



Curious about Impact —

The impact of Curious Minds as a Catalyst
for Cultural Education

A Report for Curious Minds — April 2020



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1. Introduction

This section introduces Curious Minds and the Social Value and Impact Study, sets out the aims and objectives of the research and describes the research methodology applied.

About Curious Minds

Curious Minds was established in 2008 as a Company Limited by Guarantee (06775402) and a Registered Charity (1130988) in 2009.

Curious Minds aims to improve the lives of children and young people in the North West of England through facilitating access to arts and culture. It promotes cultural education and drives innovation and collaboration between the cultural, educational and youth sectors.

“Our vision is for an equal society where all children and young people are supported to achieve their creative potential and live fulfilled lives, rich with arts and culture.”

Curious Minds’ area of operation covers Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire.

Our research objectives

The overarching objective of the evaluation is to understand and demonstrate the impact that Curious Minds is making upon individuals and organisations across sectors.

The detailed objectives of the study are to:

- Understand the impact that Curious Minds is achieving for its stakeholders.
- Provide evidence to allow Curious Minds to better articulate their influence.
- Demonstrate the impact of Curious Minds to funders, commissioners and other stakeholders.

Our research methodology

Social Value Lab carried out research between December 2019 – March 2020. We have used a mixed methods approach to this evaluation, including:

Desk research

- A review of the monitoring and evaluation data collected by Curious Minds.
- A review of Curious Minds management information.
- A review of case studies prepared by Curious Minds.
- A review of previous evaluations of Curious Minds' programmes.

We have used this data predominantly to inform the fieldwork. In some cases, we have used quotes from previous work (referenced).

Fieldwork

We have undertaken a programme of consultation with in total 338 stakeholders:

- 32 semi-structured telephone interviews with key stakeholders, including 13 teachers, 13 cultural practitioners, 6 youth practitioners.
- Survey of Teachers and practitioners who became Arts Award Advisers, with a response rate of 15% (73).
- Survey of teachers who received Artsmark support, with a response rate of 20% (126).

- Survey of event attendees, including schools and NPOs, with a response rate of 36% (54).
- Survey of cultural professionals who took part in the leadership programme (CASE fellows), with a response rate of 61% (11).
- Survey of the NPOs, museums and arts organisations that employ the CASE fellows, with a response rate of 29% (6).
- Survey of teachers who took part in the leadership programme (SLiCE fellows), with a response rate of 48% (22).
- Survey of SLiCE fellow schools, the employers of the SLiCE fellows, with a response rate of 15% (7).
- Survey of other schools in the wider SLiCE networks, with a response rate of 5% (7). Due to the low response rate, we have not included the results of this survey in this study.

Limitations to the research

The outbreak of the Coronavirus has impacted on the fieldwork for this study.

The start of the Corona measures in the UK coincide with the end of the fieldwork period. This meant that the closure of schools and cultural and youth organisations naturally influenced the response rates negatively. Although efforts were made to chase potential survey respondents, it was clear that the surveys were a low priority.



2. What does Curious Minds do?

Curious Minds promotes and supports cultural education in the North West through collaboration between the Educational, Cultural and Youth sectors addressing the Cultural Education Challenge.

Championing cultural education

Curious Minds is the organisation that brings together the educational, cultural and youth sectors in the North West of England. It aims to address the Cultural Education Challenge¹.

Curious Minds believes that every child in the North West should have access to and should be able to participate in arts and culture. It also firmly believes that arts and culture can help tackle social injustice.

Since 2012 Curious Minds has acted as one of ten Bridge Organisations in England, covering the North West. Bridge organisations

aim to ‘connect the cultural sector and the education sector so that children and young people can have access to great arts and cultural opportunities’². As a Bridge Organisation, Curious Minds goals are to:

- Create access to culture and the arts for all children and young people.
- Enable creative collaboration between the cultural and education sectors.
- Work with schools, HIE’s and cultural organisations to test and incubate innovative solutions to cultural and creative education.

In order to achieve these aims and objectives

¹ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/children-and-young-people/cultural-education-challenge-0>

² <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/children-and-young-people/bridge-organisations>

Curious Minds delivers three strands of work:



Strand 1 - Universal Offer:

information, advocacy, opportunities to engage with Artsmark, Arts Award and the Quality Principles, promotion and development of Culture Hubs.



Strand 2 - Targeted Offer:

supporting and developing educational and cultural leadership at sector, local and regional levels across the cultural, educational and youth sectors and involve children and young people in the design of cultural education.



Strand 3 - Cultural Education Partnerships:

developing cross-sector and cross-art form delivery focused partnerships, supported by Partnership Investment and other funding, to co-ordinate activity that directly responds to the needs and priorities identified by Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs) and Regional Leaders.

Curious Minds delivers a number of funded and commissioned programmes of work but this report focusses on their role as a Bridge organisation and specifically on four areas of that work. This report does not include analysis of the impact of LCEPs and Partnership Investment due to the different methodology used to achieve their goals.



Supporting schools to embed Cultural Education: The Artsmark programme

Artsmark is the Arts Council England accredited creative quality standard for schools. It provides a framework at three levels (silver, gold and platinum) for teachers and schools to plan, develop and evaluate arts and culture across the curriculum.

Curious Minds supports schools to achieve Artsmark accreditation and develop through the levels. It delivers: Artsmark Development Days, Artsmark support sessions, one-to-one support, practical resources and access to a network of schools and cultural providers that will help them to implement Artsmark in their school.



Supporting children and young people to develop as artists and leaders: Arts Award delivery

Arts Award is a national framework that provides a range of recognised qualifications (discover, explore, bronze, silver and gold) for young people up to 25 years of age to develop as artists and art leaders, participate in arts activities, experience arts events and engage with artists and their work.

Curious Minds provides training and support for Arts Award advisers, whether active in schools, or in cultural or youth organisations. They support Arts Award advisers with training, one-to-one support, public support surgeries and case studies and other resources. It helps organisations to scale up their activities and facilitates partnerships between schools, and cultural and youth organisations.



Supporting professional learning through events, training and conferences

Curious Minds regularly organises learning events for teachers and cultural and youth practitioners. These include conferences, workshops and seminars on topics relevant for cultural education. Some events are part of the of the Artsmark, Arts Award or Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs) programmes, others are organised separately. Some recent events organised include Thriving Child in the North, British Values in Schools Symposium and Art & Digital - in conversation with young people.



Cultivating Cultural Education Leadership

In order to develop leadership, Curious Minds has developed two bespoke programmes: SLiCE for teachers and CASE for cultural practitioners.

SLiCE

The Specialist Leaders in Cultural Education (SLiCE) fellowship is a one-year fellowship programme for middle and senior leaders within Teaching School Alliances and Multi-Academy Trusts. The SLiCE programme focuses on developing the fellow's capacity to strategically support cultural education in their own school and across the alliance.

SLiCE Fellows carry out a research project around a common research question. For example, in 2018/19 the question was "What role could cultural organisations have in

supporting schools to think differently about arts, creativity, and cultural education underpinning the relationships between wellbeing and literacy in the early years?"

CASE

The Culture and Arts Schools Experts (CASE) fellowship is a one-year leadership development programme for early to mid-career cultural practitioners. It develops specialists in cultural education who can lead cultural organisations' schools work.

CASE Fellows are provided with 15 days of learning and self-study across the year, including two residentials with contributions from regional and national experts. Participants learn about key cultural and education policies and how to conduct research. Each CASE fellow will adopt a personal development plan. They also undertake a 4/5-day placement within a school and are provided with networking opportunities.

Curious Minds in numbers

Since 2015, Curious Minds delivered the following KPD -



Number of schools supported

1,793³



Number of cultural organisations supported

570



Number of Arts Award moderations

65,463



Number of schools supported to embed arts and culture through Artsmark

1,168



Registered Artsmark schools

756⁴



Number of events delivered

386



Number of leadership fellowships awarded

156



Number of Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs) established

26



Number of Young Associates

20



Partnership Investment

£1m grants distributed



£1,5m match funding generated



Additional funding secured for Cultural Education in the North West

£1,05m

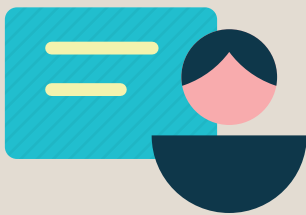
³ This equates to 53% of all schools in the North West.

⁴ This equates to 22% of all schools in the North West

3. Who is affected by Curious Minds?

Curious Minds has an impact on the cultural, educational and youth work sectors in the North West. This section describes the main stakeholders.

The first stage when looking at the impact is to establish who the material stakeholders are; the people and organisations that experience significant change as a result of Curious Minds' activities. We have identified six main stakeholder groups:

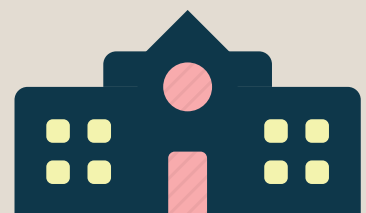


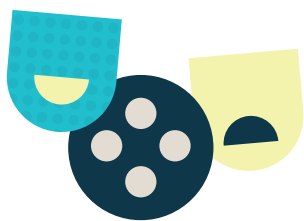
Teachers

Curious Minds delivers a range of programmes specifically aimed at teachers, including Artsmark support and the SLiCE Fellowship programme. Teachers are also one of the main groups that are supported in becoming Arts Award advisers and attending Curious Minds' events.

Schools

Supported teachers return to their schools and in many cases also work with other schools, who in turn benefit from their changed skills, knowledge, attitude and motivation.



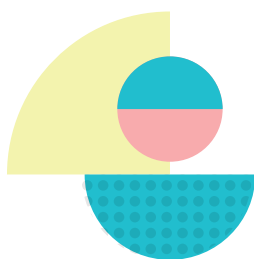


Cultural Practitioners

Another of the main groups Curious Minds works with are cultural practitioners. They can work in museums, galleries, theatres, dance and drama companies and festivals. On other occasions they are freelance artists, performers or writers. Cultural practitioners attend events and are trained as Arts Award advisers or CASE Fellows.

Cultural Organisations

Supported cultural practitioners work across the cultural sector and influence the organisations they work in and with. These cultural organisations learn and change as a result of Curious Minds' support.

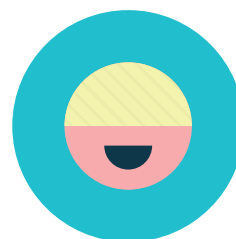


Youth Practitioners

A third group of individuals that attend Curious Minds' events and are trained as Arts Award advisers are youth sector practitioners. These include people working at youth organisations, uniformed groups (e.g. scouts, girl guides) or community organisations.

Youth Organisations

Again, the youth practitioners take their skills, knowledge and experience back to their organisations and trigger changes in attitude, activities and directions in youth organisations.



Children and Young People

Although Curious Minds predominantly works with teachers, cultural and youth practitioners and the organisations they work in, the ultimate vision of Curious Minds is to improve the lives of children and young people in order to achieve and tackle social injustice through cultural education.

Curious Minds does not seek to demonstrate the impact it has on the lives of children and young people but takes that as assumed (and uses it as a starting place for all its programmes) due to the ample evidence of the benefits of cultural education on the equality, wellbeing and attainment of children and young people. Some examples⁵:

- For example, cultural education can improve the cognitive abilities of young people by up to 17%⁶.
- One-third of young people in the youth justice system who completed the Summer Arts Colleges moved up a level in literacy and numeracy⁷.
- Students from low-income families that take part in arts at school are 20% more likely to vote in later life⁸.
- Cultural education increases transferable skills by 10–17%⁹.
- Students with intensive arts experiences in high school are three times more likely to get a degree¹⁰.
- Young people that studied arts subjects have a higher employability and are more likely to maintain employment¹¹.
- Young people who participating in arts and culture are 38% more likely to report good health¹².

The Impact Journey

Curious Minds' overarching aim is to bring about systemic change to make the lives of children better. Curious Minds works directly with teachers, cultural and youth practitioners achieving a range of outcomes. These individuals in turn change their colleagues and the schools and organisations they work in.

Teachers, cultural and youth practitioners and their organisations work with children and young people and, due to Curious Minds' support, can deliver better projects and services to more young people, ensuring access and participation.

Schools, cultural and youth organisations influence other organisations and statutory agencies they work with, thus pushing for systemic change in society. This is strengthened by Curious Minds Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs) and other bespoke programmes.

The changes Curious Minds achieves with teachers, cultural and youth practitioners and their schools and organisations, leads to more and better cultural education for children and young people in the North West. This in turn influences education, equality and wellbeing of the area.

In this way Curious Minds is a catalyst for cultural education, changing policy and practice one teacher, one cultural practitioner or one youth practitioners at a time.

⁵ See: <http://culturallearningalliance.org.uk/evidence/>

⁶ Culture and Sport Evidence Programme (CASE). Understanding the impact of engagement in culture and sport (London: DCMS, 2010)

⁷ Stephenson, Martin, Adams, Maree and Tarling, Roger. The Art of Engagement: Outcomes and Impact of the Summer Arts College Programme 2007–12 (Norwich: Unitas, 2014)

⁸ Key Research Findings, The Case for Cultural Learning, Cultural Learning Alliance, 2017

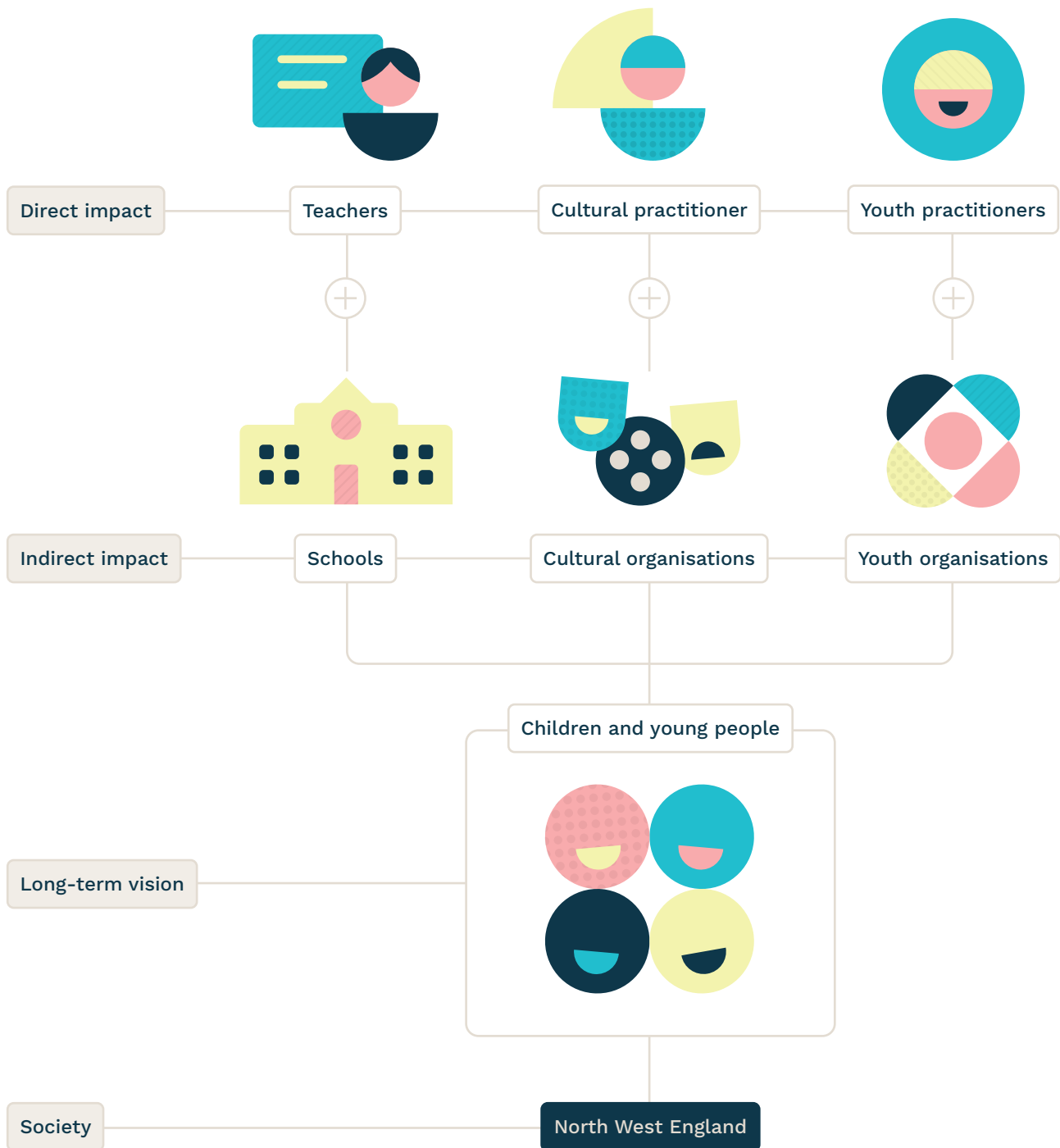
⁹ Culture and Sport Evidence Programme (CASE). Understanding the impact of engagement in culture and sport (London: DCMS, 2010)

¹⁰ Catterall, James S., Dumais, Susan A. and Hampden-Thompson, Gillian. The arts and achievements in at-risk youth: findings from longitudinal studies (Washington: National Endowment for the Arts, 2012)

¹¹ DTZ Consulting & Research. Arts Employability, Executive Summary (Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Education Department, 2006)

¹² Leadbetter, C. and O'Connor, N. Healthy Attendance? The Impact of Cultural Engagement and Sports Participation on Health and Satisfaction with Life in Scotland (Scottish Government Social Research, 2013)

Figure 3.1: CURIOUS MINDS IMPACT JOURNEY



4. The Curious Minds Theory of Change

As part of the impact study we have developed a Theory of Change, which has been evidenced by the consultation results.



See next page →

Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes – Impact		
	Activities	Stakeholders	Short	Medium	Long
Staff Funding (Arts Council England and others) Knowledge and expertise (arts sector, cultural sector, children and young people's services, educational pedagogy, employability) Curious Minds Board, advisory groups and critical friends Effort and enthusiasm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artsmark training and support Arts Award training and support SLICE programme Local Cultural Education Partnerships Events, brokerage, advocacy, information, partnership investment Membership of a Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) 	Teachers Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced knowledge of arts and culture/cultural education and how to use that in an educational setting Increased skills Increased confidence Increased ability to advocate for arts and culture in education Increased number of contacts with other schools and cultural organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased status and credibility at their school Improved career prospects Increased capacity to deliver arts and culture/cultural education in education Increased ability to influence management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More children and young people have access to the arts and culture leading to improved attainment and wellbeing Increased creative collaboration between the cultural and education sectors More innovative solutions to cultural and creative education are implemented within the cultural, educational and children's sectors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artsmark training and support Arts Award training and support Consultancy support CASE programme Curious Kitbag Trailblaze Programme Hope Streets programme Young Associates Events, brokerage, advocacy, information, partnership investment Membership of an LCEP 	Cultural practitioners Cultural organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced knowledge of arts and culture/cultural education and how to use that in an educational setting Increased skills Increased confidence to work with a more diverse group of young people Increased understanding of the educational and youth sector Increased ability to work with young people who are missing out on cultural participation Better ability to communicate with and build partnerships with educational institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased status and credibility in their organisation Improved career prospects Increased ability to influence strategic decisions Improved service offering for children and young people, teachers and schools Increased ability and capacity to work with schools Increased networks and partnerships with schools and other cultural organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More children and young people have access to the arts and culture leading to improved attainment and wellbeing Increased creative collaboration between the cultural and education sectors More innovative solutions to cultural and creative education are implemented within the cultural, educational and children's sectors
Staff Funding (Arts Council England and others) Knowledge and expertise (arts sector, cultural sector, children and young people's services, educational pedagogy, employability) Curious Minds Board, advisory groups and critical friends Effort and enthusiasm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts Award Strong Voices Hope Streets Programme Events, brokerage, advocacy, information, partnership investment Membership of an LCEP 	Youth sector practitioners Youth organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced knowledge of arts and culture/cultural education and how to use that in an educational setting Increased skills Increased confidence to work with young people on arts and culture Increased understanding of the cultural and educational sector Increased ability work with young people to take part in arts and cultural activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased status and credibility in their organisation as a cultural expert/leader Increased ability to influence strategic decisions to include culture Improved service offering for children and young people Better understanding of the positive effects of arts and culture (cultural capital) Improved status of arts and culture within the organisation Increased networking with cultural organisations 	

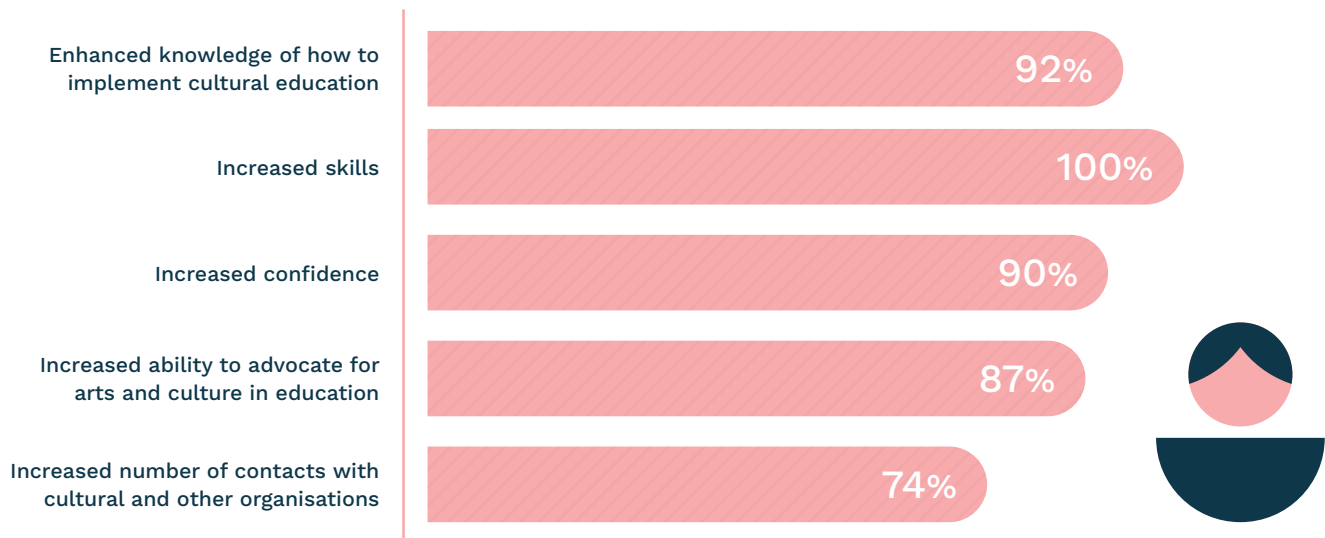
5. The impact on Teachers

Curious Minds provides cultural education training and support to teachers, who benefit by gaining a better understanding of how to use cultural education in their work, a greater ability to advocate for arts and culture, increased skills and confidence and an increased network. Within the medium term, teachers gain in status and credibility, improve their capacity to deliver cultural education and their ability to influence strategic decisions.

Curious Minds works directly with teachers in a variety of ways. It trains and supports teachers that want to become Arts Award advisers, delivers the training and support for Artsmark co-ordinators in schools, organises events that teachers attend and and develops them as specialist leaders in schools. The short-term outcomes for teachers are presented in Figure 5.1.



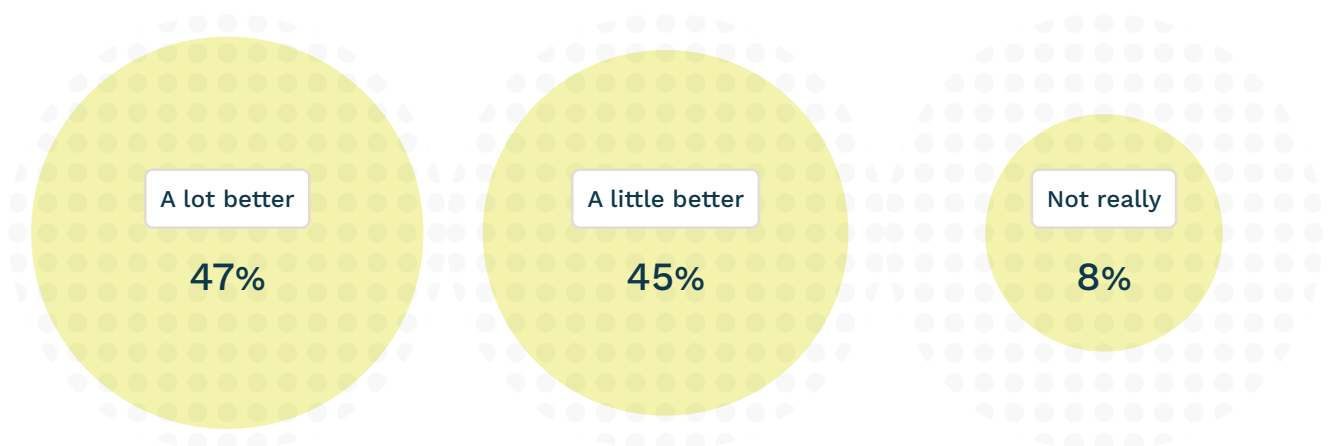
Figure 5.1 – Teachers – Short Term Outcomes



Using culture in an educational setting

Curious Minds' main objective is to enable creative collaboration between the cultural and educational sectors. Almost all teachers (92%) said they had a better understanding of how to use arts and culture in an educational setting because of their involvement with Curious Minds. Figure 5.2 shows the detail.

Figure 5.2- Understanding how to use cultural education

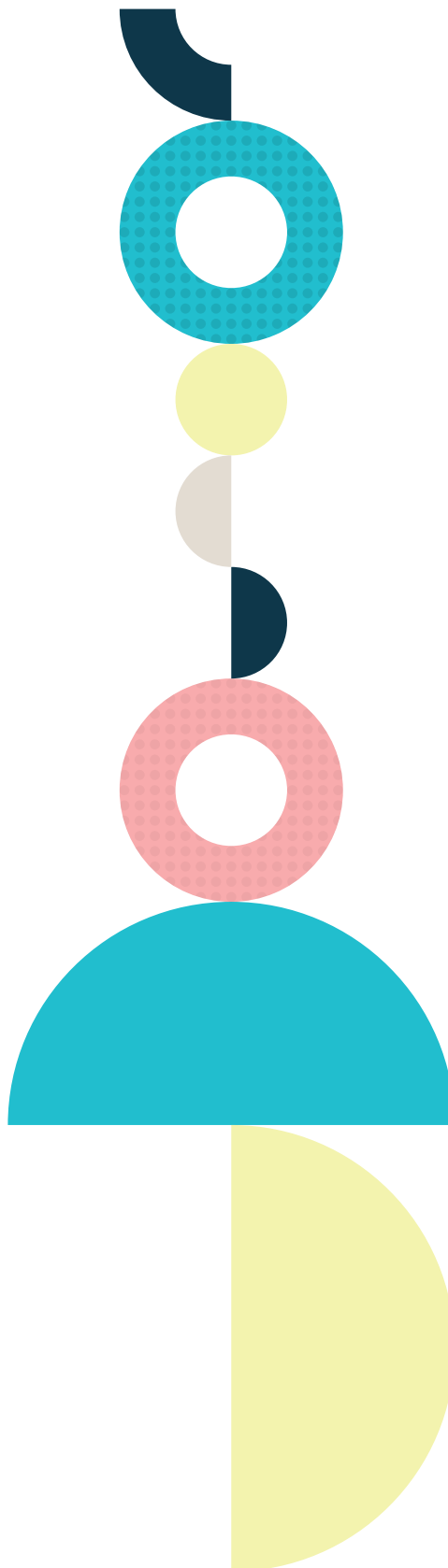


One teacher working in a school in a deprived area, commented on how she got a better understanding of the power of arts to create an ‘I can and I’ll have a go attitude’ in pupils and how arts and culture can break down barriers and open up opportunities for vulnerable pupils. Another teacher brought up the value of arts and culture for pupils with low attainment who ‘feel like they have not achieved anything in school’. Yet another teacher commented on how they used arts and culture to ‘engage with disengaged pupils’. Another talked about how they had used arts and culture to ‘turn around five boys at risk of exclusion’.

“I feel that we will be a lot more confident of how to use the arts and culture to support young people as artists.”

“Listening to the real examples of projects and partnerships have given us a wealth of ideas and knowledge for what’s out there.”

“I do feel that I recognise where arts and culture would enhance and complement our children’s learning better.”



Growing skills and knowledge

Curious Minds has been very successful in transferring skills and knowledge to the supported teachers, with all (100%) reporting gaining a range of skills and knowledge. Table 5.1 shows the most frequently mentioned skills reported, mapped against the Cultural Learning Outcomes developed by Curious Minds.

TABLE 5.1: SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Skills reported	Cultural Learning Outcome
Knowledge about opportunities available to me and my organisation	Culturally knowledgeable
Knowledge about benefits of arts and culture to young people	Culturally aware
Soft skills	Cultural leadership
Artistic/cultural skills and knowledge	Culturally productive
Knowledge about how to approach arts and culture in our organisation	Culturally productive
Leadership skills	Cultural leadership
Research skills	Culturally literate

Interviewed teachers valued the knowledge and understanding of opportunities available to them. They feel they now have the skills and knowledge to value these opportunities and pick the most appropriate ones for their school. ‘I felt a bit out of my depth before’ was the comment of one teacher. Others mentioned artistic, research, leadership and management skills gained.

“We now use this program across the school, and it has widened my knowledge on how to approach the Arts Awards with different key stages.”

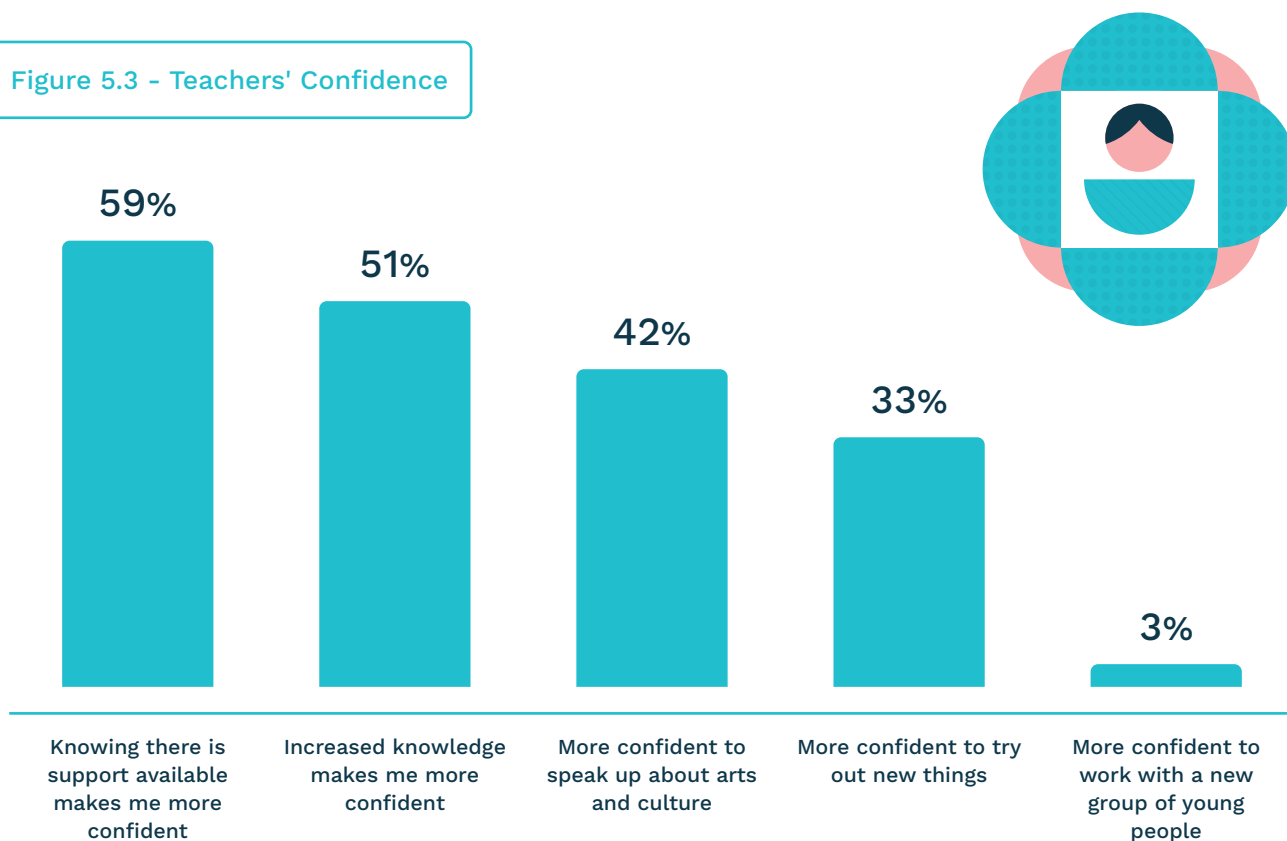
“An experienced teacher came to the school and taught me a variety of things, such as GCSE’s, schemes of work, networking and games.”

“How to deliver a programme of cultural activity and how to record it in various ways.”

Boosting confidence to deliver and speaking up

Teachers said they got confidence from the Curious Minds support, as is shown in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3 - Teachers' Confidence



The mere fact that support is available when required boosts confidence (59%), as does their increased knowledge about how to use arts and culture in an educational setting (51%).

Teachers credited Curious Minds with always being available for instant support and guidance. One mentioned that 'having support available boosted confidence'.

"I am able to express and advocate for arts and cultural activities to senior leaders more confidently - this is predominantly due to the

increase in knowledge and expertise."

"I'm able to deliver CPD to staff with confidence on the importance of my subject and its connection to most other subjects."

"I am now more confident about promoting the value of arts and culture in education."

Teachers report being more confident to share their views (42%) and trying out new things (33%).

Some teachers referred to how their increased confidence translated into their teaching. One teacher said that she now ‘teaches performing arts, rather than just wearing a creative hat’.

Other teachers revealed that their new confidence enabled them to advocate for arts and culture to the school management and present at events. One teacher got the confidence to engage in conversations with the local authority.

“I approach outside agencies and feel more able to ask for opportunities that match the children’s needs/interests. I feel I can talk to leadership about why we should offer creative engagement not just as an add on.”

“Originally, I was only part of the group to talk about dance and performing arts but now I am confident to talk about visual, 3D and music as the arts.”



Advocating for cultural education

The majority of teachers that have worked with Curious Minds (87%) have become advocates for cultural education in their school and beyond. This has led to arts and culture becoming more visible within the school and in new initiatives being established. One teacher said that arts and culture was now ‘at the forefront of conversations’. Another teacher talked about how they had set up a new drama hub to bring teachers with an interest in drama together. Most teachers advocated for cultural education at their own school, but some also did at other schools.

“Whole school projects done by the children are visible. Children carry out arts projects in the community which they are confident to talk about.”

“We have had more competitions, more work put on social media, various concerts and artist visits.”

“Academic outcomes have been delivered creatively across the curriculum. Outside visitors have worked with our pupils.”

It has also resulted that in many a school, the attitude towards cultural education has changed and arts and culture have become more embedded in the curriculum. One teacher remarked that having the support from Curious Minds helped her to advocate for cultural education at their school. Another teacher talked about how arts and culture is now used across the curriculum, for example in subjects as geography or history.

“Initially arts-based initiatives were seen as a ‘add’ on to the existing curriculum - but now we also run arts-based initiatives within the curriculum too.”

“Arts Education is now one of the highest priorities in our school and even our governors, local community and parents have become actively involved.”

“Cultural capital is on our school improvement plan”

“We have completely rewritten our school curriculum map based around our Artsmark journey, the whole school is now working on themes and have identified the cultural links within their own curriculums and each theme.”

Teachers spoke about how Curious Minds connect teachers and schools with other schools and cultural organisations. One teacher said that Curious Minds is ‘the umbrella under which everything else hangs’. Teachers mention being asked to speak at events and webinars, which grows their network.

Many teachers gave examples of how they met artists, photographers, drama and dance teachers, and how they collaborated with galleries and museums through Curious Minds. One teacher said that ‘we have the knowledge of what the children need, and Curious Minds helps you to find the right person’. Another commented that ‘Curious Minds has opened my eyes to what networks there are in our area’.

One teacher elaborated on meeting a museum officer through Curious Minds, who went on to do a four-week placement at their school, which led to a long-term ‘brilliant partnership between the school and the museum.’

Growing networks and partnerships

Through Curious Minds almost three quarters of teachers (74%) made new contacts and entered into partnerships with other schools, cultural and youth organisations.

More than half of the teachers (55%) reported new local and almost a quarter (23%) new regional networks/partnerships. More than a quarter of teachers (27%) said they have used their new networks.

Most partnerships are with a cultural organisation (20%), followed by another school (16%) and youth organisations (7%).

“We now have strong links with the heads of art from several local secondary schools and organised twilight training from them for all staff in art techniques and ideas.”

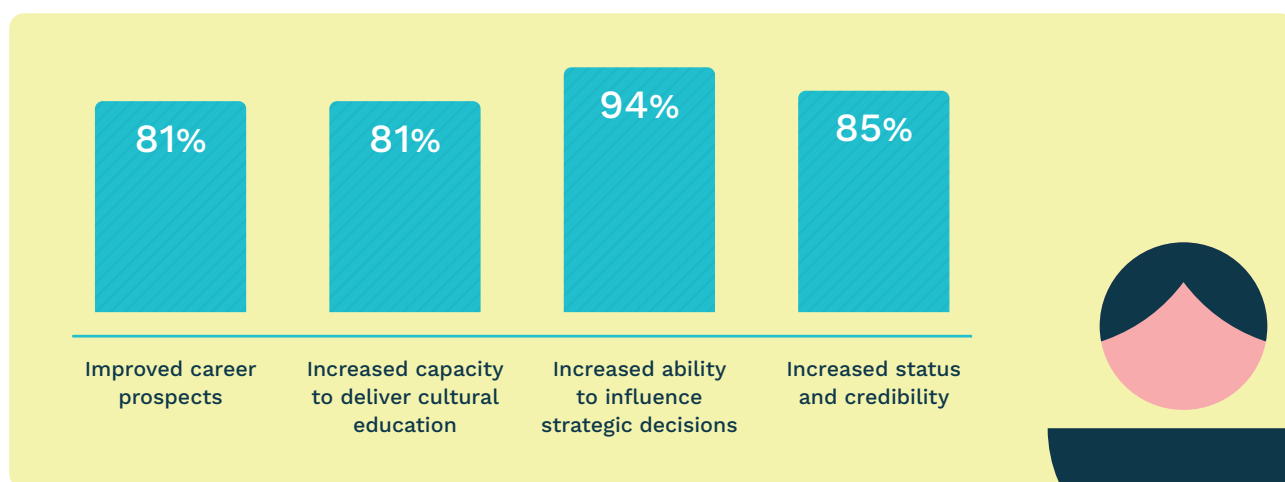
“I have made a strong relationship with [an arts organisation], which I would view as a legacy relationship.”

“We worked with [cultural organisation] during SLiCE and are in the process of working with them again for a second year.”

Medium term Outcomes

Being involved with Curious Minds also has an impact on teachers in the medium term. Figure 5.4 gives an overview.

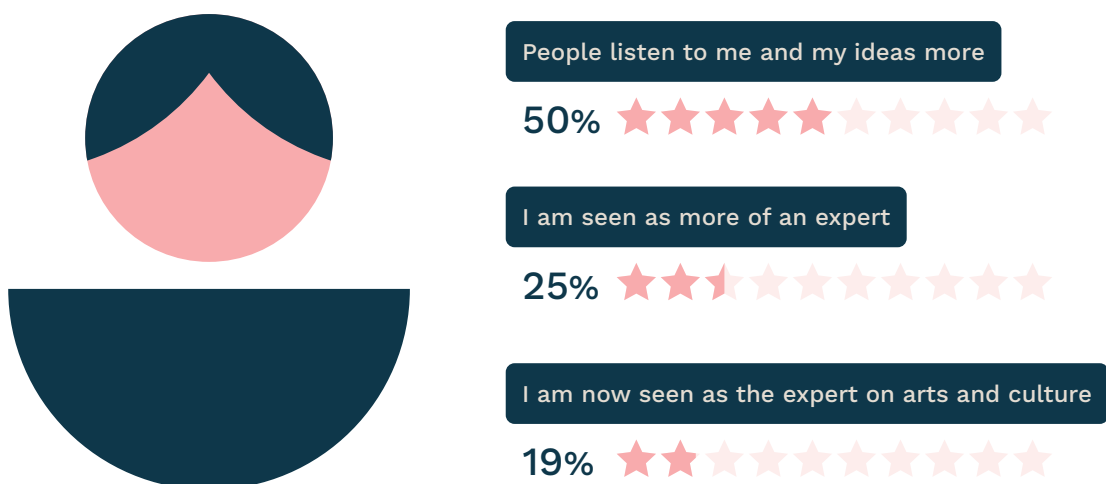
Figure 5.4 - Teachers - Medium Term Outcomes



Being seen as an expert on Cultural Education

Getting more skills, knowledge, experience, confidence and networks and speaking up for arts and culture improves the status and credibility of most teachers (81%) within their school, as shown in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5 - Increase in status



Teachers acknowledged that they were seen as some kind of expert on cultural education within their school. One said that ‘if they want to know anything, I’m the one they come to’, while another remarked that colleagues ‘come to ask me questions all the time’. Yet another teacher revealed that she is being asked for advice regularly by teachers from other schools.

“I organise an arts week at school in the summer. I feel my ideas are valued.”

“Better informed from training received, promotes being a wealth of information for others to draw upon.”

Given more responsibility for Cultural Education

From an improved status and credibility follows an increase in responsibilities for most teachers (81%). For almost three quarters of teachers (74%) this means being asked for more public engagements, but almost one in five (17%) report being given additional responsibilities within their job and for a small minority, (2%) promotion.

Teachers recognised the positive effect their involvement with Curious Minds has had on their career. Many were given more responsibilities and asked to speak at events. One teacher was given additional responsibilities for fundraising and has been able to get £20k for their school. Another stated that without Curious Minds they ‘wouldn’t have put themselves forward to present to senior management’.

One teacher said about Curious Minds that ‘for career progression they have been awesome’, while another commented that he ‘wouldn’t have got this job without my experience with Curious Minds’.

“Staff come to me for ideas and to help set up arts award opportunities. I have conducted inset focussed on art and recently been given the role of music coordinator. “

“I was asked to deliver training on Cultural Capital, SMSC and Arts Provision.”

“I have gained extra responsibilities. I will be involved with supporting children to create an individual arts log. I will also be involved in assessing the pupils work.”

“Now given title of Cultural Education Director and used over a few schools.”



Getting more effective at delivering cultural education

The vast majority of teachers (94%) state that they have become much better at delivering arts and culture as a result of Curious Minds' support. Just under half (46%) says they have become much more effective in delivering arts and culture and again almost half (48%) a little better.

"I am far more strategic and now look at 2 years for impact and further than the 2 years. I am more effective leading work with

our partners to meet the aims of our school."

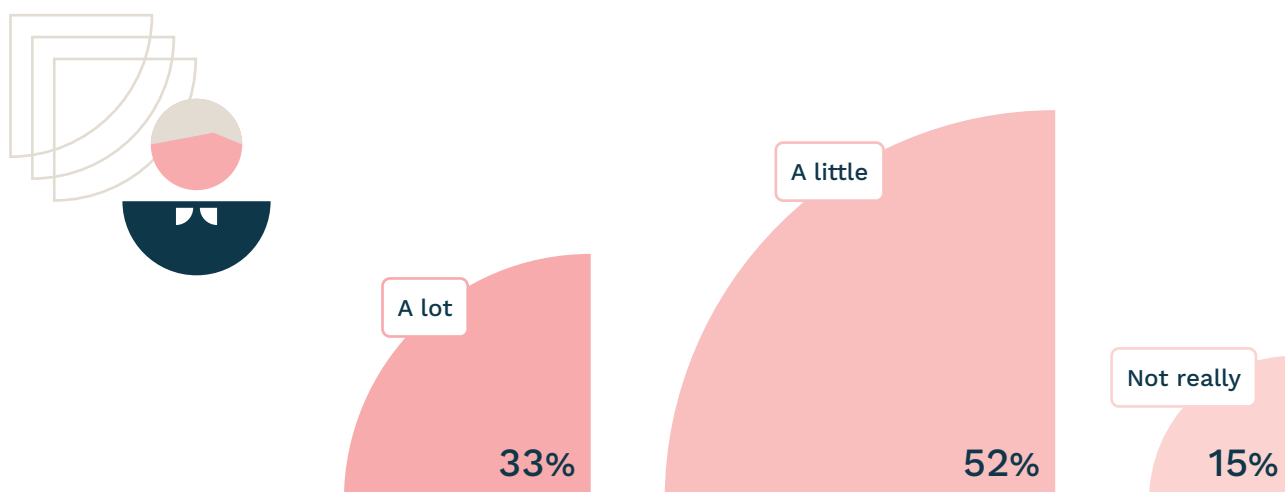
"I feel I have become a more effective leader, not only of the delivery of the Art curriculum within school, but allowing children to engage in all different areas of the Arts and Culture, and providing new and exciting opportunities."

"As I am listened to more, I have more opportunities for developing the effective delivery of arts and culture."

Increased ability to influence others on Cultural Education

A large majority of teachers (85%) report that because of Curious Minds' support they are able to influence the strategic direction of their school as shown in figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6 - Ability to influence management



Teachers point out that cultural capital is gaining importance with Ofsted and that reflects on their influence. One teacher stated that he was asked to teach colleagues on cultural education. He remarked that ‘many teachers don’t see the benefits of culture’ but his influence has ‘changed teacher’s mind-set’ at their school. Another said that he ‘appears to be very influential, people are listening to me’. One teacher pointed out that their influence reached even beyond their own school and they ‘have shifted from local to regional influencers’.

“I have driven the transformation of arts and culture in our school’s curriculum.”

“As a governor at 2 schools I will share all the information gathered to the leadership team, faculty leads and focus on this at the next board meetings.”

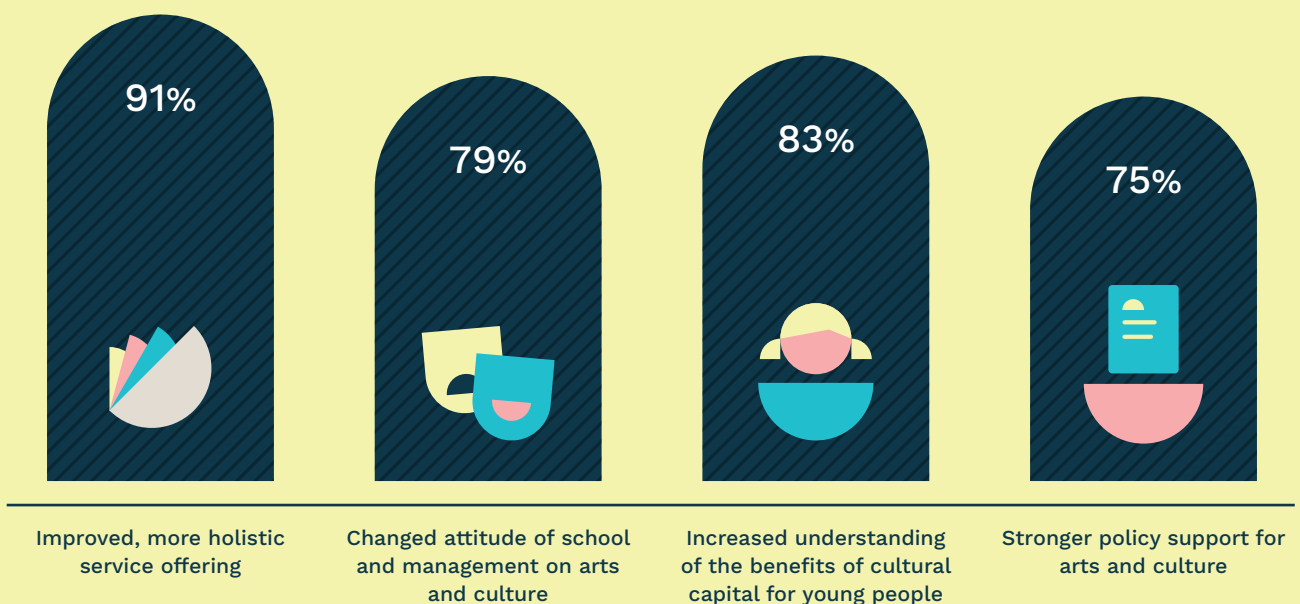


6. The impact on Schools

Teachers are successful in changing the schools they are working in. Schools benefit from an improved service offering, a change in the attitude of the management towards cultural education, an increased understanding of the benefits of arts and culture by management and embedded arts and culture into the policies and strategies of the school.

Teachers supported by Curious Minds' work have an effect on the schools they work in. Figure 6.1 shows how schools change as a result of Curious Minds' interventions.

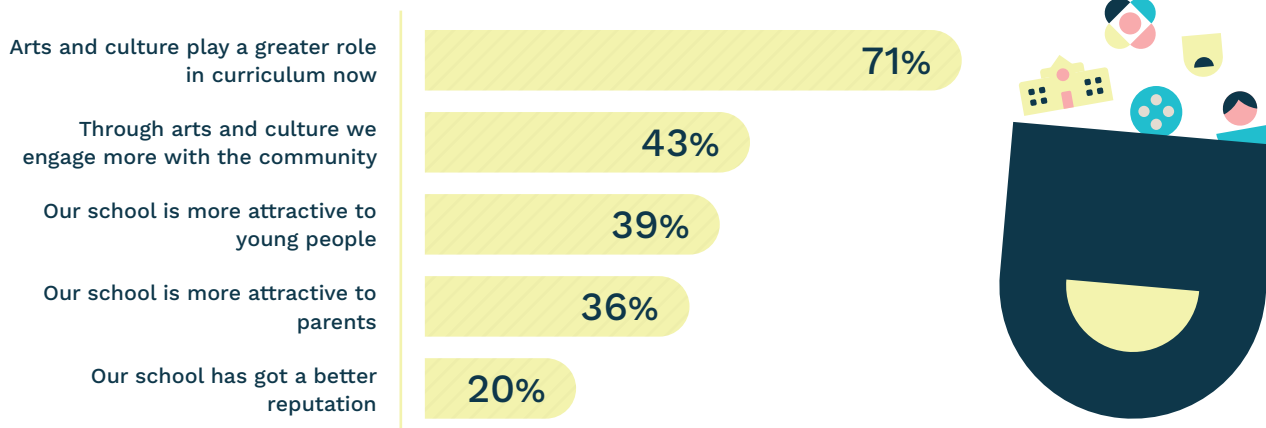
Figure 6.1 - Schools Outcomes



An improved Cultural Education offer for students and families

Teachers reported that in the vast majority of schools they work in (91%) the training and support provided by Curious Minds has led to a better Cultural Education service offering, as shown in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2 – Improved service offering



At seven out of ten schools (71%) arts and culture play a greater role in the curriculum and about four out of ten schools are more attractive to the community (43%), young people (39%) or parents (36%). One fifth of schools have got a better reputation.

Interviewed teachers said their school now has a better offering for pupils and parents. One commented that they are now ‘a better-rounded school in terms of what we offer’. Another teacher pointed out that ‘people who come to my school now see the arts shine through’.

One teacher noticed that they were more aware of opportunities available for children in their school, in a deprived area and for example there was ‘a big uptake in the amount of children learning an instrument.’

“Arts and Culture has had a positive impact on our school culture - and contributed significantly to our students’ social capital, world experiences, curiosity and imagination as well as their overall wellbeing.”

“Achieving Artsmark gold status has given our school something to be very proud of and something to not only maintain but promote further. Visitors to school can see evidence of the arts and culture and it is something that new parents to our school are very interested in. I think that it has given our school a higher profile.”

“We have worked as a team to look at ways we can use the arts more across the curriculum and have planned ‘immersive experience days’ around this.”

A change of attitude towards Cultural education in schools

Teachers supported by Curious Minds also bring about a change in attitude of the management of the schools they work in (79%). School management is more open to cultural education (51%) and arts and culture have a higher profile within the school (40%).

Teachers noticed a change in attitude at their schools. Some teachers felt that cultural education could be the solution to issues pupils and the school were struggling with. One teacher talked about how arts and culture were introduced in the STEM subjects¹³ and commented that ‘our school is a different school from the one I joined ten years ago’.

“As a result [of the event] we now have a much clearer idea of what we can do to improve the Arts provision in our school. Since then we have held an art exhibition in school through My Masterpiece who we met on the day. This has raised the profile of art within school and has been a great success.”

“Teachers and senior leaders see and value the impact that arts and culture have on the students and the school environment.”

“There is a cultural shift that is evident in our setting amongst the parents which we would not have otherwise seen.”

Recognising the importance of cultural education

Most schools (83%) report a better understanding of the benefits of arts and culture in the curriculum and the school by the management. Teachers report that schools recognise the importance of arts and culture and have become more open to cultural education. One teacher said that he ‘forces them to do more and engage more with others’.

Teachers also notice that school management is getting a clearer understanding of the impact of arts and culture on pupils’ mental health and wellbeing. One teacher said that the emphasis on cultural education ‘made our school more nurturing’.

Some teachers also point out the growing importance of arts and culture for schools to promote themselves and set themselves apart from other schools. As one teacher remarked: ‘it puts us on the map’.

“The research on the impact of the arts really supported colleagues and management who needed more understanding of the point of arts in schools! I referred to it a lot when promoting the arts in my school meetings!”

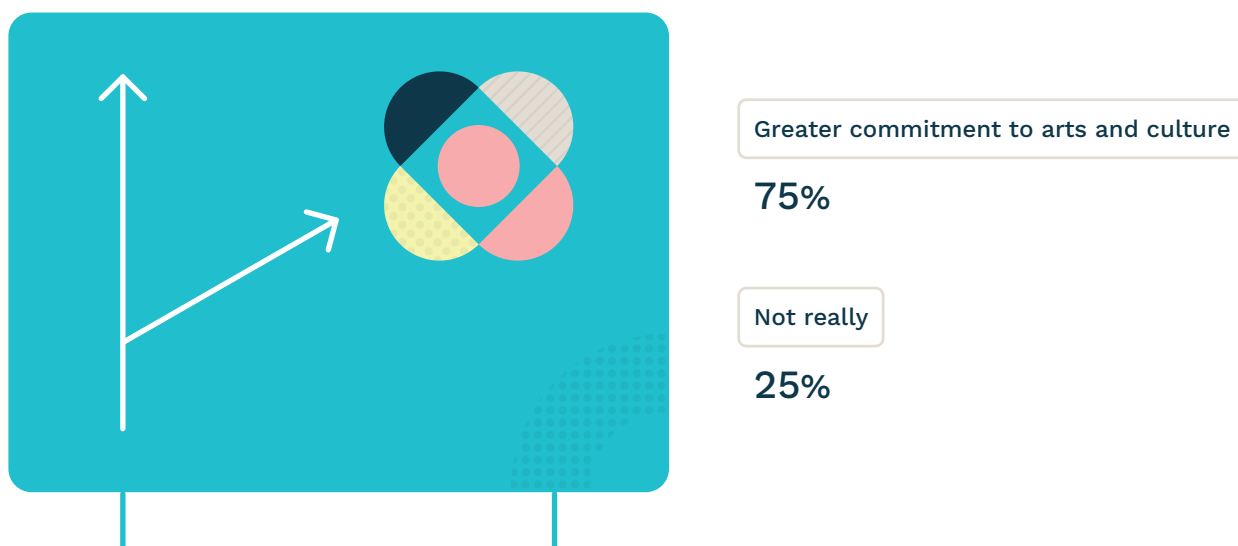
“Management have seen first-hand the benefits of arts and culture with our pupils and staff. For some pupils the impact has been life changing.

“We have redesigned our curriculum to put creativity and improving our student’s cultural capital at the heart of our aims.”

Embedding arts and culture in policy and practice

In three-quarters (75%) of schools where Curious Minds' trained and supported teacher's work, arts and culture are more strongly embedded in the strategy and policy of the school.

Figure 6.3 - Strategic direction



Many teachers report that cultural education has become more embedded in the curriculum at their schools.

“There is a greater commitment to arts and culture having a place within the curriculum so that all students receive a progressive skills based experience with informative and exciting opportunities throughout the school year.”

“When we rewrote our curriculum map it was with arts and culture as a driving theme for each half term.”

“Developing the Arts within school is one of our 6 priorities for the school development plan. It’s fundamental to giving these boys cultural experiences that open up the possibilities for them.”

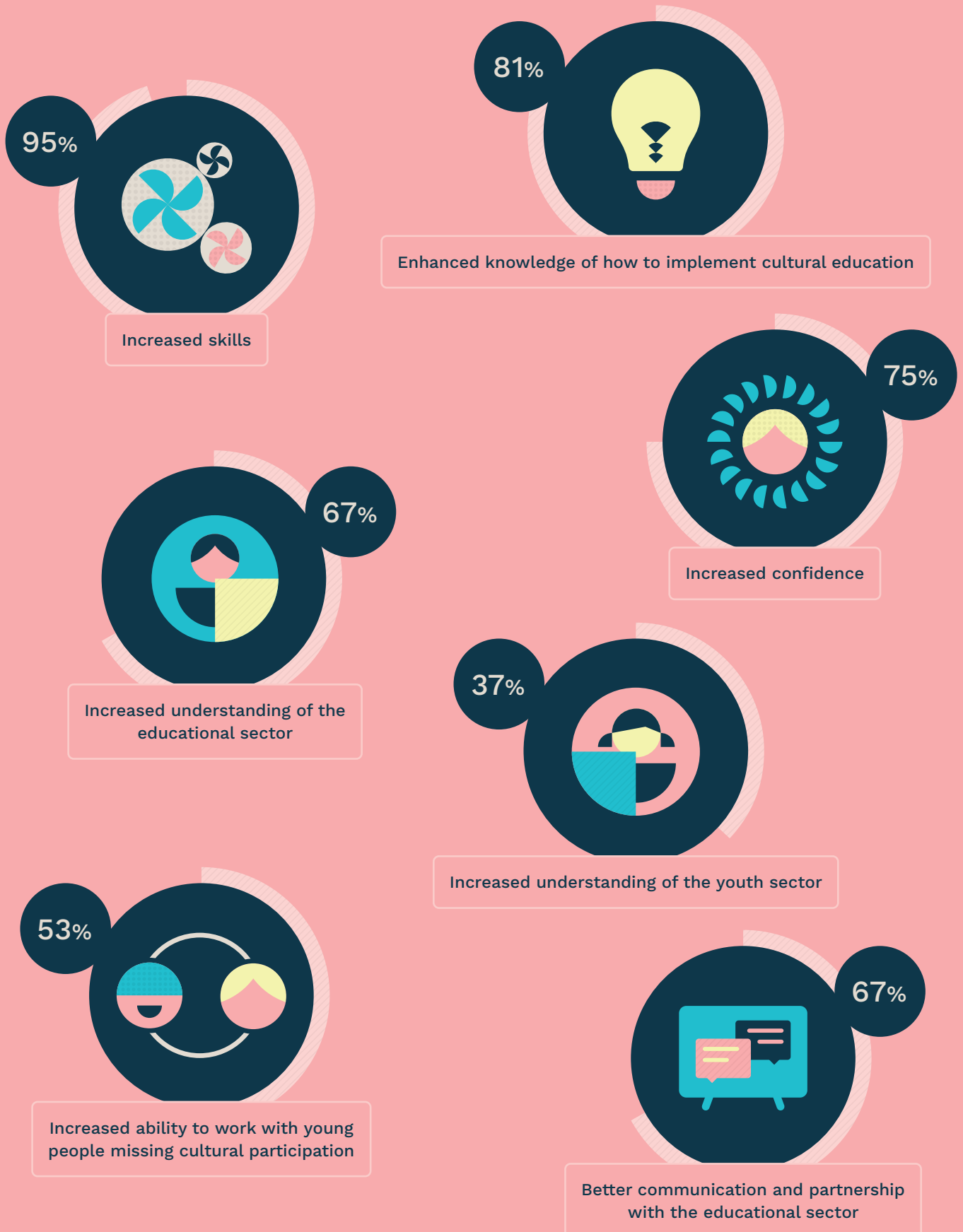
“This has been about changing hearts and minds and a real cultural shift in broader terms.”

7. The impact on Arts and Cultural Practitioners

Cultural practitioners that attend the Curious Minds programmes achieve; a broader understanding of how to use arts and culture to support children and young people, increased skills and confidence, a greater understanding of the education and youth sector, an increased ability to work with young people that are missing out on cultural education and a better engagement with the educational sector. Within the medium term, practitioners gain in status and credibility, improve their career prospects, and their ability to influence strategic decisions around Cultural Education.

Curious Minds works with practitioners in the arts and cultural sector. It supports practitioners to develop new partnerships, new frameworks for learning through the Arts Award programme and enables them to network, share practice and increase knowledge through their events. Curious Minds has developed and delivered the CASE Fellowship programme, an intensive leadership programme. Figure 7.1 displays the range of short-term effects upon cultural practitioners.

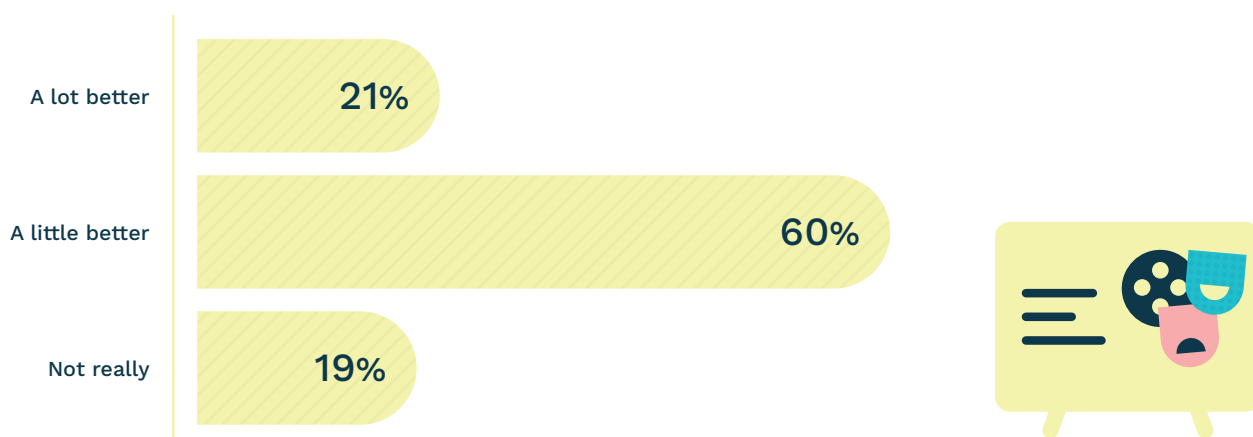
Figure 7.1 - Cultural Practitioners - Short Term Outcomes



Using culture in an educational setting

More than four out of five cultural practitioners (81%) said that they have got a better knowledge and understanding of how to use arts and culture in an educational setting, as is shown in Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.2 - Understanding how to use cultural education



Cultural practitioners interviewed shared this view and reported that having a better understanding of cultural education has led to reinvigorating existing programmes and the support of Curious Minds gave them the credibility to make the changes. Others mentioned that it has helped them to broaden conversations with schools, from the mere content and cost of programmes to the impact of them on pupils and the school.

One cultural practitioner revealed that they are now much better able to understand and deal with the contrasting views of the cultural and educational sectors.

Cultural practitioners also mentioned that it is very helpful to be able to work with pupils in a very practical way. One mentioned as example, a design workshop where young people made clocks that were exposed and sold in the museum. This made the museum environment more real for young people.

“Our partnership work through SLiCE took us into a cross curriculum setting and a close working relationship with a key member of staff in the schools that we worked with. This did inform our practice.”

“I attended a Curious Minds event not long after the curriculum changed which was really helpful at highlighting how museums might adapt their learning offer to suit it.”

“This event helps me to understand how we can work with schools. Also, to get a better idea about the cultural education in North West.”

Growing skills and knowledge

Almost all cultural practitioners that have worked with Curious Minds (95%) reported an increase in skills and knowledge. Table 7.1 shows the most frequently mentioned skills, mapped against the Cultural Learning Outcomes developed by Curious Minds.

Table 7.1: Skills and knowledge

Skill reported	Cultural Learning Outcomes
Knowledge about opportunities available to me and my organisation	Culturally knowledgeable
Knowledge about benefits of arts and culture to young people	Culturally aware
Soft skills	Cultural leadership
Artistic/cultural skills and knowledge	Culturally productive
Knowledge about how to approach arts and culture in our organisation	Culturally productive
Leadership skills	Cultural leadership
Research skills	Culturally literate

Cultural practitioners acknowledged that the skills and knowledge available from Curious Minds is valuable. One cultural practitioner said that Curious Minds is always there to give information, guidance, or to help them to link up with other organisations.

Many cultural practitioners mentioned that their skills and knowledge made it much easier to work with new schools they have never worked with before. Knowing who to approach and how to speak with them helped to forge links.

Having evidence-based information and research available at their fingertips was seen as very valuable. Also, having skills to undertake research themselves was seen as helpful.

Some cultural practitioners brought up that it is difficult to find opportunities for Continuous Professional Development (CPD), but Curious Minds provides that bespoke opportunity.

Curious Minds helps cultural practitioners to develop soft skills (such as listening, reflection, evaluation) and help them communicate better. Other cultural practitioners expressed that their new knowledge and skills made them more of a strategic thinker.

“Knowledge of what else is happening in other organisations across the sector which has helped develop joined up projects with them. Great networking.”

“Knowledge of how schools work and what work is already being done at schools” what their needs are.”

“Great way to network with likeminded people and going away with lots of ideas.”

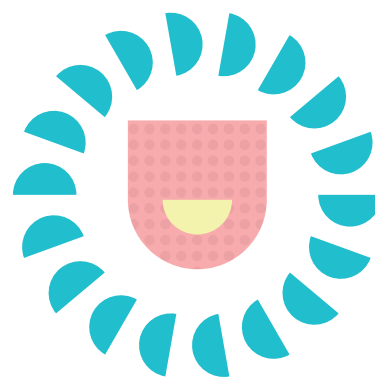
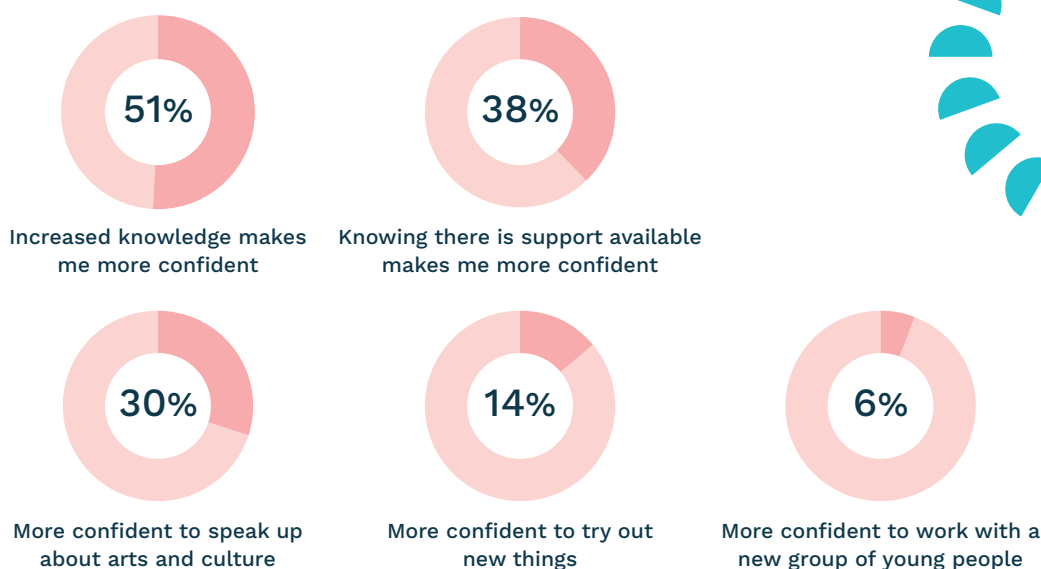
“Initiatives and projects demonstrating good practice that I might not have been aware of otherwise.”

“Knowledge about how to work with schools.”

Creating confident advocates for arts and culture

Three quarters of cultural practitioners (75%) said that they got a confidence boost from their involvement with Curious Minds, as presented in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3 – Confidence cultural practitioners



Cultural practitioners reported increased confidence from knowledge (51%) and knowing that there is support available when they need it (38%). Cultural practitioners interviewed confirmed this.

“I have a clearer understanding in my own head of the tasks at hand which means I find it a lot easier to explain to the young people – a lot less hesitation.”

“I have examples of where arts and culture have made a difference in various settings to draw upon.”

“Due to increased knowledge, I am much more confident in sharing about cultural education. I have a greater understanding which allows me to communicate more effectively.”

Increased confidence stimulated them to speak up about arts and culture (38%), to try out new things (14%) and to work with new groups of young people (14%).

One cultural practitioner said that Curious Minds had given her the confidence to speak up and ‘make things happen’. This was acknowledged by another who stated that having the back-up from Curious Minds helps to ‘articulate and defend new ideas.’

Having the support and recognition from Curious Minds was also a boost for practitioners’ self-esteem. As one practitioner said: ‘having people recognising your value, helps with your confidence’.

One cultural practitioner described that the new-found confidence led to more contact with schools and that as a result, the number of pupils visiting has doubled. Another brought up that they now had the confidence to bring the museum and artefacts into the school, rather than to wait for pupils to go to the museum.

“Much happier to communicate with senior leadership teams and heads in schools which I would not have been confident to do before.”

“I am more confident in developing new projects with other organisations and the support we offer to young people.”

“I have put forward my ideas about how I feel our organisation should adapt our approach to working with schools. These have been listened to and implemented. I don’t think I would have been as confident in advocating for a change of approach if I hadn’t done the CASE fellowship.”

Understanding other sectors

Two thirds of cultural practitioners (67%) reported having a better understanding of the educational sector and more than a third (38%) had a better understanding of the youth sector as a result of Curious Minds' activities.

“Curious Minds is very good at providing clear ways to understand governmental changes within educational and cultural sector bringing in the experts.”

“Very interesting listening to teachers at various events, especially at an event [...] about a year ago. Inspiring hearing about their arts and culture work in school and how much they value it and also how museums and galleries can support this.”

Working with young people missing out

More than half of cultural practitioners (53%) said that after their engagement with Curious Minds they are better equipped to work with young people that are missing out on cultural education, as is presented in Figure 7.4 (see over).

One in eight cultural practitioners (12%) reports that they are currently working with a more diverse group of young people than before.

Cultural practitioners said that they found it easier to engage with young people, whether in a school or community setting. Through Curious Minds they developed a more targeted approach and gained a better insight into how to engage with all young people. One practitioner pointed out that this was the main impact of Curious Minds' support.

Another cultural practitioner remarked that they now think carefully about how to engage with all young people when they design programmes and activities.

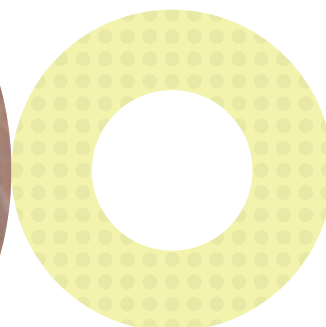


Figure 7.4 – Ability to work with young people missing out on cultural education



More confident to work with a more diverse group of young people

30%

Better engage with a more diverse group of young people

30%

Working with a more diverse group of young people than before

12%

Yet another cultural practitioner talked about how schools were a ‘scary place’ for them, but Curious Minds has showed them how to work with schools. They now see working with schools as an essential element of their offering.

“Lots of ideas about how to help our students and the general public to develop themselves so that we are a truly inclusive society – starting with drama, art in school – in a community room, out in the community.”

Communicating with schools

Two thirds of cultural practitioners (67%) stated that they are now better able to communicate with schools and some (12%) reported working with new schools they had not worked with before.

Cultural practitioners stated that Curious Minds provides a constant stream of opportunities to engage with schools. In particular, demystifying what schools are interested in and how to engage and communicate with them was seen as useful. Many practitioners could mention work with schools that they would not have engaged with before, varying from local schools to regional clusters of schools.

“The info from today will help embed and inspire, from the start, to help shape and differ all our schools engagements and better communicate and understand schools.”

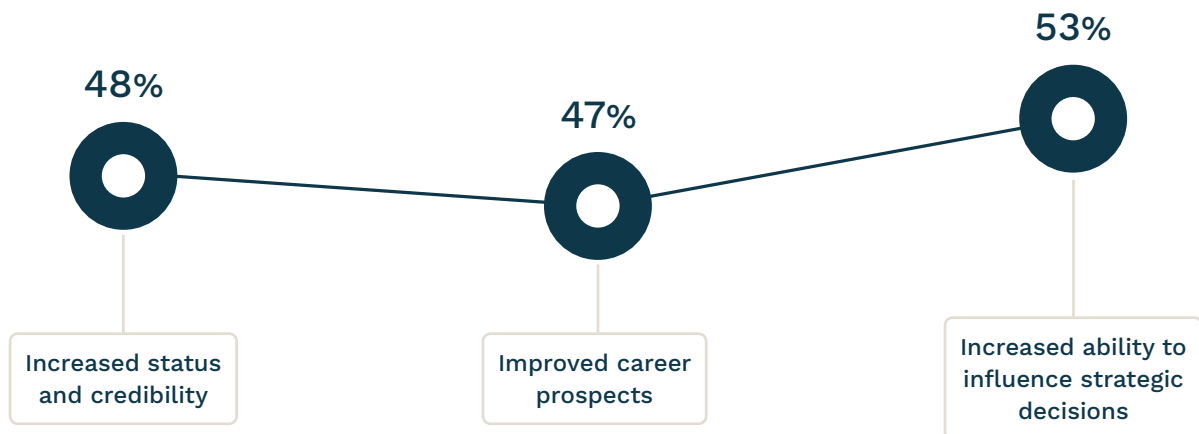
“This has certainly inspired me to approach schools with confidence – particularly from gaining the understanding that they do want to hear from us and receive bespoke offers.”

“Understanding challenges from schools that don’t necessarily involve funding. Sparked interest in how to engage with these ideas and how to work collectively. Personal understanding of curriculum, the ‘schools’ scene’, issues for schools accessing art – Brilliant!”

Medium-term outcomes

In the medium-term cultural practitioners improve their status, are able to have an influence on the strategic direction of their organisation and credit Curious Minds with advances in their career development. Figure 7.5 provides an overview.

Figure 7.5 - Cultural Practitioners - Medium Term Outcomes



Being seen as an expert

For almost half of cultural practitioners, (48%) their involvement with Curious Minds has led to an increase in status and credibility within their organisation. Figure 7.6 provides the details.

Figure 7.6 - Increase in status



Cultural practitioners gain credibility from their involvement with Curious Minds and the research they make available. This has helped them to convince colleagues to support projects. One practitioner mentioned that she convinced her school to let her work digitally with a museum in India.

Another practitioner said he could definitely see a change in his status, and that he was now ‘definitely seen as the expert on young people and culture’ within his organisation.

“Yes, I now lead on the implementation of our new schools’ programme.”

“Work will say I am the expert in schools work for the organisation.”

Getting more responsibilities

Just under half (47%) of cultural practitioners reported that their increased skills, knowledge and status has resulted in getting additional responsibilities in their job.

Some cultural practitioners revealed they have got more responsibilities in their organisations. One practitioner remarked that because she ‘knew her stuff and could talk confidently about it’ she now had extra responsibilities representing her organisation in international partnerships. Another practitioner described how their job description had been adjusted as a result of their work with Curious Minds. Yet another believed that the CASE fellowship has sped up their promotion.

“Since completing CASE I have applied and was successful in 2 new positions at other cultural organisations with a significant increase in my role and responsibilities.”

“I now manage the Arts Awards partnerships which make up part of my full-time job at the theatre.”

“I have more responsibilities such as writing our education strategy and heading up education.”



Gaining influence

Finally, more than half of cultural practitioners (53%) report that they have a greater ability to influence the management and strategic direction of the organisation where they work, as presented in Figure 7.10.

Cultural practitioners felt that their opinion was being taken more seriously and that they could influence strategic decisions. One practitioner said their influence on what was exhibited has grown. Another said that because of their influence, they now had a strategy to approach and collaborate with schools.

“In regard to children and young people, we now have 2 young people who sit on the project board and the programming meetings, offering a valued youth voice.”

“Knowledge gained from Artsmark information days has influenced our strategy for young people in the museums business plan.”

“I feel equipped to move forward and have lots of contacts to broaden horizons. Interesting information good to know, I will speak to management about implementing some of the things mentioned.”

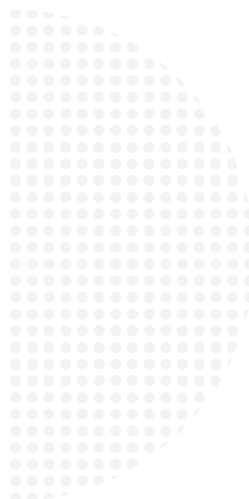
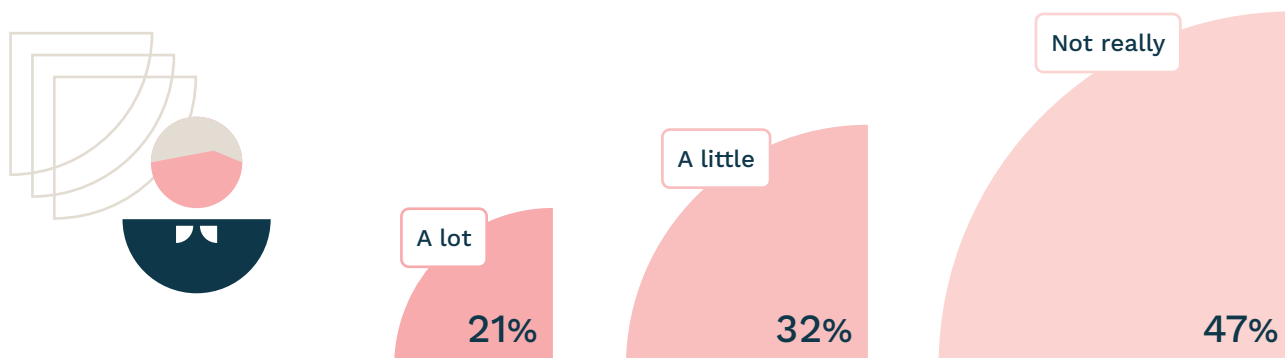


Figure 7.7 – Ability to influence management

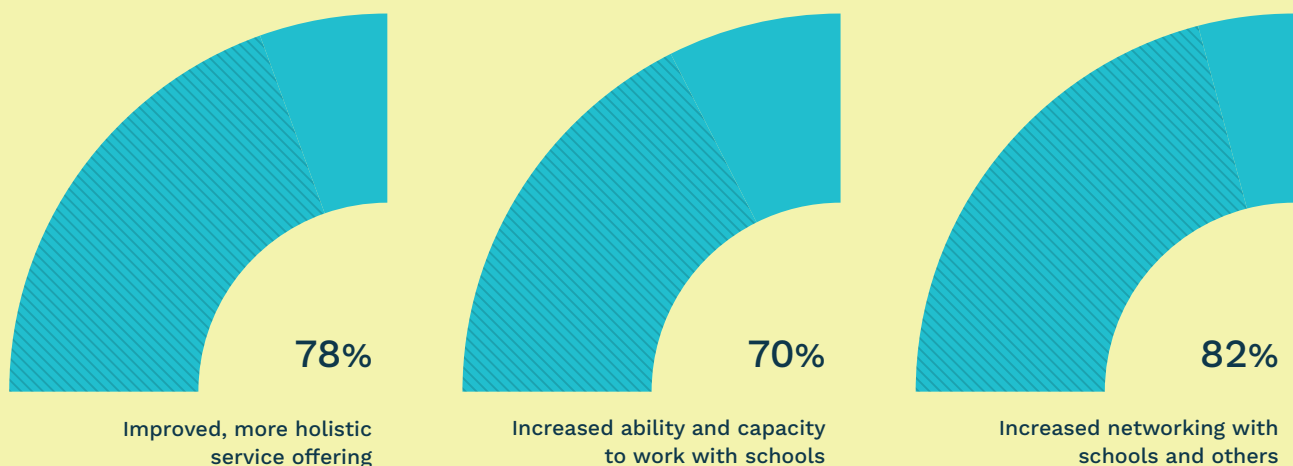


8. The impact on Cultural Organisations

Cultural practitioners are changed by Curious Minds who in turn change the organisations they work in. Cultural organisations benefit from an improved cultural education service or offer, a greater ability to work with schools and an increased network.

By working in their organisation, cultural practitioners supported by Curious Minds bring about change to their service offering, their ability and capacity to work with schools and their networks, as displayed in Figure 8.1.

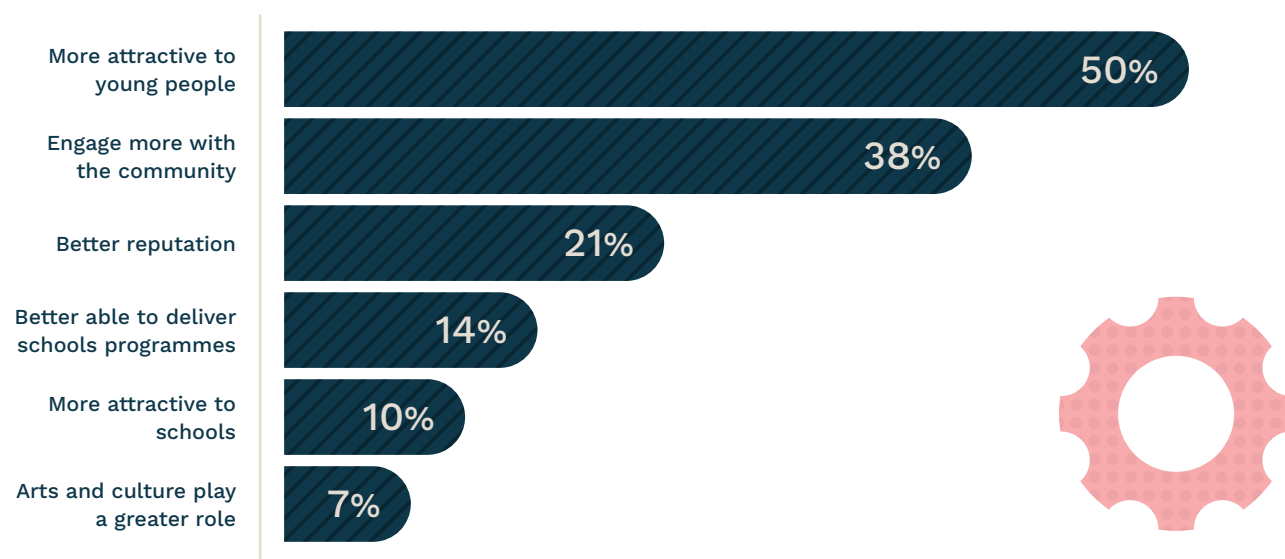
Figure 8.1 - Cultural Organisations Outcomes



An improved service offering

More than four out of five cultural organisations (81%) report an improved service offering. Figure 8.2 provides the details.

Figure 8.2 - Improved service offering



Cultural organisations have become more strategic in how they approach and work with schools and young people. One cultural practitioner reveals they now have a schools' programme, while some time ago it felt that 'they only worked with adults'.

Cultural practitioners also frequently pointed out how the service they are now offering to schools and young people has improved. One talked about projects that they have designed on racism and mental health. Another example cited was the use of digital arts in a school, providing social commentary on Brexit.

"We now work with whole school communities - families and local communities - as well as the just the school itself."

"Definitely - it widens our reach in terms of who we are able to work with, deepens the skills of our team in working with a diverse range of young people, gaining significant funding for our cultural education work raises our profile and enhances our reputation."

"Our work aligns better to school and children and young people's requirements and our programme now attracts a younger audience."

"We have managed to create a new schools offer that will diversify what we offer to schools and what we can deliver in schools."

Working better with schools

Seven out of ten cultural organisations (70%) have a greater capacity and ability to work with schools. Organisations mention a more targeted approach (42%) and being better equipped (37%) to deliver in schools.

“We have a more systematic approach to integrating arts award portfolio building into our schools’ projects.”

“Yes, I think we have a clearer idea of our offer and its value.”

“We’ve historically found schools a little bit trickier to get into. We are now going to include more schools work when designing out youth programme.”

Almost a quarter (23%) have plans to work with new schools, and some have started to work with new schools (13%) and are delivering new activities in schools (12%).

“I am more informed on the requirements and needs of schools and the challenges they face which I can include within my work.”

“Our Fellow’s understanding of the schools and the curriculum has been invaluable in helping us design a programme that fits with schools.”

Growing the network

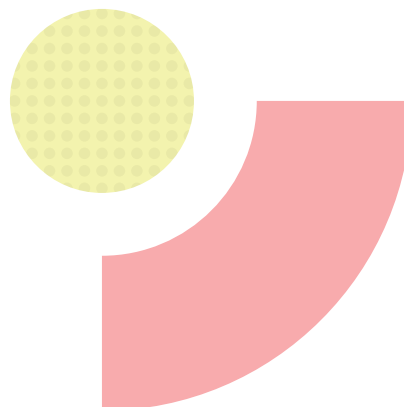
Most schools also reported having a more diverse network (82%).

“I think it has opened up partnership working across different initiatives with children and young people.”

“These events provide good networking opportunities.”

“Contact secondary schools to work in partnership.”

“I have sustained a valuable relationship with my CASE placement school also. We have devised new projects together and both act as a support/ critical friend.”



9. The impact on Youth Practitioners

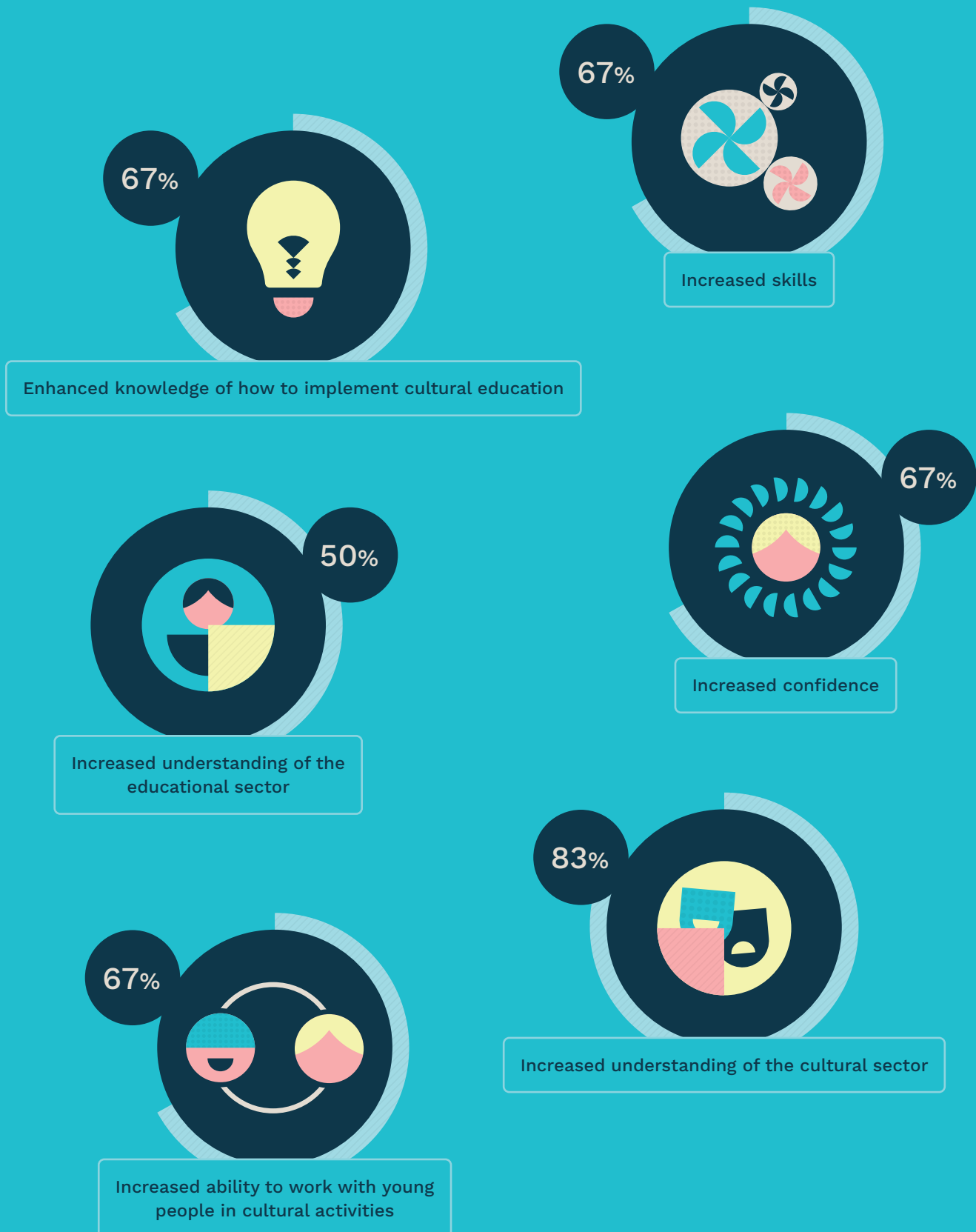
Youth practitioners involved with the Curious Minds programmes gain; a greater understanding of how to use cultural education, increased skills and confidence, a greater understanding of the educational and cultural sector, and an increased ability to work with young people in cultural activities. Within the medium term, they gain in status and ability to influence strategic decisions.

Short-term Outcomes

Practitioners within organisations working with children and young people attend Curious Minds' events and are supported in becoming Arts Award advisers by Curious Minds. This leads to a number of short-term outcomes for these youth practitioners, as shown in Figure 9.1 (see over).



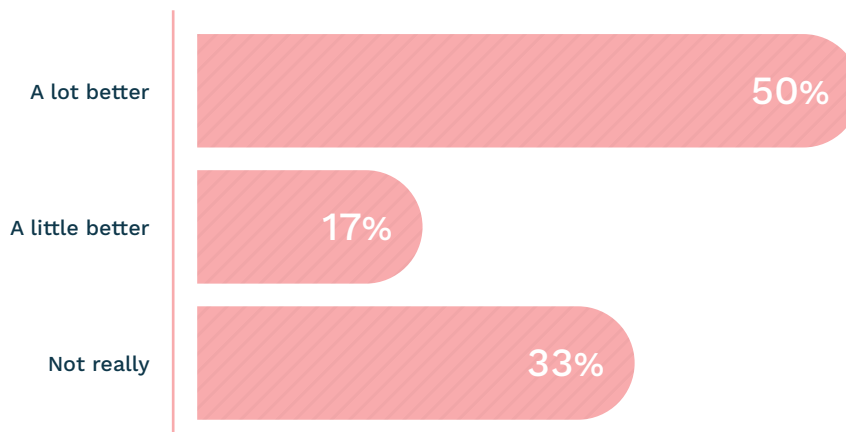
Figure 9.1 – Youth Practitioners – Short Term Outcomes



Using culture in an educational setting

Two-thirds of youth practitioners (67%) have a better understanding of how to use arts and culture in an educational setting, as is presented in Figure 9.2.

Figure 9.2 - Understanding cultural education



Growing skills and knowledge

Youth practitioners also reported a range of new skills and knowledge because of Curious Minds' interventions. Table 9.1 provides an overview of the most frequently mentioned skills, mapped against the Cultural Learning Outcomes developed by Curious Minds.

TABLE 9.1: SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

Skill reported	Cultural Learning Outcomes
Knowledge about opportunities available to me and my organisation	Culturally knowledgeable
Knowledge about benefits of arts and culture to young people	Culturally aware
Artistic/cultural skills and knowledge	Culturally productive
Knowledge about how to approach arts and culture in our organisation	Culturally productive
Soft skills	Cultural leadership
Leadership skills	Cultural leadership
Research skills	Culturally literate

Interviewed youth practitioners confirmed the skills and knowledge they gained, such as artistic and leadership skills. The information and experience provided by Curious Minds has opened up opportunities for youth practitioners that they believe they would not have got otherwise.

“I would have struggled without the skills and knowledge provided by Curious Minds.”

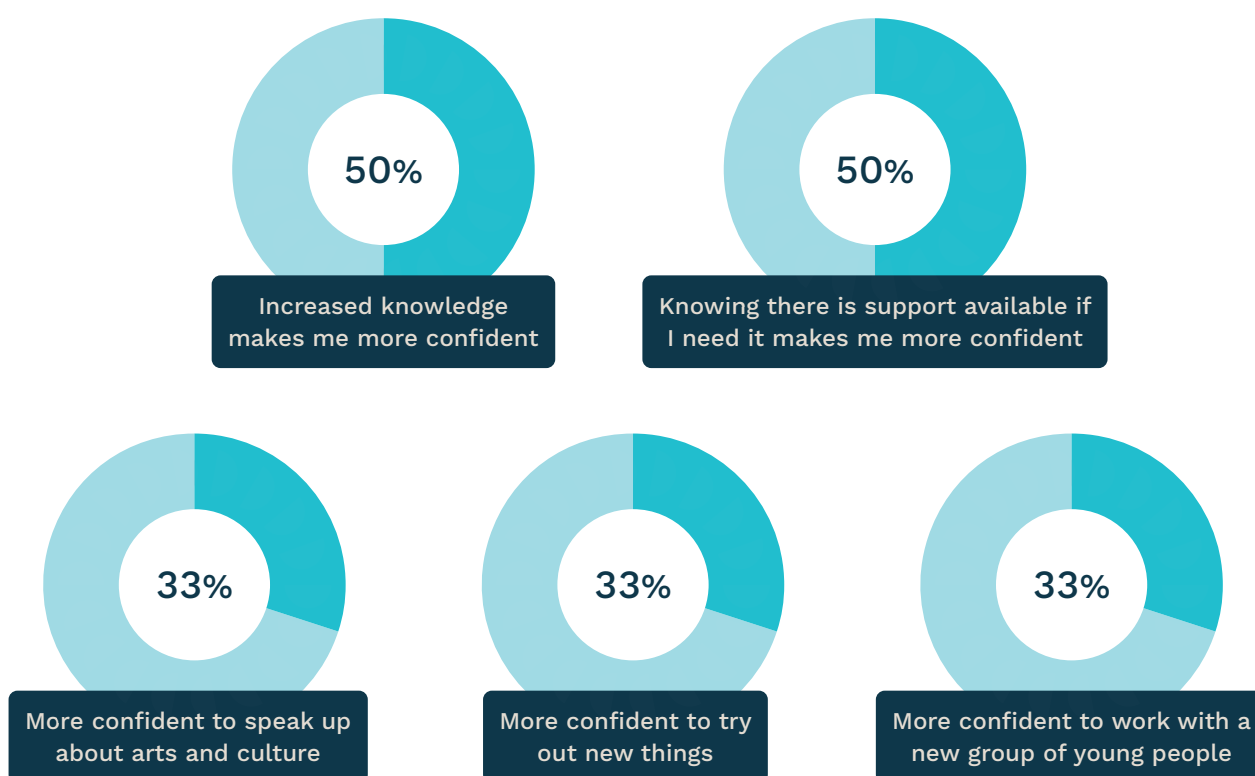
“I would be a bit lost without [Curious Mind staff member]”

“It’s knowing what is on and where to go for help.”

Boosting confidence to deliver and speaking up

Figure 9.3 represents the extent to which Curious Minds programmes have helped to build confidence with cultural practitioners.

Figure 9.3 – Confidence youth practitioners



Youth practitioners gave a number of examples as to what made them more confident. One youth practitioner said that it was very important that Curious Minds is very approachable and that they 'get what we are doing'. Another youth practitioner said that the trust that Curious Minds had in her gave her a confidence boost.

"I am able to find and ask others to come in and help the girls with their projects."

Youth practitioners also mentioned what increased confidence meant for them. One youth practitioner said that she was more confident now to talk about how cultural education could support employability. Another youth practitioner said that because of their increased confidence, arts and culture has become more accessible to young people. It also meant that young people are becoming more involved in running cultural events.

"I'm not afraid to present ideas, I'm confident in the delivery of Arts Award."

Understanding other sectors

Curious Minds aims to build bridges across the cultural, educational and youth sectors. Figure 9.4 shows that most youth practitioners (83%) gained a better understanding of the cultural sector and half (50%) of the educational sector.

Working with young people

Taking part in Curious Minds programmes increases the ability of two thirds of participating youth practitioners (67%) to work with young people in cultural activities.

Most youth practitioners that were interviewed confirmed this. One youth practitioner explained that they work with challenging young people and cultural activities provides an opportunity to work with them in a different way.

“It opens up opportunities, young people wouldn’t have engaged in cultural activities before.”

Another youth practitioner mentioned that cultural activities are a great hook to engage young people that do not engage with education or society. The youth practitioner mentioned that a homeless person had showed up every day for a three-week project and that truant young people had shown up for and had engaged with an arts project.

Medium term Outcomes

In the medium-term, youth practitioners increase their status and have an increased influence on the strategic decisions of their organisation, as presented in Figure 9.4.

Figure 9.4 - Youth Practitioners - Medium Term Outcomes

Increased ability to influence strategic decisions

67%

Increased status and credibility

33%

Being seen as an expert

Two thirds of youth practitioners (67%) supported by Curious Minds reported an increase in their status and credibility, as outlined in Figure 9.5.

Figure 9.5 - Increase in status

I am seen as more of an expert

50%

People listen to me and my ideas more

33%

I am now seen as the expert on arts and culture

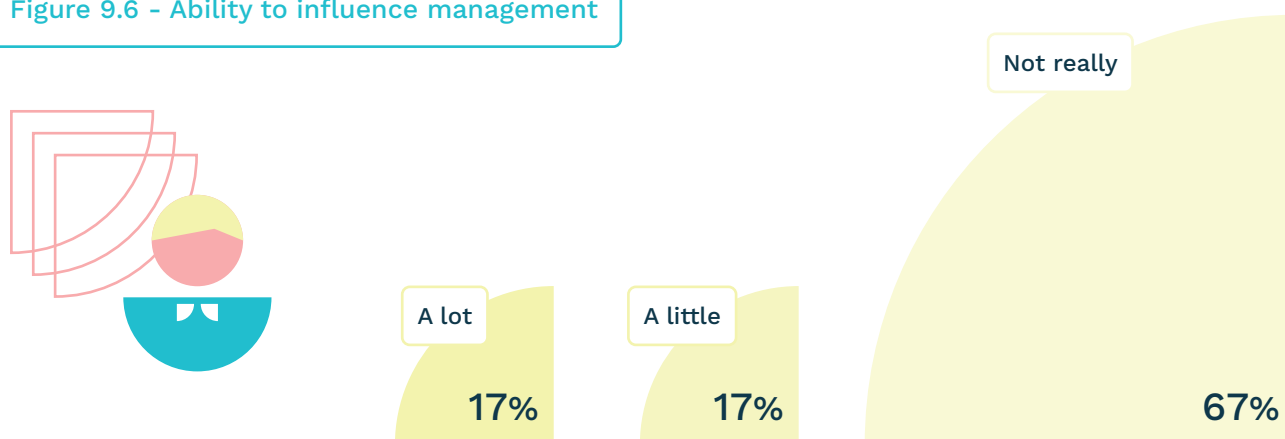
17%

One youth practitioner divulged that the credibility of Curious Minds in the North West reflects on their own credibility within their organisation. Another credited Curious Minds with winning an award, which had increased their reputation.

Gaining influence

Although less than in other sectors, a third of youth practitioners supported by Curious Minds (33%) reported that they have been able to influence the management and strategic direction of their organisation, as shown in Figure 9.6.

Figure 9.6 – Ability to influence management



Youth practitioners felt that their voice was heard more within their organisation. One youth practitioner stated that she had convinced management to increase the role of arts and culture in their summer programme. Another managed to increase the budget for arts and culture within their organisation.

Youth practitioners felt that they were able to keep the focus of management on arts and culture, where in the past it had slipped regularly.

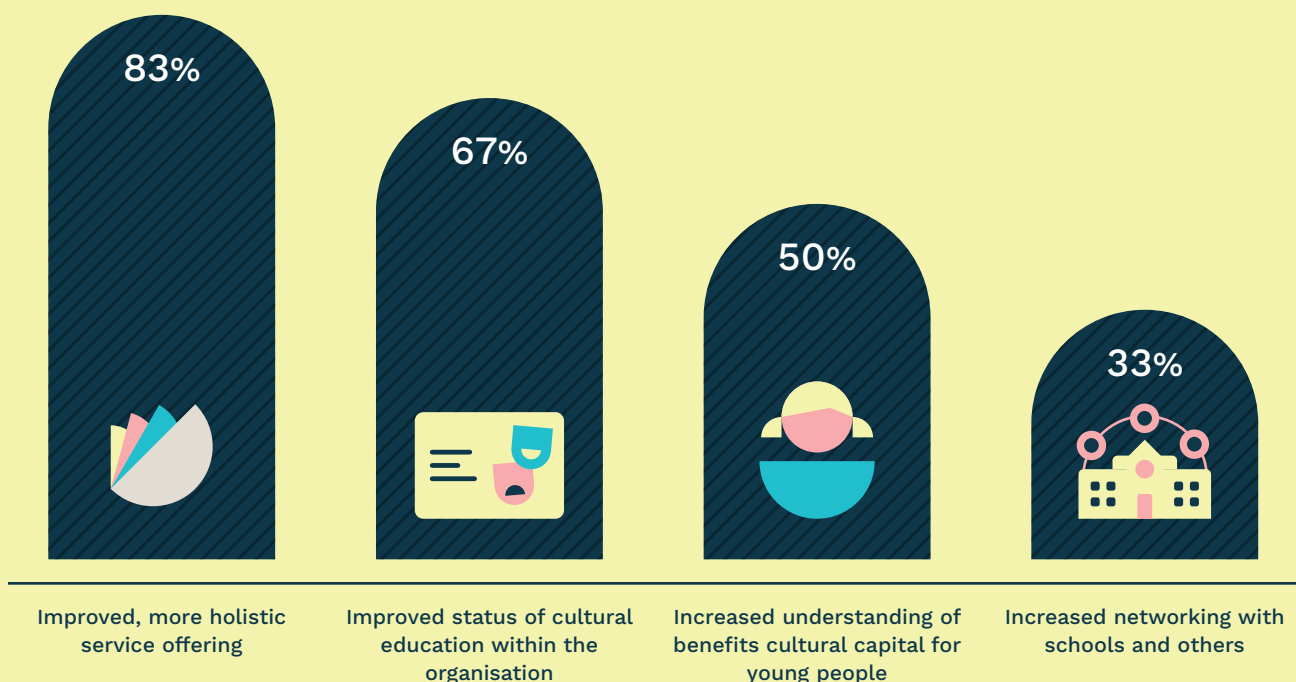
Curious Minds has also supported young people in a leadership role. One youth practitioner disclosed that their organisation was to be co-chaired by a young person.

10. The impact on Youth Organisations

Youth organisations benefitted from having practitioners engaging with Curious Minds by an improved service offering, a better understanding of the benefits of cultural capital, an improved status of cultural education within their organisation and an increased network.

Youth practitioners supported by Curious Minds have in turn affected the organisation they work in.

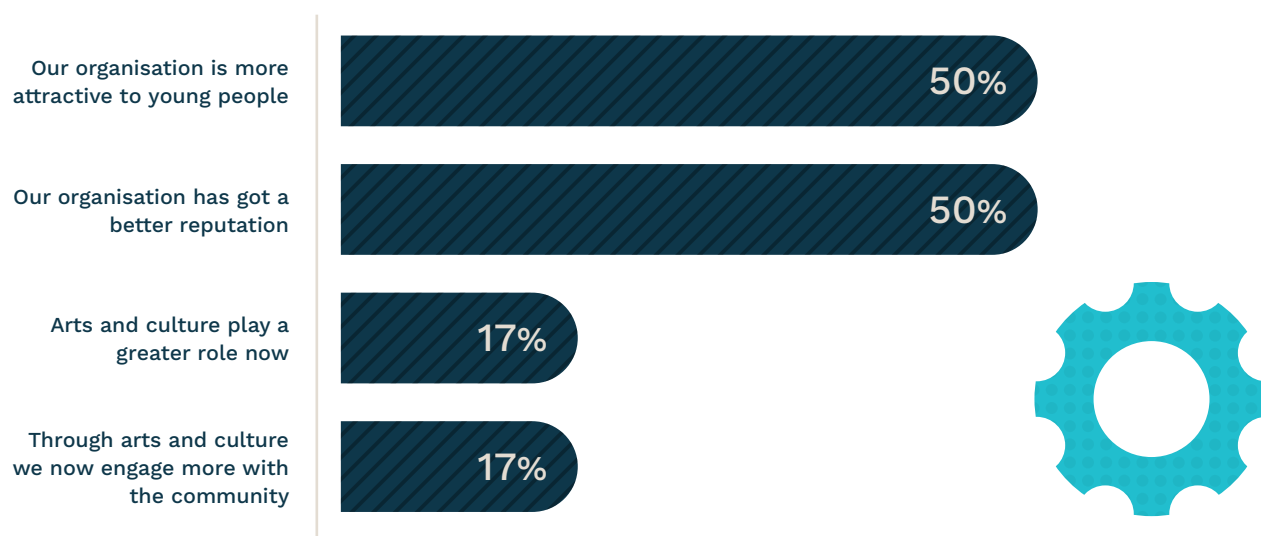
Figure 10.1 – Youth Organisations Outcomes



An improved service offering

The majority of youth practitioners that worked with Curious Minds reported an improved service offering of their organisation (83%). Figure 10.2 provides details.

Figure 10.2 - Improved service offering



“Great publicity for our organisation.”

“We amended and developed our working practices accordingly.”

“We have worked with schools we have not worked with before.”

Better understanding the benefits of cultural education

Management of two-thirds of youth organisations whose staff were involved with Curious Minds (67%) had gained a better understanding of the benefits of arts and culture in working with young people.

One youth practitioner gave an example. Curious Minds had helped them to get into contact with local creative industries and media companies. In collaboration with these companies, they have developed and delivered an employability project, which gave young people experience, transferable skills and motivation to aspire to a career within these industries.

Improved status of cultural education

Half of youth practitioners (50%) reported an improved attitude towards arts and culture within their organisation.

Growing the network

A third of youth organisations (33%) reported having an increased network.

Youth practitioners mentioned how Curious Minds are excellent in bringing people together and creating opportunities for networking. One interviewee spoke about how their youth organisation was now working with a theatre and a museum. They not only went to see a show in the theatre, but also engaged with the actors, who then delivered an acting workshop for the young people. The youth organisation also collaborated with a local artist to make banners for the womens' vote celebrations.

“Without the support from Curious Minds this would all have not happened.”

“I enjoyed networking & sharing ideas.”

“That’s what Curious Minds is really good at, bringing people across the North West together.”

11. Conclusions

This section draws conclusions and recommendations from the research.

Conclusions

Curious Minds as catalyst for cultural education

This study provides ample evidence of the impact of the programmes and activities that Curious Minds delivers on teachers, cultural and youth practitioners. It is clear that supported teachers, cultural and youth practitioners get the skills, knowledge, experience and confidence to become leaders that deliver and champion cultural education.

Curious Minds is driving change one person at a time

There is convincing evidence that Curious Minds, through supporting individuals, is bringing about change in schools, cultural and youth organisations in the North West, with slightly more and stronger outcomes in schools than in the other organisations.

Curious Minds is more than the sum of its programmes

Curious Minds is delivering a fairly consistent range of outcomes across all its programmes and activities. It uses national programmes, such as Arts Award and Artsmark, alongside bespoke leadership programmes, such as SLiCE and CASE, and events to promote and install a cultural education mindset across the North West.



Impact on different stakeholders

Overall Curious Minds achieves a slightly greater impact on teachers they work with than on cultural or youth practitioners. Although the differences are relatively small and to be classified as excellent for teachers and good/very good for the others, Curious Minds should review the context and content of its programmes and interventions to assess the reasons for this and adjust the programme content or delivery where possible.

Teachers report a significant greater impact on Curious Minds on their status, credibility and career prospects. This impact may not be a key impact that Curious minds is aiming for, but it may help to recruit participants to programmes or activities.

In terms of career prospects, there is only a very small number of stakeholders reporting a promotion (2% teachers and 3% cultural practitioners) as a result of being involved with Curious Minds.

Teachers are much more able to use their skills, knowledge and experience to influence the management and strategic direction of their organisation (85%) than cultural (53%) or youth practitioners (33%). This is an important outcome for Curious Minds as it evidences that the system change they seek is evident in the education sector and harder to achieve in the arts or cultural sector.

Next Steps

From the research we distil the following next steps:

1. Use the data to review the programmes and activities Curious Minds is delivering. For example, the outcomes of the Curious Minds support are slightly stronger for teachers than for cultural or youth practitioners. Curious Minds should review the content of the programmes and explore ways of making these more targeted to cultural or youth practitioners (without losing the outcomes for teachers).
2. Use the data to consider the strategic direction of Curious Minds after the conclusion of the Bridge funding.
3. Use the evidence and report to promote the work and impact of Curious Minds and attract support and funding.
4. Continue to consult with stakeholders on a regular basis. We would recommend designing three bespoke questionnaires for teachers, cultural and youth practitioners based on the developed Logic Model, using the questionnaires developed for this study.
5. Use this study as a baseline and prepare an annual impact report, using the quantitative data from surveys, supported by case studies and quotes.
6. Review the way Curious Minds is presenting itself, using the Impact Journey (Figure 3.1) developed. Although the ultimate aim of Curious Minds is changing the lives of children and young people, it works with teachers, cultural and youth practitioners and bring about change in schools, cultural and youth organisations. It delivers strong impact on these individuals and organisations.

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Find out more:

Social Value Lab
Studio 226, South Block,
60 Osborne Street, Glasgow, G1 5QH.
Tel: 0141 530 1479

info@socialvaluelab.org.uk

www.socialvaluelab.org.uk

