Changing young lives through media

April 2012

Contents

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Introduction

Media Trust believes in the power of media to change lives and works with the media industry to empower charities and communities to have a voice and be heard. This is achieved by providing communications skills and resources, helping access audiences and harnessing creative industry talent.

Corporate members include Aegis Group plc, BBC, Channel 4, Daily Mail and General Trust, Discovery Networks Europe, Google, Guardian Media Group, IPC Media, ITV plc, MTV Networks UK and Ireland, News International, Sky, WPP.
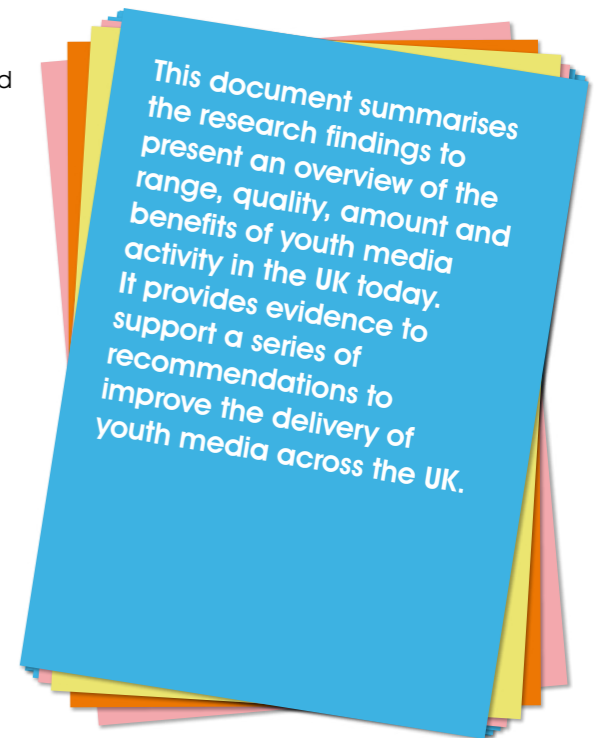
Media Trust commissioned a research project to explore how successful media is as a tool to engage 13-25 year olds, improve their lives and get their voices heard. Independent media consultants Chris Chandler and Mark Dunford undertook the research.

The research team looked at youth media outside formal education including: skills-based accredited training; mentoring from media professionals; and non-accredited media projects which provide young people with new practical, technical and creative skills to increase their confidence, raise self-esteem, speak and have their voices heard. These ranged from short to long term interventions engaging young people as individuals or groups. Projects delivered by a range of different organisations, including specialist community media organisations and those focusing primarily on youth engagement were included in the research.

For the purposes of the study, youth media is defined as film, television, animation, gaming, radio, print media and photography projects designed to engage young people aged 13-25.

As part of the research a literature review, an online survey, interviews and focus groups with young people, media professionals, youth organisations and youth media organisations were carried out.

This document summarises the research findings to present an overview of the range, quality, amount and benefits of youth media activity in the UK today. It provides evidence to support a series of recommendations to improve the delivery of youth media across the UK.

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Executive summary

Youth media is a particularly effective tool for engaging young people from the widest range of backgrounds.

The combination of technical, educational, social, creative and investigative practices makes media activity an exciting process - even more so as the end result can be communicated to an audience. These factors distinguish it from other forms of youth activity across the arts and sport.

Youth media provides young people with a voice. It gives them the means to speak and creates spaces where their voices can be heard. Because of this, youth media has social and political potential.

In an age of on-going mass unemployment, youth media is one vehicle to provide people with the skills needed for employment.

For some, youth media is an opportunity to have their voice heard. For others it is a stepping stone to their career or route into higher education

Youth media as a tool for change

Youth media is able to help young people personally and in relation to specific life choices through a wide range of benefits. For some it is an opportunity to have their voice heard. For others it is a stepping stone to their career or route into higher education.

People working in youth media see soft skills as the primary, immediate benefit for young people. It helps develop personal and social awareness, as well as confidence and self-esteem, all of which make it easier to acquire other skills.

Youth media work can have clear social benefits. Many projects address inclusion by providing training for young people not in education, employment or training. In fact, media and the creative industries are often seen as being able to drive economic growth or regeneration in particular communities.

Youth media has consistently pioneered the creative use of new technology by young people who would not otherwise have access to equipment or to work with industry professionals. It is impossible to isolate the different skills within this area as they overlap in different ways across different projects. The development of a full range of skills is the essence of successful youth media work.

The creation of a magazine or film under-writes the value of the project for the participants. Public showing or dissemination creates an opportunity to realise their achievement and gain feedback and recognition. In parallel, it allows them to communicate their opinions to wide audiences through public showcase events or the distribution on national or local media platforms. In all cases, youth media projects leave a legacy in the form of a creative artefact that can be used by participants after the project has completed.

Youth media develops personal and social awareness, increases confidence and builds self-esteem which supports the subsequent acquisition of skills.

There is a lack of a national platform for youth media. A fragmented sector needs a national voice.

Youth media delivery

There is a great diversity of methods and approaches for delivering youth media projects: the sector has proved itself flexible and innovative in working with different groups and in a range of contexts.

For young people to gain the maximum benefit, youth media needs to be participatory. It needs to be underpinned by good youth work practice and professional media ethics. Young people must also have a central role in the development of their projects, working in teams staffed by people with complementary talents from different organisations.

The majority of youth media projects are short-term. These tend to be diverse, of high-quality and fulfil the needs of young people from all backgrounds. However, many interviewees noted that there is an absence of a wider context or ladder of development for individuals and groups involved in short-term work.

Moving image is the most common form of youth media activity, followed by print and photography. There are relatively few examples of games developed by young people but it is an incredibly powerful tool when it is used due to its capacity for interaction. Digital media forms part of the distribution activities of many media projects and due to this as an expanding area has huge potential for growth.

Accredited training has grown in importance over the past decade, although views differ on its relevance. Some see it as a bureaucratic imposition while others regard it as an enabling mechanism offering routes to employment. There is truth in both views.

It was also found that there is a lack of a national platform or distribution channel for youth media. The absence of a national aggregator makes it difficult to assess the quality, range and amount of projects taking place across the UK. This visibility barrier means work often goes unseen and the inability to reach a wide audience reduces its potential impact. The lack of a national body also makes it hard to access resources, support and information on sector specific developments. A fragmented youth media sector needs a national voice.

Youth media can provide a way for the media industry to access specific communities. However, connections to the mainstream industry are fragmented and often based on personal relationships. The sector could benefit from structured links such as mentoring: this could be one route to increase diversity in the media workforce.

Reasons for engagement

- There are a number of reasons young people are attracted to youth media - from the allure that the media industry exudes to the opportunity to get their voices heard.

- Youth media appears to offer valuable training for life, in areas such as people skills and learning how to learn.

- Other skills related to employment are also seen to be provided. These include numeracy, literacy and ICT. But other business skills are also picked up through the projects, teamwork, time-keeping and commitment.

- In a more practical sense, youth media can provide the experience and qualifications to help young people go on to employment or further education – through accreditation and the development of a portfolio of work.

- Social inclusion is also seen to be an outcome of youth media projects. Many participants engaged in media projects are those that feel isolated and the projects are a means to re-engage them in society.

- Both independent and mainstream media companies support youth media and there is evidence that media professionals gain benefits from being involved.

Why do young people get involved?

Youth media is seen as a valuable and vital form of youth engagement. It sits within a wider pool of youth activity projects including sport, arts and heritage. At their best, all of these can draw in young people, provide them with enjoyment and opportunity, and offer ways to ease the transition into fully independent adult life.

Youth media is seen as having a number of characteristics that make it especially effective at engaging and young people gave a wide range of reasons for becoming involved in youth media projects. The familiarity of media and its allure, the desire to develop skills, the opportunity to get their voices heard and the lack of expectation of previous experience were contributing factors for engagement. Some young people initially attended because a friend was interested. Those already involved in a general youth project found the influence of youth workers to be a significant motivation.

Talent Studio was a national filmmaking project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, and delivered by Media Trust in partnership with the Prince's Trust's Fairbridge programme and Catch22. The project used filmmaking as a tool for engaging disadvantaged young people aged 13-25, providing them with transferable skills, increased confidence, accreditation and opportunities for further training and work experience in a professional environment.

An external evaluation of Talent Studio has shown that media is a particularly effective vehicle to engage hard to reach young people due to several unique attributes.

- The allure of the media, attracted many young people to the project.

- The majority of respondents talked about the excitement of creating a film. Having a 'window' into the world of the media, via the media mentors, provided a unique, out of the ordinary experience for participants, which gave them aspirations for their own futures.

- On media projects there is equality amongst all members of the team, with no dedicated captain or lead. Young people can assume equally vital roles, which are diverse and require varied skill sets.

- The ability for some young people to assume more 'hidden' roles such as editing allows young people who may not wish to be in the spotlight to be equally involved.

> **"The mentors from the BBC made me realise there's more opportunities out there than meets the eye. You just have to look deeper and look far and wide – they are out there; you just have to look."** Young person, Manchester

> **"I've really enjoyed it and have noticed a real change in myself. I feel more proactive and energetic and am looking forward to learning more through taking up any challenges given to me."** Young person volunteering at Media Trust

Previous experience

For almost all, and especially young people with a history of disengagement, the fact that many youth media projects do not need previous experience was useful in encouraging first steps. Perceptions of needing established and proven 'talent' are rarely present, unlike joining a sports team, art class or playing in an orchestra, and the skills-gradient is comparatively gentle. Talent and ability is allowed to emerge over time and across a range of creative and technical roles.

A familiar environment

Young people are more immersed in digital media than any previous generation, especially with the emergence and continuous growth of social media and the almost universal use of mobile phones. This makes media projects attractive to participate in, as it is a familiar environment.

Skill development

For young people wishing to enter the media professions specific skill development was seen as a driver to participate in youth media projects. The prospect of working with media professionals through mentoring programmes or other structured support is also attractive to those that want to access the industry.

Plenty of variety

Media projects offer a multiplicity of roles both creative and technical . This appeals to young people interested in different areas of media production. It also allows young people to take on numerous roles which keeps things exciting and maintains interest throughout the process.

A member of Glasgow's Castlemilk Youth Complex hosted a weekly radio show on Cyclonefm.com, booked interview subjects, programmed the music and maintained the show's presence on its website. He has been involved with the project for almost a year and a half and has gained expereince across a number of roles.

Personal development

Focus groups found that some young people became involved with media projects to increase confidence or improve their self-esteem. A participant in Manchester got involved in his project because it was good for **"building self-image,"** saying that he **"needed to change and this was the type of thing that would help (him) change."**

The 'fun factor' encourages engagement

The fact that media projects are enjoyable is clearly an important factor in securing retention rates, with **"fun"** being one of the key factors for young focus group members in encouraging them to stay. Radio, interactive games and the moving image are perceived as being cooler than choral singing or English country dancing. More specifically, young people are attracted by the interest that surrounds the professional media.

Getting their voice heard

Youth media can allow young people to explore, discuss and disseminate their views to wide public audiences. Focus groups found that this was a key driver to engaging in youth media. Young people feel it is important to contribute to the local and national media and get their voices heard. They see youth media projects as a route to achieve this.

As discussed there are a number of reasons for young people engaging in youth media projects. From the research it also seems that as well as appealing to and being attractive to a wide range of young people youth media projects are also effective at keeping young people engaged. A 15-year-old member of Bristol's Creative Youth Network said he **"started it for fun",** but stayed with it because he now looks at it as a foundation for what he wants to do.

85% of young people completed the Talent Studio filmmaking course and of those 'completers' **94.6%** young people gained their Bronze Arts Award.

What are the drivers for youth media?

For many providers, the motivation to deliver youth media projects is to provide the tools young people need to change their attitudes and behaviours, raise their aspirations and enable them to participate in society in a more active way. By doing this it challenges apathy and isolation. This can be seen as three key factors that drive youth media activity – skills development, progression routes and social inclusion. Practitioners see the benefits as mutually reinforcing and most projects share elements of all three.

All the research corroborated these factors as drivers – and outcomes of youth media. In the literature, there was empirical and quantitative evidence of the outcomes, with case study and qualitative assessments commonplace. Interviewees did comment that the demonstration of these outcomes was often based on qualitative evidence and many agreed that a longitudinal impact analysis of youth media activity was needed, to assess the impact of youth media.

Skills development

Jasmine
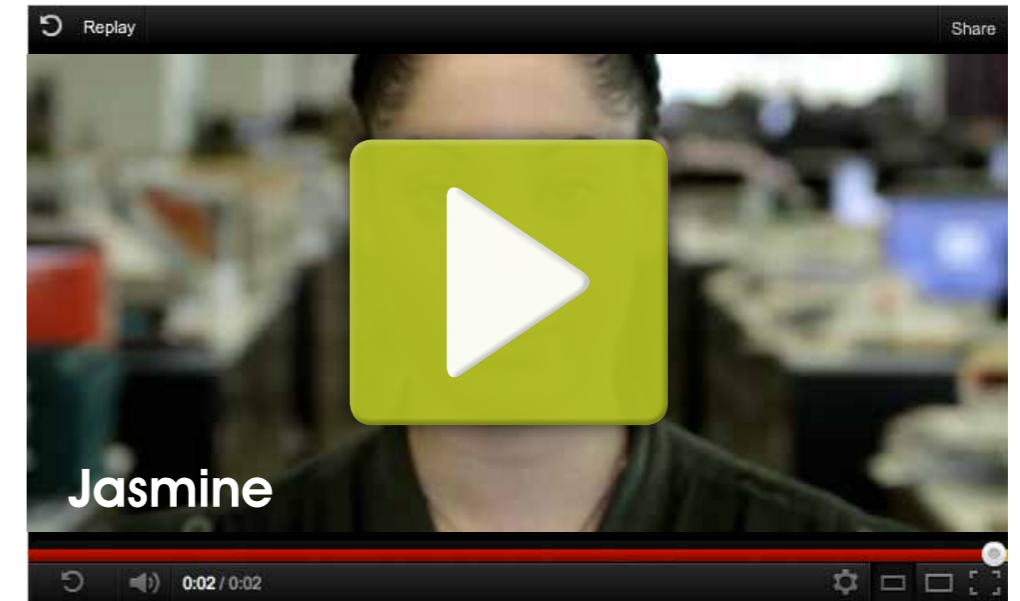
A valuable learning experience

Training for life is an essential component of youth media activity and the different types of projects offer a range of life skills for young people. Youth media provides on-the-job experience, the opportunity to use equipment and work with industry professionals. This enables the development of soft and hard skills and raises aspirations.

Soft skills

In general terms these are often classed as 'life skills' and include:

- Confidence and self esteem
- Social development
- Ability to adapt to change and face challenges
- Anger/attitude management
- Sense of direction
- Decision making
- Communication
- Teamwork.

These were universally identified as the most important, immediate benefit of youth media projects. Although considered hard to evaluate, they were seen as essential in underpinning the acquisition of hard skills and valued as they are transferable into any situation. These are clearly important in terms of social inclusion, raising aspirations and opening doors to future opportunities.

"Talent Studio took me out of my comfort zone, boosted my confidence and changed my perspective on everything. It has given faith in my future." Young person

"Young people enjoy having a role within a media group as it encourages them to be responsible and increases their confidence." Survey Respondent

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"It helps them to identify skills that they never thought they had. There are a lot of young people here that have just been told that they're rubbish and it's all about education, education, education. Through working with Talent Studio, what I've seen is that kids who weren't confident with writing and were told that they couldn't, actually find out it's more their confidence that's holding them back." Fairbridge Programme Developmental Tutor

Hard skills

In general terms these are classed as tangible skills and include:

- Numeracy
- Literacy
- ICT training
- Craft and technical (industry specific) skills.

Youth media can prove especially effective when it comes to engaging with hard to reach young people. For these groups youth media can teach basic numeracy, literacy and ICT skills and the disciplines required for regular work or employment (including timekeeping, organisational skills, problem solving and team working). These are clearly valuable in terms of social inclusion and employability or access to new opportunities in education and especially important for young people who have fallen outside the mainstream education system.

Youth media practitioners often see industry specific skills as a secondary benefit. However, they recognise these skills can be life-changing for individual young people who want to pursue a media career.

Protégé TV[11]
Protégé is a national initiative in which young people, who are excluded from mainstream education, work with artists and experts to design their own education.

"Too mad, too pregnant, too interesting, too complex, too recently arrived, too angry, too quiet - some of the different reasons why some talented kids were kicked out of school in recent years. Protégé is a real life social experiment inspired by Leonardo da Vinci based on the idea that if he were alive today, history's greatest polymath would struggle with the curriculum and probably be kicked out of the classroom.

"Protégé both creates and documents the story of how we work with excluded young people to make the most of this radical opportunity… It's about seeing what happens when unique individuals are given the creative freedom to surprise, delight and shock us with their potential."

Hosted by Central St Martin's College of Art, Protégé works with a network of local authority inclusion teams, schools and other agencies dealing with alternative provision to identify excluded young people who, despite their circumstances and adversity, show signs of talent and individuality. It works with young people as individuals to explore the context, influencing factors, and the signposts that guide their curiosity. The project aims to help young people who have been long-term excluded from school catch up through personalised learning for a return to further education or the workplace.

Creative skills

Typically, creative projects involve activities that build creative skills. These are not specific to a particular media form and they include:

- Identifying and developing ideas
- Experimentation and curiosity
- Storytelling
- Imagination
- Reflection
- Performance
- Expressive writing.

Creative skills allow young people to find new ways to communicate and express themselves.

Learning Skills

Developing an ability to learn by stimulating curiosity and imagination or simply altering attitudes was a recurrent theme in the research. Youth media was seen as an unconventional but effective way to achieve educational ends.

Media literacy - the ability to understand the quality, range and amount of media produced - is fundamental for those that want to pursue a career in the industry. While youth media provides young people with an understanding of media production the pace of change in the media industry is swift. This means that learning how to learn is also an essential part of youth media activity.

Hannah, 15 – Eclectic Productions[12]
Hannah's been in and out of care since she was five years old. In school she was struggling with literacy and numeracy. Her school recommended she come to us for some positive extracurricular activities and consistency outside of school. So in May 2010 she joined the Sounding Out project.

"Hannah often gets involved in the wrong crowd, but when she goes to the radio project I know she will be safe and it's showing her how to be a good person."
Tasha, Hannah's regular carer

Hannah was extremely proud of the two AQA accreditations that she achieved on the course, especially as she often feels embarrassed about not being able to write and read very well.

As Tasha explained:
"I think this is one of the things Hannah finds hard because she comes across as being confident and cocky, but it's to hide how she finds other things difficult. Working with Marie she is learning to be proud of herself for the right reasons."

Hannah is really enjoying her work with Reprezent and she has recently joined one of the station's most popular shows as a broadcast assistant. It has helped give her the confidence to sing in a music video produced by some GCSE students at her school.

"Hannah is happier and more focused in school. She also has more friends her own age and they all listened to her on the radio the other day! She is one young girl who deserves so much more than her life has given her so far. This is just the beginning for Hannah and I am so grateful that Sounding Out gave her the start."
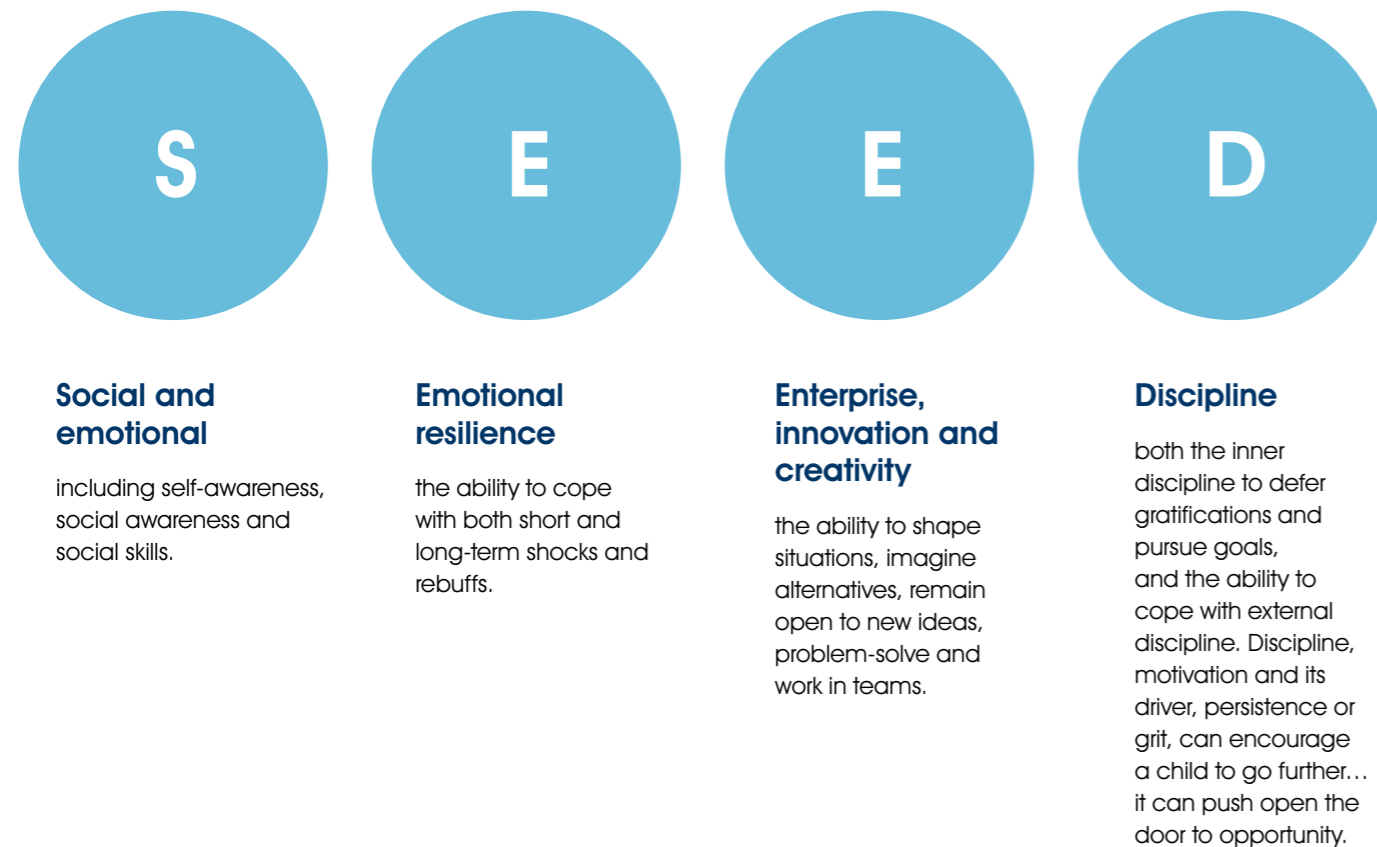
11 Source: http://www.protegetv.co.uk/

12 Source: http://www.eclectic-productions.co.uk/eclectic/case _ study _ view _ info/Hannah-15

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Progression routes

In 2009, the Young Foundation published *Grit – the Skills for Success* and *How They are Grown*[13] (Yvonne Roberts). Based on an in-depth reading of sociological, psychological and economic research, this argued that there were four clusters of competencies that were essential for modern life. These were seen to be particularly important for young people if they are to develop fulfilled and successful lives.

The Young Foundation aligned these four competencies under the acronym SEED:

S   **E**   **E**   **D**

Social and emotional

including self-awareness, social awareness and social skills.

Emotional resilience

the ability to cope with both short and long-term shocks and rebuffs.

Enterprise, innovation and creativity

the ability to shape situations, imagine alternatives, remain open to new ideas, problem-solve and work in teams.

Discipline

both the inner discipline to defer gratifications and pursue goals, and the ability to cope with external discipline. Discipline, motivation and its driver, persistence or grit, can encourage a child to go further… it can push open the door to opportunity.

The report does not mention youth media other than in passing, but these broad competencies were described, time and time again, as the main outcomes of youth media projects.

Providers active in youth media describe a range of progression routes from youth media projects, these include:

- Re-entry into mainstream education
- Access to further and higher education
- Access to employment – including jobs within and outside of the media industry.

"Our work enables young people to build their future by finding them new routes to training or employment." Survey respondent

Providing concrete proof of skills

Articles, films, podcasts and other products made by young people play an important role in helping individuals progress from a youth media project. Many interviewees stated that finished products were invaluable in giving young people a portfolio to show to employers or (especially) for further and higher education admission. One interviewee, who had until recently played a role in the admissions process for one of the Skillset Media Academies, noted that a great number of applicants quoted an involvement in youth media as having inspired them.

Accredited training has grown in importance in recent years with funding increasingly tied to the delivery of specific qualifications as well as the development of individuals. Some interviewees noted that particular funders such as local authorities increasingly insisted on accreditation as a condition of investment. This study found ambivalence about accreditation in youth media circles.

Organisations not offering accreditation for some or all of their activities frequently mentioned that:

- It might put off some young people as being too 'schooly'
- Accreditation was not suitable for extremely excluded young people from the most difficult backgrounds
- It was impossible to deliver in the limited time available.

13 http://www.youngfoundation.org/publications/books/grit-the-skills-success-and-how-they-are-grown-june-2009

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Many providers felt the focus on qualifications forced their activity to take on a particular form, which emphasised the individual trainee rather than the collaborative process. At the same time, providers recognised that some young people valued the sense of achievement associated with gaining a qualification.

Many providers felt the focus on qualifications forced their activity to take on a particular form, which emphasised the individual trainee rather than the collaborative process. Also, some organisations felt they did not have the administration support required to process the paperwork.

At the same time, providers recognised that some young people valued the sense of achievement associated with gaining a qualification. Many organisations that focused on vocational or employment outcomes noted the importance of accreditation to progression. Eclectic Productions reported that over 90% of the young people it worked with successfully achieved an accreditation. Interviewees commented on the importance of accreditation in validating project work in the face of prospective employers and Higher/Further Education providers.

Shorter courses appear less likely to offer accreditation than longer-term projects. Accreditation routes ranged from Arts Award (for basic level activities) through Open College Network (OCN) to accreditation offered in partnership with Further and Higher Education institutions.

"The majority of the participants are actively looking for creative opportunities using film as a direct result of taking part in this project. Some individuals have applied for college placements on photography and film courses, several have approached individual photographers and film makers directly for mentoring and work experience." First Light funded project, The Eternal Now[15]

"The OCN accreditation has acted as a carrot to help parental support. Parents from this community do not always see the benefit of activities like this without any qualification. The accreditation has helped to illustrate the project as an added to bonus to their children's formal learning." Project worker on a youth film project targeting the BME community in Leicester[16]

15 Source: First Light Young Film Fund – an analysis of the impact of the 2008-10 funding round (First Light/Helen Corkery Research and Marketing, 2012)
16 eclectic/case _ study _ view _ info/Hannah-15

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Main picture: Candice Pepperall grills the Liberal Democrat leader, Nick Clegg. Above, Dorian "V Go" Wright

Adika
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Creating opportunities within the media

Many interviewees were enthusiastic about the need to help able young people to work in the media and felt the creation of alternative pathways into the media industry is seen as a key part of their work. The media industry is an area of growing economic and political importance and is often seen as one of the sectors capable of driving economic growth or regeneration in particular communities. The past decade has seen the emergence of the creative economy as a key area of economic activity. The media and the related digital sectors play a key part in this sector, which is larger in the UK than other European countries.[17]

Entry to the media industries is highly competitive and often depends on a combination of high qualifications and a strong portfolio. Prospective entrants are increasingly asked to work for free in the early stages of their career and, too often, they need pre-established contacts within media companies, this makes the industry less accessible to some groups of people.

Developing craft or technical skills can be a route into relevant Further or Higher Education courses and, for some, the media industry. For example, participants working with the Rural Media Company have moved on to the Skillset Media Academy at Bournemouth, while others from Watershed have secured places at University of West of England. Employers value these skills as they enable employees to demonstrate that they can perform specific tasks.

Large media corporations often see youth media as a route to reach young people who may not otherwise have the opportunities to work in the industry. For example, BBC and Channel 4 both have schemes that establish sustainable links and connections to many different community groups.

"Youth media helps directly train the journalists, social media and creatives of the future. It offers a chance for young people to develop their critical thinking and to meet and work with different people across gender, age, ethnicity, economic background and class. It improves life chances and has a very powerful impact on employability." Survey Respondent

Participants on some youth media projects can move to being volunteers, trainees or apprentices and then on to work with the company as freelancers or permanent staff. The identification and opening of alternative pathways into the media industry is a priority for youth media and industry professionals alike. Skillset is delivering the Creative and Digital Media Apprenticeships and sees the need to work with the youth media sector to reach young people from all backgrounds engaged with youth media projects. Skillset has also raised the need for joined up and better access to careers advice for the creative industries.

John James Anisiobi – Catch 22 Academy[18]
John did a couple of internships with local papers and radio stations. None of them were paid and he struggled to find employment. He wanted to find a course that could provide the contacts and opportunities that would give him a shot at a career in the media industry.

He described how Catch 22 helped him: "Catch 22 taught me a basic journalism 'tool kit', which helped me to make the most of my placements with the Trinity Mirror and John Brown Publishing and ultimately to get a job with the Evening Standard, via an NCTJ course. After completing the Catch 22 Academy programme, I secured an unpaid placement at The Daily Mirror. After my four week placement was up, 3am girl Clemmie Moodie asked me if I would like to stay for another week. I ended up staying there for another year and the journalists on the showbiz team with whom I worked encouraged me to study for my NCTJ diploma in journalism."

The fast track course he did at Lambeth College was pivotal to his confidence and progression as a writer. Just as the course was ending Catch 22 called and told him he had been put forward for an interview with The Evening Standard. He went for the interview and got the role, and now is a Showbiz and Arts Journalist for The Evening Standard.

"This is pretty much my dream job," he told us.

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"Since completing Talent Studio it's opened so many doors for me. One of the biggest differences and something I value so much is now being a paid youth worker on other Talent Studio courses. Having done the course myself and gaining knowledge and experience within media through work experience and work placements, I am seen and respected as a role model to other young people. I like helping and passing on my experience to the young people and thanks to the Talent Studio course I'm in a job that I enjoy and is very rewarding" Anthony Howell, previous Talent Studio participant, and now Youth Worker at Catch22 Nottingham

Social inclusion

The idea of social inclusion is central to much youth media activity. Youth media is seen as a means to reach and engage young people who are often excluded by their background, gender, ethnicity or disability. Youth media projects often work with groups who are perceived as alienated or in danger of being marginalised. These include the Black and Afro-Caribbean community, white working class boys and Muslim youth. Projects such as Radio Youthology or Reprezent FM are excellent examples of successful work engaging directly with social inclusion.

Creating opportunities outside of the media

For many providers, the focus for delivering youth media projects is not to provide a route for young people into the media industry but to engage them in society. The skills gained through youth media projects allow young people to raise their aspirations, reach their potential and supports them to re-engage with education, employment and training.

"The support offered by organisations like Knowle West Media Centre empowers young people, enabling them to acquire the skills, knowledge and experience needed to take on more responsible roles". Katie Snook is a 17 year old who now works with Knowle West Media Centre.

"In September 2009 I joined the Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC) youth programme. I started off in N'large, a group for young people interested in photography. Through becoming a member I really developed my photography skills and helped contribute to the local regeneration of the area through my first exhibition piece 'N'large vs Filwood Broadway'.

"The Pro-found media post was advertised and my past experiences at KWMC gave me the confidence to apply and show what I could bring to the team. Finding out I had the job was brilliant. I was very proud of myself for achieving something like this and was ready to get going".

"Now that I work at KWMC I have learnt so much more and feel really comfortable in the environment of the KWMC building. I am in charge of gathering artists, facilitators and mentors for each of the groups that meet at KWMC, to help with their particular projects and to assist the young people participating. It has really helped me gain experience and knowledge needed for the 'real world' and possible jobs in the future."[19]

These same groups have restricted representation in mainstream media: put crudely, the media are for the most part run by corporations of older, white, middle class people who have the power to define how the world is represented and who does the representing. Youth media activity becomes one means to redress the balance.

One project leader talked of working with a group of hard to reach young people from a marginalised estate with no experience of the city centre some two miles away. By the end of the project the young people involved had made their own film and shown it at a screening in the city centre. Making the film had provided the young people with new confidence and connection to their community.

"We work with excluded young people, those from disadvantaged backgrounds, unemployed, those with disabilities, marginalised young people, those from LGBT community." Survey Respondent

Social inclusion lies at the heart of much youth media. Projects frequently include an element that challenges exclusion by working directly with participants who are excluded or have direct experience of exclusion.

Social inclusion lies at the heart of much youth media. Projects frequently include an element that challenges exclusion by working directly with participants who are excluded or have direct experience of exclusion. Projects across the country use the media to get beyond negative stereotype, illuminating some of the myths, misunderstandings and taboos. This is particularly important for young people who often feel unfairly victimised by consistent negative media and mainstream prejudice. Many interviewees noted that young people often wanted to make films addressing and challenging stereotyping.

19 Source http://kwmc.org.uk/index.php?article=613&department=12

Voice of Young People

- **The creation of a tangible product - a film, podcast or magazine - is one of the defining features of youth media. It distinguishes it from most other youth focused activities.**

- **Youth media is powerful . The product is proof of the process and it is this that provides young people with a voice and the ability to communicate their voice to large audiences and be heard in the national debate.**

- **There is no national aggregator for youth media output. The sector would benefit from more investment in 'agency' services which can aggregate and promote youth media messages within the local and national media.**

The creation of a tangible product - a film, podcast, magazine or comparable piece of media is one of the defining features of youth media. It distinguishes it from most other youth focused activities (for example sport). In these other activities the emphasis is primarily on the social and creative processes underpinning it rather than the outcome.

The combination of technical, educational, social, investigative and creative elements within a youth media project is unique. Here, the product is proof of the process and it is this that provides young people with a voice, as there are opportunities for distribution on national and local platforms.

Project completion is often marked by a screening or community based event in a cinema, town hall or other public venue. Working in this way provides participants with a clear sense of a journey so an initial workshop can be seen as something leading directly to a shared public event.

As important for some projects is the ability of youth media work to present the views and opinions of young people in national media, and to allow young people to take part in the national debate. For many this is an important balance to the sometimes disparaging view of young people that the media can project.

"Media production has proven to be a powerful tool in capturing the natural talent, creativity, stories and views of young people today. Young people often feel that they need to be heard and listened to, so the work has played a key role in facilitating this by giving them a new accessible opportunity to make films which have been distributed." Survey Respondent

"I realised that all of these young people have so many stories to tell and so much to say about their views on things and also their view on how other people view them. Which doesn't really get that much of an outing and it's just made me really conscious of that when I am thinking about what stories to cover. The media tend to ignore young people as a source of opinions or stories but that shouldn't." Mentor, Presenter and Journalist, ITV

"Our work enables self expression, allows young people to voice their opinions and gives them power to campaign on causes close to their heart" Survey Respondent

What is 'Voice'?

In 1982 when Channel 4 started as the first publisher-broadcaster, the idea that young people could make a coherent film that appeared on screen was hugely powerful. Television then was a remote ivory tower staffed by people who controlled access to the channel. Investment in the production workshops across the UK during the 1980s supported the subsequent growth of youth media.

Establishing specific spaces for youth media on Channel 4 and BBC meant broadcasters could provide an outlet for the voice of young people. At the same time, advances in desktop publishing meant that magazines and other printed material could begin to compete with the mainstream media.

Evolving technology changes the challenge

In the past decade, technology has moved on rapidly. Online publishing and radio are now relatively simple and inexpensive, and any young person can easily make, edit and show a film. Everything is geared towards individual production and the issue of voice in media has moved on because of this.

The public space has been transformed as technologies have converged to provide multiple points of entry to different media experiences. Social media platforms to distribute work is accessible for a wide range of people but the key challenge is to avoid work vanishing in the proliferation of channels and outlets and get it seen by wide audiences.

Practitioners have responded in a number of different ways and many of these are led directly by young people. For example, the Watershed acts as hub of activity and provides multiple routes to audiences for work created by young people working through their particular programmes and initiatives. Media Trust works with the media industry to secure media space for content produced by young people. There is no coordination around this area of work and the sector would benefit from more investment in 'agency' services which can aggregate and promote youth media messages within the local and national media.

Watershed is a cross-artform venue and producer, sharing, developing and showcasing exemplary cultural ideas and talent. Based in Bristol, the organisation "curates ideas, spaces and talent to enable artistic visions and creative collaborations to flourish". Watershed uses digital production to build digital media literacy and cultural engagement with a particular focus on young people. This is achieved through a collaborative partnership based practice and involves working with diverse partners - from community organisations, youth groups, schools and individuals to industry partners, artists and creative practitioners. Activity is delivered year round in Watershed, with collaborator venues, community centres, in public spaces and online. A portfolio of engagement projects, screenings and events provide young people with opportunities to develop and realise their creative, economic and social potential in and out of formal education with a view of developing the producers, artists and audiences of the future. In this way, young people are able to move from production to exhibition. A number of participants have secured roles in the industry, including Aardman.

It can be argued that organised youth media work has diminished in importance upon a national stage over the past ten years. Technology now allows young people to make their own work without the support of intermediary organisations. Access to that work has also been individualised to a point where it is scattered across the country and remains unconnected.

For youth media today the key challenge is to avoid work vanishing in the proliferation of channels and outlets.

Mediabox funding offered a way to address these issues - providing an overall framework and specific support measures for the dissemination of projects supported by the fund.

The rise and contemporary power of social media is both an opportunity and a barrier for youth media as it makes it even even more difficult to make sense of all this activity. Google estimated in 2009 that 13 hours of video is uploaded to YouTube every minute.

Getting a personal view widely heard

The idea of voice was discussed by the young people's focus groups as part of this research project. Young people saw youth media work as more than a means to create a product. It was an opportunity to express themselves in the mainstream media.

Many youth media practitioners work to help young people to use their voices in a way that expresses their particular concerns and as a result often challenges perceptions.

It is important to distinguish between voice as process (i.e. the means of speaking, giving an account) and value (i.e. the spaces where that voice can be heard to establish a voice that matters).[28] The most successful youth media work often flows from projects where the parameters are most clearly defined by young people – where they have a central role in the development and direction of the project. In short, those projects where the voice of the young person is embedded in the process and the value.

28 For a fuller discussion of these issues see Voice as Value in Why Voice Matters by Nick Couldry (Sage, 2010)

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Distribution and Dissemination

For young people and the adults who work alongside them, distributing a finished product can have a number of different (though interconnected) roles. The creation of a magazine or film under-writes the value of the project for the participants. Public showing or dissemination creates an opportunity to realise their achievement and gain feedback and recognition. This can be done by simply uploading material to YouTube, through public showcase events or the distribution on national or local media platforms. In all cases, youth media projects leave a legacy in the form of a creative artefact that can be used by participants after the project has completed.

A public launch, where the product could be viewed by peers, parents and the local community, was a high point for many young people. The involvement of local amenities such as cinemas and town halls in giving launches a sense of occasion – and making them take place in public spaces – was frequently mentioned.

"By far the best resource I have used to communicate with hard to reach young people." Gordon Barlow MBE, Metropolitan Police.[29]

"The young people respond really well to the DVD [created as the result of a partnership with young parents] and they pick up on the issues not only around physical violence but power, control and isolation. I think it really is the best learning resource I have come across covering this topic area." Workshop facilitator, Women's Aid.[30]

A public launch, where the product could be viewed by peers, parents and the local community, was a high point for many young people.

Local effectiveness

Many youth media products are mainly distributed locally and primarily seen by the families, peers and immediate community of the young people making them. Even when shared via Facebook and other social media, the lack of a youth media aggregator or any other mechanism to draw attention means that their primary audience is one that seeks them out. These local effects can still be substantial. In some youth media projects young people set out to analyse an issue of concern to them and are able to change minds and attitudes, in some cases working with local media.

In one project, delivered by Headliners, care leavers focused on the availability of supported housing. They made a film as the core of a campaign and as a direct result the local authority increased supported housing numbers by 25%. Projects created to explore and communicate young people's views on an issue are, in some instances, commissioned by local authorities and other public agencies, Such projects can be seen as more effective than direct methods of seeking a youth view as they allow for an explored, analysed and structured view, relatively unmediated by observer bias.

Youth media is especially powerful in helping young people to consider, create and disseminate to a large audience, messages which matter to them.

Grabbing the attention of the national media

The absence of a national aggregator for youth media output was mentioned throughout this research. One interviewee said: **"the current platforms are too small and grab too little attention in the national consciousness and debate."** Many interviewees felt that it was difficult to distribute content made by young people on national media platforms and for young people to have a voice in the political arena.

Media Trust itself has been successful in placing young people's stories in for example, the BBC, Sky, Channel 4, The Sun and The Guardian.

However there are examples of projects and intermediaries that succeed in placing youth media voices directly in the national media. Media Trust itself has been successful in placing young people's stories in for example, the BBC, Sky, Channel 4, The Sun and The Guardian. It also airs many youth media films through its digital television channel Community Channel. Media Trust's initiative with ITN 'Breaking Into News' targeted 18-25 year olds, offers six young people opportunities to learn about ITN and make a short news piece. The winning piece was screened on the London Tonight. Other projects (for example Headliners) put substantial efforts into getting the national press to pick up either directly or as part of other reporting on youth media voices. Livity in South London has been successful in placing youth voices **"up front and central"** in national product marketing campaigns.

29 Source: http://www.latimercreativemedia.com
30 Source: http://www.latimercreativemedia.com/projects/kim/

Youth Media, Diversity and the Industry

Another approach used to make an impact on the national debate was to help new, young voices to work in the media. It is believed that there is a need for people from a greater diversity of backgrounds to work in all parts of the media, including commissioning and scheduling roles.

Efforts to support the early careers of young people from Black, Asian and minority backgrounds, from poor and working class communities and those who have directly experienced the care and youth justice systems and other disadvantage, has a double benefit. It helps the individuals to achieve a successful course in life and it broadens the diversity of the media through recruits from such backgrounds.

"I really enjoyed my time at ITV. One of the highlights was when I made suggestions on three edits and they took on my suggestions and implemented them. When I watched the show the following morning I saw they had actually put my suggestions in – this gave me a sense that I was part of it. it was a wonderful feeling to have your ideas acknowledged by senior professionals. That meant a lot to me." Adika Paul-Campbell, 25, work placement at ITV's Daybreak
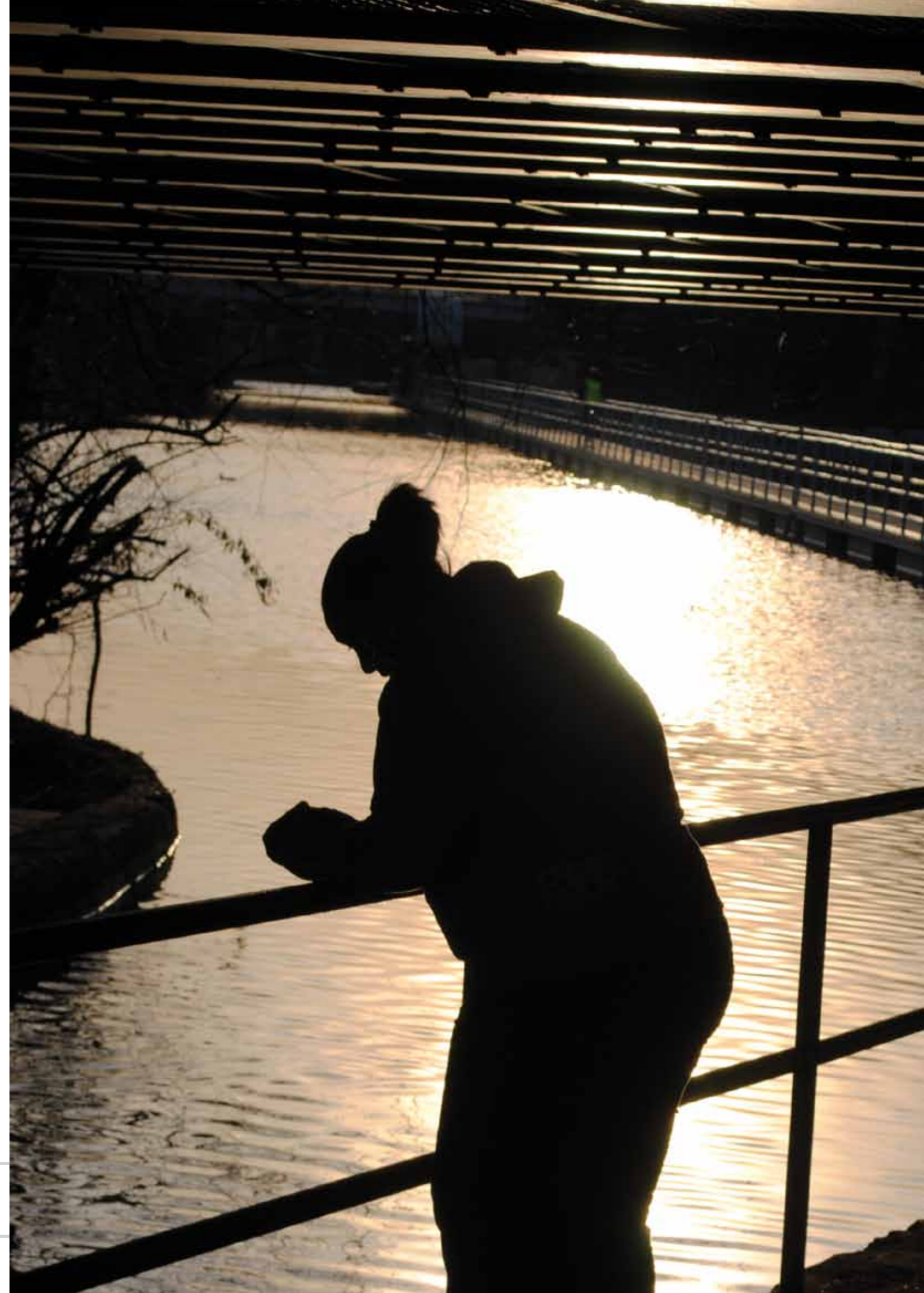
The Youth Media Landscape

Organisations and Networks

- There is no authoritative directory of organisations delivering youth media projects. The range of organisations include specialist media organisations, those focusing primarily on youth engagement and charities and organisations from unrelated sectors.

- For many organisations the involvement of media professionals is an essential part of youth media activity.

- There is a genuine depth of talent in youth media. However, when youth media is compared to (in particular) theatre and music opportunities for the most talented are comparatively weak.

- The youth media sector is lacking coordination and a regional, national and UK wide strategy. A lead strategic agency working in partnership with the youth media sector and media companies would have the capacity to tackle this.

There are a wide range of organisation that deliver youth media projects. The multiplicity and diversity of the sector makes it difficult to collate this network and as a result there is no single authoritative directory of organisations delivering youth media projects. In addition, there is not a strategic agency for the youth media landscape to coordinate this approach. This makes it difficult, to arrive at a firm estimate of numbers, but the range of organisations includes:

- Community youth charities and organisations

- Specialist media organisations

- Media and arts centres

- Charities and organisations from unrelated sectors which use media as part of their youth offer (for example heritage, conservation and international development)

All of the above organisations have been considered as part of the research other than charities and organisations from unrelated sectors due to the size and diversity of this group.

"There is no lead strategic agency for the youth media footprint or an authoritative directory of organisations delivering youth media projects. This makes it difficult to arrive at a firm estimate of numbers"

Community youth charities and organisations

A wide range of youth media projects are delivered by community youth organisations as part of their broader youth work programme engage and develop young people. Youth media projects develop personal and social awareness, build confidence and self-esteem and this supports the subsequent acquisition of skills.

"The film courses run in partnership with the Media Trust are fantastic. The courses enable young people to develop their personal and social skills through media, which is a really powerful learning tool. Many young people use the skills that they have learnt, including the Arts Award, to move onto other projects or as a evidence of their ability to achieve." Operations Manager, The Fairbridge Programme

"Youth media is a really important area of youth work and, with the growth of creative industries, there are more and more opportunities for young people to work in the media. There is also a greater need for young people to be able to develop the skills to get into that industry without going down a formal education route, which simply isn't for everyone!" Survey Respondent

Specialist media organisation

These organisations specialise in the production of professional standard content. Staff members ordinarily have an expertise in media production and a relationship with media industry outlets, such as broadcasters or publishers. This is combined with outreach and educational youth media programmes.

Latimer Creative is a social enterprise that prides itself in delivering educational innovation direct to young people. An integral aspect of their work is a commitment to social and digital media. Their ethos being that the creative technologies represent an enduring and salient platform to motivate and inspire young people to engage with the issues that matter most to them.

Latimer Creative has pioneered a new approach in educational digital media combining industry standard products with a commitment to working with young people on both the content and production of creative media learning resources.

Chocolate films produces high quality documentaries for cinema and broadcast as well as video content and promotional films for a wide range of clients. In addition, they run an extensive programme of educational and community filmmaking. The majority of their projects are for children and young people. Their projects are facilitated by skilled filmmakers who are experienced educators.

Media and arts centres

Media and arts centres have a broad arts remit which can include media. They have the capacity to act as specialist hubs, delivering their own mix of activities and providing a locus for networking and exchange. In this case youth media forms part of a far larger programme, which involves community engagement, audience development and work with media professionals.

The **Tyneside Cinema** is Newcastle's only full-time independent cultural cinema, specialising in independent and world productions. It offers a range of youth activities as well as a membership scheme focusing on developing a young audience.

Northern Stars is a programme for young people aged 15-18 from across the North East who are passionate about making films. Run by industry professionals from around the North East, Northern Stars gives young people an introduction to every aspect of

film production and provides the opportunity for them to make films and become inspired. Several of their films have gone on to win awards and many graduates go on to study film and media-based courses at university. Tyneside Cinema offers young people from Northern Stars the chance to get involved in making commissions for organisations and companies nationwide. Participants also benefit from jobs and placements on feature film and TV productions.

Elite Provision

Even the most casual appraisal of youth media output will reveal the depth of talent involved – in the same way that local youth theatres and orchestra display the often quite dazzling talents of young actors and musicians. What is noticeable is that when youth media is compared to (in particular) theatre and music is that ladders of opportunity for the most talented to access elite provision are comparatively weak.

The UK has a National Youth Theatre and National Youth Orchestra, but lacks a National Youth Film School and other provision for talented young people across the media spectrum. However, at the end of February 2012, , Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, announced the creation of a new film academy for young people, to be run by the BFI.

The Department for Education committed £3m to the film academy to give 16-19-year-olds **"a unique talent development experience working with the film industries and film professionals".** The academy will initially work with 5,000 young people. That number will be whittled down to 200 selected for a **"pioneering elite residential film-making course",** which will teach them technical, curatorial, business and marketing skills. Teachers will include UK producers, filmmakers and technical experts as well as academics. The course will be free for participating students.

There is a genuine depth of talent in youth media. What is noticeable is that when youth media is compared to (in particular) theatre and music opportunities for the most talented are comparatively weak.

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Partnerships

A common feature of interviews and focus group discussions was that partnerships for project provision were common. These were diverse but many took the form of media specialists working with youth sector providers – ranging from youth clubs and community groups through to government agencies, such as those within the youth justice system, pupil referral centres and the care system.

Many youth media projects use industry professionals - either freelancers or staff from media organisations who are either contracted to deliver youth media activity or volunteer their time. yThis combination of skills allows youth workers to provide on-going holistic support to young people and the media professionals bring their specialist knowledge and expertise. For projects led by speciality media organisations and media and arts centres, a partnership with a youth charity or organisation enables them to reach a diverse group of young people. For many organisations the involvement of media professionals is an essential part of youth media activity.

For many organisations the involvement of media professionals is an essential part of youth media activity.

"I was bowled over with just how great, how professional, how supportive and also protective of the young people the youth leaders were. How absolutely necessary they are as part of the course."[42] Volunteer freelance producer, supporting a youth media project

Working with Media Trust has enabled our youth workers to see the huge opportunities for inspiring development in young people through film. The project has enabled them not only to engage and have fun, but also to come out with a high quality accreditation and a broadcast quality film, being shown internationally. This has raised the bar of expectations that youth workers have and has expanded their repertoire of interventions from sport, cooking and outdoor activities into high quality creative media activities. Specifically, staff have gained skills in the film development process, in technical skills and in supporting young people to obtain the Arts Award accreditation. Head of Local Public Sector, Prince's Trust.

Some organisations fulfil both roles and, by virtue of their base with a particular community, act as a community resource and a repository of professional expertise.

How many delivery organisations?

There has only been one systematic audit of organisations delivering participatory youth media activity outside of formal education. This was 2010 research commissioned by 21st Century Literacy. It shows 392 delivery organisations active in moving image youth projects in the UK. A significant proportion of these also deliver other youth, media or arts activities. Providers included venues (e.g. cinemas), production companies and film archives, theatres and youth arts companies. There were providers in all of the nations and regions of the UK. Taking population and demographics into account the spread was uneven, as can be seen in the table on the right.

Youth media organisations audit 2011, analysed by nation and region[45]

Region	Number of organisations	%
London	59	15
Scotland	40	10
West Midlands	37	9
East Midlands	36	9
Wales	32	8
Yorkshire & the Humber	32	8
Northern Ireland	29	7
South East England	29	7
South West England	29	7
North West England	27	7
North East England	19	5
East of England	14	4

The interviews and focus groups give strong supportive evidence that the table above is an accurate reflection of the true picture in terms of geographical representation. Other than a few examples, market town and rural locations are poorly served.

42 Source: Evaluation of Media Trust's Talent Studio Programme, Media Trust 2011, Dr Kath Edgar

45 Source: 21st Century Literacy

An overall audit has not been undertaken for all organisations and charities active in across all areas of youth media. This will require a methodical audit of providers active across the youth media landscape and would benefit from a lead strategic agency to coordinate this area of work.

The 21st Century Literacy audit did not include community youth organisations that deliver moving image projects as part of their broader youth work remit or charities and organisations from unrelated sectors (for example heritage, conservation and international development) which use moving image as one component of their offer to young people.

In addition, the definition of youth media is, of course, much broader than just moving image projects and includes gaming, radio, print media and photography projects.

An overall audit has not been undertaken for all organisations and charities active in across all areas of youth media. This will require a methodical audit of providers active across the youth media footprint and would benefit from a lead strategic agency to join up this area of work.

In 2003 Somerset Film opened **The Engine Room** - an accessible community media centre in Bridgwater's High Street. The Engine Room gives the general public access to equipment and expertise through free 'Drop-in' sessions. Staffed by a professional film-maker, the drop-ins ensure that people of all ages and abilities can practice their skills; have access to specialised equipment; and get advice and information. Activities include courses, master classes, tailor-made workshops and training schemes, work experience and bursary placements, networking events and an annual festival - Forward Motion.

The courses are open to participants of all ages and cover a range of subjects including film-making, animation, web design, graphic design, digital photography, scriptwriting and VJ-ing. These are delivered at The Engine Room and other venues across Somerset.

One of the most innovative developments from Somerset Film over the past few years has been the Young People's Film Council (YPFC). It's an informal, self-help network of young people engaged in film-making, animation and digital media and has become a dynamic and effective vehicle for mutual support and self-expression.

Numbers of Young People involved

It is difficult to estimate the total number of young people participating in youth media projects each year. First Light reports 5,100 participants in the period 2008-2010. Mediabox in its first year of activity (2007-08) supported 12,334 beneficiaries and "more than 20,000" throughout the whole period of its existence (2007-2010). It seems likely these figures represent a small minority of the total benefiting from youth media projects.

There is both anecdotal and statistical evidence of the gender split in participants. The Evaluation of Mediabox found that by the end of March 2008 (roughly the mid-point in the project), 46% were female and 54% were male. Media Trust's Youth Mentoring project reports a similar gender balance. In interviews, one project, focusing on radio, reported a 60%/40% female to male split, and that special efforts had recently been made to attract boys into the project. This comparatively even gender split is not typical of participatory youth projects as a whole, where males tend to outnumber females, often by a considerable margin.

Evidence regarding the proportions of males and females attracted and the reasons for this is inconclusive not only for youth media projects but across all youth activities.

The difficulty in achieving a total figure for the numbers engaged in youth media projects and a true picture of these young people is certain to continue. Achieving this would require a register or network of youth media delivery organisations and a longitudinal input and impact study. It would greatly assist advocacy for the sector if a methodology for estimating numbers of participants could be agreed and implemented. This is one of a number of developmental factors identified throughout this report that can only be properly addressed through action at a strategic level.

This comparatively even gender split is not typical of participatory youth projects as a whole, where males tend to outnumber females, often by a considerable margin.

"The majority of activity-based interventions tend to engage greater numbers of males than females (typically at a ratio of around 70%/30% in favour of young males). This is especially the case in programmes that use activities which are, or have been, viewed as being more or less 'male preserves' (including various sports), but it is also the case in more 'inclusive' activity programmes such as those using music."[46]

46 The Evaluation of Mediabox, 2008, GHK/Julie Farrell and Fraser Battye

A register or network of youth media delivery organisations and a longitudinal input and impact study is required to establish a full picture of the youth media footprint.

The youth media sector is lacking coordination and a regional, national and UK wide strategy. A lead strategic agency working in partnership with youth media organiastions and media companies would have the capacity to tackle this.

Looking for a more joined up approach

There was an almost complete consensus in interviews and focus groups that the youth media sector lacked coordination at a national level and many noted that local coordination was piecemeal. Delivery organisations by and large had a clear sense of their own corporate strategy but felt that this was lacking in regional, national or UK wide strategy. There is currently no lead strategic agency for the whole of the youth media footprint. The challenges this gave rise to were identified as:

• Difficulty in identifying or exchanging good practice;

• Lack of externally verified delivery standards – which could give rise to weak project work;

• Difficulty in coordinating local and regional provision to optimise the use of resources;

• Too much competition between delivery organisations;

• Lack of an information source for young people or groups looking to get involved in media projects;

• Lack of easily identifiable 'ladders of progression' for individual young people, especially outside of higher/further education;

• Lack of recognition of the benefits of youth media activity, to demonstrate impact to government and funders.

Whilst Skillset has no direct remit for youth media, its priorities overlap in the area of 19+ training and entry to employment. Skillset recognises the value of the youth media sector having direct relationships with pre-vocational and entry-level training providers and in particular sees the sector as an engine for diversity in the industry. However, Skillset sees a need to promote the Creative and Digital Media Apprenticeships to the young people from all backgrounds engaged with youth media organisations. The difficulty lies in finding a way to address the multiplicity and diversity of organisations in the sector. This casts into sharp relief the issues identified by focus groups and interviewees from youth media organisations.

Skillset has been advising the Creative Industries Council on skills needs for the creative sector. One key point made was the lack of reliable careers advice which is currently unconnected, partial and isolated. In their report to the Creative Industries Council[47] Skillset recommends that this advice needs to be joined up and there should be better access to information about delivery bodies - especially support organisations for young people. Skillset itself is aware of the potential benefits of working in partnership to develop this approach. If adopted, this has the capacity tackle some of the strategic issues facing the youth media sector.

Alongside sector organisations interviewees mentioned that major media companies should be potential key players to coordinate a strategy for the sector. Some organisations felt that 21st Century Literacy[48] had gone some way to pulling together a strategy for moving image youth projects, although the primary focus of this was media education in the curriculum. The BFI will take direct responsibility for moving image education strategy but, interviewees had varying views on the scope of this strategy in terms of informal youth activity and of course the definition of youth media is much broader than just the moving image. However, there has been a small trend amongst strategic agencies toward a broader area of interest nearer to the youth media footprint:

• Creative Scotland, in merging Scottish Screen and the Scottish Arts Council, now covers film, photography and literature alongside the 'traditional' arts of music, drama and the fine arts.

• Creative England takes as its focus the whole range of digital moving image platforms, including film, television, games and interactive media although it concentrates on audience development for young people rather than participatory youth media projects. However, training and skills will continue to be a priority – although with an emphasis on entry-level skills and continuing professional development.

There is, however, a comparative absence of non-commercial/industry strategic leaders in gaming, radio, print media and photography. For example TIGA[49], the trade association representing the UK's games industry, focuses its education strategy entirely upon the curriculum and graduate/post-graduate provision. Several interviewees felt the development of wider youth media provision in games, apps and interactive media was likely to be hampered by the lack of a pool of freelance industry professionals to form a body of trainers, skills and expertise. They noted that the structure of the print media and moving image sectors lent itself to freelance employment and that a significant group of industry freelancers had added youth media to their portfolios.

47 Creative Industries Council Skillset Skills Group - Report To Creative Industries Council, January 2012 http://cicskills.skillset.org/the-report

48 "Film: 21st Century Literacy is a three year project delivered by FILMCLUB, BFI, Skillset, Film Education and First Light. Through the Strategy we have been strengthening film culture among young audiences across the UK, and training educators to develop a sustainable film education infrastructure." http://www.21stcenturyliteracy.org.uk/

49 http://www.tiga.org/

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Why does the media industry get involved?

Independent production companies, such as Maverick TV and mainstream media companies such as BBC and Channel 4 run programmes designed to work with young people. These activities form part of their commitment to diversity, corporate social responsibility agendas and employee volunteering initiatives. In turn, this increases their access to charities and understanding of particular communities.

From the perspective of large media corporations, youth media is often seen as one possible route to reach groups of young people who may not otherwise gain the opportunities to work in the industry.

Personal and professional development

There is some evidence (primarily from mentoring projects) that media professionals can gain a lot from being involved with youth media. Benefits include developing professional skills in areas such as communication and motivation, and a reminder that the media has a wider social and cultural potential.

"Half the time I think 'what's the point of television?' You know, it all seems a bit frivolous and a bit ridiculous. But what this has made me realise is that your skills are useful and there are loads of things that I can give back. So I suppose in a funny sort of way I feel a bit better about what I do and what I can do with what I've got. Things just seem a bit more worthwhile." Mentor, Media Trust Youth Mentoring Project.[50]

There is also evidence that media professionals also gain personal development opportunities through mentoring projects. Benefits include increasing confidence and gaining an understanding of people from different social backgrounds.

"We've benefitted from our staff working with young people and engaging with them, particularly people that may be from a different social background to themselves. And so it's been personal development for our staff as much as it has been development for the people that come through the scheme." Katie Drumm, BBC Birmingham, commenting on the Media Trust Youth Mentoring Project.[51]

Media professionals can find it difficult to engage with young people who often have no previous experience of media production or the professional attitudes required for sustained creative activity. Projects - such as the mentoring projects run by Media Trust – should (as best practice) offer training and support for the mentor to ensure everyone gets the most out of the experience.

Mentoring schemes are mutually beneficial; not only are they beneficial to the mentors but they are appealing to young people, especially those from backgrounds which are underrepresented in the media industry.

"The aspiration and needs of young people from disadvantaged communities are not necessarily different from those of any talented young person trying to develop a career in the film industry. However, they do not necessarily have the benefit of coming from a similar cultural background as most of those currently working in the industry and it can be difficult for them to have access to both formal and informal mentors who can provide both emotional and practical support over a sustained period of time." Film Trainee Schemes – A New Model by Sarah Macnee for Inclusion Through Media (Nov 2007)

Other creative industries have also provided structured mentoring opportunities for talented young people from under-represented backgrounds. In 2008, Arts Council England and Inlva explored the possibility of establishing a raft of programmes to encourage talented young artists, from BME communities, to consider a career in the arts at key decision making moments at ages 14, 16 and 19.

50 Evaluation of Media Trust's Youth Mentoring Programme, 2011ibid
51 Ibid.

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The Youth Media Picture

- Principle of successful youth media work is that projects should be driven by the needs and aspirations of young people and designed to give them autonomy and control of their own work.

- There is a great diversity of methods and approaches for delivering youth media projects: the sector has proved itself flexible and innovative in working with different groups and in a range of contexts.

- The moving image is the most common form of youth media activity, followed by print and photography.

- There are relatively few examples of games developed by young people but it is an incredibly powerful tool when it is used due to its capacity for interaction.

- Digital media form part of the distribution activities of many projects and due to this expanding area has huge potential for growth.

How are youth media projects delivered?

A central principle of successful youth media work is that projects should be driven by the needs and aspirations of young people and designed to give them autonomy and control of their own work. There is a great diversity of ways to deliver youth media projects. The sector has proved itself flexible and innovative in developing approaches to working with different groups and in different contexts. Generally delivery methods encompass:

- Short courses/modules
- Time-limited project work
- School holiday courses/projects
- Long-term engagement
- Weekly sessions over a period of time
- Drop-in sessions.

Short term v long term

Interviews indicate the majority of youth media work takes the form of short-term project work. Only a few providers appear to offer long-term engagement opportunities. This pattern is dictated by the need to deliver short projects to keep the attention and interest of young people, availability of funding, access to suitable premises.

There is a diversity of high-quality, short project provision, which fulfils the needs of young people from all backgrounds. However, due to the absence of a wider context or ladder of development for young people short-term projects could leave young people with the enthusiasm and interest to do more work and develop their skills, but nowhere to go for support to continue their involvement with youth media projects.

As there are benefits of both short-term and long-term projects the challenge for many organisations is to build the right blend. They also need to work in partnership with relevant organisations to create a network offering sustained and varied engagement with young people - on-going support and opportunities for further activity. This provides a ladder of progression for young people and non-specialist organisations wishing to include media within their offer. However, this is often linked to a cluster of industry activity and there are only a few locations with the infrastructure in place to deliver this and these are almost all limited to larger cities. A recent audit of moving image education in Scotland looked at informal youth media production activity and noted that:

"In areas where there is a cluster of industry activity, for instance a Media Access Centre, an independent cinema, or an arts centre, there seem to be more varied, vibrant and diverse provision and more innovative moving image education projects, in terms of courses and target groups. The interviewees seem to support the assertion that this is a mutually beneficial feedback loop."[58]

This highlights the need for a more joined up and coordinated approach across the sector.

Themes

Themes are driven either by the young people themselves or set by funders, delivery organisations or partner media companies. When themes are set they add a welcome degree of structure and professionalism to individual programmes. One established youth media professional noted that the Film Nation,[59] supported through the Olympics, provided an excellent example as young people were asked to explore the Olympic ideals in relation to everyday life. These were generic and aspirational enough to be interpreted in many different ways. However, when related directly to explicit policy goals this can be restrictive.

When young people are given the creative freedom to explore and execute their own ideas it provides them with the opportunity to create content about issues that matter to them. A youth worker, with experience of European funding programmes, noted that European programmes tended to allow freedom – **"a blank piece of paper to explore ideas."**

58   Audit of Moving Image Education & Media Access Centres in Scotland (Inge Sørensen & David Griffith, Scottish Screen, 2007) http://www.21stcenturyliteracy.org.uk/docs/MIE%20Audit.pdf
59   See http://www.filmnation.org.uk/

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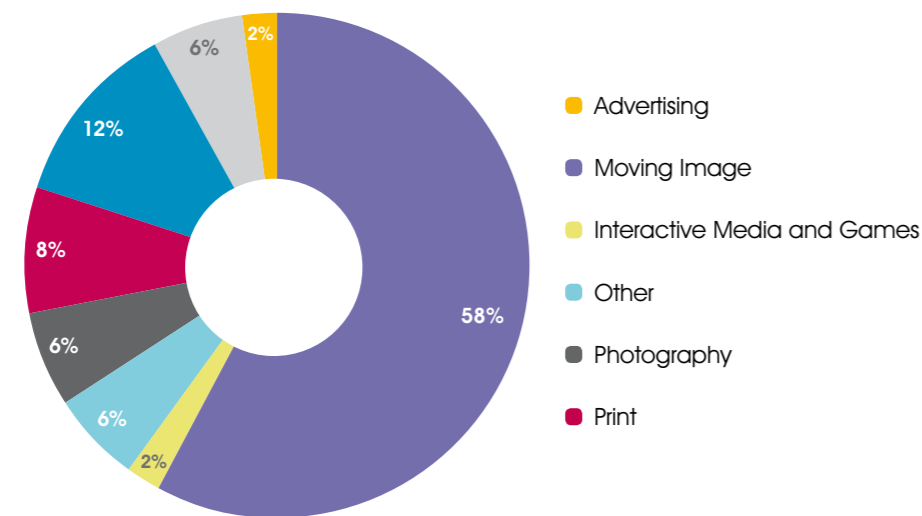**twitter**

Which media are used?

Many practitioners work across several forms of media to create work with young people in more than one discipline. This often involves different outputs from the same project appearing in more than one medium. Categories overlap and feed off each other to strengthen the overall project work.

Some firm conclusions can be drawn about the differing levels of opportunities available to engage with different media. The literature review and interviews indicate that moving image is the most common form of youth media activity. It has the greatest strategic support and a small number of dedicated funding and support agencies. Print and photography appear to be the next most common youth media projects. Despite the popularity of online and console games as part of young people's media diet,

comparatively few organisations appear to deliver projects focusing primarily on games, apps or interactive media. However, digital media in general (e.g. websites, file sharing and social media) form part of the activities of many projects, especially for the distribution of work and due to this expanding area has huge potential for growth.

The Evaluation of Mediabox[60, 61] confirms the prevalence of moving image projects as the chart below shows.

Mediabox projects funded by media type (rounds 1-6, 2006-8)

- Advertising — 2%
- Moving Image — 58%
- Interactive Media and Games — 2%
- Other — 6%
- Photography — 6%
- Print — 8%
- 12%
- 6%

"Despite the popularity of online and console games as part of young people's media diet, comparatively few organisations appear to deliver projects focusing primarily on games, apps or interactive media."

Moving image

This is the most high profile activity within the youth media portfolio. The category includes a wide range of forms and styles including animation, drama and documentaries. Moving image delivery organisations include companies with substantial professional production activities and others that focus entirely upon youth and community activity. Moving image projects can be easily distributed on online and social media sites and when working in partnership with media companies; local and national media platforms.

GMAC[62] is at the heart of the film industry in Scotland. For over 29 years, the organisation has supported and developed independent film makers and the community by providing affordable, high quality equipment, training and production opportunities.

Working in partnership with Scottish Screen, BBC Scotland and the UK Film Council, the company has an impressive track record of producing award winning short films. These include multiple BAFTA's, International Best Film Awards and the GOLDEN BEAR BERLINALE Award in 2005. GMAC's community

programme, the 2nd Unit, actively develops and supports those individuals, groups and organisations that are under-represented within the screen industry through training and support to make their own films.

One of GMAC's projects, Second Light, is a production based training scheme for young people from diverse backgrounds, targeted at redressing their under-representation in the UK film and television industries. It has been devised as a pilot that aims to widen the diversity of the talent pool available to the screen industries in Scotland.

Radio

Radio is a relatively straightforward way to distribute content and reach particular community groups. This is often delivered through an internet based service supported through an occasional 28 day Restricted Service Licence. Many successful radio projects are based in particular communities and provide young people with access to equipment and airtime, which is otherwise not easily available. These enables young people to talk directly to each other about and to their community about issues of particular concern and get their opinions heard by their audience.

Print media

Young people produce a wide range of journals and magazines with support from a range of different projects. Typically, young people are supported to research and produce stories on issues of interest to them for publication in local and national outlets.

Radio Youthology[20] is a cutting edge youth development programme and online radio station. It supports and nurtures the development of young people's intellectual, professional and creative aptitudes through innovative media projects. It was started by Birmingham based NGO, Ulfah Arts & Media with generous support from Adobe Foundation and Mediabox in early 2010 and launched its first online radio station in March 2011. Radio Y now broadcasts radio programmes by its volunteers and other youth radio initiatives around the world. The programme encourages young people to contribute to their society as leaders in media, arts and public life.

"I have been at Headliners for over two years now and it has been a huge learning experience for me. I first joined as a result of my friends' interest in the project and I saw it as a great opportunity to improve my English skills. However, I soon realised that Headliners had so much more to offer me.

I've worked on a number of projects, from a print feature on how to make it in the music industry, to a radio package on the experiences of a person living with HIV. I've also had the opportunity to do live radio interviews and take part in the making of a First Light film documentary. I have become more conscious of the world around me, as well as becoming a peer trainer, where I get to share my skills with other young people.

Headliners has completely changed me as a person. When I first came to the project I was quite narrow-minded, had low self-esteem and definitely had what I can only describe as an attitude problem, but that's changed now. I've become a very approachable, open-minded and confident young person thanks to the organisation and the staff in Foyle. I now look forward to contributing over many more years." Aoife, aged 16[64]

Games

Although, there are relatively few examples of games developed by young people it is an incredibly powerful tool when it is used due to the capacity for interaction. The reasons for the low delivery of games design projects appear to be complex and would benefit from wider research, but this could be linked to the low amount of entry level delivery – education in games design tends to starts at undergraduate level and the lack of recognised pathways in to the industry.

Rolling Sound is an education and training organisation that provides outreach services for young people aged between 16-19 who are typically classed as NEET (not in education, employment or training). One Rolling Sound project, Soul Control, was an innovative, multimedia computer game project funded through Mediabox.

The main idea came from two young people who have now gone into full-time employment within the media/computer games industry. The game explores the realities of gang life from the point of view of the main character (the player) and is set in an actual area of South London. Using the format of first-person exploration (used in popular games as Grand Theft Auto), it allows the player to explore the realities of gang life. It accurately depicts the realities and repercussions of the player's actions, both through the playing environment and a range of embedded documentary and film footage created by the young people. The game also allows the player to make positive choices and show pathways out of the gang lifestyle, for example through education.

The concept of the computer game is to reach out to other disaffected young people and to be used as a tool to discuss two key issues that are very important to them: gang culture and gun crime.

63   http://radioyouthology.net/
64   http://www.headliners.org/aboutus/whoweare/youngpeople/

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54   **Youth Media Research**

Youth Media Research   55

The Still Image: Photography and Digital Storytelling

The use of still imagery through digital storytelling is becoming more widespread and a number of those consulted in this research had run projects with young people in different parts of the UK[65]. As a result, young people contribute widely to different photography sites and there are many examples of excellent sites developed by young people working with professional photographers. Part of the reason for this is undoubtedly is the cheapness and accessibility of required equipment.

The Foyer[66] is a supported housing project in Croydon. It provides temporary accommodation for young people aged 18-25 who have found themselves homeless. In response to requests from residents, Foyer set up a programme of workshops where a photo journalist delivered photography coaching to ten young people. The trainer, who works for the New York Times and other leading publications, helped the participants build up a dynamic portfolio of work and prepare for an exhibition at Croydon Clock Tower.

The participants came from The Foyer, other supported housing projects and colleges local to the Foyer. One said of the course: "I'm in a hostel and the photography course is helping me to find a new way to communicate. It's doing a lot for me, people can see the difference." For all participants the course developed a love of photography and opened new doors for them.

65   http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/arts/yourvideo/queries/capturewales.shtml which includes the largest collection of digital stories in the UK
66   http://www.oasisuk.org/article.aspx?menuId=11312

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Funding and Strategy for Youth Media

- Public sector funding for the sector is declining.

- Specialist or dedicated media funding is now a small minority of total funding for youth media: there may be some unanticipated and unintended consequences of this preponderance of non-specialist funding.

- Youth media has the potential to deliver against government strategies for young people.

Youth media has the potential to deliver against government strategies for young people. However, due to the relatively new addition of youth media to provision for young people the sector has struggled to assess the successes of youth media and achieve the visibility it deserves with decision-makers in persuasive and dynamic ways.

As a result, the past decade has proved especially hard for some youth media organisations. Several long established agencies specialising in youth media have suffered financially, in particular those that relied heavily on public sector grants. Currently, the sector is dominated by short term project funding, which brings both opportunities and threats for organisational continuity and strategic direction.

Funding and Support

Youth media projects are financed through a wide range of sources. Grants from trusts and foundations appear to be the most common single source. Public sector funding used to be the keystone of several organisations interviewed, but this is widely seen as declining. However local authorities, the Youth Justice Board, police crime prevention budgets and others are still supporting some projects.

"Youth media is a powerful tool. I feel more should be done to ensure this sector can continue to flourish" Survey Respondent

Many organisations deliver youth media as part of an overall portfolio of activity. In these cases, funding is often drawn from an even wider range of sources and the reduction in public support for youth work is a threat to established youth media providers. For example, Inclusion Ventures from Jaywick[71] in Essex has delivered youth media work, as part of a wider programme in the poorest borough[72] in the England, by establishing links with media professionals and local colleges. Funding was secured through the Big Lottery Fund to deliver a series of film making workshops in Summer of 2011.

"We no longer have a primary funder, even though the media industry is looking to diversify its workforce and support work with disadvantaged groups." Survey Respondent

The reduction in public support for youth work is a threat to established youth media providers.

Additional support

The National Lottery is a significant funder, with First Light, Big Lottery Fund and Heritage Lottery Fund all being mentioned. There is strong anecdotal evidence that Heritage Lottery Fund is seeing a media element in a growing number of youth engagement projects. Heritage organisations are using youth media to engage young people and develop an understanding and appreciation of the past. Strategies include using films about heritage subjects, youth to age exchanges on radio, film and online, and social media. In a similar vein, the Big Lottery Fund has supported youth media as a means of engaging young people in some of their targeted programme strands.

First Light, one of the very few specialist youth media funders, derives almost all of its income from the National Lottery via the BFI. Arts Council England is a significant funder of a small number of interesting projects, which use media as part of a multi-arts approach such as Protégé TV.

With 2012 seeing the disappearance of the Olympics element of Lottery funding, all the major distributors, including the BFI, have been assured of a proportionate increase in their own Lottery income. This might mean an increase in BFI funding for youth media, either via First Light or routes such as Creative England or the three National Screen Agencies. In the face of many competing priorities for all Lottery distributors, a real increase in Lottery funding for youth media, in particular specialist youth media investment, may need sustained advocacy.

71 http://www.inclusionventures.co.uk/Inclusion _ Ventures/Introduction.html
72 http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/mar/29/jaywick-essex-resort-most-deprived

Mediabox was unique as a specialist agency supporting projects across the whole youth media footprint. When it closed its doors in 2011 many interviewees noted that its closure left a big hole in the funding landscape.

European funding has also provided support for youth media work. Some projects have secured support from the Lifelong Learning Programme, most commonly through the Grundtvig strand which supports vocational training outside the formal education systems.

Mediabox was unique as a specialist agency supporting projects across the whole youth media footprint. When it closed its doors in 2011 many interviewees noted that its closure left a big hole in the funding landscape.

Increasing help from business and corporates

A growing area of support is from commercial sources. This can take the form of help in kind (e.g. access to equipment or expertise), sponsorship or payments from corporate social responsibility (CSR) budgets. Very few organisations have developed income streams from payments for services from the corporate sector to underpin youth media activity. This is either for training provision (such as apprenticeship programmes being delivered by Livity on behalf of Google and other blue chip clients) or for straightforward production, research or development projects. These include short promotional films, youth marketing and market positioning research for youth brands.

Livity[73]

Livity is a youth engagement agency in the heart of Brixton, London. It has over ten years of experience delivering campaigns for public, private and third sectors. The aim is to get brands thinking about profit as something more than financial and prove that 'ethical marketing' is not an oxymoron.

Livity work with big brands and have long standing clients such as Penguin, who they've worked with to create an online book community for young people called Spinebreakers, and recent clients like Google, who they offer media and digital apprenticeships.

After ten years of navigating the balance of marketing vs morals and managing an office full of 'disadvantaged' teenagers, Livity is now 37 strong and clients including not only Google and Penguin, but Coke, BlackBerry and Virgin Media.

The core reason for Livity's success is the insight into young people's lives they get on a day-to-day basis, by having an open door policy to any and all local teenagers predominantly through Live magazine. This magazine is one of Livity's longest standing projects and an opportunity to demonstrate one of the agency's underlying aims - that by investing in young people directly, and instilling a sense of trust, the returns far outweigh any initial reservations.

Live magazine began ten years ago as a way to meet the needs of young people and deliver youth communications for Lambeth council. Initially a six page pamphlet, it is now London's widest read, commercially viable youth publication having gone national in its latest issue, written by young people, for young people.

The problem with project funding

These rare examples aside, it seems likely that the huge majority of youth media funding is for project work – as opposed to core or on-going funding. Although this is not unique to the youth media sector, some interviewees commented upon the risk (especially for smaller providers) that they might become funding-driven - more concerned with chasing project funding to survive than maintaining any real sense of core mission (or quality of delivery).

It is also apparent that specialist or dedicated media funding is a small minority of total funding for youth media. Whilst all funding is welcomed by the recipients, several interviewees wondered whether there may be unanticipated and unintended consequences of this preponderance of non-specialist funding. Some suggested that youth media elements offered as an add-on to projects focusing on other activities could too easily end up offering poor quality provision. This situation could be exacerbated by the lack of clear standards for delivery across the sector as a whole.

There were also suggestions that topics and target groups could be unduly affected by funder bias. At its most extreme some felt this could create a 'ghetto' of media projects for the most excluded. There was no consensus about any negative effects of the predominance of non-specialist funding on the media inputs and outcomes of project work, but the field may benefit from closer study.

73 http://livity.co.uk/

Strategic issues
Looking beyond academic success

Government strategies for young people also focus on successful outcomes. They are beginning to look beyond academic success in shaping positive life outcomes. The literature review provided a clear picture of youth media's ability to meet these and other important government strategy aims. Media Trust's youth mentoring scheme[75] delivered upon government strategies, including Every Child Matters and the Ten-year youth strategy. More recent government thinking has stressed the importance of promoting the youth voice. As the 2011 report Positive for Youth[76] states:

"Young people have energy, enthusiasm, and valuable ideas for shaping and improving the world around them. Yet young people generally get a bad press. Young people have a right to have their views taken into account in all decisions that affect their lives. We must give them a stronger voice and celebrate their positive contribution and achievements. We must also encourage and support them to speak up when they see media reporting that they believe is unbalanced or unfair."

This strong statement of strategy potentially places youth media at the heart of government priorities, offering both opportunities and challenges for the sector:

Opportunities. To link up with public priorities and investment - and to build support for young people, whatever their background. The fact that youth media projects provide space and opportunities for young people to find and express their voice is self-evident, but many youth media organisations also set out to support young people in challenging and correcting the bias present in the mainstream media.

Challenges. These mostly concern visibility and proof of achievement - how to present the successes of youth media in non-school settings to decision-makers within government and other stakeholders in persuasive and dynamic ways.

Government strategies for young people also focus on successful outcomes. They are beginning to look beyond academic success in shaping positive life outcomes.

75 Media Trust/Substance, 2008.
76 HM Government/DfES 2011 http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/positive%20for%20youth.pdf

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Recommendations for Action

1 **A fragmented youth media sector needs to find a national voice. A lead strategic agency for the whole of the youth media footprint should be established. This agency would work in partnership with key organisations in the youth media sector and media industry. This would allow the sector to:**

- Identify and exchange best practice
- Develop and disseminate delivery standards
- Coordinate local and regional provision and encourage partnership working to optimise the use of resources.

There is also an urgent need to develop a UK-wide service to improve information for young people and youth groups. This would help them get involved in media at any level and provide 'ladders of progression' towards employment.

As part of this there is a requirement to better understand the landscape of the sector. This should be based on a methodical audit which should assess factors including:

- Number of organisations
- Location
- Type of organisation
- Scale of activity.

An initial study should establish a base level figure for participation. Following this there needs to be a practical and on-going method for sampling or estimating participant numbers. Further research in the form of a longitudinal input and impact study of youth media would also be needed to establish a true profile of the participants.

2 **Establish a national youth media aggregator to support the distribution and dissemination of youth media content to ensure young people's voices are heard by the widest audience. Youth media output often struggles to get attention: government and national media tend to be very impermeable to individual youth media messages. This could provide:**

- More investment in 'agency' services which can aggregate and promote youth media messages within the national media;
- A service which will lift the best and most interesting online youth media outputs above the 'noise' of the thousands of items of content posted online every day.

A strategic agency and aggregator for youth media content would allow the sector to better identify its benefits and provide the ability to communicate its value and impact to decision makers and funders.

3 **Greater strategic co-operation and coherence will strengthen the sector's ability to identify its benefits and communicate its value and impact to decision makers and funders, making a case youth media activity based provision. A fragmented youth media sector needs a national voice.**

Appendix 1: Organisations consulted in the research

Organisation	Interviewee
21st Century Literacy	Ruth Brooks
4Talent	Glynn Ryland
ACE	Clare Boulton
BFI	Nikki Christie
BFI	Noel Goodwin
Chocolate Films	Rachel Wang
Cornerhouse	Marisa Draper
Creative England	Jay Arnold
CUCR	Imogen Slater
Eclectic Productions	Shane Carey
Envision	Emma Bird
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation	Derek Bardwell
Film Agency Wales	Emma Flatley
FilmClub	Mark Higham
Film Education	Ian Wall, Lydia Pinke
First Light	Leigh Thomas
Headliners	Fiona Wyton
Hi8us Midlands	Kulwant Dhaliwal
ITN	Robin Elias
Knowle West Media Centre	Dr Roz Hall
Livity	Sam Conniff
Metropolitan Film School	Jerry Rothwell
Princes Trust	Jeremy Newton
Prince's Trust Fairbridge Project	David Mellis
Rural Media Company	Nic Millington
Skillset	Kate O'Connor
Teesside University Media Academy	Warren Harrison
Watershed Media Centre	Madeleine Probst
Youth Music	Christina Coker, Douglas Lonie

Research Survey

A survey was sent to representative youth media organisations across the UK and respondents quotations are included in the body of the report. Thanks to all those who took the time to complete the questionnaire.

Focus Groups

Five focus groups were held across the country with youth media practitioners. These took place in Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, London and Manchester. Thanks to all those who contributed time and effort to these sessions.

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Appendix 3:
Youth focus groups
— summary

Overview

Over the course of five days, a series of focus groups were conducted with 41 young people aged 12-24 in Bristol, Birmingham, Glasgow, London and Manchester. Each group consisted of those who are either currently working on a media project, have an interest in developing a media project or have worked on one in the past. They came from various backgrounds, with some on track to go to university and others who are not sure of their future plans. There were also some who could be considered **"at risk"** or youth who have faced adversity, along with others who came from more stable, traditional backgrounds. This mix proved to be beneficial in understanding how media projects fare with youth who are able to utilise it as a tool for various forms of personal and/or professional development. The purpose of each discussion was to explore their media projects and find out what they have learned, the impact of their experience and what inspired them to remain involved.

Project summaries

Manchester

- Fairbridge: This organisation engaged youth in a filmmaking programme through Talent Studio where participants produced a short film based on a topic of their choosing.

- HPAN: The HPAN programme engaged youth in a short filmmaking project. Similar to Fairbridge, students were able to select a given topic and took part in various roles from camera-work to on-camera acting and interviews.

Glasgow

- Prince's Trust: Members of the Prince's Trust's local media project produced a one-minute film based on a given topic. Those in the focus group chose to explore a story titled **"Wedding Bells."**

- Castlemilk Youth Complex: Castlemilk Youth Complex has launched an online radio show produced by youth titled Cyclonefm.com where participants fully produce daily shows and maintain its hosted Web site.

Bristol

- Watershed: Through this programme, participants produced film projects based on a topic of their choosing. Projects were later screened at the Watershed film complex in Bristol.

- Creative Youth Network: Participants from Creative Youth Network were part of the project's Youth for Youth initiative, which produces a series of music events for Bristol youth age 11-19. Project participants take part in a range of activities including event production, promotion, graphic design, advertising, strategic partnerships, programming and more.

- City of Bristol: The City of Bristol has developed a Radio & Photography scheme for local youth who are interested in exploring these areas. Two participants in this group were a part of this programme, working on independent photography projects. This called for them to learn the fundamentals of photography and utilise their knowledge to shoot a project centred around a theme of their choosing.

- Skillset: The one participant who came through Skillset was currently on an advance creative and digital apprenticeship at the BBC.

London

- Catch22 Barking & Dagenham / Lewisham: Participants in Catch22's media projects in Barking & Dagenham and Lewisham had worked on film projects based on a topic of their choosing. Their films were also locally screened through Talent Studio and will be airing on Community Channel—similar to those in Manchester.

- Headliners: Participants were currently working on podcasting shows based on topics that were discussed at length before hand and later developed into a full-length show.

- Fitzrovia/ On the Road Magazine: Fitzrovia participants worked on magazine projects, which were later printed in On the Road Magazine distributed throughout the Camden area. The group included two who developed and wrote a relationship advice column and another member who participated in a number of projects including a most recent article on youth identity and personality.

- Livity: Our Livity participant was an active contributor to Live magazine, writing a number of articles with UK music artists and also taking part in the organisations' recent partnership with Google.

Birmingham

- Youth Hostel: 99% of this focus group came from a local youth hostel. While they have not participated in any media projects in the past, each of them expressed an interest in doing so. Two youth had taken media courses on GCSE level—with one in Media Studies and the other, Music Production.

- Youth Media Programme: One participant who had experience working on a media project was currently developing a radio podcasting show.

Motives & Retention

Whether part of a direct media project or a larger organisation that incorporated a media initiative into their wider offer, each of the participants worked on their given media project from start to finish. So what was the motivation that initially drove them to get involved in these projects, and what was it that maintained their interest throughout the process?

Many of those who were part of larger organisations like Fairbridge or Catch22 chose to participate in a media project either because they were recommended by a programme worker or took the initiative themselves based on a pre-existing interest in the field. As most of the organisations of this type that were included in our focus groups incorporated film projects, the majority of participants were interested in on-camera roles like acting or presenting, while a minority were previously interested in working more production roles like camera work or editing.

Youth participants who were a part of direct media projects became involved for a number of reasons. Some had a pre-existing interest in the field, while others were looking for projects to get involved with where they could meet people or spend time when not in school.

There were also a few young people who became involved with media projects in an effort to combat shyness or improve their self-esteem. This sentiment was shared from a participant from Glasgow whose involvement with her local Prince's Trust project helped her to **"come out of her shell"** and combat a shyness that existed prior to her involvement. After working on a film project that required that she get in front of the camera she felt more comfortable expressing herself around people. Another participant in Manchester noted that he got involved in his project because it was good for **"building self image,"** noting that he **"needed to change and this was the type of thing that would help (him) change."**

When it came to maintaining interest, many of the participants stayed with their given projects because it was **"fun"** and it introduced them to areas of interest that they had not previously recognised. For instance, a 16-year-old Livity participant in London began working with the organisation with plans to stay with them for three weeks, which later turned into six months.

"It was the best thing to ever happen to me," she said. She now contributes regularly to Live magazine and has utilised her project as a way to make new contacts and now plans to run for Lambeth Youth Mayor. A 17-year-old Bristol participant who dropped out of college because he lacked interest, became involved in a radio and photography project because he **"needed something to do",** but stuck with it because it was **"fun."** It is important to note that this particular participant also had a tough time focusing during our session, yet was clear of his maintained interest in being active in his photography project.

For those who had a pre-existing interest in media, they continued with their project because it gave them a greater understanding of the inner workings of the industry and could help with future aspirations. Some participants noted that it looked good on their CV either for college, university or for involvement in other media jobs or projects. A 15-year-old member of Bristol's Creative Youth Network said that he **"started it for fun",** but stayed with it because he now looks at it as a foundation for what he wants to do. Another 15-year old Catch22 participant always wanted to take part in media in school but never had a chance, so the moment Catch22 provided an opportunity for him to produce a film, he jumped at the chance, noting that **"it will never get boring to me."**

Possibly another factor that contributed to some retention is the fact that many of the media projects allowed participants to take on numerous roles, which not only introduced new skills but appeared to keep things exciting, thus maintaining their interest throughout the process. Many of those who worked on film projects took on more than one role, serving as on-screen talent while also working behind the camera writing scripts, casting, identifying sources or conducting interviews (for documentary-style films). Three separate participants who worked on radio podcasting shows engaged in similar activity. A member of Glasgow's Castlemilk Youth Complex hosted a weekly radio show on Cyclonefm.com, and also booked interview subjects, programmed the music and maintained the show's presence on its Web site. He has been involved with the project for almost a year and a half.

Members of Bristol's Creative Youth Network fully take on the responsibility of producing a series of music events for their peers throughout the course of a year. All of those who participated in the Bristol focus group had been involved with the project for at least a year and a half, with one member involved for five years, now serving as a member of the group's board of trustees. Each person was involved in various levels of the production process from programming to lighting to advertising and promotion. This integrated involvement not only seemed to play a part in their retention, but it also contributed to their dedication to the final product and to the organisation overall. Throughout the course of the focus group, many of its members spouted statistics of how their projects **"reduced crime by 23 percent by helping to get youth off of the street"** and made note of national awards that they have won for their work in the Bristol community--- serving as proud producers of their own work and ambassadors of their project. There is no question that the fact that they were able to **"own"** their projects and take part in its overall success played a part in their dedication.

Benefits

The increased responsibility that participants experienced through the media production process is just one of the benefits that came across in the discussions. Other benefits that were noted include **"helping with interview skills," "networking," "confidence," "motivation," "having a sense of achievement," "learning new skills, and "working with ambitious people."**

To explore the last point further, the idea of **"working with ambitious people"** or in other words, working in teams, came across as both a benefit and a challenge for some. **"Working with other people who don't really have any work ethic is difficult,"** noted one participant in Bristol, while another 12-year-old in London stated, **"people may not agree and you'll have to try to get on the same page."**

While this process of working and negotiating through teamwork may have been positioned as a challenge, none of the focus group participants felt that it was impossible to overcome, but just understood it as part of the overall process. One participant noted that working on her media project helped her to become more creative—not just in developing new ideas for her actual product, but in listening to different points of view to ultimately figure out how to make something work. While

many had worked in groups for school or other extra-curricular activities, it was this combination of creativity, storytelling and tangible execution that made the team-working process different in media production.

The idea of voice also came across in a few groups who noted that their involvement was not only an opportunity for them to gain new skills and meet people, but to create a product that could educate their communities and express the voice of young people. They saw this as an opportunity to counter some of the ways in which young people are portrayed in mainstream media. This was especially prevalent with the London focus group where many participants chose to work on projects that focused on topics such as **"stop and search"** police activity; youth language and its effects on the London riots; and youth identity and personality. In addition, many residents of a youth hostel in Birmingham who had never worked on a media project expressed an interest in doing so in an effort to share their experiences with a larger audience.

When an 18-year-old Headliners participant was selected to be a part of a **"speak out challenge"** at school, his chosen topic was directly influenced by his Headliners experience on youth and media. His topic: why young people should have a voice. Also, when asked why his group chose to focus on 'stop and search' police activity, 15-year-old Catch22 member simply said, **"everyone in our area has a thought on the topic. Instead of complaining about it, we've done something about it."**

So with that said, what role does distribution play in young people's enthusiasm about their project? In each city, focus group participants noted an appreciation for going through the process of developing their media product, but equally noted the importance of it being distributed as well. It's about **"having something tangible to show people what's in my head,"** noted a participant in Manchester. **"If it's good, it's the recognition that you get from those who see it that makes you want to do more,"** said another in Bristol. While another in London stated, **"If you want to make a difference, people need to see it. Getting your point across can change someone's point of view."**

Through projects like Talent Studio, Fairbridge and Catch22, participants were able to have their films screened in major cinemas as well as shown online and on the Media Trust-supported Community Channel. It was this reach to larger

audiences that appealed to some media producers, while others also took it upon themselves to expand their media products to wider audiences through Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and other forms of social media. Producers of a relationship column in Fitzrovia's On the Road Magazine were so proud of their work that they are now developing a bespoke Facebook page to promote the section and interact with potential readers.

Then there were those who found a great value in the production process and placed a smaller emphasis on distribution and visibility. Many in this category had a great appreciation for the skills that they learned while working towards the development of a product to ensure that it **"looks good,"** said one Bristol participant.

Many also received assistance from industry professionals who volunteered their time to either speak with them or fully take part in their production process. This experience working with actual media professionals proved to heighten their interest in their project and also serve as a source of inspiration. An 18-year-old film producer from Bristol noted that her experience working with a professional cameraman on one of her projects helped her to become more mature and professional in the process. Another film producer in Glasgow found great inspiration from working with a renowned British director, showing that he too could aspire to do the same.

Results

The final activity in each focus group asked that participants think about what they would create if they had an opportunity to develop their own media product. After discussing the process of creating their projects, this activity proved to show how their experience would play into their own projects if they had unlimited resources.

They were given no restrictions or ideas for genres, medium type or audience, and the results varied with each group. While some projects showed a clear connection to the projects created through their respective organizations, others did not. A 12-year old Fitzrovia participant in London developed the idea of a youth media centre for youth starting at 6 years of age where they can explore a number of industries and topics through the development of media products. Products would span across film and TV, print and online.

A similar project was suggested by a participant in Glasgow who developed the idea for a magazine that would focus on a number of topics that pertain to young people. The idea behind this concept would allow those with varied interests to explore them further by writing about it in the magazine.

Participants in Birmingham who had yet to work on a media project each developed film projects that focused on helping youth with controversial topics such as teen pregnancy, drug use and everyday hardships. They chose film and TV because they felt it would resonate with viewers and also noted that they would benefit from producing a product that would reflect their realities on film.

So, what can be concluded from this activity is that in addition to young people gaining tangible skills, life and work experience, along with the confidence that comes from producing a product, they also see media as a way to explore other areas of interest, while communicating their viewpoints to a larger community. Through discussion, research and storytelling, young media creators are deepening their own knowledge and learning the art of communicating their insights to others. The fact that they recognise this and identified new ways that it could be used to help other youth is certainly something to be noted.

Sherry J. Bitting

Appendix 4: Research Team

Research Team

Chris Chandler has extensive experience of the public sector's engagement with film and the creative industries. He has worked with a range of organisations delivering media and arts community access programmes to young people and adults including First Light, Signals Media and London Bubble Theatre. He currently operates as an independent advisor and consultant to public, private and voluntary sector cultural organisations on the development of strategic business planning, operational delivery and evaluation. Recent consultancy and research projects have included the publication of a major report for Skillset into new entrants training provision; professional support to the management of the International Institute of Visual Arts (Iniva); and a ground-breaking study for the BFI – *Opening our eyes – how film contributes to the culture of the UK.*

As Head of UK Partnerships at the UK Film Council he managed partnerships with organisations including First Light and the regional and national screen agencies. He played the leading role in the establishment of the English Regional Screen Agencies and of First Light – the UK's innovative youth film initiative. He led on the creation of strategies for nations and regions, creative industries investment, film heritage, film education and audience development.

Chris Chandler is a visiting lecturer at the National Film and Television School and is external examiner for the Goldsmith's Media Landscapes course.

Mark Dunford has over 20 years' experience in the creative industries. Before he became an independent consultant he worked at the BBC, the BFI and the Arts Council of England. His consultancy work over the past 12 years draws on his research training and focuses on initiatives designed to increase the cultural and commercial effectiveness of public sector investment in digital media activity. Clients include UK Film Council, Skillset, British Film Institute, NESTA, Arts Council England, various charitable Trusts and a host of commercial companies.

From 2004-2008, he was Executive Director of Hi8us Projects Limited where he developed and led the Equal funded Inclusion Through Media Development Partnership, a youth media centred partnership of 37 professional organisations delivering 25 creative projects at a total value of over £7m; it was the largest sector specific Equal partnership in Europe.

Mark is currently employed on a 0.5 basis to manage the Skillset Media Academy at the University of Hertfordshire where he teaches undergraduate students studying Film and Television. He also leads an MA module on Digital Media at Goldsmiths College, University of London and is a Director of Digitales, a digital storytelling company based at the same University. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts and a Trustee of London Bubble Theatre Company.

Associate Researcher

Sherry J. Bitting

Sherry Bitting has spent over 11 years working in several facets of the media and communications industry. After crafting her skills at such companies as Fairchild Publications, Complex Media and Porter Novelli Public Relations, Sherry launched SJB Communications in 2008, where she worked with such companies as Complex Media (Complex magazine Complex.com), Men's Fitness magazine, Proctor & Gamble, Moet Hennessy, Caid Productions, Black Girls Rock! Inc.,and more.

In 2010, she left New York City to pursue an MA in Transnational Communications and Global Media from Goldsmiths, University of London where she focused her dissertation on media education as a learning tool in secondary education. Sherry is based in London and she continues to work for clients both in the US and UK.

When not working, she enjoys speaking with young people on the importance of media literacy and critical thinking. Over the years, she has worked with such schools and programs as the Murry Bergtraum High School for Business Careers, High School of Media & Communications, Sweat Equity Enterprises, Teen Lift, and Inspirational You (UK).

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