities and diverse new third and private sector partners to bring their spaces and skills to the innovation ecosystem. Developing a new AHRC Community College of Experts - a new community peer review college – would better connect the funder back to communities and partners and keep R&D close to events on the ground.



Medium Term Recommendations		
Strategic Area	Targeted Intervention	Who
Address Skills Gaps	Cultural Economy and Cultural Policy Skills Gap Strategy	AHRC; DCMS
Collaborative Literacy	Creative Communities Toolkit	AHRC; DCMS
	Creative Communities Digital Hub and Interactive Mapping	AHRC
Incentivise Impact	Annual 'Creative Community' Community Research Awards (CCCRAs)	AHRC
Economic Framework	Creative Communities Evaluation Model	AHRC
Dashboard Delivery	CCO: Creative Communities Observatory	AHRC; DCMS
Investment Plus	Business-Activation Review	AHRC and Innovate UK; Create UK and CIC; DCMS
	Investment Plus Review of the relationships that exist between the commercial creative economy and the subsidised cultural sector	AHRC and UKRI; DCMS and HM Treasury
Incentivise Private Sector Engagement	Review of tax-based supply side incentives for private sector R&D participation in cultural and creative industries	DCMS; Scottish Government, Welsh Government, NI Government and HM Treasury
Lost in Translation	Development of a traffic light system for 'at a glance' graphics	AHRC
Cross Union Creative Communities	Creative Communities Cross-Union Call and/or ring-fenced Union Calls	AHRC and UKRI; DCMS
Flexible Funding	Review long-term funding allocations	AHRC and UKRI
Flexible Funding	Review REF	AHRC and UKRI
Embed Impact, Don't Follow It On	Review and reframe AHRC follow-on opportunities	AHRC
Next Generation Research Partners	Routes Into Research recruitment drive	AHRC and UKRI; Arts Council England, Arts Council of Wales, Creative Scotland and Arts Council for NI; Scottish Government, Welsh Government and NI Government
Collaborative Governance	'Get on Board' Recruitment Programme	AHRC; DCMS
Collaborative Innovation Training	Co-creation skills scaffold for researchers and update the current researcher development concordat	AHRC and UKRI; NCCPE



Address Skill Gaps: there is a deficit of cultural policy makers and cultural economist in the UK labour market and this is limiting potential to capture, articulate and amplify the value of AHRC research. A strategic commitment to train more economists in culture and more cultural and creative industries leaders in economics is needed so sectors can share a common language in talking about and capturing the values generated from creative communities.

Collaborative Literacy: collaborative partners need help to navigate co-working, find each other, form new relationships, and find ways to come together to tackle shared challenges through creative interventions. Developing a Creative Community digital hub and toolkit – open access resources for collaborative partners with diverse users’ needs in mind - would address the gap that currently exists in providing best practice and empower communities.

Incentivise Impact: the impact and value of partnership working within AHRC R&D is invisible and rarely profiled. Developing an annual award ceremony - ‘Creative Community’ Community Research Awards (CCCRAs) - as a point of reflection and celebration would identify and recognise the people, partnerships, and initiatives that underpin research excellence in engaging new audiences and partners.

Economic Framework: the qualitative benefits of collaborative R&D - community cohesion, identity, skills, education, criminal justice, or health – struggle to be evaluated, while economic benefits often take priority. Developing a Creative Communities Evaluation Model - an end-to-end evaluation model to capture the activities, benefits and connections that catalyse Creative Community R&D - would aid understanding of their outputs, values, and spill over effects and make clear the case for policy and growth.

Dashboard Delivery: there is a need to shout louder about the brilliant work that is happening as a result of AHRC R&D. An open access tool could help promote the value, impact and contribution of collaborative R&D. Creating an Interactive Creative Communities Observatory - a searchable dashboard that offers a snapshot of funding, activities, and upcoming events - would enhance communication and public engagement with research by the public and potential partners.

Investment Plus: by helping the private sector get more from giving we can build new opportunities for philanthrocapitalism in the R&D system, pivot philanthropy towards community strengthening, and unlock a new generation of socially conscious, younger donors who want to participate not just donate. An Investment Plus Review of the relationships that exist between the commercial creative economy and the subsidised cultural sector would further understanding of how these can be adapted to grow R&D.

The timing of this is vital. Against a backdrop of financial uncertainty, and an energy and cost of living crisis that is impacting on all actors in the Creative Community model, new formulas of philanthropic funding are needed now more than ever to sustain this work into the future.

Lost in Translation: extending past the short-term recommendation to simplify language and review the terminology used in funding calls, consider the development of an ‘at a glance’ traffic light system for opportunities that would streamline queries around eligibility.



Cross-Union Creative Communities: the devolved nations are not generating as many bids or receiving as much funding as might be expected, yet are renowned for their strong civic pride, identity and creative communities. Developing a Creative Communities cross-union networking call and/or ring-fenced Union Call, facilitating closer working with key partners within each nation and beyond across the UK, would help strengthen the number and relative strength of proposals submitted to AHRC and the kind of R&D possible through co-creation.

Flexible Funding: financial support structures must consider the differential needs of research partners. While there is no one-size fits all model of research, the linear and competitive format of most output-orientated funding schemes limits potential for innovative interventions with creative communities. New models of delivery, including co-designed calls with communities, third and private sector partners, would reorientate power dynamics in bidding.

Embed Impact, Don't Follow It On: AHRC 'follow-on-funding' model frames impact as something that happens after research, plus timeframes struggle to generate or capture longer-term impacts and are often lost or under-valued post activity. Reviewing and reframing follow-on opportunities as sustained public engagement calls would encourage impact to be co-created and delivered with partners.

Next Generation Research Partners: engaging new partners in R&D remains a challenge. A cross-council review and mapping of Creative Communities could bring collaborations closer together and recruit new partners. Co-creating a new strategic recruitment campaign could open up the opportunity of engaging in R&D with AHRC to more organisations, bodies and individuals.

Collaborative Governance: current governance models create barriers to AHRC activities and knowledge, disempowering communities and partners and limiting their participation in strategic decision making. New models of cross-sector collaborative governance should be adopted as best practice to attract new faces into governance – including a 'Get on Board' Recruitment Programme - representing communities at board level and on award panels to encourage under-served communities to help shape and drive decision making.

Collaborative Innovation Training: partnership working in research requires a different model of research skill and leadership to develop collaborative R&D. A co-creation skills scaffold that significantly updates the current researcher development concordat would help researchers develop core skills, exchange good practice, and learn from current work.



Long Term Recommendations		
Strategic Area	Targeted Intervention	Who
Lost in Translation	Levelling Up Language and Metrics Alignment	AHRC and UKRI; UK Government
Community Research Organisations	CRO Framework	AHRC
Devolved Dynamics	UK Creative Communities Commissioner	DCMS and DLUHC
Incentivise Private Sector Engagement	Signature Partner Pre-Engagement Call AHRC x Innovate UK	AHRC and Innovate UK; DCMS
AHRC Data Observatory	AHRC x ESRC x PEC Digital Footprints Digital Twin Creative Community Pilot	AHRC, ESRC and PEC
Evaluation	Embed the evaluation of funded research on GTR	UKRI

Lost in Translation: Aligning the language of ‘levelling up’ missions and related metrics with UKRI would further facilitate impact of funding calls and clarify questions of eligibility.

Community Research Organisations: creating targeted opportunities to rebalance the number of IROs in the devolved regions of England and in the devolved nations Wales, Scotland and NI. The development of a new category of bidding eligibility for Community Research Organisations would encourage participation in research from a more diverse range of communities.

Devolved Dynamics: DCMS and DLUHC could harness the connectivity recommended in our all nations approach through jointly establishing a UK Creative Communities Commissioner to work between UKRI, arms length, third and private sector actors in the R&D ecosystem.

Incentivise Private Sector Engagement: there is a wall of private sector finance waiting to invest in Creative Community R&D. Companies seeking to invest inward into the locations where they operate should be offered incentives to do so, and support in connecting the skills base of their workforce to the needs identified by local communities. This includes commissioning a Micro-Partner Study to better understand representation, participation and parity of opportunity, reviewing tax-based incentives for private sector R&D participation, and developing collaborative calls between AHRC and Innovate UK to promote closer strategic working.

AHRC Data Observatory: current systems of data capture, storage, and sharing mean that stakeholders can only read the first page of the story and have no way of knowing if it ended happily or not. AHRC, ESRC and PEC collaboration on a Digital Footprints programme - a cross-council approach to increasing the supply and use of community data in AHRC funded work - could foster a data driven approach to funding decisions and long-term evaluation.

Evaluation: evaluation is often the smallest part of the application for funding, and there is no public record of the project evaluation reports. Where local project data is generated, it is often inaccessible. Better data capture, storage, and sharing is vital to prevent double doing and to enable research areas to move forward rather than stalling or repetitively circling around certain topics. Embedding the evaluation of funded research on UKRI's Gateway to Research (GTR) would better capture learning about expectations and realities of partnership delivery of R&D.



7. Lessons Learned

The UK faces a constellation of opportunities and challenges. None of these issues can be tackled alone, but co-created culture and R&D can help us to understand, adapt and generate solutions to contemporary contexts.

Through collaborative cross-sector catalysing, Creative Community R&D can:

- Strengthen business models
- Foster innovation, collaboration, and connectivity
- Increase regional cultural and creative export
- Develop, attract, and retain skills and talent
- Grow diversity and representation in the workforce
- Improve environmental impacts
- Unlock inward investments



To harness the potential of Creative Communities we must

Convene: through community engagement, participation and co-creation we can develop a more diverse base of researchers to grow and diversify the R&D workforce.

Catalyse: with meaningful cross-sector partnerships and a commitment to a community infrastructure plan we can create the profound shift needed to create the conditions by which research and innovation become by all and for all going forwards.

Contribute: big change requires big changes. We must invest flagship funding in Creative Communities and evolve organisational practices to realise the growth potential of R&D.

New structures are needed to change who engages in R&D. Good ideas can come from anyone and anywhere. Everyone everywhere should benefit from and have the opportunity to engage in R&D through creativity and culture at a local level no matter their location, means, or background. Creative Communities offer new models of innovation at a time when old R&D models are becoming more and more limited. Innovation cannot empower when it is kept apart from wider society. Central and devolved governments have an economic, social, and cultural imperative to catalyse their collaborative capacity to engage in R&D as a pathway to growth and innovation. We need to move towards a less extractive model of citizen centric R&D. Innovation only works if it straddles sectors and is viewed as a team effort across the regions and nations, not just an ivory tower task.

Data can appear daunting, complicated, and out of bounds for many potential contributors to the R&D system. We need better, more accessible data and evidence to make the case for supporting culture and the arts more broadly, and for incentivising participation in cross-sector R&D around this area. Funding can facilitate or frustrate the creation and effectiveness of Creative Communities, but it is just one lever that can be pulled to drive this change. There is no one size fits all model when it comes to innovation. Co-creation partnerships are a powerful tool for overcoming inequity and creating links, leading to active citizenship, upskilling, wellbeing, and spotlighting of the stories that a community wants to explore. Communities are capable. Embedding access to and engagement with R&D in communities is the foundation for the innovation of public interest and the social solutions to the problems facing the UK today. Creative Communities promote an inclusive process of stakeholder involvement centred on equitable discovery as an interactive process in which all players are empowered to participate and jointly shape the design, delivery, and evaluation of new culture by all, for all.



8. Looking Ahead



CIPs: Community Innovation Practitioners and Podcasts

CIPs will explore co-creation of R&D with communities and partners as a mechanism of change, and will consider short, interim, and longer-term outcomes on skills, wellbeing, the environment, civic identity, and pride in place. The Creative Communities team will work with the CIPs and their host organisations to generate case studies that will inform the Creative Communities programme recommendations in phase three by providing a deep dive into the devolved policy contexts of the four nations and regions, as well to central government. Together, the CIPs will be supported to form a national Community of Practice by the Creative Communities team, through mentorship, training activities, workshops, and events. The CIPs will also be supported to produce podcasts that capture and share key learning from their experiences.

Creative Communities Policy Labs

Five Policy Lab workshops (one in London and in each of the four nations) will complement the CIP case study learning through a deeper consultation and co-creation of policy proposals, fostering closer connections between the devolved administrations and AHRC knowledge pathways. Involving key stakeholders and experts from research organisations, third and private sector partners and communities, each workshop will explore successes and challenges, with a particular focus on building capacity, addressing skill gaps and barriers to engagement and scale up. To action a more widespread culture of bidding, co-bidding, communication and networking between HEIs and IROs in the devolved nations, the labs will produce briefing papers, reports and government submissions, roundtables, and joint policy networking events, highlighting areas for future AHRC investment.

Creative Communities Survey

The first ever survey of partners who have engaged in AHRC research from 2012-22 will begin in Autumn 2023. It will ask previous recipients of funding to reflect on their experience, learning, opportunities, and barriers in working as part of a Creative Community. The survey will aim to identify opportunities and requirements relating to skills, resources and infrastructure, offering opportunities to build and deliver new partners into future AHRC research collaborations.



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