



BRENT 2020



**THE
AGENCY
PROJECT
REPORT**

LONDON BOROUGH OF CULTURE

JUNE 2021

MAYOR OF LONDON

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**BRENT
2020**
LONDON
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WHAT IS THE AGENCY?

The Agency was a creative entrepreneurship programme for young people in Brent as part of the Mayor's London Borough of Culture 2020. The Brent 2020 programme explored the stories, art and emotions that hold life in Brent together, uncovering and celebrating the borough's untold tales and unheard voices.

The Agency provided development opportunities to help 23 young people gain the skills they need to develop social change projects where they live. The scheme was supported by Battersea Arts Centre and run by Kiln Theatre.

This intense programme helped develop the creativity and fresh ideas of young Londoners in Brent. As well as project management and business skills, they learned how to network and develop creative ways to solve problems. By the end of the course, they were ready to bring their entrepreneurial ambitions to life, delivering their social change projects with and for the community in which they live.

The Agency in Brent joins other Agency projects across the UK in Battersea, Manchester, Cardiff, Southampton and Belfast, as well as the original programme in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The freedom of the methodology is really great. I always try and take it into other jobs and areas that I work on that aren't even connected to The Agency. We aren't teachers or to enforce anything which helps so much with their learning. We give suggestions and tools but ultimately, it's up to them.

-Lydia, Agency at Kiln Theatre facilitator



BACKGROUND

The Agency works with young people aged 15 to 25 from some of the most deprived areas in the UK to create social change projects based on the needs they identify in their communities. The programme began in 2013 through a partnership between Battersea Arts Centre (BAC), Contact and People's Palace Projects (PPP).

Since the pilot year in 2013, it has had a significant impact not only on the young people who have taken part but also the organisations and communities that enable them to realise their ideas. We aim to be truly representative of the local area, working with young people who are driven and ambitious with lots of ideas, as well as those who may not think they have anything to contribute to their local area, in order to drive social innovation from the ground up.

The Agency is not only a tool for individual empowerment and social mobility but has the potential to provide an emancipatory education to drive social innovation and solve systemic social problems. The programme does this through constructing a safe space for young people to think critically about the world and their place in it while devising ways they can turn their ideas and dreams for change into a reality.

The programme is based on Agência de Redes para Juventude, founded by Marcus Faustini in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2011.

WHAT SETS THE AGENCY APART?

1. The Agency methodology **puts young people from some of the most deprived areas of the UK at the centre of social change**, using an asset-based approach to achieve **sustainable, local change** through young peoples' life experience, community resources, culture and passion.
2. The Agency supports young people on an individual level to **improve their opportunities** but also creates a collective force for systematic change, **mobilising young people around social issues** they care about.
3. The Agency **changes the way cultural and community organisations work with young people** by adopting more inclusive, co-created, collaborative working practices across their organisations.
4. The Agency uses **creativity as its key currency** to unlock innovation, helping young people to **achieve their potential** and future success in education, employment and enterprise.
5. The Agency is a **tool to create robust networks** within a locality where young people, cultural organisations and communities work together around shared goals and values.



THE NEED AND THE TERRITORY: KILN THEATRE IN CONTEXT

Kiln Theatre in Kilburn was proud to be selected to deliver and produce The Agency project in Brent for the first time as part of London Borough of Culture Brent 2020. Kiln Theatre was delighted for the opportunity to build on their expertise and experience of delivering drama and arts projects to local young people and communities. Kiln Theatre is a local venue with an international vision. Proudly rooted in the London Borough of Brent for 40 years, their mission is to make theatre for everyone, and their vision is to uncover shared humanity, amplifying unheard voices into the mainstream. The building houses a 292-seat auditorium that stages predominantly new writing and is also host to a 300-seat cinema which programmes mainstream and art-house films at affordable prices. The Kiln also houses a bar and café, plus three rehearsal spaces which are used for their productions, workshops and Creative Engagement projects. Their ambition is to produce world-class theatre that provokes, entertains and appeals to the exceptionally diverse society in Brent and beyond.

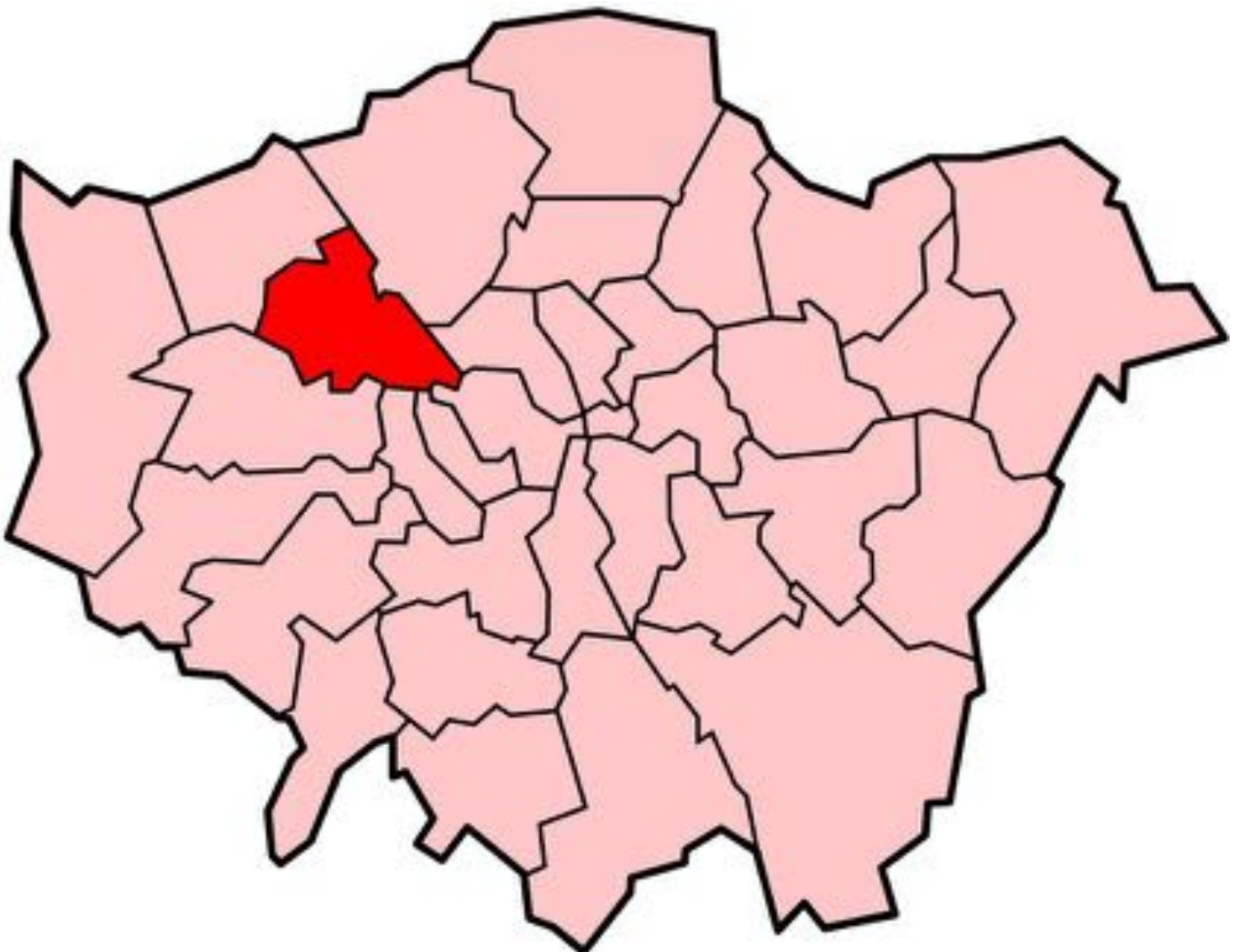
Kiln Theatre's geographical location and local demographics are intrinsically linked to their identity and mission. They are positioned at the fault-lines of major systemic issues – which have been exacerbated by COVID-19 – in one of London's most vulnerable and diverse boroughs. Brent has the UK's highest Black, Asian and ethnically diverse population as well as the highest child poverty rate in London (Trust for London, 2020). Kiln Theatre is the only ACE-subsidised theatre in the borough and they are deeply aware of the key role they play in providing high-quality, affordable cultural opportunities to Brent residents. In the borough there is one NPO per 112,000 residents; in contrast, neighbouring Camden has one NPO per 9,000 residents. Brent is also a young borough, with the median age (35) five years lower than the England average (Arts Council England, Brent.gov.uk and Camden.gov.uk). All of these statistics influence their diversity and equality strategy. The long established Creative Engagement programme at Kiln Theatre aims to champion the imagination, aspiration and potential of the Brent Community, producing high quality participant-centred, drama and creative projects to support empowerment and amplification of community voice



SNAPSHOT OF THE TERRITORY

Kiln Theatre is based in Brent, London's most ethnically diverse borough where 69% of the population is Black, Asian and ethnically diverse, with 38% of that group living in poverty, according to [London's Poverty Profile](#). Levels of poverty in Brent are high for young people too, with 44% of children living below the poverty line. Brent is also the most densely populated borough in the whole of London. The area has a high percentage of young people with 35% between ages of 20-39, therefore The Kiln is particularly committed to serving the needs of young people in Brent through The Agency and other programmes to promote equal access to the arts and to develop creative leaders.

From getting to know young people in the area through The Agency recruitment, it was clear there are many brilliant ideas and energy in the borough though many young people face immense challenges as well. The biggest issues that came up in recruitment were around the lack of spaces and opportunities for young people in the area and that many do not feel safe in many places in their area. Agents came from St Raph's and Chalk Hill estates, Stonebridge, Wembley and Harlesden.



Brent's young people have demonstrated yet again that they have innovative ideas, passion, and incredible potential to make positive social change. Young people truly are the experts when it comes to solutions for issues that affect them, and we feel privileged to work with these agents and with Kiln to back their initiatives. The projects were so well thought out, the extra time the lockdown created had a big impact on the quality and originality of the pitches.

-Catherine Nicholson
Senior Producer, The Agency at Battersea Arts Centre



THE
AGENCY
BRENT

We ask two questions: who is the most talented young person you know who should be in this project? And who are the ones who are not engaged at all, who you imagine won't have any ideas? Because we want both of them.

- Marcus Faustini,
Agency founder



RECRUITMENT

The Agency targets a diverse mix of young people that is representative of the demographics of the territory, not only the most driven and ambitious ones. The Agency goes to places where young people are and asks them to be part of the solution to problems in their community. They are asked if they have a business idea; what they are passionate about; or what they would like to change about where they live. From their very first contact with the programme, they are spoken to as young people with ideas, potential and agency over their lives.

In Brent, an intensive recruitment at Kiln Theatre took place over a 6-week period in November and December of 2019. The recruitment team consisting of Agency alumni, members of the Brent 2020 young ambassadors The Blueprint Collective and staff worked with local organisations in and around St Raph's Estate, Chalk Hill and Wembley to connect with young people who would benefit most from the programme. Seven Agency alumni from Battersea Arts Centre and Blackhorse Workshop and 4 young people from Blueprint Collective were hired to recruit this cohort of Agents. The team spoke to over 100 young people outside restaurants, at bus stops and outside schools in the local area about the programme. They also worked with referral partners, business owners and local people to target young people who needed the programme the most. This included: Ansar Youth Project and The Yellow, both community centres in Wembley, SUFRA foodbank and kitchen and employment support service The Living Room on St Raph's Estate and Brent River Collage a Pupil Referral Unit in Chalk Hill. Agency recruitment particularly targeted care leavers, working closely with Brent Council to run a bespoke session with 8 care leavers, 6 of whom ended up taking part in The Agency.

The team received nearly 100 applications and interviewed 60 young people, offering 25 places on the programme with a waiting list of 10. Everyone who wasn't offered a place was invited to join the Blueprint collective's network of young people making creative projects across the borough as part of Brent 2020.

CYCLE 1: CYCLE OF STIMULUS

I feel like I've become more engaged in community. I don't think it's changed how I see community. I've always kind of seen or accepted both what I've experienced and the communication that happens between people. Working on this has enlightened that stuff for me.

-Cycle 2 Agent

The first, 12-week cycle in Brent used a theatre-based, creative methodology to help young people (Agents) develop their ideas starting from their desire for change in their local area and using specific tools developed by Agency founder Marcus Faustini, adapted to a UK context. Sessions focused on cognitive skill- building through developing the logistics of the ideas with support from facilitators, including practitioners from the local area, and community groups they aim to work with, whilst also developing the non-cognitive, social and emotional capabilities necessary to bring these projects to fruition. These 'soft skills' such as agency, communication, and creativity have been linked to improved longer-term employment and educational success.

The aim of this cycle was to enable Agents in Brent to take an idea based on a need they identified in their community; articulate it; defend it; find support for it through different networks; and pitch it alongside other young people's ideas, host organisations and industry professionals on the day of The Panel. Agents attended two sessions, for a total of 7 hours, weekly. Each Saturday through Cycle 1, the Agents were introduced to a new tool designed to help them to generate, develop and strengthen their idea, while in the Wednesday sessions these tools were explored using creative tools and practices.





To summarise, these sessions included:

- **INNOVATIVE IDEA GENERATION** - Developing ideas and expanding notions of what's possible through creative workshops
- **SOCIAL IMPACT**- Each project highlighted and addressed a specified need identified by the young people in their communities
- **RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION** with communities - every project consulted with communities and obtained 50 signatures before pitching for funding from The Panel
- **NETWORKING** - Identifying and opening up local networks, using creativity to build networking skills
- **DEVELOPING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET**- key to success in resourcefulness running their own projects but also in future careers and education

Agents received a stipend for taking part which helped to counterbalance the hidden privileges of being able to take part in unpaid work, helped with travel and food, and provided disposable income for them to spend on themselves and their projects.

At the end of this cycle, young people pitched their ideas to a panel of industry experts who decided upon three projects that were awarded £2,000 of seed funding. The quality of the pitches was so high that a fourth project was also selected by The Panel for dedicated producing support. The four selected projects moved on to Cycle 2 where their ideas would be developed and tested. Agents who were not awarded funding for their projects were encouraged to join other successful projects to stay engaged with the programme.

Agents pitched for £2,000 + an additional 16 weeks of support.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE UK

The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK has been significant on people of all ages, greatly impacting society's physical, mental, and emotional health. While young people have not been affected as much physically by the impact of the pandemic, the lockdowns imposed by the government have had a severe impact on young people's mental health. Preliminary data shows that out of any age group, young people are more likely to report the negative impact of the pandemic on their mental health. While mental health has worsened by 8.1% for the general population in the UK, it has been significantly worse for young adults 16-24. As a result, mental health services have been stretched and oversubscribed- an estimated 1 in 4 young people unable to get the support they need.

Employment opportunities have also been severely affected for the general population but affecting younger populations more significantly. One in three young people aged 18-24 lost their job or were furloughed because of the lockdowns, as compared to one in six for the general population. Young people from minority ethnic groups already have significant labour market disadvantage and are less likely to be in employment compared to others in their age group. Employment not only positively impacts socio-economic status but also has a positive effect on self-esteem, sense of purpose and stability, with unemployed young people twice as likely to suffer from mental health issues.

In addition, 60% of young people are concerned that the lockdowns have negatively affected their relationships with their peers and others in their community. With the age of 12-24 a crucial time frame for the development of socio-emotional skills that will help them in all areas of their lives, the result of the pandemic could also have long-term effects on how these skills are developed and maintained.

The impact of the lockdowns on the young people taking part in The Agency align with this national research, further outlined in the Impact section. The Agency teams were acutely aware of these issues, proactively working to counteract some of these negative effects through the way they engaged with and supported young people during this time. Employment, a sense of community and support for mental health were all addressed during the delivery of The Agency at Kiln Theatre, also further outlined in the Impact section.

I managed to make connections and help people in ways that I wouldn't have been able to think of alone, and it is one of the main things I will take away from being on the Agency. Brent is a diverse area, full of people with the potential to make social change happen in their local areas. The Agency is the perfect platform for individuals in Brent to speak about their local concerns and make change happen.

-Brent Agent

Where do I begin without the help of The Agency during lockdown? I don't know where I would be; The Agency has helped me become who I am today. With the extra money we were able to get from The Agency, it's helped me provide for my family and help my mum out with bills and food etc.

-Cycle 1 Agent

COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND DELIVERY OF CYCLE 1 IN BRENT

The Agency at Kiln Theatre began on 8th January 2020 though the programme had to be put on hold at the end of week 10 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Agents in Brent had just held their community consultations and were two weeks away from pitching to The Panel when the pandemic forced the programme to halt normal activity and go online. The focus of the programme shifted to more pastoral support for Agents, engaging with them online and helping them to develop their ideas at the pace of the young people. Facilitators ran sessions online and checked in with young people via telephone on a regular basis.

Though pitches were postponed, contact was maintained throughout this period, with each facilitator supporting a small group of Agents weekly. There were also fortnightly sessions held with the group as a whole to continue to develop their projects and extend their networks. Agents were paid their full stipend and were given £10 additional per week throughout the postponement period to cover Internet costs.

Just before Agents pitched their ideas to The Panel restrictions were eased in the UK so they were able to meet in person for an intensive period to prepare. They were given three weeks of preparation time in total, receiving £30/week stipend. In total, 12 projects pitched to The Panel, with 4 projects and 11 Agents taking part in Cycle 2.



As a Brent resident I take huge pride from knowing we are home to this centre of artistic excellence. To see these young lives inspired and enabled by everything the Kiln represents is itself an inspiration. Indeed, it is a huge part of why we are and will always be a borough of culture

-Councilor Muhammad Butt

THE PANEL

The Panel included:

Dawn Austwick – Chief Executive, The National Lottery Community Fund and Kiln Theatre Chair of the Board

Jonathan Badyal – Head of Communications, Universal Music

Councilor Muhammed Butt – Leader of Brent Council

Indhu Rubasingham – Kiln Theatre Artistic Director

Sydney Sylvah – The Agency Alumni, Battersea, founder of Sydney's Naturals

Nathaniel Telemaque – St Raphael's Estate resident and artist

THE PITCHES

Brent Power Play by Anthony – free access to sports for care leavers to build confidence and improve mental health.

Consent First by Fizza – workshops for young people around healthy relationships and consent.

Film4Thought by Berlyn, Lina, Nathan, Yusra – opportunities for young people to produce short films which speak to current affairs and needs.

Kicking Through Violence by Mohit, Zouhir – safe and rival-free football tournaments across Brent.

Kids for Life by Lylah – support and activities to vulnerable young people Living History by Michael – archive and installation of pre-regeneration local histories.

Mind Map by Amber – mentoring and support for young people struggling with mental health.

Sancia's Podcast – A podcast that gives individuals with care experience a platform to have their voices heard through their stories and experience.

St Raph's Shard by Melina – community events to reunite young people of St Raphael's Estate following a spout of violence and knife crimes.

Sweet T by Tanya – a support service for people at risk of homelessness.

Tit for Tat by Conor – workshops about helpful life administration including tax, tenancy agreements, contracts and opening bank accounts.

Tutor Me Tutor You by Fadya, Grace, Ilwad – peer-to-peer tutoring project offering free support in Performing Arts, Maths, Science and English.

THE PROJECTS

Three selected projects received £2,000 towards a pilot of their idea, working with the support of a specialist producer to help bring their vision to reality. A fourth project was offered dedicated producer and fundraising support.

The four selected projects were:

Living Histories by Michael- Living Histories is a co-created archiving project and an installation that documents the stories of people and places in areas of Harlesden undergoing regeneration [@livinghistories_ www.livinghistories.co.uk](https://www.livinghistories.co.uk)



Sancia's Podcast by Sancia- Sancia's Podcast is a podcast that gives individuals with care experience a platform to have their voices heard through their stories and experience. As well as draws up on professional advice and information. Aims to change the narrative about care leavers @sanciaspodcast



It was fabulous to see the talent and creativity of this group of Brent young people. Their commitment to their communities, the strength of their ideas, and their energy and enthusiasm was inspiring. I'm only sorry we couldn't have more winners!

- Dawn Austwick, Chair of Kiln Theatre

The Agency gave me more confidence working with a team and expressing my ideas and being able to put your words into actions. The Agency opened my ideas to how many opportunities there are to become a better person and how many different paths I could go down in my life. It opened my eyes to the problems that are going on in my community and it gave me the tools to actually try and change something.

-Cycle 2 Agent

Film4Thought by Berlyn, Yusra, athan and Lina- Film4Thought is a project for young people in Wembley where young people take the lead in planning and shooting their own short films around pertinent topics: family issues, gangs, body image and sexual assault. Young people will learn film making and editing skills [@film4thought_](https://www.instagram.com/film4thought_)





Consent First by Fizza- Consent First is a creative project for young girls in Wembley providing zine making and design skills and education around consent and sexual assault @consentfirst_

The agency provided me with masses of opportunity and support. The people I was working alongside became my family, and individuals I looked up to, and appreciated. I gained a lot more self-confidence and independence- which was down to the help of the facilitators who helped me feel empowered and great about what I was doing for the community.

-Cycle 2 Agent



CYCLE 2: THE INCUBATOR

The aim of the 16-week Cycle 2 was to teach practical project management, planning and business skills alongside bespoke support with an individual producer who guided the Agents in building their projects and piloting them in the local area. It focused on:

COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY SUPPORT through community partnerships, 1-on-1 mentorship and professional networking meetings

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT - practical skills in resource building, developing networks and being creative in approaching them

SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT - self-confidence, self-efficacy, perseverance, motivation, creativity and resilience: just a few of the skills necessary to deliver projects.

BECOMING LEADERS IN THEIR COMMUNITIES - working with other young people, partners and local groups to implement their ideas

MAKING PROJECTS COME TO LIFE - becoming skilled producers and project managers to make their projects happen

In this cycle Agents turned their ideas into projects, laying the foundation for an intervention implemented within the community. Through piloting their projects, by the end of this phase Agents also learned to evaluate their projects through gathering integral feedback to be used in the long-term to impact the future development of their projects.



Agents achieved the following in Cycle 2:

Sancia's Podcast

Sancia recorded, edited and shared three episodes of the podcast and shared them across several major platforms. The podcast will return with new episodes in July 2021 and Sancia is exploring future funding.

Living Histories

Michael created a website holding the archive of oral histories from Harlesden which will become part of Brent archive. He commissioned 3 local artists to create artwork in response to the archive and ran an online sharing event which brought 60 audience members.

Film4Thought

The group worked with young people to script, act, record and edit 2 films about consent and sexual assault, gang violence and family issues.

Consent First

Fizza ran a consultation workshop with 15 young people and received 10 creative submissions from young people for the zine which she used to create the first issue of the zine. The zine will be distributed to schools for free in July 2021.

We go in with the mindset that everyone is creative to a lesser or greater degree. They realise through creative tasks that when you're in a creative mindset you can reimagine your world and your reality. If it was done in a different way, if it was more taught, I don't think they would come out of it with the same sense of identity. I feel like they discover their own creativity because we approach it in a creative way.

-Will, Agency at Kiln Theatre Lead Facilitator

Despite the challenges presented from the Covid-19 pandemic, the team were able to provide pastoral and project support to all Agents throughout Cycle 2, including running expert sessions around these key themes:

- Project Management
- Budgeting
- Marketing and branding
- Working in your community
- Facilitation & safeguarding

Additional inspiration sessions were held by: **Moed Majid**- Vice Magazine; and **Amaarah Roze**- creator of Standardz

Cycle 2 culminated with **Hope In Action** a series of virtual events marking the end of The Agency scheme and launching the four new projects imagined and realised by young people of Brent. The Agency: Triple Bill which was hosted by Agency alumni, launched Sancia's Podcast, Consent First, and Film4Thought on 17 March, with Living Histories launched on 19 March in a curated sharing of oral histories and commissions. The series concluded on 20 March with **The Agency: Recovering Hope**, a workshop for young people living, learning or earning in Brent. The workshop was hosted by local resident and Agency Facilitator Marco Campbell, Activist Dan Glass and Agent Fizza Syed. The workshop asked young people about their hopes for the future addressing the impact of the pandemic on young people in Brent and what they want to happen now, illustrator Amber Anderson scribed the conversation live to create a visual document of their ideas, as seen below. All events were free and they were held online.



The biggest skill was networking. Really and truly before I wouldn't have gone out saying, hey, I'm Sancia, listen to my podcast. I wouldn't usually do something like that. The worst they can say is 'no'. It gave me that confidence to connect as well.

–Cycle 2 Agent



IMPACT

KEY OUTPUTS

- 23** young people took part in Cycle 1
- 330** hours of creative training sessions
- 60** hours of mentoring time
- 52** new networks made
- 115** community members consulted on project ideas*
- 12** social change projects pitched
- 4** social change projects funded

- 11** young people took part in Cycle 2
- 188** hours of producing support
- 2,070** participants took part in activities led by Agents

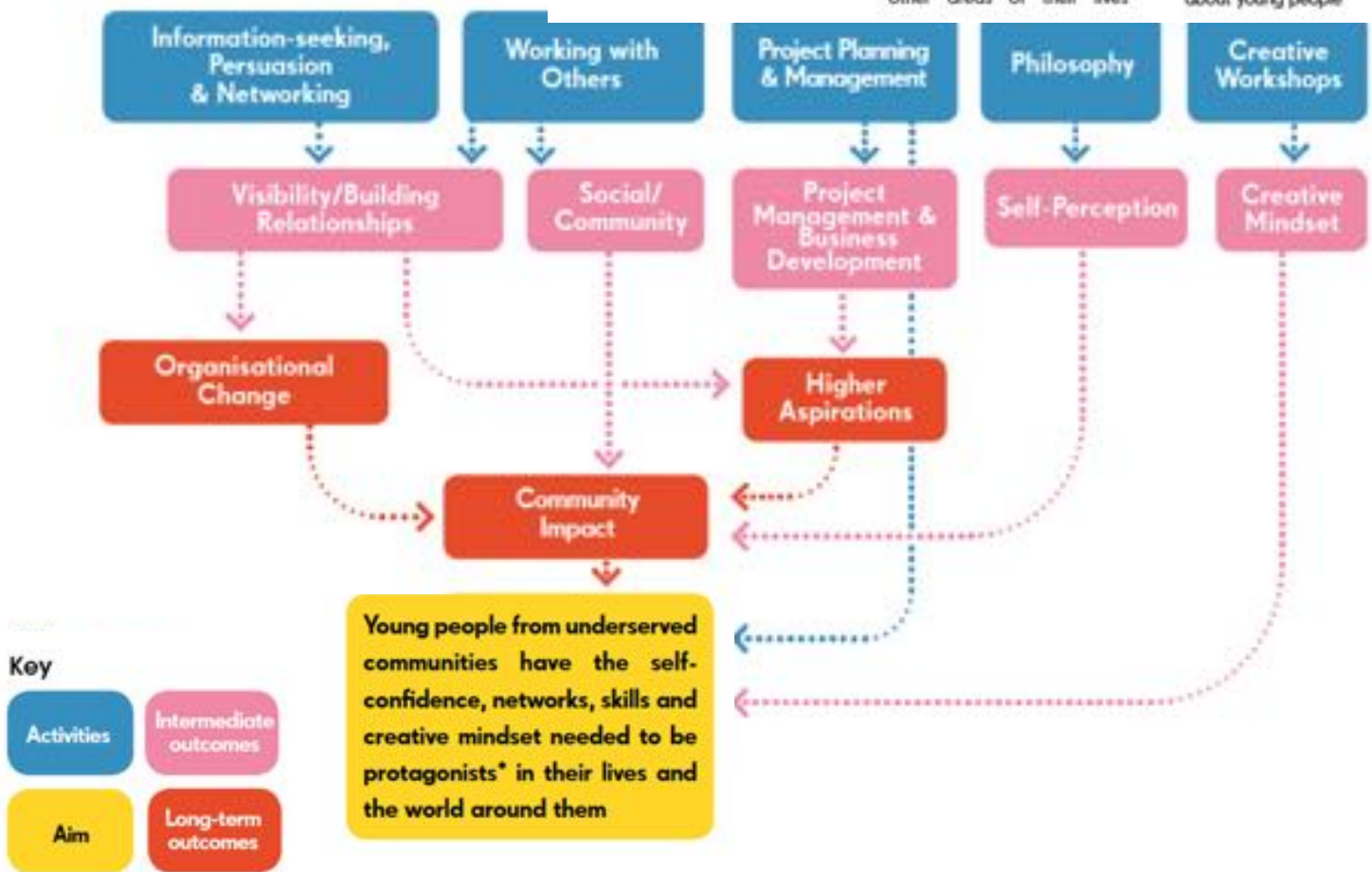
- 11** freelancers employed across the project including local artists from Brent
- 190** hours of paid employment for Agency alumni and young people in Brent

*The community consultation was held in March 2020 and was drastically impacted by lockdown restrictions

***WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PROTAGONIST IN A CITY?**

THEORY OF CHANGE

1. Young people are more part of the economic life of the city by seeking employment, having an entrepreneurial mindset and building resources in their communities
2. Young people develop their creative abilities through a culture of creativity embedded in the programme, giving them the tools and mindset to find solutions in other areas of their lives
3. Young people are more included in the social life of their city, breaking down stereotypes they have about their community and negative perceptions communities have about young people



WHAT DO WE MEASURE?

The overall aim of The Agency is for ***young people from underserved communities to have the confidence, networks, skills and creative mindset needed to be protagonists in their lives and the world around them.***

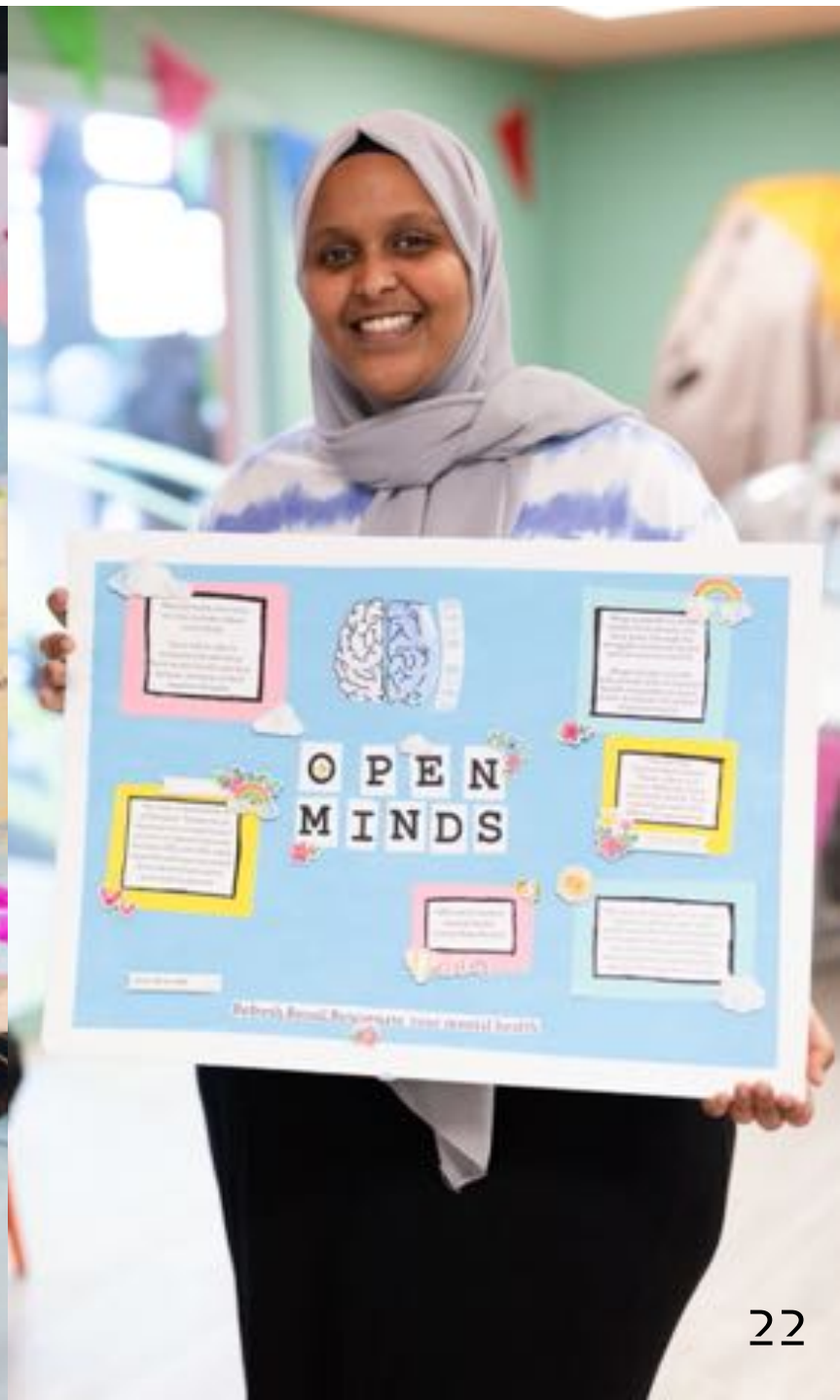
We use a social impact approach to measure change in the lives of young people who take part in the programme. In ordinary times, we collect qualitative and quantitative data that relates to the outcomes in the theory of change above.

Normally, all of our data collection methods are conducted in person based on social science research, gathered at a baseline (Week 1), midpoint (Week 12) and endpoints (Week 28) in the delivery cycle. As the impact of the pandemic was significant, the transition to filling in longer questionnaires online was not feasible. So, the decision was made to shorten the questionnaire and focus more specifically on outcomes and priorities relating to how young people have been impacted by the pandemic based on current research. All data was collected online with Cycle 2 Agents using Google forms.

SOCIAL IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE

As the needs of young people shifted during the pandemic, we altered our approach to accommodate this shift. Following research and consultation about these fluctuating needs, the key outcome areas we focused on in our questionnaire to Cycle 2 young people were:

1. Confidence
2. Perceptions of community
3. Employability skills
4. Self-efficacy
5. Creativity and access to the arts
6. Team-working



The following outlines the findings of this questionnaire:

CONFIDENCE

100% of young people improved their sense of Agency by an average of **90%**.

CREATIVITY AND ACCESS TO THE ARTS

100% of young people felt more creative through taking part in The Agency by an average of **90%**.

100% of Agents had more access to culture through The Agency by an average of **90%**.

TEAM-WORKING

100% of young people felt they were part of a team by an average increase of **97%**.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

100% of Agents believed that The Agency helped them to build their employability skills by an average of **87%**.

SELF-EFFICACY

100% of Agents reported an average increase of **87%** in feeling like they are more able to achieve what they set their minds to by taking part in the programme.

100% of Agents felt more confident talking to other people about their ideas by an increase of **93%**.

PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY

100% of Agents reported a **100%** increase in being more active agents in their community.

100% of Agents showed an average of **93%** increase in understanding the needs of their community.

83% of Agents felt like their community had opportunities for them by an average increase of **93%**.

I improved my networking skills and felt more confident approaching people I don't know with an idea. Pitching it and especially considering where I was last year and my own clarity with the idea. I feel like I'm in a much better stage.

-Brent Agent

ADDITIONAL SUCCESSES

Regardless of the pandemic, Agents took up the following additional opportunities:

- 7 Agents gained paid employment with Young Brent Foundation (YBF) as community peer researchers. 1 Agent now has a permanent paid role with YBF.
- Agents represented The Agency to The Duchess of Cornwall, Camila Parker Bowles.
- 1 Agent joined the board of one of her Agency networks, Tender, an organisation broadening education around healthy relationships. They also worked with Steve Sinnott Foundation to present international conversations on women's education.
- 22 Agents commissioned to make a creative response to their experience of lockdown.
- 8 Cycle 2 Agents were paid to take over Kiln's social media for a day in March 2021, promoting their projects. Agents felt trusted, their ideas reached new audiences.
- 2 Agents have been appointed to the Front of House team at Kiln Theatre.
- 3 Agents have applied for the role of Assistant Facilitator at The Agency in Battersea.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE AGENCY IN BRENT

For our project, it was a struggle because of Covid. Most people weren't allowed out and we weren't allowed to be in a group, so we had to work hard to find a day to film. We had to wait longer, and it postponed our ideas because of weather. It affected us hugely.

-Brent Agent

For many young people on the programme, the pandemic and various lockdowns was difficult to manage, leading to a lack of motivation and issues with mental health. Many Agents lost focus and found it difficult to engage in online sessions as well as their other obligations with school and family life. It wasn't until the group started meeting in person again to prepare for their pitches in July 2020 when the group regained its momentum with most young people pitching their ideas to The Panel. On a positive note, additional time and space to think through their ideas was actually beneficial for some Agents to formulate their ideas and to be less affected by what their peers were doing.

The pandemic also understandably had an impact on delivery for funded projects, with work having to go online during the second lockdown in November 2020. This impacted who was able to engage with the projects as it was difficult to connect with some groups of people who would have needed to meet in person, for filming, workshops or interviews, for example. At times, it was simply the uncertainty of not knowing what the regulations would be and constant change in how they could engage with their projects that was the most difficult. However, having to go online was also beneficial for some in that they were able to connect much more easily with people in other cities and countries who might not otherwise be able to engage. Working online has opened a wide range of new possibilities for working with Agents to develop their networks, particularly with people who live outside of London or who may have limited availability. This will continue to be used as an engagement tool moving forward.

A massive thing that came out of that hiatus was that for some Agents who were unsure about their ideas, that period actually allowed them the space to formulate their ideas.

-Will, Agency at Kiln Theatre Lead Facilitator

LEGACY

THE PROJECTS

Everyone has been so supportive. They never made it feel like school. We were all just working together, and it was never an age thing either like they're older telling us what to do. Education should be an exchange; we both learn together. I never felt like I was back in school. Every single week I was hyped for it. I couldn't wait for it and that was for the facilitators. So, yea it was great.

-Brent Agent

Since The Agency finished, Kiln Theatre are working to fundraise to run The Agency programme again which would include supporting funded projects to continue. Regardless of the funding outcome, Creative Engagement Staff at Kiln will lead on creating a legacy plan to support the Agents to continue beyond Cycle 2 with their projects and also continue to engage with the Theatre:

Sancia's Podcast

Sancia is continuing to build her network and working with Kiln Theatre's team to fundraise to record more episodes of her podcast. Her plan is to go international with the podcast, building on policy conversations with others working in the care system around the globe.

Living Histories

Michael is now working with renowned, Brent-based photographer, Roy Mehta. For the sharing, he ran an online event on the oral history collection with an audience of 60 called Immapancy. He will continue to run his project, fundraise and collect more stories.

Film4Thought

The two films created will be shared online and screened at Kiln Theatre in summer 2021.

Consent First

Fizza's zine will go to print in April and then sent to schools in Brent. It will also be available at Kiln and online. Fizza plans to make more zine issues, building upon different themes and to run workshops in schools to have a deeper impact on other young people.

My life changed drastically from working on my project- I was more aware of my place in the world and listening to my peers' ideas on their projects also taught me new skills. Without The Agency's help not only in the sessions but financially helping us too, it helped me to support my family with food and my mum with her bills. The best feeling was seeing my mum happy from me being able to help her and that's because of The Agency.

-Brent Agent

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

Delivering The Agency in Brent has enabled Kiln to support young people in the borough who may not think theatre or a theatre space is a place for them, developing ways they work more closely with their community. This is part of Kiln Theatre's long term aim of being a Theatre for All. Led by Kiln's Creative Engagement team, The Agency has given support, resources and a platform for young people and local artists in Brent that they may not otherwise have had access to.

Throughout the pandemic the commitment, creativity and resilience of the Brent Agents was an inspiration for the whole Kiln Team. Kiln Theatre's Artistic Director Indhu Rubasingham and the Chair of Trustees Dawn Austwick were part of the Pitch Panel in Brent Agency 2020, and were blown away with the Agents and the quality of their projects. Based on this experience Kiln Theatre's Executive Team support fundraising to run The Agency again, and a wish to see wider organisational change as a result of further engagement with the project.

For Kiln Theatre, The Agency has changed the way it operates in a number of ways:

- The Agency Methodology has impacted the way Creative Engagement Department plan and frame their projects, from practical issues like offering stipends, to recentring and resourcing young people in projects such as Town Hall Talks.
- We have also developed a paid training and employment program for young people in Brent who want to be workshop facilitators on Kiln's Youth Theatres, to continue offering paid leadership, development and employment opportunities to young people in Brent.
- Kiln Theatre now has more experience supporting young people with formal processes such as getting a bank account or signing up to a payroll. Kiln Theatre has a better understanding of barriers that some young people face with these processes and this knowledge is directly informing the theatre's procedures.
- Agents are now part of regular mailing lists for employment opportunities, funding opportunities, and free/discounted tickets at Kiln Theatre and other theatres.
- Creative Engagement are planning a range of opportunities that can be offered to support Brent 2020 Agents beyond Cycle 2.

Kiln Theatre aims to deliver The Agency again. This would allow the programme to have an even deeper and more sustainable impact in the borough, strengthening the networks that have already been sparked with community organisations through delivering the programme. The theatre would also seek to relocate the project centre around the Kilburn/South Kilburn area, enable them to develop new, strong partnerships with local organisations and young people on the theatre's doorstep..

I want to personally thank each Agent for the exceptional hard-work they have put into creating such a varied and impressive set of pitches. They have used their passions and experiences to serve their communities and create social change. They are making sure their voices, and the voices of their communities are heard. I want to applaud the tenacity and bravery of every Agent for using their experiences to make a change for good. I can't wait to see what the future holds for each of them. It has been a real privilege to learn from The Agency Project and see how it influences us as an organisation. The methodology and the practitioners are deeply awe-inspiring.

-Indhu Rubasingham, Artistic Director of Kiln Theatre

The Agency in Brent was shaped and delivered by:

Gemma Rowan: The Agency Project Manager, Gemma specialises in creating and managing creative projects centered on education and social justice.

Lydia Paulett: The Agency Assistant Facilitator, an artist and producer specialising in community work and social change, Lydia also produces youth and community projects at Battersea Arts Centre.

Marco Campbell: The Agency Assistant Facilitator, Marco grew up in Brent where he is a well know youth worker mentoring local young people in sports and music.

Will Hudson: The Agency Lead Facilitator, a theatre director with a social practice, Will has worked in Brent for several years using creativity to support marginalised communities.

A big thank you to the following people who helped us connect with young people in Brent: A New Direction, Ash Patel & Halah Metwally at The Yellow, Chris Murray at Young Brent Foundation, Corinne Micallef, Dhikshana T Pering, Emma Gavin at Brent Virtual School, Emily Ilieffe & Kimberley Rogers at Ark Academy, Gemma Lewis at Brent River College, Hassan Amjad at The Living Room, Jyoti Morar at Brent YOS, Keir Crawley at Preston Manor, Kevin Okoroji at Brent Council, Moeed Majeed at Vice, Mudasssir Daya at Ansar Youth Project, Ranjna Shiyani at Ashley College, Samantha Dottin at Brent Council, SEID's Social Innovation and Enterprise Hub, Sufra NW London, The Blueprint Collective, Vito Drago and Ark Elvin Academy.



I used to feel like I could see the problems in my community but I couldn't do anything about them but The Agency really helped me in terms of being able to do something.

-Brent Agent



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Originally conceived by Marcus Faustini in Rio de Janeiro, The Agency UK is a Battersea Arts Centre and Contact programme devised in partnership with People's Palace Projects. It is designed to have a transformative impact on participants. Previous Agents have gone on to develop live music enterprises that have reached over 100,000 people, partner with Chelsea Football Club to create innovative English language learning programmes, and work for global consultants Ernst & Young as Careers Consultant for Young People in Care. The Agency in Waltham Forest, London Borough of Culture 2019, was delivered by Blackhorse Workshop, who were then inspired to establish Blackhorse Responders, a new youth programme in creative activism

The Agency at Kiln Theatre is part of Brent 2020, London Borough of Culture. The Agency UK is a Battersea Arts Centre and Contact programme devised in partnership with People's Palace Projects. Current and past partners include: Kiln Theatre, Blackhorse Workshop, National Theatre Wales, Energise Me and Fablab Belfast.

Funded by the National Lottery through the National Lottery Community Fund and London Borough of Culture - a Mayor of London initiative - supported by the City of London Corporation's charity and City Bridge Trust. The Agency is a programme originally conceived by Marcus Faustini in Rio de Janeiro where it is delivered by Agência de Redes para a Juventude. The UK pilot (2013 – 2015) was funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

The Agency runs nationwide and takes place in London, Manchester and Hampshire.

Report by Meg Peterson and Gemma Rowan.
Report designed by Meg Peterson.

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