



NETWORK AMBASSADORS PROGRAMME 2019 - 2022

Summary Report



Family Arts
Campaign

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Summary Report

Findings from August 2019-August 2022

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Introduction

In 2019, Family Arts Campaign (the Campaign) acquired funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (EFF) for the Network Ambassadors programme, an innovative new model of engaging with arts organisations and families across England.

The three-year programme ran from August 2019 to August 2022 and supported six existing Family Arts Networks to create a more effective, joined-up and sustainable model of engaging diverse families in arts and culture at a local level, through new paid Ambassador posts.

Six part-time regional Family Arts Ambassadors, employed for one day per week, started in post in October 2019, based in Bristol, Cumbria, Sunderland, Derby, Manchester and Newcastle, representing the wider North East region.

Each Ambassador was formally based within, and line managed by, the lead (Host) organisation in each Network.

What are Local Family Arts Networks?

Local Family Arts Networks are groups of six or more regional organisations who work together to support family engagement. They can be made up of both arts and non-arts organisations, with at least two different art forms represented in each Network.

Networks form a way for local organisations to work together to share learnings, provide a wide range of quality family arts experiences, reach more family audiences, engage with more diverse families and better understand their needs.



Ambassador Programme Outcomes and Indicators

The Network Ambassador programme responded to the following outcomes and indicators over the three years of project delivery:

Outcome 1: Increased capacity and resource within Family Arts Networks to enable collaboration

- Level of engagement of Network organisations (attendance at meetings, contribution to activities, etc.)
- Contribution to Networks' strategy and commitment from Network members
- Increase in funding & in-kind contributions to support the work of the Networks
- Increased activity of Network members (new & existing) in adopting Standards and promoting events via Fantastic for Families (FFF)

Outcome 2: Stronger relationships between regional arts and community organisations to reach families

- 5 x active non-arts organisation partnerships are made per Network annually, to broaden reach to families
- 75% of Network members report positive impact on audience reach with new families in their organisation, attributable to stronger relationships between regional arts and community organisations (based on each Network's definition of a 'new' family)

Outcome 3: More families and more diverse families engage in and have more enjoyable experiences of arts and culture, particularly least culturally-engaged families

- Reach new families from high areas of social deprivation through targeted activities and resources
- Engage more families through online digital content
- 75% of families report positively on their experiences of online / targeted / physical arts & culture.

The above outcomes and indicators include adjustments made as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the family arts sector.

Evaluation

The Audience Agency (TAA) was commissioned by the Campaign to undertake an evaluation of the programme, with funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Family Arts Campaign. This report explores findings from August 2019 – August 2022, and is based on feedback collected during Ambassador focus group discussions in October 2020 and August 2022, quarterly Network reports from January 2019 - July 2022 and reflections with Ambassador Host organisations.

The Ambassadors were embedded within the evaluation process at both a practical and strategic level from the programme's outset. TAA and the Campaign provided support including bespoke training and mentoring in evaluation processes, help and frameworks to collect quarterly data and guidance on reporting progress and challenges from their Network organisations. During the programme, Ambassadors upskilled themselves and their networks not only in core Campaign priorities such as family engagement, sector support, and partnership working, but also in evaluation.

Quotes are attributed to network ambassadors throughout the report. However, in some instances, where qualitative data was gathered in a focus group setting, they are anonymised.

Key Successes and Learnings

- Ambassadors have increased ‘capacity and resource within Family Arts Networks to enable better collaboration’ (Outcome 1). A total of 133 varied organisations have engaged in the six Ambassador networks over the three-year programme, bringing together smaller and larger organisations, funded and voluntary run groups with a focus on arts, health and the community.
 - Across the programme, there were 52 new sign-ups to the Family Arts Standards fostered by Ambassadors, supporting network members to improve the accessibility and quality of their family arts offers.
 - With their strategic and connecting role, Ambassadors have increased capacity and resource within and outside their networks to enable better collaboration.
 - Within their networks, Ambassadors have galvanised cross-working and disseminated best practice to address specific priority areas through shared initiatives, such as training opportunities, conferences, creative packs, family events, shared marketing and festivals. Examples include the Family Arts North East Network’s ‘Bringing Down the Barriers – Access and Inclusion for Every Family’ network event (April 2021), which featured a range of speakers from both arts and non-arts backgrounds.



[The network] used to be more competitive - now everyone is more collaborative

- Ambassador



- In several cases, Ambassadors have re-energised networks, leading to greater collaboration across members.
- Network Ambassadors have successfully achieved external funding to the value of over £30,000 in addition to in-kind donations to support network training opportunities, conferences, marketing, and programmes for families.

- Outside of the networks, Ambassadors have developed ‘stronger relationships with and between arts and community organisations’ (Outcome 2).
 - Although the Covid-19 pandemic significantly impacted Ambassador activity, it also resulted in an unexpectedly positive legacy. As Ambassadors and Network members pivoted their activity to reach families during the pandemic, they formed collaborative partnerships with non-arts community organisations supporting families in need, such as food banks and places of worship.
 - Over 60 sustained relationships with charitable and community-led organisations have been developed across networks to increase engagement with underserved families.
 - This has built capacity for smaller arts organisations in particular, for example, in Sunderland, where network members with limited resource would have otherwise struggled to identify and develop such relationships with hyper-local community organisations working with families.



The pandemic has opened up and sped up non-arts relationships that may otherwise only have been opening up at the end of the three-year programme

- Bristol lead organisation



The most significant change has been the network’s involvement in non-arts-based partnerships.

- Sunderland Ambassador



- The Ambassadors have provided a connecting role with and between arts organisations and those embedded in wider health, social, and educational initiatives such as foodbanks and children’s charities. This has led to more underserved families engaging in arts activity and a heightened awareness amongst networks members about the barriers preventing many families from engaging. For example, members are thinking more readily about price sensitivity and the accessibility of their offers.

- The increase in the level of new partnerships generated with non-arts organisations in particular has led to ‘more families and more diverse families engaging in and having more enjoyable experiences of arts and culture, particularly least culturally-engaged families’ (Outcome 3).
 - Over 12,000 packs of creative resources were delivered to families from areas of deprivation across the networks during the pandemic in 2020/21, including through partnerships with foodbanks and other community organisations.
 - During the Covid-19 pandemic, Ambassadors quickly pivoted to delivering activity online, including supporting members to better engage families digitally through accessible methods. For example, [Digital Pathfinders](#) “Creating Accessible Online Content” training was organised by the North East Ambassador and delivered by Difference North East, with participants from both the North East and Sunderland networks.
 - Collecting and collating consistent quantitative data about families from members has been a continued challenge across the networks over the course of the programme, and is reflective of a sector-wide issue in more informal participatory settings in particular. However, based on the data available, over 75% of families engaging in a sample of network setting activities reported positively on their experiences of online / targeted / physical arts & culture.
 - Through bolstering network social media, many Ambassadors have grown their networks’ reach and activities, as well as increased engagement with families.
- Although some hybrid offers have been maintained, the majority of Ambassadors reported a decline in members producing digital content in the third year of the programme, due to organisations putting more resource into in-person activities to meet the demands of families.
- As a result of working towards Outcome Three and new reach to local underserved families developed during the pandemic, Ambassadors and Network members have developed a deeper and more nuanced understanding of ‘diverse’ families in their particular regions. This has led to Networks being able to re-orient their family arts programming to be specific to the needs of local underserved families, and increasingly focus their work on these key audiences. .

- Overall, the Ambassador experience has been positive despite the unexpected challenges and disruptions of Covid-19 over the course of the programme. Ambassadors particularly benefited from peer support from Ambassador colleagues and the central campaign team. These interactions have developed their practice, knowledge and skills, which has fed back into their work in their respective settings.
- An overarching and significant benefit of the Ambassador programme has also been in relation to the continued existence of the Networks, despite the severe impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The consistent support from Ambassadors to their Network members, together with regular galvanisation of collaboration, was integral to the continuation of Network activity in each region. It is clear from the feedback of lead organisations and Network members that having the Ambassadors in post ensured the continuation of the Networks themselves, at a time when resources and capacity were significantly affected:



Having Yemi [Manchester Ambassador] in post has meant that the work of the Network could survive in the pandemic

- Manchester lead organisation





**Thank you to Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for funding the Network
Ambassador Programme from 2019-2022.**

If you would like to find out more about the programme and future
opportunities, visit familyarts.co.uk/networks or email Anna Dever,
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