

The Impact of People's Palace Projects' Work in England: Summary of Evidence

2006 – 2010

**Report by Nick Williams, commissioned by People's Palace
Projects' Board**

January 2011

Introduction

People's Palace Projects' work explores how socially engaged arts practice can cross international and cultural boundaries. Through curating projects, forging collaborations and supplying artists and practitioners, it seeks to understand how this practice can be replicated, adapted and relevant in different contexts to that in which it originated. Key to this is the recording of impact on participants and practitioners, noting the differences in context and background, and leaving legacies that are tangible and unique for those involved.

PPP's work has made and will continue to make a valuable contribution to Arts Council England's strategy around arts engagement and to its thinking on strengthening civil society through the arts. PPP helps the sector think through and develop what is the necessary evidence for the impact of engagement and participation - which is still an important focus of debate - and to communicate its value to the wider civic world. People's Palace Projects work is important because as an organisation, it constantly gathers evidence, and different thinking *about* evidence from practitioners, policy makers and other non-arts agencies. PPP has developed a broad reach through the network/community of participants drawn from across England and beyond, enabling the exchange of experiences and knowledges that can be compared and contrasted. As an organisation they take responsibility for building the evidence base. People's Palace Projects operates from across local, national and international arenas, giving a unique perspective and evidence-based support for participatory work.

This report attempts to summarise key points within the evaluation materials People's Palace Projects holds for its programme of work since 2006, presenting them as an evidence for its application for Arts Council England's National Portfolio Funding programme. It by no means attempts to summarise all of the learning derived from the programmes of activity, or to capture all reflections from participants and partners. Its aim is to advocate for PPP's role and impact on English arts practice, by attempting to articulate how this work supports the Arts Council's priorities for the next funding period.

Summary of Evidence Reviewed¹

- Feedback from *Points of Contact* Artist Participants [evaluation reports from Barbican, B3 Media, Contact Manchester, DADA Disability Arts Network, Entelechy, Freedom Studios Bradford, Lawnmowers Theatre Company, National Theatre of Wales, RSC, Sage Gateshead, Southbank Centre, Watershed Bristol]
- *Points of Contact* statistical evaluation
- *From the Favela to the Manor*, Research report commissioned by Dr. Richard Ings [People's Palace Projects publication]
- *In Tune with the Beat of Where They Are, - The AfroReggae Partnership in 2007*, Louise Owen, People's Palace Projects: Bulletin N°4
- *Cultural Warriors* Statistical Evaluation, April 2010
- *AfroReggae Summer Project 2010*, Liverpool EverymanPlayhouse. Commissioned by Liverpool Primary Care Trust (draft report, final report due February 2011)
- Debrief transcripts from AfroReggae 2010 [Interviews recorded by Public Health and Public Security Researchers at the Centre for the Study of Public Security and Citizenship/CESeC, University of Candido Mendes,
- *Cultural Warriors* Programme Update, PPP Board Papers December 2010
- Mile End Statistical Background, PPP Internal Document
- Lawnmowers Independent Theatre Company evaluation, *Cultural Warriors* 2010
- Report to London Centre for Arts and Cultural Exchange [LCACE] on Seed Funding 2010
- Presentation to ACE Executive Board on *Points of Contact* programme, April 2010
- Report to Paul Hamlyn Foundation on 2009 *Cultural Warriors* programme
- *Intense Dreams: Reflections on Brazilian Culture and Performance* by Paul Heritage
- *World in Motion Phase 1 Feedback*, Barbican Centre internal evaluation

¹ All available on request from People's Palace Projects

PPP's Work with Socially Engaged Practice in Brazil & the UK

People's Palace Projects and its Artistic Director Paul Heritage have been working with community arts projects and socially engaged arts practice in Brazil since 1992. The development of the approaches to this work in Brazil has deeply influenced the work of the company in the UK, drawing principles and philosophies to Europe in an attempt to apply them to artistic practice in a variety of communities. Paul Heritage says: "The scale of Brazil's social crises has been matched by the impact of high-quality arts initiatives, especially in making interventions into drug gang culture within the shantytowns known as *favelas*....there were important lessons to be learned from the Brazilian experience, and have created a range of projects that aim to extend and deepen the civic and social engagement of the arts within a UK context."

Key notions within this include the use of artistic practice as a means of expression, protest, validating the hidden individual as a citizen and social improvement. Whilst it is obvious that the UK has many more social structures and mechanisms, PPP attempts to apply arts practice alongside these structures to adapt methodologies and measure impacts. Using the *Points of Culture* approach to drawing on popular cultural expression and building links and networks between projects, People's Palace Projects has sought to bring popular forms to mainstream venues such as the Barbican Centre and Sage Gateshead, link programmes of activity to develop leadership and skills, and support the journey of practitioners between different points of understanding of what can be achieved through the power of art.

People's Palace Projects is an agent of change, focusing on building the capacity of people in other organisations and working with those who are seeking to create change through art. This is divided into the practitioners, artists and institutions who work with communities and the members of the communities themselves who participate in projects set up and curated by PPP, but essentially delivered through partnership with other cultural institutions.

PPP's work uses a diversity of artists and practice, drawing from the inherent diversity of Brazil, and mapping it onto the multi-culturalism of England today to find new ways of stimulating forms of cultural leadership that are autonomous, shared and transformative for communities.

To that end, the AfroReggae collaboration which started in 2006 continues until 2012, continues to develop youth leadership amongst young people traditionally labelled as *disadvantaged*, providing means of self-expression for young people at the *margins of society*, and promoting a stronger sense of self-worth and citizenship amongst young people who are termed *at risk of social exclusion*. I italicise each of these terms to highlight that they are UK terms, rethought through the practices developed in Brazil and introduced to the UK by People's Palace Projects, in collaboration with its UK arts partners.

Key to the delivery in the UK is working with experienced artists and practitioners in partnership with cultural institutions around the UK that share some of the philosophy of the work to better work with local communities. Baba Israel, Artistic Director of long-term partner organisation Contact Theatre, says of PPP:

“People’s Palace Projects are a key supporter of Contact and have played an integral role in our international work. They have built important bridges particularly with their networks in Brazil. They have nurtured our connection with AfroReggae who have shared powerful insights into their process of working with young people and communities. Their approach was a catalytic force for our own Future Fires project. This has important legacy with People’s Palace Projects’ support of the Cultural Warriors which has maintained our connection with AfroReggae creating a context for the launch of our current Future Fires cohort. It has also expanded our national network building a community of arts organizations and young people working to empower communities to experience artistic excellence across the country.”

Rebecca Ross-Williams, Theatre & Community Director, Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse Theatres, says of the partnership on the Liverpool 2010 project:

“This was such an ambitious project ... It absolutely could not have happened without PPP ... With the years of experience in planning and delivering a wide range of artistic work with Afro Reggae and international partners, you were able to communicate very effectively between the Liverpool partners and AfroReggae and advise both sets of partners on programme, the best way to achieve aims and artist selection and were invaluable in helping shape the detailed operations.

...this project had significant social impact in engaging young people and their communities, encouraging participants to develop artistic and social skills, building confidence and self esteem, breaking down barriers and challenging some territory issues and, most of all, encouraging aspiration. In this sense, PPP and Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse share a vision of taking the very best and bravest art to the most socially deprived, culturally barren communities.

Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse would very much like to work with PPP again in the future and hope this is just a start to our partnership work.”²

² Appendix 5: full text of letter

Points of Contact and Mid-Career Artist Development

During 2010, PPP ran the *Points of Contact* exchange programme, supported by the DCMS, ACE and British Council in the UK, along with the Brazilian Ministry of Culture. It brought together 14 UK artists³ from across England with 12 policy makers to discover the nature and impact of the *Pontos de Cultura* programme in Brazil, to develop collaborative working links between Brazilian organisations and UK arts practitioners and to explore how the Brazilian model might impact on future UK arts policy. All but one of the UK practitioners are what is currently termed by ACE, mid-career. This means that they have a significant body of work behind them, have experience of leading organisations or major departments in larger organisations and a professional maturity to enable the reflection and analysis of their Brazilian experiences and how it maps back onto their practice in the UK.

The feedback from the UK artists was overwhelmingly positive. This diverse group of practitioners reported profound impacts on their practice and home organisations following the research visit to Brazil in spring 2010. The statistical feedback presented a revealing picture, demonstrating that each of the artists expressed the belief that the experience provided by PPP would have a deep influence on their practice upon return to the UK.⁴ Qualitative feedback is emphatic in its support for the exchange and the impact on individual artistic practice:

“The Brazilian experience has forced me to cut through the language of bureaucracy here in the UK and understand my art once again in relation to people and not exclusively to that of funding institutions and quotas”

Madani Younis, Freedom Studios, feedback on Points of Culture

The clear understanding of the grass roots approach of the Brazilian project has had a lasting impact on the artists. Understanding that the relationship between artist and community, the presence within that community and need to empower the participants to raise their voices in ways that are meaningful has resulted in some radical rethinking of approaches back in England. For example, Baba Israel⁵ has indicated that Contact Theatre will now develop a satellite presence in north Manchester to better work with those communities rather than run peripatetic workshops.

“As an organisation we share a common ethos with PPP, an ethos of ensuring that communities excluded from mainstream arts provisions connect with the bravest and best art. Our recent trip to Brazil supported by PPP and the visit from Brazilian artists and policy makers that followed has inspired our staff and creative development team to continue and expand our focus on North Manchester. North Manchester is an underserved area and we are now looking at

³ Appendix 1: List of participants in Points of Contact exchange, 2010

⁴ Appendix 2: statistical responses from artists involved in Points of Contact programme

⁵ Artistic Director of Contact Theatre, Manchester and regular collaborator with PPP through From the Favela to the World and Cultural Warriors programmes

establishing a satellite space to better serve that community. This decision has been directly influenced and affirmed by our work with PPP and we look forward to continuing to work them for years to come.”

Baba Israel, Contact Theatre

Geraldine Ling⁶ reports that in light of her experiences in Brazil, she feels that UK approaches to community work are tired and unimaginative and that the investment in genuine and meaningful work with communities is lacking, due to an over formality which prevents the achievement of social goals. She cites the experience as a strong starting point for a more empowered approach to community engagement for future UK projects.

“In the UK we need a complete change if we want to make it easier for marginalised groups and communities to have their rightful place at the cultural table – for me *Points of Culture* is a good starting point.”

Geraldine Ling, Lawnmowers Independent Theatre

David Slater of Entelechy Arts, which works primarily with elderly people and those with complex special needs, similarly reflected on the impact of the Points of Contact exchange programme on Entelechy’s practice:

“The experience has re-energised us as a company. It has given us the courage to re-imagine ourselves; the courage to place the human at the centre of all that we do. (...) In London, we have been uncovering our own backyards; meeting invisible and isolated groups of people, in forgotten parts of our communities, desperate for connection, recognition, and new experience. We have had the courage to embark on these adventures both knowing, and not knowing, what we are doing. It’s a process of deep hanging-out: listening, absorbing, finding connection. And so our family grows new voices, new networks, woven into our journey.

Of course we have always tried to listen to the voices of our participants. Now we’ve thrown away the flipchart, and swapped it for rice and chicken. So planning and policymaking is increasingly fixed over communal meals. Our members contribute both ideas and food; it reconnects us with the domestic and the everyday. And this has dramatically increased people’s capacity for agency – their ability to articulate, to champion, to advocate for their practice. Our 70-year-olds said ‘We want to meet the funders.’ And so far, over the last six months, they’ve raised £65,000.”

(from David Slater’s contribution to Points of Contact seminar, Southbank Centre, October 2010)

The Brazilian notion of empowerment was repeatedly reported as a direct example of a learning outcome on the programme. The need to ensure that this is at the heart of any meaningful community practice is highlighted as a

⁶ Lawnmowers Independent Theatre, a learning disabled theatre company in Gateshead

key change needed to UK practice, which has deep implications for how practitioners might work with communities in future.

A tangible impact from the exchange is the range of collaborations and projects being developed by these practitioners that will draw on the artistic practice they experienced and the philosophy behind what they saw in Brazil. Without PPP curating this programme and facilitating this exchange none of these would have happened. Across the group, Paul Heritage's leadership, knowledge and willingness to deepen their understanding was cited as one of the most important aspects of the visit – something that comes from the wealth of experience he brings having worked in Brazil for nearly 20 years.

“Thank you for this [*Points of Contact*], and also for your own incandescent leadership of this extraordinary journey. We've been really happy to commit to it – it is exactly the sort of visionary collaboration we relish for the teeming learning opportunities it gives us.”

Antony Sargent, Director, Sage Gateshead

Tangible outcomes can be measured by the planned projects that will take place as a result of the links brokered by PPP through this exchange, including:

- *Contacting the World* in Rio 2016 – **Contact Theatre's** biennial International Emerging Artists Exchange programme will take place in Rio with major Brazilian collaborations in 2012 and 2014's *Contacting the World* to develop the process
- **Contact Young Actors Company** will work with Nós de Morro on a new piece of theatre
- **Entelechy Arts** will continue to explore practice development with older people with Casa das Fases with a view to a future collaborative project
- **Freedom Studios** is already incorporating a Brazilian artist exchange programme into its future schedule
- **Sage Gateshead** already plan to work with PIM, Projeto Guri and Guri Santa Marcellina, and continue to work with AfroReggae
- **Southbank Centre** used the exchange to further develop their Brazil Festival in 2010

These illustrate only the projects that have been planned as a result of the trip. There will be many more now being developed and the notion of exchange of practice is a key basis for the future projects. This could not have happened as quickly or efficiently if it were not for People's Palace Projects' brokering relationships, providing cultural understanding and, in the case of some, actively contributing to the development of content.

It is clear that mid-career artists benefit from specific opportunities to try new things, explore and reflect in order to improve and develop their practice. The

importance of network building and knowledge exchange is clearly acknowledged as is personal learning and development.

“The visit turned into a profound opportunity for me to re-evaluate and consider not only my professional values and structures but my personal architecture of beliefs and motivations and the points where professional and personal intersect. So the visit has had an impact on me which will, I know, have a lasting effect which will change my behaviour in different spheres of my life and my sense of purpose.”

Shân Maclennan, Creative Director of Learning & Participation, Southbank Centre

Again the qualitative feedback suggests that the experience of the thinking and practices at the heart of the *Points of Culture* programme encouraged new perspectives on diversity. These discoveries had a profound resonance for participants as they noted for the striking difference between British and Brazilian approaches to diversity. This was clearly linked to the revelations about the ways in which Brazilian arts policy priorities and legitimizes work which stimulates stronger notions of citizenship and legitimacy. This has a strong potential to refresh and move forward the debate on diversity in the arts in the UK if adopted more widely.

The sense that each Brazilian cultural organisation [*Ponto de Cultura*] was built upon local practice, embracing popular cultural forms and eschewing the colonial mainstream impacted greatly on the UK practitioners. It generates a clearer understanding that to create meaningful and authentic experiences with communities, you have to build from the community grass roots upwards. This element is something many feel is hindered by UK policy and funding practice and reported again and again as a major hindrance to harnessing the energy and vitality that is present in the Brazilian work they experienced. All of the practitioners feel that this is one of the key elements that PPP brings to collaborations – an insistence on working authentically with communities, and empowering them, therefore ensuring community ownership and strong sense of personal investment in the work.

It must be noted that the UK practitioners would like any future development of this programme to create a greater dialogue with UK policy makers and funders. There is a clear opportunity for reciprocal learning between cultural policy agencies and funders to learn with artists and arts organisations. People’s Palace Projects is perceived as having a vital role to play in facilitating, consolidating this learning and establishing a strong dialogue that can share the practice and understanding of innovation in participatory models of practice.

From the Favela to the World, 2006 – 2012: A Long Term Applied Arts Programme

The Arts Council has been attempting to develop the reach and engagement of arts audiences and participants for several years now, driven by a desire to make a statistically significant change to participation. Demographic background has played a role in this and Arts Council England changed direction to focus on how the arts can play a more meaningful role in the lives of individuals as a part of its shift to Public Engagement⁷.

Individual arts engagement is a complex story – tendency to be involved is as much about where you live and what is available in your local area, as it is about your experiences at school. Major changes in structures of provision, political interference around funding at a local level and changing approaches to schools based work have led to a varied level of provision, and therefore exposure across the country. Arts organisations have therefore often undertaken participatory projects in areas where funding is available, in schools which have enthusiastic teaching staff and when funds can be raised. This means that activity often took place in more affluent areas or areas where single individuals drove a programme.

This picture began to change with the election of the Labour government in 1997 and the increase in funding to the arts, and a belief in the potential of applied arts practice. Localised funding through New Deal for Communities and shifting public agency approaches to incorporate arts (e.g. Sure Start, Connexions) attempted to reach those that didn't otherwise participate, using arts instrumentally to achieve social aims.

And still this did not make a statistically significant impact upon arts engagement. Arguably this was because the practice applied was not relevant, the inter-agency working still fragmented, the funding applied across a political cycle rather than over the longer term. People's Palace Projects' thinking was shaped by this UK context and posed the opportunity for some of the Brazilian techniques to be piloted.

People's Palace Projects first brought Grupo Cultural AfroReggae to the UK in 2006, at the invitation of the Barbican Centre. It was the start of a major and long term project which would take AfroReggae's practice of working with young people whose lives are caught up in the social dominance of the drugs industry in the favelas of Rio, and translate it to *hard to reach*⁸ young people, affected by gangs and gun crime over an extended term, 2006-2012.

Why AfroReggae? Because they combined proven excellence in their arts practice through performances at packed venues from European concert halls through to the Carnegie Hall, with a popular appeal as seen when they opened the Rolling Stones Concert on Copacabana Beach for over 2 million people and a bold social mission that aimed to use culture as a weapon. They were

⁷ Engagement in the Arts, London Action Plan 2009, Arts Council England, London

⁸ Again I use UK terminology to ease understanding and mapping

and are able to create arts programmes that on a daily basis take young people out of the drug gang culture which is destroying their communities. Their own evidence is powerful. They work with over 10,000 young people in Rio de Janeiro, from the poorest, most violent communities, and their success is recognised not only by international awards and accolades but by the extensive funding they receive from state and private sources.

People's Palace Projects' role was to devise, plan, and facilitate not only the knowledge transfer that would take place between English arts practitioners and AfroReggae, but to set up workshops and trainings so that they could work directly with young people at risk in London and Manchester. The 20 minute documentary produced by Amnesty International⁹ demonstrates in detail the transformative methodologies that PPP bring to participatory arts practices in England through the presence of AfroReggae. Paul Heritage, as director, worked with AfroReggae and Gringo Cardia, the internationally renowned Brazilian designer¹⁰ that PPP brought into work on the Barbican shows, to ensure that the story of these cultural warriors from Rio de Janeiro would electrify and inspire audiences in London and Manchester as much as it had in Rio de Janeiro. So far they have created two shows together for the Barbican¹¹. Each played to capacity audiences with 4 star reviews and feature articles in newspapers and magazines across the UK cultural sector.

To accompany the success of its work with AfroReggae and the Barbican, People's Palace Projects set up a partnership¹² of participatory arts practitioners and companies, social agencies and police. Seminars and training were vital – the sharing and dialogue between the practitioners, NGOs and state mechanisms have all been essential to the sharing the practice and understanding what could work. PPP's role was not about directly delivering the projects themselves – others were far better placed for this. However, Paul Heritage and other PPP staff have been directly involved at every stage in the brokerage and liaison, and on hand to translate between the Brazilian and UK artists to expedite the collaboration and learning. The translation that PPP provides goes far beyond providing the necessary bridge between English and Portuguese, and involves a transcultural translation to ensure that skills sharing and knowledge exchange can take place as effectively as possible.

The project did not seek to impose Brazilian popular culture. It was set up to stimulate the development of projects that would flourish on their own, using the practices and methodologies of AfroReggae, bringing members of the band back regularly to provide inspiration and further develop skills of the practitioners delivering the UK projects.¹³

⁹ available from PPP

¹⁰ In 2009, Gringo Cardia designed *OVO*, the latest show for Cirque de Soleil

¹¹ *Favela to the World* – 2006 and 2007; *Favelisation* 2009 both at the Barbican Theatre

¹² See Appendix 3: National Partners in the *Favela to the World* programme

¹³ See *In Tune with the Beat of Where They Are, - The AfroReggae Partnership in 2007*, Louise Owen, People's Palace Projects: Bulletin N°4

The analogies between the Brazilian *favelas* and UK urban settings should not be over extended. However, there are clear similarities between disenfranchised young people in both countries, often participating in gang culture that is geographically defined, and let down by a fractured and short term approach to social support. Whilst the UK social support structure is very much more developed than that in Brazil, it is also weakened by gaps between institutional agencies, in contrast to AfroReggae's centres which seek to offer all-round provision of health, educational, social and cultural care to young people. The sense of a long-term approach which sought to build links between agencies around shared goals through the UK partnership was key to achieving outcomes.

There are further similarities. The UK's ongoing concern over youth sociability, the demonization of the hoodie-clad youth, and the increasingly draconian restrictions on civil liberties introduced over the last 10 years, including measures such as ASBOS and dispersal orders have redrawn relationships between young people and criminal justice agencies¹⁴, and provides a picture of a social situation that the AfroReggae methodology can clearly map onto.

The philosophy of transformation and hope was a clear starting point. In Brazil, AfroReggae always work with the *worst* young person, the one considered the most violent or difficult. It is this group that is often let down by UK agencies, including the arts sector that lacks the skills or shies away from reaching these most difficult to reach communities and individuals. The group's focus on individual development in its practice, the authenticity that they bring and sense of personal investment in the participant was clearly ripe for these groups in east London and Manchester.

The hook of a music group was a clear advantage – hip-hop is associated amongst these young people with glamour, and with the idea that people from disadvantaged backgrounds can and do succeed. AfroReggae are clear that not every young person they work with can become an artist, but what is learned can be applied to make daily lives better. In a UK context, we view individual creativity and practice as having intrinsic value, and acknowledge that the process of participation in an artistic process can be more valuable than the output. This chimes clearly with the AfroReggae approach for which PPP has advocated. This again proved to be a powerful message to the young people.

“It sounds cheesy but I'd probably say they gave us hope and motivation. One thing that one of the people from AfroReggae said is that we're losing valuable achievement time, and for someone to say that and see how it is in this country after a few weeks, I'll remember that. Just to say to myself and others, “Don't waste it and keep trying coz we can.” *Participant in Liverpool 2010 summer project*

¹⁴ See *The Use and Impact of Dispersal Orders*, Adam Crawford and Stuart Lister for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/use-and-impact-dispersal-orders>

The partnership has brought together major cultural institutions – from the Barbican and Southbank Centre in London to The Sage Gateshead, and Contact Theatre in Manchester. This involvement breaks down the clearly entrenched UK distinctions of community and professional artwork by offering AfroReggae performances in their programme incorporating the young people that participated in the programmes. This is a major acknowledgement by these institutions of the power of the artistic practice to make meaningful art by socially excluded young people and that it can sit alongside major performances by well funded, professional companies. It is also the result of PPP’s intervention as it is unlikely that smaller community groups would achieve this level of profile.

The AfroReggae method is not purely about the individual person or the community but the dialogue between the people, communities, social spaces and agencies. The network of collaborators built through this programme has fostered an excellent dialogue, a network of practitioners and a better understanding of what works to support young people who are faced with a complex mixture of social challenges. The challenge for PPP and the partnership has been the fragmentary nature of this field of work and the short term funding of projects within it from arts and social sources, who attempt to analyse its work through a narrow and complex mechanism and lens¹⁵ which fits their own criteria rather than responding to a grass roots informed approach which is at the heart of this partnership.

Participant Impact

Based in the AfroReggae practice, the outcomes that People’s Palace Projects have brought to young people, artists and audiences in England have been on a smaller scale but they match those that have been achieved in Brazil. What is extraordinary is that the same outcomes are achieved across the partnership, in different cities, united by similar social conditions.

The act of collaborative drumming – often the starting point for the groups – demands listening and collaboration from each of the participants. Even with the most boisterous groups, leaders reported that the level of listening to each other and awareness of the group was impressive. Anecdotes around AfroReggae’s approach to singling out individuals who are not engaged or are disruptive and suggesting to them that they are the most important element of the group demonstrate how this practice builds self-worth and pride in participation.

“I mean, I was a lot older than most of them. I’m in me twenties like but most of them were in their early teens so, it was hard like, but it was easy in a way coz I could help them coz I’ve been there, I’ve done it all like. ”

Participant in Liverpool project, previously labelled as a “bully” and known to police

¹⁵ *In Tune With The Beat of Where They Are – The AfroReggae UK Partnership* by Louise Owen

The need for total group commitment, and the development of a culture within the group, brings with it self-regulation – with peer support and teaching even amongst those with the greatest behavioural problems or at highest risk.

The development of group dynamics is clearly an analogy to the gang dynamic but AfroReggae have a firm belief that replacing art for the involvement in illegal activity, while exploiting familiar structures and hierarchies, works. In the UK context, it is clear that activities which are designed in this way to reach those who are on social peripheries and most likely to be attracted by gangs, and who are therefore at risk of becoming involved in violent crime, do provide a better support framework, develop individuals' capacities and resilience that will enable them to make better life choices, and potentially reduce the risk of criminal involvement.

The degree to which the artists are considered “authentic” by participants who are reluctant to engage is essential to the success of this work: the AfroReggae methodology used within *Favela to the World* incorporates the sharing of individual practitioners' stories, and reciprocal requests for individuals to reflect within group work on their own situation and their capacity to change it:

Matthew's Story

Matthew from Kirkdale was under police supervision at the time of the project and engaged with AfroReggae on three occasions; his first session was discussion-based. Matthew seemed perplexed and fixated on why AfroReggae would come to Kirkdale; he seemed even more confused that the artists could afford him time to sit and respond to his enquiries, which were often less than polite and intended to shock. Youth workers stated that Matthew had been difficult to engage for some time and that they struggled to prevent him sabotaging activities for other young people. Following the initial discussion, Matthew engaged in two further sessions, which were combined sport and drumming sessions. Although Matthew dipped in and out of the sessions, it was clear he held the artists in high esteem. He was respectful to all the adults present and, most importantly, to those young people who were committed to the activity.¹⁶

The recent *Sinking & Swimming* report by the Young Foundation, drawing from the analysis of various research reports, demonstrates the importance of key focal points in work that can enhance life chances for young people in the UK: each of them clearly identifiable in AfroReggae's methodology. These indicators are very different from the standard educational measures around literacy and numeracy:

“The authors [Blanden, J. Gregg, P. Macmillan, L. (2006)] continue to argue that policy [towards the goal of increasing social mobility] ‘should focus on the personal efficacy (the sense that your own actions can make a difference), concentration and anxiety of children from low

¹⁶ AfroReggae Summer Project 2010, Liverpool (draft report, final report due February 2011)

income backgrounds'. Leon Feinstein of the Institute of Education has similarly shown children's dedication and capacity for concentration at the age of 10 has a much bigger impact on earnings 20 years later than their ability in maths. A sense of personal agency at the age of 10 is also more important to life chances than reading skills. Other research has emphasised the importance of self-discipline and persistence (as opposed to impulsiveness) which turn out to be the key causal variables that lie behind differential academic results and different patterns of success in later life."

Sinking & Swimming: Understanding Britain's Unmet Needs, The Young Foundation, December 2009

While PPP does not claim that the impact of its arts projects can be registered in the statistics on knife crime rates within an entire community, there is evidence to show the effectiveness of the arts work on an individual level:

- A pupil at Hackney Free from a culturally diverse background, who was excluded from school very early within the *From the Favela to Hackney* project for placing a lit firework in the hood of the Head Boy, has sustained a four-year commitment to the Bigga Bloco¹⁷. Not only has he made a choice to regulate his behaviour as part of the group, he is now a group leader, supporting learning and modelling positive behaviour for other participants. In summer 2010, AfroReggae selected him to support them in teaching rhythms and mentoring newer groups for a joint performance at Southbank Centre; and Bigga Bloco plan to use him in a similar role as a mentor when they set up new groups in the near future.
- A young emerging artist from a culturally diverse background, from the *Cultural Warriors Playing On* group [who is an ex-offender and therefore anonymised here for data protection reasons] has stated to PPP that he wants to work with theatre because he feels it is a tool that will allow participants in his local area to reflect on whether accepting a contract to kill someone for £1000 is a viable life choice.

The *Favela to the World* project with AfroReggae in the UK has developed the artistic forms that it uses to appeal to a breadth of young people. It still encompasses the original drumming practice but also draws on various dance forms, rap and MC-ing, graffiti art, theatre and circus skills. There are always challenges to the recruitment of the specific young people that the programme is aimed at, and this is the subject of various reports throughout the evaluation evidence over the last 4 years. Community workers have resorted to innovative ways to reach out - tapping unseen networks between young people, promoting activities to teenagers on street corners, suggesting that they attend in groups, offering a range of taster workshops and exploratory sessions in venues, and using a combination of conversation and sports

¹⁷ Bigga Bloco was set up by PPP in partnership with Bigga Fish in 2007/8. It was a performance group drawn from young people who had taken part in AfroReggae's workshops in East London. It is now supported and run entirely by young people with support from Bigga Fish. They have a regular performance schedule at major music festivals

activities as a ladder of engagement into arts participation. This was inspired by the direct approach to recruitment that AfroReggae take in Rio and which was also effective most recently in Liverpool, where the extension of the 2010 summer project's reach beyond 8-15 year olds and into the target 15-19 year old group was achieved by AfroReggae members and the PPP/Everyman team hanging out conspicuously in parks and public spaces – with or without their drums.

The location of the activity has been vital, given the limited territorial range of most of those termed at *risk of social exclusion*.

Immediate Theatre's AfroReggae samba drumming workshops were staged initially at the Blue Hut in summer 2007...the project was targeted to reach thirty young people, in particular those who live on the Murray Grove estate. However, the Blue Hut was too small to accommodate the specified group size, and its location in a residential area meant that the noise generated by the drums was unwelcome, especially later in the evening. But at the Blue Hut, embedded in the estate, the group was building successfully. When the sessions moved to Hoxton Hall, less than ten minutes' walk away, attendance dropped off sharply. Jo Carter, Artistic Director of Immediate Theatre says "it's a problem, because our focus is the young people who live on the Murray Grove estate, and none of them will go to Hoxton Hall. They won't leave their area. The barrier is Pitfield Street, which divides two different gangs. A young boy, 11 or 12 years old, was attending the sessions at the Blue Hut but he stopped coming after the move, because his mother said it was too far for him to go." ... Damian Atkinson, Education, Youth and Sport Programme Manager at the Shoreditch Trust reflects that "young people here live quite a local life. People don't go very far, people might not ever leave Shoreditch, or very rarely. But people are very conscious that 'this is my patch', and therefore to move something ten minutes, you wouldn't think it would make a difference, but actually it does make a huge difference...in maximising resource you would say well look, it's crazy to have two things going on ten minutes away, but in reality you will not make a difference [unless you do]"¹⁸.

The Hackney project brought together young people from five schools in Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Islington, and work for these participants has been successfully sustained in the long term by a combination of the Bigga Bloco and the Barbican's World in Motion Drumming project. In the short term, the Liverpool project recorded successes such as the visits of 222 young people from other areas to the City and North districts, overcoming anxieties around widespread awareness of tension and segregation:

"We're also now from that [summer project] gonna hopefully be working with Dave in The Shewsy [youth centre in West Everton] and

¹⁸ Interview with Damian Atkinson, Shoreditch Trust featured in '*In tune with the beat of where they are*': the AfroReggae UK Partnership in 2007 (PPP report 4). Louise Owen

we're gonna get our kids and their kids to come together and do different things and hopefully, during Respect Week, we're gonna have AfroReggae based drums. So getting the two areas, that are known for hating each other, to work together on such a grand scale [was a success of the project towards its aim to 'Connect']".

Youth community worker from Liverpool project¹⁹

Projects such as this can't easily solve long-term issues of territory but it can provide both a snapshot and an inspiration of how territorial notions can be challenged through artistic work. What can be said with certainty is that the relationships built through the *Favela to the World* programme have seen young people from Hackney perform at the Royal Festival Hall, and young emerging artists from Stratford East and Camden travel to Newcastle for workshops with their learning disabled peers on the Cultural Warriors programme.

The programme has recently extended to working with learning disabled young people through collaboration with the Lawnmowers Independent Theatre Company in Gateshead. The early evaluation on this new aspect to the programme articulates similar and profound results. Learning disabled people are often socially excluded as a result of their disability, and they can use art to break out of what they and AfroReggae described as their ghetto:

"Daniel has a quite profound learning disability which has excluded him from many activities during his life ... When he left Sunderland college we found that there was virtually nothing for him to do and after many unsuccessful quests we had to settle for his only pastime being taken out for lunch and a walk with a personal assistant twice a week. Most days were spent trying to find something to do until bedtime then it all started again the next day; how distressing it was to feel that this was it now for the rest of this young man's life."

The Cultural Warriors programme with AfroReggae that PPP has brought to the Lawnmowers participants has stimulated confidence and communication, unlocking participants' abilities to express themselves:

"Daniel loves being part of the group; he enjoys the practice sessions as much as the performances. He has met many people and visited many new places that he would not have experienced had he not become involved. His life has been transformed into something much more worth while; he now has structure and direction, and lots to look forwards to. He recently played drums with a singer and guitarist at a music night he would never have had the confidence to do this before"

Both quotes above from Olwyn, mother of Daniel, Lawnmowers participant

¹⁹ AfroReggae Summer Project 2010, Liverpool Project (draft report, final report due February 2011)

Thus a Rio favela's cultural warriors encourage learning disabled people in Gateshead looking to break out of their own ghetto through arts to become visible and register their presence, their value and their rights through art²⁰.

Young people across all of PPP's projects have developed an emotional engagement to the art, to the project and to the concept of themselves as warrior-citizens through the empowerment of the AfroReggae methodology. The pride in their work comes from a sense of ownership. This was often the result of recontextualising their work through the public performance and platforms for sharing that have been key features throughout. By placing the work in the forums of major cultural institutions, through the brokering and programme requirements set out by PPP, the young people have seen their work appreciated by others, and been admired for their commitment and energy. This becomes a virtuous circle of ongoing engagement and commitment to the programme, and a key way of further recruiting young people. The leadership evoked in the young participants has become a programme of its own – *Cultural Warriors* – which has successfully built on the solid foundation of four years of AfroReggae inspired work.

Cultural Warriors - Youth Leadership Development through Artistic Practice

The leadership potential of some of the young people participating in the early projects became apparent quickly. It therefore seemed appropriate for this to be nurtured to increase the impact it might have on those young people – and to make possible that the impact of the project could be extended to others. *Cultural Warriors* was created by People's Palace Projects and set up as a collaborative programme with Theatre Royal, Stratford East, Contact Theatre, Manchester, and The Sage Gateshead. and Playing Out (an independent emerging theatre company formed out of relationships built during a National Youth Theatre outreach programme).

Drawing on the groundbreaking work of AfroReggae in the field of youth leadership and applying it to urban London, Gateshead and Manchester, the programme is well under way with the first cohort from 2010 about to train the next cohort of young people beginning in April 2011. That they are taking on the delivery of the project themselves illustrates its efficacy and results. The programme will develop to deliver the *Transformation* programme of multi-media installations, produced by the young people themselves in Manchester and London.

Evaluation so far highlights that the participants have found the work fun and inspiring:²¹.

“The experience is only beginning and I already feel like it is life changing.”

²⁰ *Intense Dreams: Reflections on Brazilian Culture and Performance* by Paul Heritage

²¹ Appendix 4 Statistical evaluation of Cultural Warriors first phase

“I wasn’t very enthusiastic to meet them but when I did it was the best experience ever. I learned a lot i.e. discipline, confidence, coordination, drumming, understanding & skill.”

“Worst moment? That I knew [the weekend] would come to an end”
[this/similar repeated on 4 of 32 completed forms]

“Worst moment? Missing some workshop time”

“Worst moment? Nothing/none/didn’t have one/blank” *[10/32 forms]*

Participant evaluation on initial networking weekend

Participants’ feedback also highlights the importance of the programme – artistically, culturally and in terms of leadership. The value is acknowledged across the participant group and there is a clear understanding of how what they have learned can be applied to their own contexts and lives – a clear indication of practical benefit, as always intended by AfroReggae and PPP. The participants’ resilience is also built up by their awareness that across the country there is a network of other young people who have similar attitudes and want to make a difference in those contexts:

“Best moment? Jamming with the group from Manchester and coming together to realise our dreams were the same”

Participant evaluation on initial networking weekend

“To me being a Cultural Warrior means being someone that uses a plethora of art and culture to make a significant change in the way people think.”

Niall – State of the Nation TRSE June 5th 2010

Schools work

Key evaluation findings of the original *World in Motion*²² programme run by the Barbican and AfroReggae, and facilitated by PPP, were:

- Improved self-esteem and concentration amongst participants achieved
- Use of different ways of learning, primarily kinaesthetic approaches, create cross curriculum links for teachers
- Participant general behaviour improves due to empathy with AfroReggae musicians, and deeply supportive and understanding nature of group leaders. PPP’s Associate Director, Sylvan Baker is particularly noted by participants as offering a different style to the school teachers
- Teachers highlight the very high quality of the programme and the benefit of the AfroReggae methodology is clear amongst students with behavioural or multiple social exclusion issues.

The original *World in Motion* schools also report that without the funding provided by Barbican, they would not be confident to take the risk on the programme. However, having participated they were keen to highlight that the school would consider further investment as the programme’s benefits are

clear. The World in Motion Drumming is still running four years later as a partnership between Barbican/Guildhall and the original schools involved, with new schools also joining the programme. PPP continues its involvement in this strand of work through linking World in Motion drumming groups to the activities of the AfroReggaeUK Network and through its new partnership with St. Paul's Way Trust School and Barbican/Guildhall, launching in 2011.

Practitioner Skills Development

One of the key roles PPP has played is in the establishment of training by AfroReggae for practitioners working in communities. These artists and practitioners all have huge experience of working with socially excluded young people. The feedback from them over the impact of learning new approaches from AfroReggae was phenomenally positive.

They each reported on the success of the knowledge exchange and felt highly energised by the approach as it placed the concept of artistic work as a means to empower the individual and transform their lives at the heart of the project. The opportunity to learn more and to play through interactive training workshops was beneficial. It did not just tell the practitioners about the methods used but showed them and encouraged them to adapt and build them to make them most relevant to their own situations.

Conclusion

People's Palace Projects has successfully engaged English audiences, artists, arts organisations and young people from marginalised communities with the best of Brazilian arts and culture. PPP did not set out to deliver a large-scale programme of participation. It aimed at bringing together a network of interested artists, developing their skills and practices through activities such as AfroReggae workshops or visits to Brazil and to support them in applying this practice in their own unique situations. What is vital is that PPP acts as curator in developing *how* this work can adapt to a local context, and to be a cultural broker between major institutions and community groups to present the legitimacy that is essential for the participants to feel that their voice has been registered and their contribution validated.

Evidence for this is clear through the project evaluations. This work simply would not have taken place if PPP had not been deeply committed to navigating the fragmented structures of working with the socially excluded, the multitude of funding requirements and hoops, and of course to translating the practices and supporting the understanding of the Brazilian context to ensure the correct mapping onto a UK context. Throughout all of the research reports, statistical data, participant feedbacks, critical reviews of public performance, there is an overriding message: this is excellence in practice, as PPP builds capacity in the English arts sector to develop effective ways to strengthen civil society.

Appendices showing participating arts organisations and examples of evidence gathered by PPP in relation to its programmes

1 – Participants in Points of Contact Programme

Artists and arts professionals: 20 day visit

Individual	Position	Organisation
Marc Boothe	Founder/Creative Director	B3 Media, London
Jo Wills	Project Leader, World in Motion	Barbican Arts Centre, London
Suzie Henderson	Head of Creative Development	Contact, Manchester
Ruth Gould	Chief Executive	DaDa Disability & Deaf Arts, Liverpool
David Slater	Artistic Director	Entelechy, London
Madani Younis	Artistic Director	Freedom Studios, Bradford
Geraldine Ling	Director	Lawnmowers Theatre Company, Gateshead
Genaya Parris	Youth Ambassador and freelance fashion designer	National Theatre Wales, Cardiff
Geraldine Collinge	Director of Events & Exhibitions	Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford upon Avon
Shân Maclennan	Creative Director, Learning & Participation	Southbank Centre, London
Katherine Zeserson	Director of Learning & Participation	Sage Gateshead
Victoria Tillotson	iShed Project Manager	Watershed, Bristol

The artists were in Brazil from Monday 22 March to Saturday 10 April, visiting Rio de Janeiro and Fortaleza in a shared itinerary with the funders and policy makers group, and then made individual visits to specific *Pontos de Cultura* in varying locations around Brazil, before returning to São Paulo as a group and departing for the UK.

Three further arts organisation representatives participated in the visit, following the itinerary of the funders and policy makers group:

Baba Israel	Artistic Director	Contact Theatre, Manchester
Sean Gregory	Director of Creative Learning	Guildhall School of Music & Drama and Barbican Centre
Robert Wells	Programme Leader, Professional Pathways	Guildhall School of Music & Drama and Barbican Centre

2.2 UK Funders, Policy Makers and Clore Fellows: 10 day visit

Individual	Position	Organisation
Sian Clarke	Relationship Manager, Engagement & Participation	Arts Council England
Andrea Stark	Executive Director, East and South East regions	Arts Council England
Andrew Barnett	Director	UK Branch Calouste Gulbenkian

		Foundation/ Chair, Novas Scarman Trust
Joe Hallgarten	Clore Fellow /Director of Cultural Programmes	Clore Leadership Programme / Creativity, Culture and Education
Ariane Koek	Clore Fellow	Clore Leadership Programme
Mick Elliott	Director of Culture	Department of Culture, Media and Sports
Clare McColgan	Head of Culture	Liverpool City Council
Fran Hegyi	Senior Cultural Advisor	London 2012/LOCOG
Robert Bell	Social Justice Programme Manager	Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Robin Simpson	Chief Executive Officer	Voluntary Arts Network

Their programme started in São Paulo on Sunday 21 March, continuing to Rio de Janeiro to join the artists, and then to Fortaleza, returning to the UK on Saturday 27 March.