

**Laidlaw Research Programme –
Studio Wayne McGregor’s Engagement Projects in Hackney: Investigation and
Recommendations for Building New Partners and Programmes**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims of the report

This report provides information about the opportunities for community engagement in the areas around Studio Wayne McGregor/Here East. Responding to the studio's aspiration to increase their reach and engagement with the communities surrounding their new building, research has been carried out in order to identify how local organisations and groups perceive the interaction with the studio. The primary purpose of the research was to identify groups and organisations in Hackney Wick that would be interested in developing a dance programme with positive impact on education, health, wellbeing and community cohesion. Research started in Hackney Wick but was extended throughout the whole Hackney borough. The methods used in order to achieve the best results were desk research, email communication, meetings and phone conversations with the people and organisations that responded positively to the first contact attempt.

The outcomes of the research are taking the form of a report produced for Studio Wayne McGregor's use. The research explored mainly the possible engagement opportunities and secondly the current arts provision/activity in Hackney. However, all the research questions were asked with the needs and the aspirations of the studio in mind. Therefore, the organisations and groups that were identified through the research do not mirror an accurate and complete mapping of the organisations in Hackney, but focus mainly on the topics, fields and domains that concern the studio's interests. The report only explores the groups and organisations housed in the Hackney borough, that develop programmes with an impact on education, wellbeing, health and community cohesion. Furthermore, the interviews, phone calls and email communication was carried out only with the individuals and organisations who responded to the initial contact email and agreed that their opinions, responses and contact details would be shared with Studio Wayne McGregor.

1.2 Aims of the project

The overall objective of the research carried for Studio Wayne McGregor is twofold. It aims at collecting and analysing evidence of the significance of the studio's engagement programmes for the local communities and identifying new ways to interact with them. As a result, it also seeks to partner with schools, groups, organisations who might be interested in and benefit from developing a dance programme.

The goal has been detailed into specific objectives:

- to describe the community landscape around Studio Wayne McGregor;
- to identify what groups are part of these communities;
- to examine what is the current opinion/knowledge about Studio Wayne McGregor in the local community;
- to comprehend what are the community's needs and how Studio Wayne McGregor can contribute towards addressing them;
- to explore the current arts provision/activity and how people engage with it;
- to foster communication and partnership between the studio and local individuals, community groups and organisations.

1.3 Background of the research

Studio Wayne McGregor moved to Here East in April 2017, being the first arts organisation that relocated to Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The studio is a place that explores movement, artistry, thought and partnership, but it also supports the development and touring of Company Wayne McGregor dance works. In addition to the signature works that made the studio known world-wide, Studio Wayne McGregor has an extensive learning and engagement programme. All learning and engagement projects designed and delivered by the studio reflect the artistic process that Wayne McGregor uses with his own company in the studio. Therefore, all the participants in the projects, workshops and demonstrations experience the high quality and cutting edge practice that unlocks individual creative potential.

So far, over 90,000 people of all ages and walks of life have participated in the learning and engagement projects across the UK and internationally, from school children to adults, and from those with no prior experience to dance students and professionals. Following the move to Here East, the studio has been looking to add a more local focus to their wide-ranging learning portfolio, by engaging with the local communities through long-term programmes. The local organisations and the communities surrounding the building are all diverse and have specific needs, therefore research is useful in order to identify the opinions and aspirations that the local groups have about the engagement programmes that the studio is organising. The research aims to provide the basis for an engagement plan in relation to building partnerships with groups and delivering programmes that have real use and relevance to the local community.

2. RESEARCH APPROACH

2.1 Methodology

In order to gather the data, a range of methodologies were used. In the first two weeks, desk research was used to identify organisations and community groups across Hackney. The search was split into types of organisations focused on wellbeing, arts, health, social isolation, old people, youth, volunteering, previous offenders and education. The organisations were chosen so they would cover a vast majority of the Hackney borough, and so there would be at least one for each theme mentioned above. Splitting the search into themes made it easier to identify key words that could be used to explore more options. Google search was a good method in order to identify diverse organisations, their missions and previous projects. However to reach a wider range of groups, organisations who have large networks were contacted to ask for advice on which of their members and collaborators to contact further. These organisations are Creative Wick, London Youth, London Legacy Development Corporation, Hackney Marsh Partnership, Volunteer Centre Hackney, UCL East and Hackney Quest. Most of them agreed to share the names of organisations that they think would benefit from the interaction with the studio, and some offered to spread the word about future projects through their newsletters and other channels. The organisations identified at this stage were contacted through an initial email describing the purpose of the research and the studio's initiative (Appendix 1). For all the organisations, community groups and associations identified, the mission and projects stated on their websites were taken into account before deciding to contact them. In order to achieve the best response rates, it was essential that the message sent out would be a tailored for every organisation's specificity. The aim was to set up a meeting, or schedule a phone call with the individuals or groups that showed interest after receiving the email.

Following the desk research, face-to-face meetings and phone calls with the organisations took place. During these conversations, the individuals who agreed to talk were delivered a presentation about the studio's work and mission, previous projects, future plans and resources. After that, the conversation took the shape of an informal, semi-structured interview (Appendix 2). The meetings mostly took place in the buildings of the organisations that agreed to meet, and had the purpose of investigating most of the research questions set up in the beginning, though primary research. Interviews explored what is the current knowledge about the studio, what is the organisation's connection with dance and other sports or artistic activities, and what activities/workshops/interactions with the studio they would be interested in that would benefit the organisation and the groups. The conversations that took place also helped in clarifying the aims of the research and in answering questions that arose after the presentation.

3. CURRENT CONTEXT

3.1 Studio Wayne McGregor

Studio Wayne McGregor is a creative arts space opened in 2017 at Here East, in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Wayne McGregor CBE is a multi-award winning British choreographer and director, internationally renowned for innovations through performances that have an impact on the dance practice in the modern era. The studio comprises three dance studios, two of which are the largest in London, and a series of other spaces which serve different purposes such as collaboration, discussion, and creation. Similarly, Here East is a campus that brings together diverse organisations inspired by curiosity, creativity, research, education and technology, in the pursuit of innovation.¹ Studio Wayne McGregor also became the first arts organisation to move onto Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The studio is a space where Wayne McGregor creates his signature works, where the Company Wayne McGregor dancers rehearse, where learning and engagement programmes are being developed and also where innovative research in science, technology and arts is being carried constantly.

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is a complex built for the 2012 Summer Olympics and for the 2012 Summer Paralympics. After the Olympics, the park was transformed into a new area of entertainment, recreation, commerce and community. It became both a place to live and work, creating new neighbourhoods and commercial places. Even if the initial aim of the park was to become a home for the sports, from the very beginning, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park made artworks part of its architecture and landscape, fostering a sense of cultural ambition. From then forward, arts and culture started to be an important aspect of the park's strategy, including events, festivals, and commissions working with the local creative community and the artists.² In 2012, the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) commissioned an *Arts & Culture Strategy* which served as basis for all future projects concerning arts and culture. The strategy committed to create art for all to enjoy, build on the local heritage by enlivening the public spaces and connecting with the communities, support cultural infrastructure, nurture the next generations of creative minds, support the new initiatives.³ It was only natural that more and more artistic and cultural organisations found their way to the Olympic Park. A local directory created by the LLDC in 2015 identified 42 cultural organisations in and around the park. It is stated

¹ Unknown, *Info Studio Wayne McGregor* <<http://waynemcgregor.com/about/studio-wayne-mcgregor/>> [accessed 14th of July 2018].

² Unknown, *Inspiring Arts. Enhancing Culture*. <<http://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/the-park/things-to-do/arts-and-culture>> [accessed 14th of July 2018].

³ London Legacy Development Corporation, *Arts & Culture Strategy* (London: ReproCity, 2014), p. 5

<http://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/~media/qeop/files/public/lldc_artculturestrategy_webhigh.pdf>.

in the introduction of that document that the aim of the directory is to expand over time and include even more organisations.⁴ In 2018 Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park hosts key cultural and education organisations that work towards developing long-term strategies. Furthermore, other organisations are moving into the park, like UCL East, Victoria and Albert Museum and many others.

Therefore, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Here East, Studio Wayne McGregor and the surrounding area, are all part of an inspirational transformation programme that aims to regenerate this part of East London. The strategy for 2015-2020 creates a few strategic outlines: opportunity (economic growth and life chances improved), community (creating a cluster of places designed with people at heart) and destination (creating a basis of a new metropolitan heart in East London).⁵ Studio Wayne McGregor with its innovative engagement programmes and constant interest in education, health, wellbeing and community cohesion contributes towards achieving these major goals through specifically designed dance programmes.

3.2 Community landscape around Studio Wayne McGregor

When talking about Studio Wayne McGregor, Here East and Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, it is essential to also focus on the community landscape around all of these. In the initial parts of the research, the desk research, served to understand the nature of the communities surrounding the studio. In that sense, the Hackney Council website was a helpful resource in understanding the vibrant mix of communities living in Hackney. Inward migration can be traced back to the 17th century, the community landscape being very diverse today: Caribbean, Turkish and Kurdish, Vietnamese and Orthodox Jewish communities, accompanied by newer African and Eastern European groups. Statistics made in 2011 show that around 40% of the population come from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups, 36% are White British and 16% are other white populations, speaking at least 89 different languages in the borough.⁶

⁴ London Legacy Development Corporation, *Local Directory*, 2015
<http://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/-/media/lldc/local_directory.ashx?la=en>
[accessed 14th of July 2018].

⁵ London Legacy Development Corporation, *Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the Surrounding Area. Five Year Strategy: 2015-2020* (London: 2015)
<<https://www.london.gov.uk/moderngovlldc/documents/s57393/Item%2012a%20-%20PUBLIC%20-%20LLDC%20Strategy.pdf>> [accessed 14th of July 2018].

⁶ Unknown, *Knowing our communities*, <<https://hackney.gov.uk/knowning-our-communities>>
[accessed on 14th of June 2018].

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 The groups

If the desk research helped identify a rather statistical approach of the community landscape around studio Wayne McGregor, the visits to the organisations that agreed to meet showed a more humanistic side of all this. In that sense, research has shown that the lines drawn by ethnicity statistics are very blurred when it comes to the real community landscape. Most community groups and organisations housed around Studio Wayne McGregor are often very mixed and are centred on other common aims: wellbeing, culture, sports, volunteering and many others. A research conducted by the Hackney Council identified 436 voluntary organisations, presented as being part of the community and living section. Even if this number is known, a complete mapping of all organisations could not be identified. For that reason, the findings and statistics identified for this research may not mirror the whole organisational landscape around the studio.

It is worth noting that for the scope of this research, the notion of community was not seen as purely statistical. Instead, the main point of the research, with the meetings and the conversations was to actually meet organisations, feel the real vibe of the groups, understand their needs and expectations. In that sense, the research questions aimed to go beyond strategies, numbers and statistics and explore the communities that give life and purpose to the Hackney borough. With the objective of the research for the Studio Wayne McGregor in mind, 63 organisations and community groups were identified and contacted (Appendix 3). All of these focus on different aspects: youth, community, wellbeing, culture, disability, environment, human rights, mental health, sports, social welfare, LGBTQA+, migration and others.

My research has shown that the organisations often identify themselves according to the activities they do and promote, but another aspect that influences how the groups are divided is the age. All organisations that spoke about their activities, admitted that they are designed to appeal to a certain age group. In that sense, there are youth groups, for young people up to 20-25 years old, senior groups for 65+ individuals, and everything in between often comes under different names (social inclusion, wellbeing, community etc.). It was observed that, regardless of the name, age group and the type of organisation, key words that describe most organisations are wellbeing and community. Hence, taking into account the 63 organisations contacted, there is a significant predominance of the youth, wellbeing and community groups. The youth groups often include activities with effects on education, arts and sports. Meanwhile, community groups consist of ethnic groups, minorities, neighbourhood associations, and wellbeing groups are often centred on disability, mental health and senior groups.

As described in the methodology, these organisations were identified through Google searches or suggested by other organisations. The introductory email from Appendix 1 served as a template for all the emails that were sent out, but they were also tailored accordingly. The response rate was far from being 100%. The initial email received 21 responses in total. Appendix 3 states how were the organisations contacted, which ones responded, and how was the communication carried out. The postcodes are also provided in order to show where in the borough are the contacted organisations housed. Looking at the location also points out a few neighbourhoods where there are larger concentrations of organisations.

Out of the 21 responses, they were structured in the following way:

- 7 responded and either suggested other organisations to talk to or offered to post about the research on their newsletters;
- 9 responded and agreed to meet and discuss further;
- 5 responded, but due to various reasons, the communications was not taken any further.

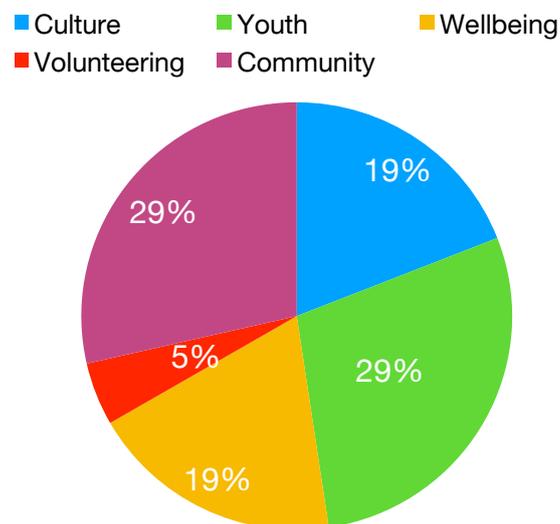


Figure 1. Types of organisations who responded to the initial email (21 responses).

A. Youth Groups

Considering the chart, it can easily be observed that youth groups were the most responsive to the studio's proposal, but so are the organisations focused on community. This fact could prove multiple things. One of them is that Hackney is described as being a young borough, since 25% of the population is under 20, and 23% aged between 20-29 years old.⁷ Therefore, there are more youth groups in Hackney than other types. Another fact could also be that of the idea of dance is often perceived as being an activity for the young people. However, naming them youth groups that not really do them too

⁷ Ibid.

much justice, as it automatically places them into a age based category. Meanwhile, these groups actually do all sorts of activities which benefit the young people. That fact may actually make them more open to suggestions and proposals coming from diverse external organisations, as long as the activities proposed match their interests.

B. Community and Wellbeing

When it comes to the community and wellbeing organisations, the ones identified through the research are either ethnic, migrant groups and neighbourhood associations, or groups centred on disability, mental health and elderly associations. All of these groups do activities with effects on social isolation, community building, wellbeing and health. The organisations that are part of these categories and responded to the introductory email are either aware of the benefits that dance has towards wellbeing and health, or are interested in exploring the entertainment of this physical activity.

C. Culture and Volunteering

The cultural organisations also responded well to the introductory email, but the majority of them only suggested other organisations that could be contacted and could benefit from the interaction with the studio. The reason for that could be that the cultural organisations often work with the same communities that the studio is trying to reach. The volunteering organisations have large networks and work towards raising funds for their partners, recruiting volunteers and even coaching, supporting and delivering projects. Because of that, the interaction with these only brought to the surface more organisations that could be contacted.

4.2 The current arts provisions and activity

Hackney is an example of one of the most vibrant cultural economies in London. The current arts provision varies from art galleries and museums to dance, music, festivals, performing arts. Commercial and non-commercial artistic activity developed in the borough, investment and support in this sector being essential. The cultural policy

'Cultural activities help address social exclusion through shared opportunities for enjoyment and increased understanding. Communities can connect through shared activities and shared experiences leading to a greater sense of community cohesion.'

framework commissioned by the Hackney Council states clearly:

During the desk research, organisations that promote arts and culture were also identified. These seem to create a high proportion of cultural and artistic activities in Hackney.

- Creative Wick: creative regeneration agency founded in 2013; facilitates a sustainable creative economy in Hackney by helping to increase current levels of resilience alongside the ongoing development of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park; their projects include arts consultancy, artist-led education, events, research, enterprise, network (Hackney Wick and Fish Island Cultural Interest Group).
- UCL East: located on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park; started engaging with communities in East London through widening participation, student volunteering, public engagement, museums and collections.
- Hub67: a community centre that provides a home for the Hackney community; deliver relevant and purposeful projects for the community, in a building that acts as a community place with an artistic vision.
- Stour Space: a socially minded organisation offering exhibition, performance and studio space for the development of creative enterprises; devoted to the promotion and production of art and design, performance and innovative business.
- Hackney Arts: gives creative opportunities to residents and provides a platform for local artists to share their work; delivers classes for free to the local partner organisations.
- Hackney Arts Centre: a multi-arts space, bringing together both the leading, rising and most important talents of all fields under one roof; looks to become a leading light in the city for audiences from all walks of life to meet, listen, watch, dance and enjoy all artistic endeavour and creativity has to offer.

Some of the cultural and artistic events organised in Hackney are:

- Hackney WickED: a festival that began in 2008 when a group of local artists decided to coordinate a series of local art events to highlight and celebrate the breadth and diversity of art and creativity in the area; allowed visitors the chance to explore the labyrinth of artist studios, live-work spaces and up-and-coming galleries hidden behind the normally unwelcoming façade of industrial streets and warehouse walls.
- Yoruba Arts Festival: a festival founded in 2010 that celebrated the rich and diverse arts and culture of one of Africa's largest and oldest cultures; features cultural performances, arts and crafts, workshops, competitions, children's activities, African Market, Traditional food and Live Bands showcasing the rich, vibrant and colourful arts and culture of the Yoruba's.
- Art, Design and Craft Fair: the fair is an opportunity for artists, designers and craft makers to promote their products; there is illustrative art also hand crafted and decorated items.
- Cultural Interest Group: the group was founded in 2010 and it is a monthly networking meeting of Hackney Wick and Fish Island's stakeholder community; it is dedicated mostly for those interested in arts, culture and creative practice as part of their business.
- The Yard: a theatre and music venue in Hackney Wick built out of salvaged material; in 6 years of existence their work has been seen by hundreds of thousands of people.

Therefore, the cultural landscape in Hackney is very diverse, and so is the artistic activity. All of these are producing art, drama, music, dance, film, literature, media, architecture and heritage. Taking this variety account, it is only natural that the public differs slightly from one activity to the other.

• **Interaction with the cultural groups**

For the purpose of the research, contacting these organisations was not considered helpful, as the focus was rather on community groups and smaller organisations. However, during the Cultural Interest Group meeting, when representatives from these organisations were present, many showed interest in the studio's programmes and agreed to share their contact details for future reference (Creative Wick, UCL East, Stour Space, Bobby Moore Academy, Tom Fleming Consultancy). Presenting the objectives of this research at the CIG meeting was not very helpful in terms of identifying organisations, but it could be useful when it comes to promoting a project or looking for partners amongst the attendees to the meeting. Attending the Hackney Wick and Fish Island Conversations meeting at the Stour Space, right after the CIG meeting, showed that there are normally the same people attending these types of events. A collaboration, partnership or promotion could be the outcome of attending a couple of these meetings, since connections could be made there. For example, a local composer approached me at a meeting, after hearing about the studio's plans to get more involved into the local communities. The conversation with her is described in Appendix 4. Therefore, if a collaboration with cultural organisations is needed, meeting the representatives of those at events is probably the best way to approach them.

4.3 Participation

The research focused mainly on contacting and meeting with the organisations that would like to develop a dance programme and collaborate with Studio Wayne McGregor. In that sense, the engagement and participation in cultural activities for the wider community is not an aspect that was researched in detail.

'The most successful workshops we have had were never one-offs, but a series. When we run activities, we normally have a specific age group in mind that might respond best. However, just to make sure, we run taster sessions for different age groups to see which one responds best. I cannot stress how important that taster session is. There is nothing worse than having an unengaged and demotivated audience.'

Instead, when it comes to organisations and charities, the participation in activities is easier to determine. Many of the organisations interviewed said that participation is always dependent on how relevant the programme is for the group. Thus, most

organisations have already established groups of people who attend their activities regularly (normally on a weekly basis). Because of that, the turn up to an event can be approximatively measured even before it takes place. However, in the case of a series of events, the numbers can either grow or decrease, depending on how engaged the group is in the activity. The activities coordinator from a centre for refugees talked about the engagement in their projects:

As a result, when it comes to participation in the activities taking place in an organisation, the target audience is normally predetermined and already known. In that situation, good promotion for the event is not a very important aspect, but the quality of the activity is. Probably even more important is the relevance of the activity for the group it is delivered to. Speaking of the arts provision and activity in the organisations in Hackney, most of them name their activities artistic, to a certain extent. Whether it is a youth, community, volunteering, social inclusion, culture, or wellbeing organisation, artistic activity is very often encouraged, promoted and even delivered. Because of that, the organisations are open to ideas regarding possible artistic interventions and aware of the benefits that they have for their groups. The Sports Inclusion and Development Officer speaks about the organisation she is part of, as being very much related to art.

‘What we do is to promote positive mental health and wellbeing through creative learning. Our mission is to support recovery, social inclusion, and mental wellbeing through arts. Specifically, we work towards achieving psychological wellbeing through creative education. In order to achieve that, we offer courses in arts, music, computing and health for people with moderate to severe mental health needs.’

4.4 Studio Wayne McGregor’s Reputation

One of the research questions was identifying what people already know or understand about Studio Wayne McGregor. Responses to this question were given both during the meetings and through emails. Out of the 21 organisations that have been in contact either only through emails or at meetings and phone calls, 10 organisations already heard about Studio Wayne McGregor, meanwhile the other 11 have not.

The data shows that the 10 organisations who already knew about the studio have either been in contact with someone from the studio previously, are part of the same networks, or are relatively well-established in Hackney. Meanwhile, the other 11 organisations who have not heard about the studio happen to be smaller organisations, which focus mostly on working directly with groups from the community and have regular weekly meetings and activities. There is a tendency that smaller organisations seem to appreciate that they are being contacted by a rather prestigious organisation, even if they did not know about

it before. In that sense, every person has done some research before the meeting or the phone call, saying that they were surprised they have not heard about the studio sooner.

When it comes to what the people actually understand about the studio, most organisations had other similar engagement projects delivered by external organisations or individuals, so they easily understood what the studio is trying to achieve. A minority of them have had no contact with dance or any similar workshops before, and needed more time and explanations in order to understand what the interaction with the studio would look like. However, in both cases, the conversations led to new ideas about possible interactions.

If the opinions about knowing and not knowing about the studio were mixed, each and every one of the 21 organisations that responded knew about the Here East instead. A few opinions about Here East that were expressed during the meetings are:

- it is a place that brings many professional people into the area;
- it creates good job opportunities for the locals (the restaurants are mostly locally supplied and the staff are locals);
- it is not displaced and separated from the community, but connected with it (because of the community engagement programmes and the public spaces it offers);
- it is proactive when it comes to community engagement;
- it is very modern;
- it can be a threat to the local artistic community (because it brings to the area massive cultural institutions that can threaten the current arts provision in Hackney and limit the sales for locally produced art).

Everyone who happened to know the studio from before praised the initiative to create more community engagement projects. They stressed the need for more creative activities being delivered by actual professionals from the industry. That might be important in order to change the misconceptions that dance is an activity for young people.

'I have worked with the Wayne McGregor Company before and every one there is amazing. Although I personally think engaging with the community by doing contemporary dance and movement is a great idea, the last time we did this it was a small turn out for a lot of work (people feel it is only a place for middle class 20 -30 age people). They somehow have to break that image.'

Also, it can be helpful for the local raising artists who could be interested in a career in dance. The studio could then help educate and promote aspiring dancers. But the interaction could not be limited to dance only. There are performance artists in the area who might also be inspired by Wayne's work and would like to experiment further.

Therefore, even if the research aimed to identify local organisations and community groups interested to develop a dance programme, exploring what individual locals or members from the artistic community want from the studio could also be an option to engage with the communities in Hackney.

'I've been looking to engage with studio Wayne McGregor. I am a freelance audio & visual artist based in Hackney Wick. My work is interdisciplinary. I collaborate with practitioners, directors and companies, researching, developing and composing projects from scratch or existing material. The results of which take the form of music, film, dance and live performance. I'm keen to engage with my local community in an arts context. I'm also keen to work on projects that use movement and music to engage the public with a wellbeing subtext.'

4.5 Intervention Opportunities

Following interviews with 9 organisations focused on wellbeing, youth, community, culture, and 1 local artist that is developing interdisciplinary projects, a range of activities were identified that the local community would be interested in and find beneficial:

- visiting the studio and watching open rehearsals;
- having sessions that would teach a group a specific dance style;
- having a series of workshops that lead to a showcase or performance in order to promote and reward the individuals taking part;
- having a series of workshops throughout 4 to 6 weeks;
- organising taster session for different dancing styles;
- organising a mentoring scheme by pairing a dancer with a young person;
- having internships, scholarships or grants for talented young people;
- using the studio space for educative activities unrelated to dance;
- organising workshops off-site;
- organising Irish or Romani dance for more Gypsies and Travellers organisation to take part in;
- involving local artists in the work delivered by the studio.

Conversations have been tailored for every organisation's needs and possibilities, therefore the options listed above do not reflect a unanimous view. Descriptions of the full conversations with each of the 9 organisations and the 1 artist are listed in Appendix 4. All the organisations that were interviewed responded very positively to the Studio Wayne McGregor proposed initiative. They are all willing to partner with the studio in the development of programmes and want to be contacted to bring the conversations even further.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The current arts provision, the participation in cultural activities and the artistic activity in Hackney are all topics that deserve attention. However, probably the most important part of this research was not investigating those aspects, but actually speaking to the groups that would like to collaborate with Studio Wayne McGregor. Because of that, probably the first action to be taken as an outcome of this report, would be to contact the organisations in Appendix 4 and start planning the engagement projects.

All the organisations that actually responded and agreed to meet were all very excited at the thought of collaborating with Studio Wayne McGregor. During the desk research phase, there were a few individuals who I have lost communication with, but the ones who decided to continue the communication until the interview stage were all very determined and eager to be part of the engagement programmes organised by the studio. What in the beginning seemed to be a chase for organisations, turned into a conversations between equals who both have something to contribute with. All the organisations who agreed to collaborate with the studio also emphasised the importance of the activities they do for their groups, and how they would really enjoy to get involved.

All of this proved that indeed, the studio should make the first move in contacting organisations, but the rest would not to be a unilateral conversation with no outcome. The individuals who respond are often interested enough to make the necessary steps so the collaboration would happen. The research has also shown that some organisations even wait for these little steps to be made by the 'bigger' organisation. Therefore, despite the timing and the short length of the research, it has proved that there is a desire for community engagement in Hackney, and organisation are happy to facilitate it. Getting in touch with the right individuals and groups could be difficult, especially because there is a lack of a centralised communication system between organisations, but once the intentions are set straight, the rest is possible.

5.1 Moving Forward with Building Partnerships

Appendix 4 lists all the 9 organisations and the 1 artist that were interviewed, and would like to collaborate with the studio in the near future. They are all waiting to hear more about the practicalities of the actual interactions. Below the list, there are the organisations who expressed interest in meeting or talking, but communication was somehow lost along the way. Those could also be contacted, as they proved to be interested, but timing was probably not best at the time.

During the research, getting the studio's message across was probably the most difficult to do online. However, multiple trials have brought to the surface the best methods that

could be used to get in contact with other organisations and locals. This list is not complete, but for the scope of the research, it was enough.

The communication methods used were:

- personal or organisational emails: it is always a good method to start communication like that, but the response rate can be quite low;
- newsletters: even if posting about the research on a newsletter did not seem like a great idea, it actually started the communication with 2 organisations who got in touch because of that. During the research, a few organisations proposed to have the studio's programmes advertised in their newsletters (Volunteering Centre Hackney, UCL East, London Youth, Cultural Interest Group);
- attending meetings: taking part in the Cultural Interest Group monthly meeting, and the Creative Entrepreneurs Breakfast at Stour Space helped me interact with locals, and gather opinions and questions in a focus groups like setting.

5.2 Building Contact

• Methods

A good way to build contact with the groups is to approach them individually at first, picking up the conversation from where it was left off. All the 9 groups and the one local artist are waiting to be contacted via email. For the best results, I would suggest to email everyone separately, asking to arrange a face to face meeting or a phone call. What is seemed quite clear was that the groups are ready to start talking about the actual projects at the next meeting. In that sense, it is good to read the descriptions of the conversations that took place, and understand what each organisation is looking to achieve. For the organisations that mentioned they would like to have activities happening at the studio, it may be helpful to invite them over (especially for the groups that work with disabled people, since they need to make sure the space is adequate).

Getting in contact with the organisations in the way mentioned above could work for more immediate projects. However, in the long run, after an initial session was delivered, having all the partner organisations meet for a focus-group in a non-formal setting, could help tie the connections further and create real networks. Many organisations stressed the idea that one-offs are never very efficient (both in terms of activities and partnerships). In that sense, the connections could become stronger if they surpass the emailing stage and evolve into group meetings. This idea comes from the fact that most organisations encouraged the need for continuity, but also because one organisation said it was interested in meeting other similar groups and collaborating in order to take part in a dance activity that interests them all. This idea could probably work best for the youth groups who might be interested in having sessions that teaches them a certain dance style. However, it might not be that efficient for groups that are concerned with mental

health or disability. That needs to be checked with every organisation in particular, as the idea to merge some groups for taking part in a common activity only came up during the last interview.

- **Timing**

The only organisation which needs to be contacted as soon as possible is Mini Mermaids and the Young Tritons. They are looking to start delivering their 8 week curriculum as soon as possible, and are looking to use the studio's space for one of their sessions.

The youth organisations mostly start their activity once the school begins, so from September onwards. They all said that discussions should be carried closer to that date, since in the summer period they are not that active. The community and wellbeing organisations run weekly activities, so they may be contacted even during the summer period.

5.3 The Offer

The list of possible interactions is written above. Activities suggested by more than one group were:

- having workshops that take place at the studio - this option is quite popular, because the idea of visiting the studio seems quite appealing for many organisations; the only few groups that would prefer to have the activities taking place closer to them would be the ones that find it difficult to travel because of movement or financial reasons;
- having sessions on specific dancing styles - the idea of trying out something new was present in most conversations with the organisations; both for those with prior experience or with no prior experience, learning a few basic moves in different styles seems something worth exploring; thinking about the practicalities of this, maybe this activity could be organised as a pop-up session, with individuals or groups coming from more organisations, not just one;
- working towards a performance or a showcase - this idea was suggested mostly by the youth organisations, which think it is helpful for the young people's work to lead to an outcome;

Seeing all of these, it becomes more obvious that the interactions desired by the local community would ideally be over a longer period of time, teaching them something completely new, with the purpose of either moving for fun, or creating something with an outcome. However, something else that Studio Wayne McGregor could offer is more transparency when it comes to the community engagement programmes. Better promotion

of this type of work in Hackney could help make the studio better known, and ease the process of finding organisations to partner with in the future.

Most groups were intrigued by the idea of collaboration with the studio, but the conversations with them showed slightly more interest. When it comes to which organisations were most excited about the offers, there are a few who showed particular interest in the activities delivered by the studio. These are:

- Mini Mermaids and Young Tritons - are looking to use the studio's space in order to deliver their activities for young people; Khara was equally interested in the studio space and in Wayne's work (after watching the TEDx talk)
- KEEN London - the athletes are always learning new movement activities, but were not involved in any dance workshops before, despite their love for music and movement
- Akwaaba London - would like to organise a workshop for the young people and have a performance happen at the end
- The Stroke Project - are well aware of the benefits that dance has for stroke survivors and would like to a workshop delivered
- Hackney Quest - would like to take part in a workshop delivered at the studio; the young people took part in a hip hop workshop before, but would like to try out something completely new

The other organisations are just as willing to collaborate and partner with the studio. However, due to various reasons, they were not as proactive.

- Young Hackney Concorde - the young girls interested in dance are already attending hip hop competitions and are rehearsing weekly; a workshop in a different dance style would be very beneficial, but dance is not something new for the group
- London Youth - the organisation often facilitates dance workshops for the groups that partnered with them, so dance is not at all something new; Jas suggested some organisations that would particularly benefit from dance workshops and said that London Youth could spread the word about the studio's engagement activities
- Core Arts - the group is already taking part in dance workshops, but would like to explore something different at the same time;
- London Gypsies and Travellers - the organisation was very receptive to the studio's intention, however, the youth workers are quite new and they are still working towards building their group; they think a dance workshop could be great for the young people they are working with, but need some time to reconnect with them.

CONCLUSION

Overall, despite the difficulty of getting in touch with the organisations in Hackney, the research was helpful in identifying that there is a need for community engagement in the local area. The opinions collected show that the studio has a great reputation amongst the people that have collaborated with it, and the ones that have not, are interested in trying it out. The possible interactions identified through the interviews can be part of a portfolio of desired cultural interactions with Studio Wayne McGregor that can be used to begin the direct engagement as soon as possible. These activities could provide the opportunity to get to know the local communities better, and to promote to engagement work the studio does more widely.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1 - Initial Email

Dear ...,

I am a student at the University College London and I am carrying out some research on behalf of Studio Wayne McGregor.

Studio Wayne McGregor is dance organisation housed in a new building situated within Here East in Hackney Wick. The building comprises three dance studios, including two of the largest in London, and a series of playful spaces in which to collaborate, make and create across the arts, science, technology and research. The studio is the first arts organisation to move onto Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in east London and it is keen to increase engagement with its local communities.

Wayne McGregor CBE is a multi-award winning choreographer and director, who has been radically redefining dance for over 25 years. He is Artistic Director of Studio Wayne McGregor and is also Resident Choreographer at The Royal Ballet, Covent Garden. He creates work for the most important dance companies in the world including the Paris Opera Ballet, Bolshoi Ballet, and New York City Ballet. McGregor is also in great demand to choreograph for opera, theatre, fashion shows, films (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, *Fantastic Beasts 1 & 2*, animated film *Sing*), TV (2016 Brit Awards opening) and music videos (Radiohead's *Lotus Flower*, which went viral online). McGregor is passionate about dance and creativity, and in his famous TED Talk in 2012 encourages everyone to dance and 'misbehave beautifully'.

Studio Wayne McGregor has a reputation for delivering high quality dance activity across the UK and internationally. With the move to the Olympic Park they are looking to extend their collaborations and opportunities for community engagement within the local area. There are many possible interactions with Studio Wayne McGregor, such as visiting the studio and watching open rehearsals, dance and movement workshops off-site for all ages and use of facilities for local groups to undertake creative activities. However, the studio is aware that there could be many other interactions that would benefit the community, so it is open to new ideas.

I am therefore contacting you to see whether you would be interested in meeting to learn more about about Studio Wayne McGregor's current programme and how you might become involved. The studio is looking to build partnerships with groups that could benefit from the engagement with the studio and participation in dance and movement, and it would also like to understand the needs of the community and how it can contribute towards addressing them through dance and wider creative activity.

Thank you for taking the time to read this email and I look forward to hearing your answer. Please let me know if you would prefer to meet or schedule a phone call anytime by the end of June.

Appendix 2 - Interview Questions

1. Do you know anything about Studio Wayne McGregor?
2. Do you know anything about the Here East?
3. What is your organisation's connect to dance or other cultural/artistic activities?
4. What is the focus of your group's activities?
5. How would your group think about/respond to a dance workshop?
6. What would be useful to you in terms of dance?
7. How would you imagine the interaction with the studio could take place?

Appendix 3 - Organisations

Organisation	Contact Name	Contact Email	Type	Contact	Postcode
Wick Award	Polly Mann	polly.mann@wickaward.co.uk	wellbeing	no response	E8 3AZ
Creative Wick	Will Chamberlain	william@creativewick.com	arts/culture	suggested organisations, invited to CIG meeting, suggested reports about Hackney	E9 5GW
Hackney Quest	Luke Billingham	luke@hackneyquest.org.uk	youth	suggested organisations, and was interviewed through phone conversation	E9 7AE
LLDC	Layla Conway Lorna Blake	LaylaConway@londonlegacy.co.uk lorna.blake@hackney.gov.uk	community	suggested organisations	E20 1EJ
London Youth	Jas Hothi	jas.hothi@londonyouth.org.uk	youth	suggested organisations, was interviewed through meeting	N1 6DA
Stratford Circus	Monique Deleatnat Bell	Monique@Stratford-circus.com	arts/culture	no response	E15 1BX
Hackney Council	Lauren O'Leary	lauren.oleary@hackney.gov.uk	community	suggested organisations	E8 1DY
Here East	Jasel Nandha	Jasel.nandha@hereeast.com	community	no response	E15 2GW
Tom Flemming Consultancy	Tom Fleming	tom@tgconsultancy.co.uk	arts/culture	no response	-
Groundwork	Sarah Reece-Mills	sarah.reece-mills@groundwork.org.uk	community	no response	E5 0PD
UCL East	Briony Fleming	b.fleming@ucl.ac.uk	arts/culture	suggested organisations, newsletter	E15 2JE

Organisation	Contact Name	Contact Email	Type	Contact	Postcode
Hackney Wick Craft Club	Debbie Bowden	debbie.bowden@talktalk.net	arts community	responded once, did not set up meeting	-
Hackney Marsh Partnership	Wendy Thomas	wthomas@hmp.org.uk	community	suggested organisations	E9 5QG
Connect Hackney	James Demming	james@connecthackney.org.uk	wellbeing	no response	E8 3AZ
Eco Active	-	admin@ecoactive.org.uk	community	no response	E9 5QG
Mind in the City	-	services@cityandhackneymind.org.uk	wellbeing	no response	E9 7SN
Hackney Migrant Centre	Daf Viney	info@hackneymigrantcentre.org.uk	community	no response	N16 9ES
Hackney Caribbean Elderly Association	-	info@hackneycaribbean.co.uk	wellbeing	no response	N16 7EX
London Gypsies and Travellers	Tyler Hatwell	thatwell@londongandt.org.uk	community	interviewed though meeting	N16 8NA
Young Hackney Concorde	Joyclen Brodie-Mendes	jobrodie-mends@hmp.org.uk	youth	interviewed though meeting	E9 5PP
City and Hackney Wellbeing Network	-	SPOE@mindchwf.org.uk	wellbeing	no response	-
Centre for Better Health	-	services@centreforbetterhealth.org.uk	wellbeing	no response	E9 6QH
Core Arts	Laura-Jane Connolly	lconnolly@corearts.co.uk	wellbeing	interviewed though meeting	E9 6DJ
Project Indigo - Off Centre	Maya and Suzy	indigo@offcentre.org.uk	LGBTQA+	no response	E9 6AX
Outward	-	hackneyvolunteers@outward.org.uk	volunteering	no response	E2 8HT
Akwaaba London	Mike	akwaabalondon@gmail.com	community	interviewed through phone conversation	N16 8AJ
Compassionate Neighbours in East London	Richard Julian	CN@stjh.org.uk	community	no response	-

Organisation	Contact Name	Contact Email	Type	Contact	Postcode
Hub 67	Katherine Igoe-Ewer	katherine@theyardtheatre.co.uk	arts/culture community	responded - did not set up meeting	E9 5HA
Hackney Community College	Davina Gray	davina.Gray@NCCLondon.ac.uk	education	no response	N1 6HQ
Volunteer Centre Hackney	Charlotte Handel	hov@cvHackney.org	volunteering	suggested organisations, newsletter	E8 2LY
Sustainable Hackney	-	info@sustainablehackney.org.uk	environment	no response	-
Disability BackUp	-	info@disabilitybackup.org.uk	wellbeing	no response	E8 3AZ
Hear to Meet	-	HearToMeet.Hackney@hearingloss.org.uk	wellbeing	no response	E8 1LB
Hackney Recovery Service	-	hackney@wdp.org.uk	wellbeing	no response	E8 3SG
Mildmay	-	info@mildmay.org	wellbeing	no response	N1 4PU
Food Cycle - Hackney	Matt	matt@foodcycle.org.uk	shelter	no response	E9 7JE
The Hub Club	Cathay Boyle	cboyle@outward.org.uk	wellbeing	responded - did not set up meeting	E5 8NN
Senior IAG	Evette Dawkins	edawkins@hmp.org.uk	wellbeing	no response	-
Trowbridge Senior Citizens' Club	Gordon Fryer	gordonfryer78@gmail.com	wellbeing	no response	E9 5NH
Stour Space	Neil McDonald	neil@stour.space	arts/culture community	no response	E3 2PA
Age UK East London	-	info@ageukeastlondon.org.uk	wellbeing	no response	E2 9LU
Ekta Project	-	ekta_info@yahoo.com	wellbeing	no response	E12 5JF
Roma Support Group	-	info@romasupportgroup.org.uk	community	no response	E7 0XB
The Pedro Youth Club	James Cook	info@pedroclub.com	youth	responded once, did not set up meeting	E5 0HD
An Viet Foundation	-	anviet@anvietuk.org	community	no response	N1 4LS
VLC Community Centre	-	vietnamlaocambodia@yahoo.co.uk	community	no response	E2 8BN

Organisation	Contact Name	Contact Email	Type	Contact	Postcode
Wayside Community Centre	-	info.wayside@gmail.com	community	no response	E5 0NP
Social Eyes for 4Life	-	socialeyes4life@gmail.com	wellbeing	no response	E8 3LU
Reach Out	-	info@reachoutuk.org	youth	no response	E8 2NA
Creative Lifestyle CIC	-	info@creativelifestyle.org.uk	women's club	no response	E5 0UD
Kith and Kids	Marjolein de Vries	marjolein@kithandkids.org.uk	wellbeing	no response	N17 8DX
Hackney Pride 365	Tara Hudson	tara.hudson@hackney.gov.uk	LGBTQA+	no response	-
Rainbow Community Care Association	Hilda	rainbow.hilda@yahoo.co.uk	community	no response	E5 0NG
The Huddleston Centre	-	info@huddlestoncentre.org.uk	wellbeing	no response	E5 8EH
KEEN London	China Davis	china@keenlondon.org	wellbeing	interviewed though meeting	N16 8JN
Mini Mermaids Running Club	Khara Mills	khara@minimermaidrunningclub.org	youth	interviewed through phone conversation	-
The Stroke Project	Laura Prikken	laura.prikken@triangle.care	wellbeing	interviewed through phone conversation	-
Skyway	Marlon	Marlon@skyway.uk.com	youth	no response	E2 8DG
The Crib	Kelly	parentsvoice526@gmail.com	youth	responded - did not set up meeting	N1 5TJ
Springfield	-	steveh@springfieldclub.co.uk	youth	no response	N16 6DH
East London Dance	Zenovia Grant	zenovia.grant@eastlondondance.org	arts/culture	no response	E15 1BX
Freelance Artist	Lauren Doss	dossled@icloud.com	arts/culture	interviewed through email	-

Appendix 4 - Interview Descriptions

1. Young Hackney Concorde

Contact details

Name: Joyclen Brodie-Mendes

Email: jobrodie-mends@hmp.org.uk

Address: Kingsmead Way, Homerton E9 5PP

Contact means: visit and interview

Conversation description:

I met Joyclen at Young Hackney Concorde. She let me in the receptionist's office, and we talked there. I started by delivering her the presentation about the Studio, especially since she said that she has never heard about it before. She said that she would have preferred to see more pictures of the studio space.

When asked how would the young people in the organisation like to be involved with dance, she mentioned that they have a group of girls doing hip-hop that are very excited about dancing. She said that the young people would like to visit the studio, and see a rehearsal session with one of the dancers. The young people that could benefit from the interaction with the studio would be aged from 10 to 15 years old. The dancing style that they are learning at the moment is hip hop, but they could be more interested in having session that would teach them a new style.

Joyclen mentioned the importance of having sessions that lead to a product. She said that the young people could benefit a lot from participating in a showcase with the studio or being part of one of the studios performances. It was stressed the idea that it would be great if the young people could visit the studio and have sessions that lead to a tangible outcome.

2. Akwaaba

Contact details

Name: Mike

Email: akwaabalondon@gmail.com

Address: Barrett's Grove Entrance (off Stoke Newington Road) N16 8AJ

Contact means: phone call

Conversation description:

I contacted Mike after we established that it would be better to schedule a phone call. I told him more about the studio, the past projects and the people it worked with. Then, he started to tell me more about the organisation he is part of.

He said that it is a social centre for migrants and it is run by volunteers only. These volunteers are both migrants and non-migrants. The number of people who attend their weekly Sunday afternoon session is large, from 100 people to 250 people. The type of

activity they do regularly is simple: they cook a meal, eat together and organise activities for the community. The types of activities they organise are english classes, music session and many others.

In terms of how he imagines the interaction with the studio, he seemed excited about the idea of having session delivered by the studio dancers. He mentioned that the most successful workshops they had were not one offs, but a series. What he means by a series, is throughout 4 to 6 weeks, or even longer. He gave me previous examples of activities: a series of portrait making workshops that taught the people how to draw portraits that were then exhibited in a local gallery; a film making workshop that ended with a short film created by the people.

When I asked for what age group he thinks the interaction with the studio will be most beneficial for, he said that he believed that the older children (12-15) would be most happy for it. His reasoning was based on the fact that that group of young people does not seem to identify with the children activities anymore, nor with the adult ones. However, he mentioned that he cannot guarantee that they will enjoy the workshops. The solution he then gave was to have the dancers organise tester sessions for more age groups and see which group responds best to that. He stressed how essential that tester session is, because it would be a shame to have the dancers work for an unengaged and demotivated audience.

The importance of an outcome was also mentioned. Mike suggested that it would be best if the group that engages in the dance activity would work towards a performance that would be videoed or presented to a larger audience in their organisation. The workshop session would happen during their Sunday afternoon sessions, and they would prefer to have the dancers come to them.

3. Hackney Quest

Contact details

Name: Luke Billingham

Email: Luke@hackneyquest.org.uk

Address: 1 Poole Rd, London E9 7AE

Contact means: phone call

I contacted Luke initially to see whether he could suggest some organisations that might be interested in what Studio Wayne McGregor is proposing. After suggesting other organisations as well, he said that Hackney Quest would be equally suitable for the partnership with the studio. We agreed to talk more over the phone.

When asked what he already knows about the studio, he knew that it was situated in Here East and that it delivers high quality dance. He described Hackney Quest as a youth club that operated in the evenings every single week, and it provides day activities during all holidays except Christmas. The activities that the youth club does could be defined as diverse, affordable, and close to the Hackney Quest.

In terms of possible interactions, he thinks that the young people would like to take part in workshops at the Studio, but it would be equally alright if the dancers come to where they

are. What is essential is that the dances would be led in an engaging way. The young people did a street dance workshop before, since it is immediately popular with the young people, but anything works as long as it keeps them engaged. He mentioned that both, a one off workshop or a series could work really well. The young people are aged 8-18, but the organisation also had activities for older people and family support projects. Workshops tailored for older people could also be useful.

Another thought that Luke had was to see whether there exists a possibility to have mentoring schemes offered by the studio dancers to the young people. Therefore, the young people could benefit from being paired with one of dancers that could share their experience. Also, having scholarships or grants in order to undertake work at the studio could prove helpful.

4. Mini Mermaids and Young Tritons

Contact details

Name: Khara Mills

Email: khara@minimermaidrunningclub.org

Address: -

Contact means: phone call

Khara, the London Ambassador for Mini Mermaids called me, as a follow up of the advert circulated by the Hackney Centre for Volunteering. I told her more about the studio, the workshops that have been done before and the possible interactions with the studio, and she appeared very excited at the thought of a possible collaboration.

She told me more about the organisation she is working for. Mini Mermaids has the mission of allowing girls to really feel how movement can benefit their physical and mental health, helping them to understand self-worth, build confidence to move and keep moving and to boost their self-esteem before it peaks at 9 years old then takes a nose dive. This is why they start to work with them from 6/7 years old and hope to help them find some resilience in this crazy social media driven, pressure heavy world, to navigate life more kindly for themselves and others. The girls that are part of the Mini Mermaids come from a low socio-economic background. The concept of the organisation and the ideas for the curriculum are inspired from the US. However, Mini Mermaids have been around in the UK for 3 years, and in London for 2 years. The projects they are doing were aimed at primary school girls, but they have recently directed their interest to the community in Hackney. A lot of their work aims to explore different spaces for sports. They use the indoor space for discussions, reflexions, but prefer the outdoor space, because for now, it provides more opportunities, especially during the warm seasons.

The curriculum that the Mini Mermaids follow is centred on sports activities. They identify as a running club, but the word is used loosely, since the whole purpose is to actually explore the movement potential. The curriculum is designed for 8 weeks, with 1.5 hours of activities per week. Each week focuses on a different theme, inspired by a body part. They explore themes such as feelings, emotions, community, strength, goal setting, nutrition, health. Even if the organisation promotes sports first and foremost, most girls have little or no experience with sports. Instead, they learn how to find and manage their movement potential.

When asked how the Mini Mermaids would interact with the studio, Khara mentioned that what they are looking for at the moment, is a new space for them to explore. Each 8 week programme is trying to take the girls into a different space.

'I wasn't sure what other information you need from me at this stage, but perhaps a reminder that as a community interest company we would love to offer one of our 8 week once a week programmes using the studio space and the surrounding area in the park. Also to discuss the possibility of a workshop as part of our programme, as a way to encourage the girls to think differently about movement. We have 'running club' in our name, but we want to encourage the girls to move in any way that makes them feel good, by finding their happy pace, which is different for every one of them.'

Therefore, it would be the space of the studio that would interest them the most, but having at least one workshop with of the dancers, would also be helpful.

5. London Youth

Contact details

Name: Jas Hothi

Email: jas.hothi@londonyouth.org

Address: 47 – 49 Pitfield Street, London N1 6DA

Contact means: meeting

I emailed Jas in order to ask for a list of organisations that may want to collaborate with the studio. Instead, he suggested we would meet, so I can tell him more about the studio's proposal.

He started by telling me more about London Youth. He is the Sports Development Officer, and he is in charge of arranging sports opportunities for the organisations that partnered with them. London Youth is a large network of 350 youth organisations, housed in each borough. However, Jas works mostly in the sports sector in Hackney. Dance has always been an important sport for the organisations that work with London Youth, so there already exists a culture of appreciation for dance in the youth sector. He told me more about what is the place that dance takes in relation to youth activities, and there are many residential camps where young people learn how to dance, or partnerships with dance studios.

Even if there seem to be many other dance related activities in the area, Jas has particularly excited and keen to help facilitate the connection between the studio and local organisations. He said that running taster sessions for the young people could be a good step to take at the beginning. Since he could not speak on behalf of other organisations, he said that he would be happy to collaborate with the studio in future projects and facilitate the interaction studio-community. He could promote the programmes through the newsletters sent out by London Youth.

6. Core Arts

Contact details

Name: Laura-Jane Connolly

Email: lconnolly@corearts.co.uk

Address: 1 St Barnabas Terrace, Homerton, London, E9 6DJ

Contact means: meeting

After emailing Core Arts twice, I was directed to speak to Laura, who is the sports coordinator for the organisation. Core Arts promotes positive mental health and wellbeing through creative learning. Their mission is to support recovery, social inclusion, and mental wellbeing through arts. Specifically, they work towards achieving psychological wellbeing through creative education. They offer courses in arts, music, computing and health for people with moderate to severe mental health needs. The sports programme started 3 years ago and now is an important aspect of Core Arts.

The members of Core Arts are doing 15 sports at the moment, and dance is indeed one of them. They have 6 week dance courses in a variety of styles, emphasising having fun and following a choreography at the same time. The 6 weeks can sometimes end up with a performance in the main hall of Core Arts, but since it may sometimes be too difficult for the people to engage in that, it does not always happen. Classes have around 10 people per class.

In terms of the interaction with the studio, it could start with a tester session happening at Core Arts. It is sometimes difficult for the people to go straight to the studio, since it may be a stress factor for most of them. After they have gotten used to the dancer, going to the studio to rehearse could also be a great idea. Everyone is older than 18 years old, but most people who take part in activities are normally 30-45 years old. The person who facilitates the workshop does not need any special training, especially since there will be volunteers to help the participants out. Working towards a performance would be a great idea, but it must be seen how the workshop participants would respond to that.

Laura said she would be happy to work with the studio in the future, especially since the dance workshop is amongst the most popular ones.

7. KEEN London

Contact details

Name: China Davis

Email: lconnolly@corearts.co.uk

Address: 1 St Barnabas Terrace, Homerton, London, E9 6DJ

Contact means: meeting

KEEN is a charity which offers one-to-one support at sports and activity sessions for children with additional needs and disabilities. The children are ages 6 to 15 and they all have a

mentor. The KEEN in East London has a session every Saturday for 2 hours. The activities that have happened previously are basketball, hockey. Since China started working with the athletes a few months ago, she is not aware whether there has been a dance session before, but she believes that it would be very beneficial for the young people. The number of athletes who attend their workshops weekly are around 20, and there are 20 more mentors. Most of their activities take place in their sports hall, every Saturday.

When it comes to imagining the future interactions with the studio, China said that it would be interesting for the athletes to go and participate in a workshop in the studio. She would imagine a 2 hour session. The number of people who would attend that session would not be as large as the usual, since special travel arrangements need to be made. Also, always, the number of young people who attend, would be doubled by the number of mentors. Some of the mentor are actually graduates from the programme, so even they would like to get involved in the workshop. Since the success of any interaction is measured with the enjoyment of the people who take part, she said it would be better if at the beginning, the athletes could watch a performance and then take part in a short, simple workshop.

China was not so sure about how people would respond to a dance workshop, but she could say for sure that whenever the young people have some time off, with no activities, they always somehow turn to music and movement. She would be happy to continue talking about possible interaction and happy to make them happen. Even if she did not hear about the studio before, she believes that the collaboration could benefit the young people. All interactions would have to start after September.

8. The Stroke Project

Contact details

Name: Laura Pikken

Email: laura.pikken@triangle.care

Address: 48-50 Well Street, London E9 7PX

Contact means: phone call

Laura contacted me as a follow up of the newsletter send out by the Hackney Volunteering Services. At Stroke Project they run weekly support groups in different venues around Hackney for stroke survivors and many of their clients are interested in different activities including dance and there is good evidence on the therapeutic benefits of dance in ongoing recovery from stroke and for overall health and well-being. They are using artistic expression, movement and exercise to support the people attending their workshops.

The regular groups have about 30 people attending, then the smallest group would be of about 5 people. They all have different abilities, some are more able, some less able, depending on their condition. All people at the Stroke Project are adults, and their ages range from 30 to 90 years old. Part of their ongoing activities are choir classes, arts sessions, gardening, cooking, walking groups. They have never been involved in dance workshops before, but they have a room that could accommodate a workshop, and the people would be happy to try it.

The potential options would be coming to see the studio, but that might be possible only for a small number of people, due to travelling difficulties. Instead having session happening closer to them would be best. One offs are alright, but it would probably be better if there was a series of workshops, because the people tend to feel better once they've become more confident and familiar with the instructor. Unfortunately, only one workshop could not get them out of their shell. All of the groups at the Stroke Project meet weekly, for 2 hours. There is a different group for each day on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

9. London Gypsies and Travellers

Contact details

Name: Tyler Hatwell

Email: thatwell@londongandt.org.uk

Address: Mildmay Community Centre, Woodville Road, London N16 8NA

Contact means: meeting

The London Gypsies and Travellers are aiming to help the gypsies and travellers in London get better support over their lives, and have a say in the decision that are concerning them. They mainly work on equality and inclusion, work and skills, homes and young people. While the work with adults is meant to help mostly with issues relating to finding appropriate work and home, the activities with young people are different. The team that is working with young people is quite new, and the areas that they devote their attention to are fighting prejudice, discrimination and isolation.

In that sense, Tyler seemed very surprised that I contacted them on behalf of the studio. He suggested that what they would like best would be to establish trust is the local community, as an organisation, and as a group of people. They have had workshops like filmmaking, confidence building sessions, but they are mostly quite spontaneous, and do not really have a reestablished weekly schedule. Instead, the organisation has a network of young people that are looking forward to new opportunities and activities. The activities that they have had were sometimes one offs, with not much consistency, and that is why they would prefer something that would be on a longer term. Tyler thinks it would be good if the young people went to the studio to watch open rehearsals and take part in a workshop. He said that having the dancer teach the young people a specific dance, would benefit them mostly. He does not know if it is possible, but classes of Irish dance, flamenco, or Romani traditional dance would be the best. Also, most young people attending their activities come from low-income families, therefore, covering the transportation costs for the ones living far away from the studio might be difficult.

Overall, The London Gypsies and Travelers would like to collaborate with the studio and they would find it very helpful for the young people attending their activities. They emphasises once again that building trust within the community is one of their main aims, and this collaboration would be a step forward.

10. Lauren Doss

Contact details

Name: Lauren Doss

Email: dossled@icloud.com

Address: -

Contact means: meeting and email

I met Lauren at the Hackney Wick and Fish Island Conversations Breakfast at Stour Space. She approached me afterwards saying that, as a local artist, she's been looking to engage with the studio for a while, and she would like to tell me more about her work. In an email, she described her work:

'I am a freelance audio & visual artist based in Hackney Wick. My work is interdisciplinary. I collaborate with practitioners, directors and companies, researching, developing and composing projects from scratch or existing material. The results of which take the form of music, film, dance and live performance.'

Previous and current working relationships that I have are with Rambert Dance Company, Collectress, Alex Garland, Michael Grandage and Natasha Khan amongst others.

'I'm keen to engage with my local community in an arts context. I'm also keen on projects that use movement and music to engage the public with a wellbeing subtext.'

Other organisations/individuals who expressed interest:

- **Hackney Wick Craft Club:** debbie.bowden@talktalk.net

Debbie emailed back saying she needed a few days to discuss the proposal with the members of the club, but never got back to me afterwards.

- **The Hub Club:** cboyle@outward.org.uk

Cathay emailed back saying she would like to set up a meeting. Then, communication was lost because she did not email back.

- **The Pedro Youth Club:** info@pedroclub.com (07950499754)

Sent back a short emailing saying James Cook MBE could be contacted, but he did not respond to the phone.

- **The Crib:** parentsvoice526@gmail.com

Was contacted around the end of the project, and due to lack of time, the communication was not continued. However, Kelly expressed interest, so should be contacted.

'We run boroughs United our annual event at Hackney Empire, so would be great to discuss working together. We have dance groups from across a large number of boroughs who take part in Feb half term every year. Would be great to have a judge from the school. My number is 07961859921.'

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