



## MANIFESTO FOR CHANGE: LONDON'S CREATIVE SECTOR

## FOREWORD

Being young, almost by definition, is a time of uncertainty, opportunity and promise.

Young Londoners are awash with creativity. We see it in their music, the art they create, the vibrancy of their digital lives and the challenge of their campaigns. Some of these young Londoners will go on to have successful careers in the creative industries, be that in the digital, performing arts, fashion, film or media sectors. However, systemic inequality within the creative world means that many can't get a foot in the door or never find the door at all. This is particularly true for those from low income backgrounds, including young people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. That is why we, the Mayor's Fund for London, have worked tirelessly with partners in supporting young Londoners to find and push through the necessary doors to access great careers.

With the pandemic dominating thoughts and headlines, and with some elements of the creative sector on its knees, it might not seem the right time to launch a Manifesto for Change. We disagree.

London has always been a global creative force and will continue to be so in the years ahead. Parts of the creative sector, such as digital, are buoyant. Others, such as the performing arts, are having the hardest of times. Nevertheless, the creative sector will thrive long term and we have a duty to ensure that our talented young Londoners are able to access creative sector careers, regardless of their race and ethnicity, socio-economic background, or the fact that they were unlucky enough to be young at the time of COVID-19.

This Manifesto for Change does not ask for the earth, but merely for more determined, systematic and co-ordinated action to level the playing field.

Think of the great talent we will miss out on if we do not.

**Kirsty McHugh, Chief Executive**

uncertainty

opportunity

promise





## London: the illusion of opportunity

The notion that London is a 'social mobility engine', is persistent. We know that in reality, this is not true. Our *'One City, Two Worlds'* report (January 2020) highlights that just 17% of London's professional jobs are occupied by people from low income backgrounds, compared to 30% nationally.

The creative sector is a good example of where this disparity exists. London's creative industry has major economic pulling power. A pre-COVID study by the Greater London Authority highlights how the industry adds a £52bn boost to the national economy with an additional £40bn spent within the London supply chain. However, aspiring young people from low income and BAME backgrounds who are ready to unleash their potential in London's creative industries are faced with a highly uneven playing field. Lack of access to relevant networks, widespread informal recruitment practices and limited progression pathways affect these groups disproportionately, thus depriving London of diverse voices and talents.

Inequality figures in London's creative sector are stark. Research by the Centre for London has demonstrated that no less than 95% of the industries' workers come from an advantaged background<sup>1</sup>. Similarly concerning figures point to a lack of ethnic diversity. Even though BAME groups make up 40% of London's population, fewer than one in four are represented in the creative industry's work force<sup>2</sup>.

COVID-19 has further deepened this inequality. Research from the Creative Industries Federation has projected the economic fallout of the pandemic to be twice as high in some areas of the creative sector compared to the wider economy<sup>3</sup>. Unemployment spikes are expected for the freelance community (287,000 freelance roles likely to be terminated by the end of 2020) and other groups of creative workers (job losses of 122,000)<sup>4</sup>.

Young people from low income and ethnic minority backgrounds are most at risk of losing their employment in the sector or never gaining a foothold to begin with. We risk a generation of young people missing out on creative sector careers, a loss which will reverberate even when the sector recovers.

# 40%

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups make up 40% of London's population



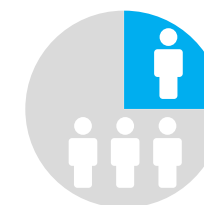
# 95%

Of the industry workforce comes from an advantaged background



# 1 in 4

Fewer than one in four Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups are represented in the creative industry's workforce



**Ultimately, social inequality and racial inequity pulls the fabric of our society apart and corrodes social and economic cohesion. We believe urgent, co-ordinated cross-sector action is needed to build a diverse and inclusive creative sector that nourishes the careers of diverse young talent.**

<sup>1</sup> [www.centreforlondon.org/publication/culture-club](http://www.centreforlondon.org/publication/culture-club)

<sup>2</sup> [www.centreforlondon.org/publication/culture-club](http://www.centreforlondon.org/publication/culture-club)

<sup>3</sup> [www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/news/press-release-cultural-catastrophe-over-400000-creative-jobs-could-be-lost-projected-economic](http://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/news/press-release-cultural-catastrophe-over-400000-creative-jobs-could-be-lost-projected-economic)

<sup>4</sup> [www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/news/press-release-cultural-catastrophe-over-400000-creative-jobs-could-be-lost-projected-economic](http://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/news/press-release-cultural-catastrophe-over-400000-creative-jobs-could-be-lost-projected-economic)

## Unleashing creative talent

The Mayor's Fund for London is an independent charity, championing social mobility for young Londoners.

We use our place at the heart of London to make the case for investment in opportunities for young people, particularly those from low income backgrounds.

Our work in the creative sector dates back to 2014 when we launched **Creativity Works**, a high impact arts-based programme engaging young Londoners between 16–24 who are not in employment, education or training. Supported by Berkeley Foundation and Citi Foundation, the initiative improves access to employment by raising confidence and developing transferable and technical skills. The programme offers unique insights and experience of working in fields such as multimedia, fashion, film, festival and event management.

To date, Creativity Works has supported over 700 young Londoners, with a further 100 due to graduate from the programme by the end of 2020. Over 70% of participants move into employment, education or training after completing the programme.



**700**   
Young Londoners supported  
by Creative Works so far

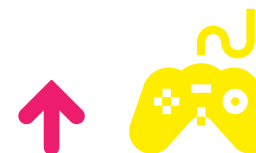
## Time to step up

Our work in the creative sector, recently compounded by the impact of COVID-19, has made it clear that there is much to be done in addressing social inequality and racial inequity.

We are, of course, aware of the challenges that areas of the industry currently face, especially the music, theatre, film, TV, photography and performing and visual arts sectors. Some predictions point at job losses of 60% so there is a great need for these sectors to be supported to continue operating<sup>5</sup>. The recently launched Kickstart Scheme<sup>6</sup> can provide an important platform to benefit the industry and young people. We also know that there are areas in the industry that are currently booming. The video gaming industry is a prime example of this with animation doing well too, creating many exciting career prospects for diverse, young talent.

**As we collectively work to minimise the negative impact of COVID-19, we believe now is the time to refocus and create a more equal industry. One where young people from all backgrounds can access opportunities and are empowered to thrive.**

During a time of change and uncertainty, it is clear that practical, low-cost recommendations are needed to help create a more equal, and ultimately more successful, industry. We have worked with the Greater London Authority, Arts Council England, our funders (Berkeley Foundation and Citi Foundation) and expert partners (A New Direction and Media Trust), to conduct a series of consultations with creative sector employers, young people, front-line support staff and teachers, building on existing data from our programmes and external expertise. The result is this Manifesto for Change and its five urgent and practical recommendations.



The video gaming industry is a prime example of areas in the industry doing well.

<sup>6</sup> For more information: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme)

# MANIFESTO FOR CHANGE

London's creative industries to be recognised as leaders in driving social mobility for young people from low income and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.



We have listed recommendations which, if adopted, have the power to achieve transformative changes for the industry and young people. They are not limited to one particular sector, but make an implicit call for better collaboration and coordination across public, private and third sectors.

### 1. Co-ordinated action to bring creative industry role models from diverse backgrounds into schools and colleges across London to raise awareness of opportunities

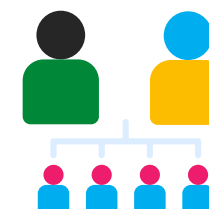
'You cannot be what you cannot see' is an oft-used phrase to indicate how a lack of representation holds diverse talent back from joining certain industries. By bringing younger, more socio-economic and ethnically diverse creatives into the classroom, young people from these communities are much more likely to engage with their stories. It is a low-cost, immediate action that will go a long way towards creating a stronger sense of interest among more diverse groups for exploring their ambitions.

### 2. Increase engagement between creative industry employers and schools/ colleges in underserved London geographies to build employability skills relevant for the industry

The creative industry is among London's biggest economic forces. In 2019, the Greater London Authority reported over 267,000 people to be working in the industry with another 203,000 employed in the creative supply chain – more than in the legal and accounting sectors combined.<sup>7</sup> There is a wealth of opportunities for companies and schools across our capital to connect and engage in career guidance activities. Unfortunately, many schools do not currently have any creative company partnerships in place, particularly those located outside central London. Many of the young people we speak to, having newly embarked on their career paths, comment on how their decision-making could have been made so much better had they had the opportunities to engage with creative professionals whilst still attending school.

awareness

opportunities



employability



### 3. Make sure existing schemes, including apprenticeships, operate effectively within the creative sector to bring more diverse skills and talent into the industry

National schemes, such as the Government's new Kickstart programme, have the potential to provide opportunities for young people to gain critical experience of work in the creative sector. However, programme design does not always work in an environment where many opportunities are short term, project-based or carried out by freelancers. The apprenticeship levy, for instance, requires employers to engage in a minimum of a 12-month contract which locks out huge swathes of creative businesses, whilst the Kickstart programme is aimed at employers (or groups of employers) able to provide 30 placements or more. Employers and intermediaries too often have to work outside the publicly funded system or have been forced to operate within inflexible rules. Sometimes this can be a success. For instance, when companies have engaged in successful projects where apprentices are 'shared', allowing young people to work on different assignments. This manifesto calls for public sector funded programmes to work with the creative sector and for more non statutory funders to learn from each other as to what works and to collaborate to provide more co-ordinated funding for effective approaches.

### 4. Invest in more diverse recruitment and progression pathways to ensure opportunities are accessible and aspirational for all young people who wish to embark on a career in the industry

Employers have a significant role to play in ensuring that their internal processes and policies allow for a diverse pipeline of talent to come through and flourish. There are exemplary leaders in the industry that have made great strides through:

- Conducting outreach with community partners and local councils;
- Offering employment and work experience opportunities through formal application procedures that are externally promoted;
- Providing relevant training to all members of staff;
- Encouraging initiatives such as reverse mentoring and setting up of youth advisory boards.





Not all creative sector employers are currently in a place to invest in outreach, recruitment and progression practices. COVID-19 restrictions further complicate matters for the foreseeable future. However, research has clearly identified that diverse companies do outperform those who are not<sup>8</sup>. We therefore call upon business leaders to commit to diversity and inclusivity as a way to build a more resilient and sustainable industry.

Where funding and resources are an issue, employers should consider supporting schemes like the Mayor's Fund for London Creativity Works programme (delivered by Media Trust and A New Direction) that leverage funding and other support from multiple employers. Employers should also consider non-capital intensive contributions like providing staff volunteers to run training or serve as mentors for diverse young talent.

## 5. Promote socio-economic background and ethnicity pay gap reporting across the industry

We believe reporting on socio-economic background and ethnicity pay gaps supports a culture of inclusivity where everyone is rewarded fairly and can reach their full potential. Research shows there is some considerable work to be done in London where those from working class backgrounds earn on average 15% less compared to those from higher professional and managerial backgrounds. The figure for BAME employees show lower earnings of 16% than their white counterparts<sup>9</sup>. Providing more transparency will help to push the issue higher up on the agenda as has been the case with gender pay-gap reporting.



## OUR COMMITMENTS

We believe that now, more than ever, we need an equitable creative sector that provides opportunities for young people from diverse backgrounds to enter and thrive. As social mobility advocates for young Londoners, we will continue to support young people, work with employers and champion change.

We will use the Manifesto for Change in the following ways:

**i) Improve effectiveness of our business engagement.** Through our career guidance and support programme Access Aspiration, we will work more closely with creative businesses across London to ensure more diverse, younger role models are involved.

**ii) Encourage employers to commit to diversity.** We will actively promote our Diversity Pledge as part of our engagement with London employers. Our ambition is to grow the number of creative industry businesses that are actively committed to bringing more young people from

low income backgrounds, including those of minority ethnic backgrounds, into the fold.

**iii) Improve visibility of schools and colleges underserved by employer partnerships.** We will aim to work with partners to increase the visibility of areas across the capital where there is limited engagement between schools and colleges and creative sector businesses. This will require better data and signposting for companies and schools looking to work together.

**iv) Work actively with the creative industries to build new partnerships.** We are keen to expand our networks within the sector to develop new areas of work. If you are interested in collaborating with us to promote more equal and inclusive pathways into work, we would love to hear from you.

“ Race and class disparities have shaped all sectors in London and the creative industries are no different. People of colour feel discouraged to enter the creative industries due to an industry wide lack of representation. It takes a lot to survive in a space where you are excluded or not made to feel welcomed. That's why it is so important to open the doors of the creative industry to everyone, in ways that aren't just 'symbolic'. Not just to who are those willing and able to undergo the discomfort of being the odd one out. ”

**Rachael Simões**

Supported by:

Citi Foundation



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