

Beyond growth: promoting inclusive development of creative clusters in the UK

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Executive Summary

Over the past two decades, there have been two defining narratives for the creative industries: on the one hand a story of economic success and growth, on the other, entrenched inequality and exclusion. Often there is strikingly little connectivity between them.

This research has sought to explore how to position equality and inclusion more firmly at the centre of the creative cluster development agenda and the place-based approaches that might support more *inclusive growth* of creative clusters.

It draws lessons from an in-depth study of the Yorkshire screen cluster, case studies of other UK cities and regions, and a review of international practice. It presents five key recommendations for policymakers and industry stakeholders:

- 1. Baseline equality and inclusion in regional creative clusters:** develop stronger regional intelligence systems that can monitor the extent to which the opportunities created as clusters expand are benefitting people from diverse backgrounds and those living in social mobility 'cold spots'.
- 2. Make inclusive growth the primary objective of the creative cluster development agenda:** embed equality, diversity and inclusion into the core of the strategy for growth and promote greater connectivity between sector-focussed and place-based approaches to inclusive growth in the city-region.
- 3. Advance a multi-faceted, integrated set of active policy measures that tackle the structural issues at the root of exclusion and disadvantage.** Diversify education pathways; connect those disadvantaged in the labour market with jobs in growth sectors; advance good work and inclusive working practices; promote inclusive entrepreneurship; and unlock the potential of cultural anchors. The research identifies nearly 50 examples of inspiring practice, from 15 different countries across the globe.
- 4. Maximise local partnerships and employer engagement:** weave together a wide range of services, activities and expertise within the city-region to customise programmes to local needs and sustain action over the long-term. Strengthen the engagement and investment of private-sector employers, unite business communities with shared interests and promote peer-to-peer learning.
- 5. Build our collective understanding and evidence base of 'what works' in promoting more inclusive development of creative clusters:** ring-fence funding for programme evaluation, promote consistency and comparability in impact measurement; and develop mechanisms that support knowledge exchange between creative clusters.

1. Introduction

The creative industries have been a focal point in the UK policy narrative for over two decades. Successive UK Governments have referred to the creative industries as an “*economic powerhouse*” announcing various fiscal incentives and wider policy measures to cement competitive advantage and promote growth.

In 2022, the UK's creative industries contributed £125 billion to the UK economy (DCMS, 2024), more than the Aerospace, Life Sciences, and Automotive industries combined (DCMS/CIC, 2023). The creative industries support nearly 2.4 million jobs (DCMS, 2023). The sector also delivers higher levels of innovation than many other parts of the UK economy, positively supports the UK's trade balance and is an important source of soft power (DCMS, 2023; DCMS/CIC, 2023).

Over recent decades, this growth narrative has been largely consistent. Most recently, the House of Lords Communications and Digital Select Committee report argued that the creative industries should sit at the heart of the UK's economic growth plans (House of Lords, 2023). The creative industries have been identified as a priority by Government in each UK nation¹; and in 2023, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the creative industries Council (CIC) set out a new creative industries Sector Vision with the aim of expanding the sector by £50bn and supporting an additional one million jobs by 2030 (DCMS/CIC, 2023).

At the same time, there has been another narrative just as persistent as the industry's growth story: one concerning entrenched inequality in the creative sector. Despite the impressive metrics of economic contribution and expansion, it is clear that the benefits of growth have not been equitably distributed but instead have been heavily concentrated amongst a white, middle-class, able-bodied minority, mostly living in urban centres, particularly in London and the South East of England (Tether, 2019; Carey, et al., 2022; Wreyford, et al., 2021). The extent and causes of inequality in the creative industries have been examined, measured and explored in a wide range of reports. These document significant structural barriers, often rooted in the spatial patterns of employment, structure of work, business practices and workplace culture that dominates these industries. In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the need to promote greater equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across the creative sector and an expansion in EDI initiatives, predominantly offering education and entry routes into work (Carey, et al., 2023). Despite these efforts, the industry is failing to ‘shift the dial’ across the majority of diversity metrics (Carey, H; Giles, L; O'Brien, D, 2023).

These are familiar narratives for the creative industries, but there is often strikingly little connectivity between them: on the one hand a story of economic success and growth, on the other, inequality and exclusion. This contrasts strongly with the wider policy discourse, where there has been growing recognition of the need to more closely couple economic and social outcomes, seeing economic growth not as an end but a route to shared prosperity. This includes an acceptance of the need to deploy active policy measures that ensure that the opportunities created as economies expand are more equitably distributed, benefitting more people and more places. Over the past decade or so, we have seen policymakers in countries and cities across the globe prioritising *inclusive growth*² and developing strategies and plans that support this outcome.

As the Sector Vision set out ambitious plans to expand the creative industries, including a million additional jobs, there is an urgent need to consider how this next chapter of growth can better benefit

¹ Labour (2024) Change: Labour Party Manifesto 2024

Welsh Government (2024) Priorities for the Creative Industries Sector in Wales

Scottish Government (2022) Delivering Economic Prosperity: Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation
Department for the Economy (2021) 10X Economy - Northern Ireland's decade of innovation

² The concept of ‘inclusive growth’ is subject to different interpretations (see (Lee, 2019) for further discussion). Throughout the course of this research, we use the OECD definition: “*Economic growth that creates opportunity for all segments of the population and distributes the dividends of increased prosperity, both in monetary and non-monetary terms, fairly across society.*” (OECD, 2014).

more diverse groups of people and places across the UK. There is an important role for place-based policy in this regard and research suggests there is much local innovation underway in creative clusters across the country. With the devolution agenda regaining momentum, it is timely to consider how to position equality and inclusion more firmly at the centre of the creative cluster development agenda and advance place-sensitive policies to support inclusive growth of creative clusters.

Research Aims and Approach

This research has sought to provide an evidence-base to help *inform place-based interventions that could ensure the opportunities created as creative clusters expand benefit more people and places across the UK.*

The research is founded on a partnership between the creative industries Policy and Evidence Centre (Creative PEC), XR Stories (part of the AHRC Creative Clusters programme) and the Screen Industries Growth Network (SIGN), working with researchers at the University of Wolverhampton and Keele University.

The research programme was comprised of a series of connected work packages, including a rapid evidence assessment of the extent and causes of inequality across the creative sector, the trialling of an experimental approach to measuring workforce diversity at a regional level, bilateral interviews with regional policy makers in creative clusters across the UK and an examination of effective or promising policies and practices in driving inclusive growth: regionally, nationally and internationally.

Throughout our case study research, we applied three main screening factors. Firstly, the research focused on *place-based* interventions implemented at the city or regional level. This still presented a very wide spectrum of potential policy directions, spanning education, jobs, housing, infrastructure and public services (OECD, 2016; Green, et al., 2017). So, secondly, we refined the scope further, prioritising *economic, skills and social policies* that support more equitable distribution of opportunities and greater equality of outcomes. Finally, we sought to examine interventions that had an explicit *sectoral focus*, especially those directed towards the creative industries, as well as wider sectors of the economy. An additional concern for the international research was the *transferability* of case studies to the UK-context. With this in mind, we considered interventions implemented in places with comparable political economy and of similar scale to UK cities and regions.

This Report

This report summarises the findings from the various strands of research, bringing together the key messages from a series of working papers produced over the lifetime of the programme:

Chapter 2 provides an in-depth study of the Screen Industries in Yorkshire and Humber – a regional sectoral cluster that has seen substantial investment and expansion in recent years, with a focus on more holistic, progressive and sustainable local and regional development. *This chapter was led by Kate O Connor (XR Stories and SIGN).*

Chapter 3 presents evidence from case studies of promising practice relating to inclusive growth, including EDI initiatives and interventions, drawing on examples from UK cities and regions. *This chapter was led by Paul Sissons (Keele University) and Eun Sun Godwin (University of Wolverhampton).*

Chapter 4 examines international practice, presenting over 30 examples drawn from more than 15 different countries across the globe, to stimulate thinking on the range of potential policy directions and options that could be implemented here, in UK cities and regions. *This chapter was led by Heather Carey and Lesley Giles (Work Advance and the Creative PEC)*

Chapter 5 synthesises the conclusions from the research and presents 5 key recommendations for policymakers in promoting more inclusive development of creative clusters.

Further information is available from the [accompanying working papers](#), published alongside this final research report

2. In-depth study of the Yorkshire Screen Cluster

2.1 Introduction

The UK's Screen Industries have experienced rapid expansion in recent years, with 2022 marking a record year for production and commercial revenues (BFI, 2023). The sector now supports 278,000 jobs across the UK and employment is expected to continue to grow in the years ahead (BFI, 2022). Research commissioned by ScreenSkills suggests the need for a further 20,000 full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) over the next five years to support the expansion of Film and High-End TV production alone (Nordicity / Saffery Champness, 2022). This will drive expansion across the value-chain, including in post-production and Visual Effects (VFX), and digital production more widely – including Animation, Video Games and Immersive Content (XR) – has strong potential for growth (Olsberg SPI, 2023).

The Yorkshire and Humber region is home to a significant and rapidly growing Screen cluster, which has seen substantial investment in recent years. This has included the British Film Institute (BFI) and regionally funded *Yorkshire and Humber Screen Industries Growth Plan*; the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded *XR Stories Creative Cluster*; Research England funded *Screen Industries Growth Network (SIGN)*³; relocation of Channel 4's national headquarters to Leeds; and a range of other industry and regionally funded initiatives. Together these investments have sought to strengthen networks and social capital; catalyse research, development and innovation; support start-up, scale-up and sustainability of screen businesses; upskill the workforce and develop the pipeline of world-class talent. Importantly, as we discuss further below, the focus of these initiatives has extended beyond economic expansion, to support more holistic, progressive and sustainable local and regional development. This makes the Yorkshire Screen Cluster fertile ground for in-depth study. In this chapter we examine the picture of growth and inequality; the efforts made to promote more inclusive development; and what we might learn from these endeavours in shaping future policy.

2.2 Growth and inequality in the Yorkshire Screen Cluster

Over the past decade, there has been increasing interest in the potential of creative clusters and (more recently) microclusters as drivers of regional creative industries growth, particularly in the context of efforts to 'level up' the UK economy and redress the spatial footprint of the sector (Siepel, et al., 2023; DCMS/CIC, 2023; Siepel, et al., 2020; Swords & Prescott, 2023).

Over this period, we have seen a succession of studies mapping creative clusters across the UK, each of which identify important sectoral clusters within the Yorkshire and Humber region, with Leeds, Sheffield and Harrogate being amongst DCMS's 55 Creative Clusters (see (Mateos & Bakhshi, 2016; Klinger, et al., 2018; Frontier Economics, 2022)). Most recently, the Creative PEC's *Geography of Creativity* report suggests employment in the creative industries had been growing rapidly in Yorkshire and Humber in the lead up to the pandemic, with significant concentrations of employment in the creative industries in Leeds, York and Sheffield, which feature in the top-15 areas in the country for net job creation in the creative industries over the past five years.⁴

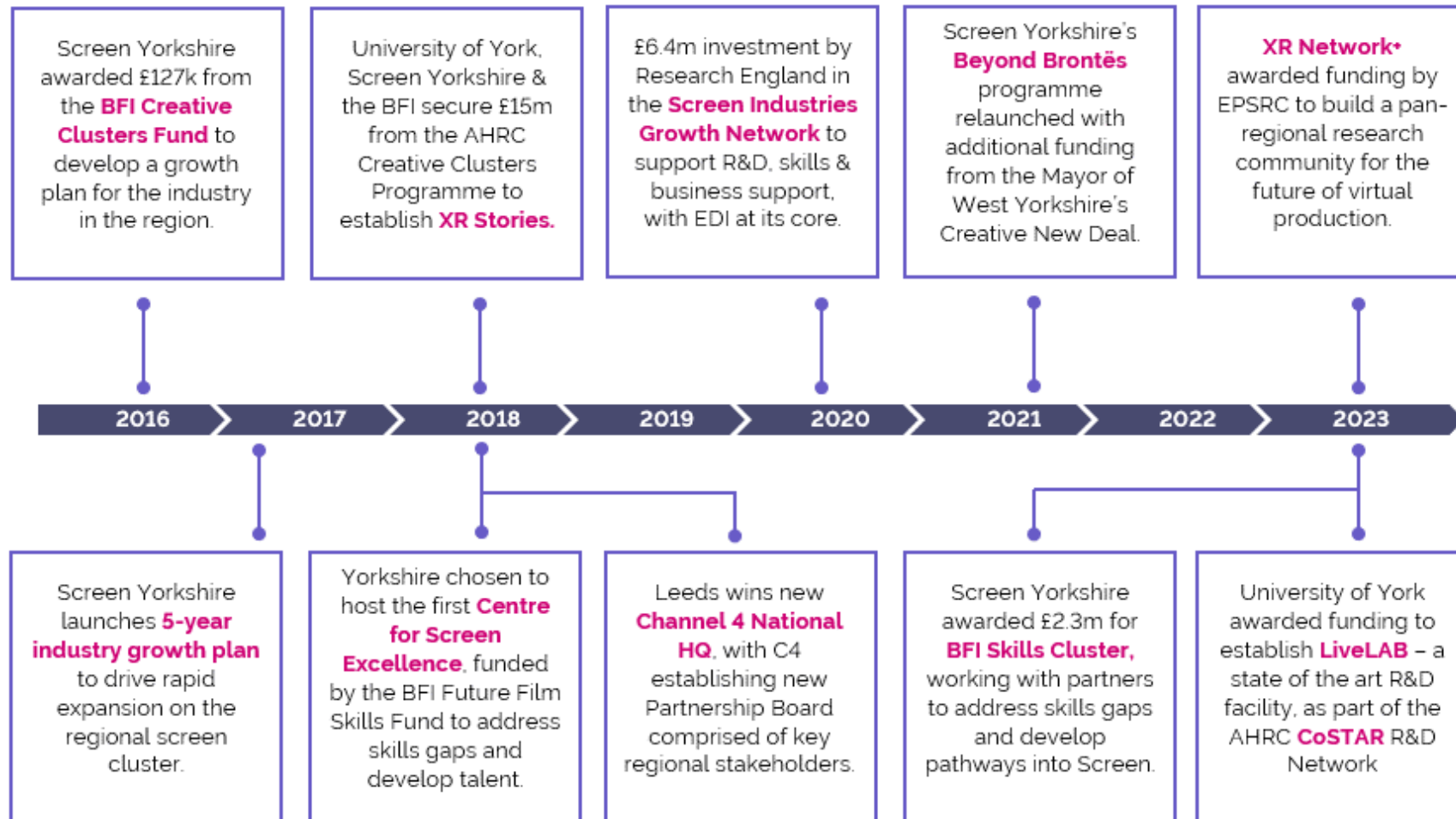
The Screen Industries are an important part of this growth story. Leeds, Sheffield, and Bradford are vital Screen Industry centres. The region, known for drama and digital production, witnessed a reported 116% surge in employment growth between 2015–2018, vastly outpacing the national growth rate of 11% (albeit from a smaller base) (Swords & Townsend, 2019). This ascent has been further propelled by the strategic prioritisation of the Screen Industries by national and regional

³ XR Stories and SIGN are led by the University of York, partnered by Screen Yorkshire and the BFI.

⁴ Analysis undertaken for Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs)

policymakers coupled with a series of major investments over a number of years.

Figure 2.1: Timeline of key investments and recent policy developments in the Yorkshire and Humber Screen Cluster



Despite the sector's strong economic performance, research suggests entrenched inequality in the Screen Industries, nationally and regionally. The Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA), undertaken as part of this study, found widespread concerns relating to the representation, retention and progression of women, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled people and individuals from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds in UK Screen (Sissons & Godwin, 2024).

Yet, despite these concerns, there is a **dearth of robust sources of data on diversity and inclusion in the regional sectoral cluster**. Regular provision of accurate and reliable employment and demographic data is crucial to understanding the size and shape of the workforce at any point in time, mapping change over time, benchmarking, and assessing the impact of policy interventions. An important strand of this research project sought to draw on existing data sources and develop new survey evidence to baseline the picture of workforce diversity in the Screen Industries in the Yorkshire and Humber⁵.

The analysis of national, sectoral and regional data however revealed a scarcity of intelligence even from the most well-established sources, including the Office for National Statistics' Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) and Labour Force Survey (LFS)/Annual Population Survey (APS), as well as from research evidence produced by the BFI, ScreenSkills and OFCOM. The reasons are wide-ranging, including: problems around classification systems (particularly the adequacy the UK Standard Industrial Classification in capturing the full breadth of activities that comprise the Screen Industries); self-misclassification of respondents; a failure of data sources to capture Creative freelancers, who comprise a large share of the workforce in the Screen Industries; and most significantly surveys having inadequate sample size to support detailed analysis at a sectoral and regional level. In short, the research found major limitations in the availability of existing datasets to inform critical analysis of employment and inclusivity in the sector.

To address these gaps, the research team at SIGN embarked on experimental primary research to seek to establish a baseline of workforce diversity in Yorkshire and Humber's Screen Industries. This exploratory research comprised an Employer Census and Workforce Survey. Both these elements however faced a number of challenges. Low response rates, particularly amongst specific parts of the sector, including broadcasters, and groups of workers, coupled with inadequate data to enable accurate weighting meant the research team could not be confident that the data produced was robust and representative. For this reason, the primary data are not presented in this report. We do, however, seek to draw lessons for future research and highlight the lack of robust regional data on workforce diversity as a critical evidence gap that will continue to hinder policymakers and practitioners in promoting inclusive growth of creative clusters (see Box 2.1).

Box 2.1 Piloting an experimental regional approach to measuring workforce diversity

A dearth of robust data from national and sectoral sources on the diversity of the Screen workforce in Yorkshire and Humber highlighted the need for original regional research to fill the gap. A new bespoke methodology was therefore developed comprising an Employer Census and a Workforce Survey:

- The Employer Census was targeted at all companies in the region for which records were available. This captured employment numbers only broken down by contract type (employee/freelance) and occupational group. Employers were also asked to cascade the Workforce Survey to employees and contractors.
- The Workforce Survey targeted both employees and freelancers who had worked in the region in the past two years covering key demographics as well as areas such as career entry and progression, income, and qualifications.

⁵ The full report from the regional baselining activities can be found [here](#).

Following extensive research during the development stage, utilising multiple sources, a total of 431 companies were identified as in scope to the Employer Census. Around half of companies in the sample were based in Leeds or Sheffield, with substantial clusters also present in York, Huddersfield and Harrogate. The largest number of companies in the sample were operating in Digital/online (121) and Games (65).

Unfortunately, both surveys yielded low response rates. In the case of the Employer Census, this resulted in the absence of usable data, including for the purposes of weighting the workforce survey data by sub sector. We are, however, able to draw lessons from these experimental approaches to inform the design of future research:

- Capturing emerging sectors: The development of the sample frame highlighted the significance of evolving sectors in areas such as digital, immersive and games. These sectors are poorly served by national and other data sources and achieved the lowest levels of response to the survey. It is therefore both imperative but also highly challenging to obtain a better picture of these sectors. Substantial further engagement would be required before embarking on a similar exercise if reasonable outcome measures are to be delivered.
- Securing buy-in from employers: despite the considerable efforts of the research team in promoting the primary research, including working extensively through regional networks, getting employers to complete the survey and cascade the Workforce Survey was particularly challenging. This likely reflected the highly political context, the particularly busy period during which the survey was completed (during the post-Covid production boom) and survey fatigue following extensive primary research with businesses during the pandemic. Future research should explore how best to promote a sense of ownership and buy-in amongst businesses in order to improve response rates including co-design and incentivisation.
- Clear and simple messaging: Both the purpose of the survey and the methodology were necessarily complex. As a result, some of the messaging evoked during the promotional campaign may have become overly complicated. Simplifying the purpose of the survey and either adapting the methodology or providing employers with more direct support to engage their workforce might have helped to secure a higher level of response from employers.
- Length & complexity of the questionnaire: a key objective of both surveys was to capture in-depth information on job roles in the sector. However, response rates suggest that the length and complexity of the survey may have impacted completion. Future research would do well to carefully weigh the trade-off between the depth of information the survey provides and likely completion rates and explore scope for modularisation or follow-up research.

Source: (O Connor & Flintham, 2023) <https://screen-network.org.uk/publication/inclusive-growth-work-stream-1-a-regional-baseline-picture-of-diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-screen-industries/>

While we lack data on the true picture of equality and inclusion in the Yorkshire and Humber's Screen cluster, the causes of the Screen Industries' diversity problem are well evidenced – summarised in Figure 2.2 overleaf and with further detail available in the accompanying REA report.⁶

What is clear when looking across the range of barriers to access and progression is that inequality in the Screen Industries is often rooted in the structural features of the sector. This includes the comparatively high rates of self-employment, with more than half of those working in Film and TV production working in this way (Carey, et al., 2017; Carey, et al., 2023). Freelance workers, although instrumental to the sector's functioning, face precarious work and fluctuating incomes, while also bearing other employment costs (insurance, sick pay etc.) (Eikhof & Warhurst, 2013; Film and TV Charity, 2024).

The project-based model, with its attendant features of temporary employment and diffuse production networks, is also seen as a key driver of inequality. The fragmented production system has been found to inhibit employer investment in training, while the professional and reputational risks of project-based working encourages a reliance on informal networks that can have exclusionary impact (Grugulis & Stoyanova, 2012). Informal recruitment, degree-level

⁶ The report from the Rapid Evidence Assessment of the extent and causes of a lack of diversity in the UK Screen Industries [can be found here](#).

entry requirements and the use of unpaid internships all serve to restrict access to the sector for disadvantaged groups (O'Brien, et al., 2016; Carey, et al., 2021; Nwonka, 2015).

Altogether, the evidence suggests the narrative in the arts of a meritocracy in which the 'talent will out' is misplaced and instead suggests that access to the opportunities created as the Screen Industries expand will be heavily impacted by a person's social, cultural and financial capital (Eikhof & Warhurst, 2013; Nwonka, 2015; Cannizzo & Strong, 2020; Carey, et al., 2021). There is growing evidence that the issue does not end with entry – that underrepresented groups face barriers to progression and that attrition of diverse talent is a critical issue for the industry (Carey, et al., 2021; Film and TV Charity, 2024; Wilkes, et al., 2020).

Figure 2.2 Summary of available evidence on EDI in the Screen Industries



Source: elaborated from (Sissons & Godwin, 2024)

2.3 Efforts to enhance equality, diversity and inclusion

In response to the types of EDI concerns described above, there have been a wide range of sectoral and organisational interventions which have sought to address inequality in the UK Screen Industries. Reviews of the existing policy landscape suggest that such interventions

have tended to be targeted at disadvantaged groups, most often being based on the idea of tackling individual or group barriers to accessing opportunities (Nwonka, 2015; Carey, et al., 2021; Carey, et al., 2023; CAMEo, 2018).

These **individual and group-based interventions** vary in form, but often seek to promote access to employment opportunities in the Screen sector through training, mentoring, buddying and paid placements (CAMEo, 2018; Carey, et al., 2021). There is relatively little formal evaluation of how well such initiatives have functioned, rather the evidence is largely anecdotal (Newsinger & Eikhof, 2020). It is also unclear whether efforts to address individual barriers leads to positive and sustained employment outcomes; whether structural issues in the sector reduce the efficacy of such interventions; or whether such targeted initiatives risk perpetuating negative assumptions and a deficit-based model of thinking (Tidball & Bunting, 2021; Newsinger & Eikhof, 2020).

In contrast, approaches which engage with the **structural conditions in the industry** (which generate exclusionary outcomes) appear less well-developed.

Employment trends, such as the growth of freelancing, create challenges for industry-wide improvements (Wing-Fai, et al., 2015; Wreyford, 2015), but there is little robust evidence of changing practices in this area. There is now increasing recognition of these types of problems, however the deep-rooted nature of these issues makes systemic change challenging, and sector practices have been slow to adjust. A lack of data and evidence can also hamper efforts for change (CAMEo, 2018; Carey, et al., 2021; Carey, et al., 2023)

The overall landscape of interventions is one in which measurement of the issues is improving (albeit from a low-base), and there is a considerable number of relatively small-scale initiatives, but a lack of a strategic approach to sector development (either nationally or within place) which adequately engages with the range of issues which shape unequal access to opportunities in the sector (Carey, et al., 2021; Carey, et al., 2023; Wreyford, et al., 2021).

In the Yorkshire and Humberside screen cluster, we also find a wide range of interventions to enhance equality, diversity, and inclusion. While this includes several initiatives introduced throughout the UK by broadcasters and trade bodies, the focus of our regional policy landscape mapping has been programmes specific to the region, particularly those led by Screen Yorkshire, XR Stories and SIGN.

Most notably, following on from the development of the Yorkshire and Humber Screen Industries Growth Plan, three innovative initiatives were developed and implemented by Screen Yorkshire with support from the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and the Leeds City Region Business Rates Pool funding and (in the case of the Centre of Excellence) ScreenSkills, using National Lottery funding distributed by the BFI. These three programmes - *Beyond Brontës*; *CoSE:Y* and *NEXT LEVEL* – summarised in Box 2.2 below, all aimed to support underrepresented groups to develop the skills, confidence and connections to enter and succeed in the Screen Industries. The initiatives involve a range of activities focused on mentoring and career support, development of sector-specific knowledge and skills and work and practical experience.

Box 2.2: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programmes in Yorkshire and Humberside

Beyond Brontës

Beyond Brontës began in 2019 and was designed to help tackle barriers to entry to the TV and film industry for young people from a diverse range of backgrounds. The programme focused on those aged 18-30 and living in local authorities in West Yorkshire and encouraged applications for those identifying as having a protected characteristic. The support offered includes training, industry masterclasses, CV and interview workshops, mentorships, one-to-one support, and provision of careers information. Internships and work experience placements with TV and film producers have also been arranged through the programme.

The Centre of Screen Excellence (CoSE:Y)

The Centre of Screen Excellence (CoSE:Y) is a partnership initiative between Screen Yorkshire and ScreenSkills to provide specialist craft and technical film and TV training in industry areas where there are specific skills or labour shortages.

Although not solely focused on inclusion the initiative encourages 'applicants from groups who are currently underrepresented in the film and television industries' (and there are financial bursaries available). The courses cover Lighting, Hair & Make-Up, Costume, Art Direction & Props, My First Factual TV Job and Production Assistant and include practical training, tutorials and masterclasses. The provision also includes practical advice on freelance careers and on-set experience. CoSE:Y is designed to bridge industry skills needs with diversity and inclusion issues. The focus is therefore on building individual human and social capital in order to compete for opportunities in the industry. There is somewhat less emphasis on seeking to address structural aspects of industry practices.

NEXT LEVEL

NEXT LEVEL focuses on career advancement and specifically mentoring for mid-career professionals in Film, TV, and Games to support progression to senior levels. The programme is funded by the WYCA's Creative Catalyst Programme and is delivered by Screen Yorkshire in partnership with Game Republic.

The part-time programme targets both employees and freelancers and includes workshops, seminars peer-to-peer networking and mentoring which are tailored to the TV, Film and Games industries. The themes include finance, budgeting, legal, management, HR and sustainability. There is again an expressed aim to attract to the programme 'applicants from groups who are currently underrepresented in the TV, Film and Games industries'.

Source: Screen Yorkshire <https://www.screenyorkshire.co.uk/skills-and-talent/>

More recently, XR Stories (part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Creative Cluster programme) and the Screen Industries Growth Network (SIGN) (funded by Research England) have advanced a range of further activities to promote equality, diversity and inclusion across the Screen Industries in Yorkshire and Humber.

Crucially, this has seen an evolution in the approach to promoting EDI across the regional screen cluster to one that *positions programmatic activities within a wider-ranging, 360-degree strategy* that embeds equality and inclusion across all funding programmes and schemes (see Box 2.3 overleaf).

The *XR Stories and SIGN Diversity and Inclusion Policy* set out a range of strategic objectives. *Quantitative EDI targets* were established for all activities and an *EDI Advisory Board* was set up to better understand the issues facing both companies and individuals and to help steer the development of further programmes of work.

XR Stories and SIGN also sought to *incentivise and enable businesses across the Screen Industries to adopt more inclusive practices*. All R&D application processes conformed to the BFI Diversity Standards. New resources and funding were made available for Screen businesses to adapt existing or implement new processes that would support hiring and growing diverse workforces. Specific groups of individuals and SMEs were targeted in order to highlight the availability of R&D funding beyond those who traditionally have knowledge of R&D funding. SIGN also appointed consultants to work directly with companies to address relevant diversity challenges and develop recruitment, management and wider policies and guidelines that would promote more inclusive business practices and workplace culture.

Box 2.3: Embedding a 360-degree EDI Strategy in the Yorkshire & Humberside Screen Cluster

XR Stories and the Screen Industry Growth Network

XR Stories and the Screen Industries Growth Network (SIGN) work together to support the development and sustainability of the Screen Industries in Yorkshire and Humber. EDI has been built into the work of both organisations from the outset, through the adoption of a 360-degree strategy that embeds EDI within organisational practices, processes and programmes. The XR [Stories and SIGN Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) sets out a range of strategic objectives:

- To achieve an inclusive organisational culture, where everyone is treated with dignity, respect and care.
- To reduce key barriers and systemic inequalities, and ensure equitable access to our funds and services, informed by evidence-based research and consultation.
- To measure our performance and impact and modify our actions through reflection.
- To establish an expectation that our partners will adopt EDI values and practices.

XR Stories and SIGN developed and funded a range of programmes, schemes and interventions, including:

Industry voices: a suite of video interviews with people from diverse backgrounds working in the Screen Industries to share lived experiences of discrimination and structural inequalities and build understanding of the steps businesses and policymakers could take to promote equality and inclusion.

Placements, internships and insights: supporting 211 internships through 61 companies, offering guidance to SMEs operating in the Screen Industries in Yorkshire and Humber looking to host a placement, internship or work shadowing opportunity for those from diverse backgrounds underrepresented in the Screen sector.

Bursaries: providing financial awards to support underrepresented groups to take up employment or training opportunities in the Screen Industries in the region

EDI Consultancy: offering dedicated support to Screen businesses looking to adopt more inclusive practices, ranging from small, one-off events (e.g. talks, workshops) to larger scale work for organisational change.

Training: free online courses for regional Screen businesses to examine EDI issues in the workplace and understand how to create an inclusive organisational culture.

Early careers support: free, comprehensive, six-month training and mentoring scheme for graduates currently under-represented in the regional Screen sector, to help build confidence, careers and professional networks.

SIGN Up! Mentoring scheme: matching freelancers impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic with industry professionals who can share their knowledge, experience and networks to rebuild skills and portfolios.

Ambitious EDI targets and criteria were established for all activities, which were agreed by the BFI, BAFTA, and reflected pan-economy guidance from organisations like Stonewall and the Social Mobility Commission:

- 12% d/Deaf and disabled participants
- 50:50 gender balance;
- 20% from underrepresented ethnicities,
- 10% LGBTQ+;

During the three years of the **XR Stories and SIGN programmes** trained over 2000 people and the following was achieved:

- 36 EDI schemes delivered
- 15 training businesses supported to deliver training
- 75 businesses accessing training or placement opportunities
- 168 bursaries distributed to widen access and participation and build a more diverse skills pipeline in the screen industries
- Over £205k in funded bursaries to people wanting to start or further screen industries careers

Source: (XR Stories / SIGN, 2023)

XR Stories and SIGN came to an end in 2023 and 2024 respectively, but during the three-five years the programmes ran they delivered a considerable number of EDI schemes, bursaries and training for businesses (XR Stories / SIGN, 2023). Although it is too soon to evaluate the long-term impact of the activities these organisations led, a recent study has examined the impact of diversity schemes advanced by these, and wider organisations, on career progression in the Screen Industries in the Yorkshire and Humber region (Thomas & Einarsdottir, 2023). Interviews with organisers and participants associated with four diversity schemes focused on how these interventions had helped participants from under-represented backgrounds to overcome barriers to access and progression within the Screen Industries. The study concluded that well run EDI schemes provide valuable experiences with a positive impact for people's immediate career trajectories with the potential to improve industry cultures and practices but long term progression is impeded by structural inequalities (Thomas & Einarsdottir, 2023).

While XR Stories and SIGN programmes have come to an end, the region has successfully secured new funding to support the XR Network+, a pan-regional initiative to drive expansion of virtual production across the UK and CoSTAR, a substantial investment by AHRC that will see the establishment of a new University of York-led R&D facility in Wakefield.

Further, there have also been wider developments that offer potential to cement a stronger focus on inclusive development of the screen cluster, and wider creative industries, in Yorkshire and Humber. The first Mayor of West Yorkshire (which includes the cities of Leeds and Bradford) has both committed to the cultural and creative industries and made *'Enabling Inclusive Growth'* a core theme of the Combined Authority's work (Brabin, 2022). This includes the development of an *Inclusive Growth Programme* focused on employment, skills and physical and digital connectivity; with progress towards inclusive growth aims being monitored against a range of baseline indicators (covering employment, housing and income). Promoting strong connectivity between sector-focused and the place-based approaches adopted in the region offers significant potential – something already being explored in Bradford. In step with the bid for Bradford to become the 2025 City of Culture and the Bradford Culture is Our Plan, Bradford City Council commissioned a screen sector strategy with the explicit aims of 'levelling up' the Screen sector and ensuring that local content creators and people can access the jobs created as the sector expands (Under the Moon, 2021). Building on community programmes and developing an education and skills pipeline into the sector are a key focus and the actions also include accessing *business and entrepreneurship training, forging networks* with commissioners and distributors and promoting strong *collaboration with regional anchor organisations*, such as the National Science and Media Museum based in Bradford.

Altogether our review of the policy landscape in Yorkshire and Humber suggests there has been much local innovation, with a range of place-based approaches that have sought to promote more inclusive development of the regional Screen cluster over a significant number of years. Despite the common challenge of shifting national policy priorities and funding streams, efforts to promote greater equality and inclusion have been sustained over a considerable period of time, albeit often in different forms, being led through different organisations, programmes or projects. The evolution in the approach towards one that positions equality and inclusion more centrally to the region's efforts to growing the Screen cluster is noteworthy, and the emergence of a regional strategy for inclusive growth that better integrates place-based and sector-focussed actions warrants further observation and exploration.

2.4 Key learning for future policy-making

Our in-depth examination of the approach to driving greater inclusivity within the Yorkshire and Humber Screen cluster has highlighted some important learnings for future policymaking:

1. Baselining equality and inclusion in regional creative clusters. While we are developing much better evidence on creative clusters and micro clusters across the UK, we still lack robust evidence on whether the opportunities created as clusters expand are equitably distributed, benefitting people from diverse backgrounds and those living in social mobility 'cold spots' within these regions. More regular publication of headline diversity statistics for the creative workforce in different creative clusters (contextualised with regional diversity) would help, at least in part to address this evidence gap, where data from official sources such as the Labour Force Survey are sufficiently robust and with new data available from the 2021 Census of the Population. There is also a need for cities and regions to progress in-depth research examining diversity and inclusion within regional creative industries. This research has highlighted some of the methodological challenges in doing so and provided some lessons in overcoming them.
2. Impact of Innovative Programmes. The introduction of programmes like Beyond Brontës, CoSE:Y, and NEXT LEVEL in the Yorkshire and Humber region has been pivotal in nurturing talent who were previously underrepresented in the Screen Industries. By focusing on skills development, confidence building, and networking, these programmes have started to shift the dynamics within the industry. Yet, there remains a pressing need for robust evaluation of medium- and longer-term impacts so that policymakers might better learn from past programmes and enhance our collective approach to driving greater equality and inclusion across the creative industries.
3. Embedding EDI Principles in the creative cluster. The decision to integrate Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles into the core of the creative cluster's growth strategy represents a significant shift. This move recognised the value of diversity not just as a social good but as a key driver of innovation and creativity. Embedding targets and advancing a multi-faceted strategy to address systemic employment issues shows signs of nurturing more inclusive growth practices. Interim evaluations indicate positive outcomes for individual career trajectories, and again there will be an important role for robust policy evaluation to evidence the long-term effects on industry culture and practices.
4. Promoting policy continuity and sustained action over the long-term: The ongoing political commitment and significant investment in Yorkshire and Humber's Screen Industries have offered the potential to examine how to grow regional sectoral clusters in a way that ensures the benefits of growth are more equitably distributed. Yet even here, and despite noteworthy advances, the project-based and temporary nature of many initiatives has presented a challenge to achieving a significant and sustained impact, particularly in the face of structural challenges that underlie inequality. Examples of successful long-term initiatives in other regions or industries could provide a blueprint for future action, particularly those that feature longer-term funding models, more robust and lasting support structures, and that seek to fully exploit the intersections of inclusive growth and industrial strategy in places.
5. The importance of employer engagement and industry leadership: It is vital for all stakeholders to work with employers and employer organisations to address systemic issues such as working practices, structures and pay alongside establishing and funding specific programmes and initiatives. This is particularly important as levels of attrition are impacting on the sector and the diversity profile of the workforce.

3. Case studies from other UK Cities & Regions

3.1 Introduction

One of the aims of this research project was to develop learning about the efforts of other UK cities and regions in promoting inclusive growth. In this chapter we present evidence from case studies of promising practice relating to inclusive growth, including EDI initiatives and interventions, drawing on examples from cities and regions across the Four Nations of the UK. The case studies bring together a diverse group of interventions – in terms of their scale and ambitions and covering a spectrum of strategic and more programmatic approaches. They also provide coverage of different sectors and different spatial scales (though a number are variations on the idea of city-regions).

The case studies are introduced in Figure 3.1. A number are focused on parts of the creative sector (Cardiff, Coventry, Glasgow). In Bristol, the focus on the creative sector is 'nested' in the case study within a wider city level approach to inclusive development. In this case the creative sector programme is jointly developed between Bristol and Bath, demonstrating the different and overlapping geographies of interventions of relevance to place-based approaches. In London, the focus is more broadly on the digital sector. In Belfast, a number of broad priority sectors are developed. In this section we first provide short vignettes of each case study before providing a synthesis and policy learning from the case studies collectively.

Figure 3.1: Introduction to UK case studies

City/region	Sector/s	Relevance to research aims
Belfast – inclusive growth city	Digital, tech and innovation (identified as part of wider strategy)	Combining sector and place and with an explicit focus on inclusive growth.
Bristol – inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy; OneCity Plan; Bristol + Bath Creative Industries Cluster	Some broad sector focus in wider strategies. Creative cluster programme as part of wider city approach.	Place-based and inclusive growth focus. Study of the creative cluster within the context of wider city-level activities.
Cardiff Capital Region (Clwstwr)	Screen	Screen focus and combination of interventions for growth and inclusion aims.
Glasgow – Creative industries growth and inclusion	Creative industries set within wider economic development context.	Creative industries and their role within wider place-based economic development
Coventry Cultural Strategy/DCMS UK City of Culture	Arts, cultural, heritage	Long-term approach to culture. Utilising one off opportunities (City of Culture Year) for future developments.
London – Digital and the Greater London Authority Mayor's Academies Programme	Digital	Specific diversity challenges and development of sector-targeted employment hubs.
Wired Sussex/Brighton Digital Cluster	Digital	Bottom-up, firm and membership-led practices and initiatives

3.2 UK Case Study Vignettes

BELFAST – INCLUSIVE GROWTH CITY⁷

Belfast City Council (BCC) has a long-term commitment to inclusive growth and sets out a 2-year plan which builds on previous initiatives and activities to adopt business practices that support inclusive growth and engage partners (anchor institutions) across Belfast. The aim is described as:

“to connect all residents with economic growth and create vibrant communities where everyone has the opportunity and aspiration to succeed” (Belfast City Council)

The plan has several areas of EDI-related focus. The following are some of the actions taken to *promote inclusive growth through the Council's own role as an employer*:

- Developing targets for inclusive recruitment and opportunity;
- Ring-fencing entry level posts for underrepresented groups, wherever possible, together with additional supports, such as provision of pre-recruitment training programmes;
- Working with relevant organisations in neighbourhoods, such as disability organisations, to address EDI issues; and
- Developing and delivering workforce diversity action plans (gender, disability, LGBT+ and race) to support fair work practices.

The City Council has also developed the *Inclusive Growth City Charter* ‘to encourage organisations across Belfast to ensure their business practices as employers, procurers, or in the delivery of their services, are channelled in the direction of more inclusive growth across Belfast’ (Belfast City Council, 2020). The three core pledges in the Charter are: *Fair wages*; *Fair contracts*; and *Working in partnership with the community*. Their target inclusive growth cohorts include Residents not in employment; Residents with low skill levels; Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET); and those in-work but on low wages.

BCC runs Belfast *Employment Academies* to provide tailored training to help people get jobs and help businesses to work towards the vision and goals of the Charter. These academies work as a free-to-use platform for businesses during their first year and provide one-to-one specialist support to help the businesses develop more inclusive practices. One of the areas the academies focus on is the reconsideration of entry criteria to see whether there are any unnecessary barriers to entry (e.g., qualifications as a barrier to entry which disproportionately impact particular groups). It is reported that 80 per cent of the employers that took part in the Academies have changed the practice in focusing now on skills rather than qualifications in their entry criteria.

BCC also established a *Good Work Standard*, and has designed a pilot *mentorship and peer-to-peer learning scheme* linking large organisations with good practices to smaller organisations, and developed the ‘Belfast Business Promise’, a new *accreditation for employers* working towards inclusive employment practices and economic growth in the city.

BRIGHTON – WIRED SUSSEX⁸

Wired Sussex is a membership organisation and regional *peer-to-peer network* of firms in the digital, media and technology sector across Sussex. Based in Brighton, this network consists

⁷ The case study is based on (Belfast City Council, 2020) *Commitment to Inclusive Growth*, Belfast Business Promise and interviews with stakeholders.

⁸ The case study is based on [Wired Sussex](#) and their [diversity toolkit](#)

of companies and freelancers in the digital sector. Member firms and freelancers can share their practices and initiatives including those with EDI focus through the network platform. The network takes a bottom-up approach with small-scale projects and initiatives by member firms and individuals.

The network has developed a '*Skills and Talent Manifesto*' to support skill acquisition and talent development in the digital sector in the Greater Brighton region. The Manifesto demonstrates the network's aspiration to strengthen the partnership between the education system and the digital sector to *train and retain diverse talent* in the sector. The Manifesto also shows the network's commitment to diversity and inclusivity throughout recruitment, workplace culture, sharing and promoting best practices in the sector, focusing on the following areas:

- Recruitment by recognising talented people from every part of society;
- Creating an inclusive and supportive workplace culture;
- Sharing and promoting best practices in the sector; and
- Providing support for initiatives for inclusivity and diversity.

The Manifesto was developed in 2018 through *Talent Fest*, one of their initiatives. Following this Manifesto, a *Diversity Working Group* was formed by the signatory companies and the group developed a monthly forum to work on improving practice around inclusion, diversity and accessibility. In the following year, a Headline Sponsor of Talent Fest 2019, American Express, has also pledged to the Manifesto and is working with the network to develop and deliver several initiatives in relation to the Manifesto goals.

In addition, as another follow-up for the Manifesto, the Wired Sussex *Diversity & Inclusion Toolkit* was developed. This toolkit provides resources, case studies and best practices to support members to create inclusive workplaces and other D&I related resources for recruitment and retention, as well as guidance for incorporating diversity for events and information on groups supporting diversity in the region. It has also encouraged other cities, with Bristol and Newcastle undertaking their own version of similar networked initiatives.

BRISTOL – INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND THE CREATIVE SECTOR⁹

Bristol City Council has developed an '*Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy*'. The Strategy is developed to align with the Council's "One City Approach" to provide a strategic impetus on the social benefits and sustainability of approaches to economic development. The Strategy is organised around eight themes:

- People centred: focusing on investment in inclusive education, employment and skills opportunities;
- Skills: focusing on life-long learning to thrive in an inclusive economy;
- Creativity and innovation: focusing on growth by generating diverse and productive ideas and services;
- Well Connected: focusing on transport and digital connectivity;
- Open for Business: providing an environment for the right conditions for increased people focused productivity and investment in business growth;
- Place focussed: developing high quality places and communities to attract a diverse mix of residents, workers and visitors;
- Deliver Homes: providing affordable homes;
- Work in Partnership: delivering good growth with social mobility through strong

⁹ The case study is based on (Bristol City Council, 2018) (Bristol One City, 2021) and [Bristol+Bath Creative R+D](#)

partnerships.

The creative and cultural sectors are important aspects of the One City Plan (2021) in terms of both economic inclusion as well as access to culture and cultural opportunity. Bristol has a partnership project funded under the Creative Clusters programme, the *Bristol + Bath Creative Industries Cluster* B&B CREATIVE R&D including the universities of Bristol, UWE, Bath and Bath Spa alongside Watershed, a local cultural organisation. The programme is organised around 6 activity themes focusing on digital placemaking, connections and networks in practices in the cultural and creative industries and inclusion action research. The project is also focused on developing future creative leaders and opportunities within programmes for *New Talent Fellows* to support the development of a '*radically inclusive leadership model*.'

Bristol and the strategic approach adopted is one of a *multi-layer multi-partner strategy* and includes aspects of *sectoral focus alongside the place-based approach*. The case study also highlights the issue of time horizons of impact, and seeks to work over the long-term while adopting a *dashboard monitoring approach* to enable core indicators to be measured and reviewed for progress.

CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION (CLWSTWR)¹⁰

The Clwstwr programme is a five-year project that provides R&D investment funding for the screen and media sector in Cardiff Capital Region. The programme acknowledges the importance of *diversity in innovation* and considers distinctive diversity areas such as Welsh language in their approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). In relation to EDI, they aim to build an inclusive culture by achieving a set of specific aims:

- To support the research and development of innovative and equitable ways of working within the screen and news sector of Wales;
- To make their structures and processes as diverse and accessible as possible;
- To encourage an ecosystem of industry, academia and third sector working, inspiring and establishing diverse and inclusive partnerships and collaborations; and
- To amplify the voices of those working to improve the diversity of the media sector in Wales.

The funds are split into three main streams – 'Seed', 'Project Funding' and 'Transformative projects'. The criteria for selection of proposals requires not only economic impact (on the company and Welsh media sector) but also social/cultural impact. The latter includes impact on diversity and equality of access to media production and consumption. They particularly encourage applicants from less represented groups. In this way, the programme encourages EDI at the very early stage of funding application.

There are 14 projects focusing on inclusion and wellbeing funded by Clwstwr, and these projects are supported by the programme's Producer, Delivery and Management team. Clwstwr also developed a *diversity monitoring process* based both on legal requirements and being informed by best practice examples from Creative Skillset, the Civil Service, Literature Wales, The Other Room Theatre and Frân Wen. In their first diversity monitor in 2019, the programme identified barriers people may experience for participating in their R&D programme and took measures to address them. The report provided a number of initial lessons that can be found in Clwstwr (2021), Diversity Monitoring report.

Successful outcomes from this programme include that female applicants were increased

¹⁰ The case study is based on information from the [Clwstwr](#) website and [EDI pages](#), their programme report Clwstwr (2021) and interviews with stakeholders

from 28 per cent in their first Open call, to 44 per cent in the second Ideas Lab call.

COVENTRY CULTURAL STRATEGY/CITY OF CULTURE¹¹

The Coventry Cultural Strategy was developed and funded by Coventry City Council and Arts Council England (ACE), and with support from both Coventry University and the University of Warwick. The strategy was set as a ten-year plan initially with the five key goals (Partnership; Lifelong learning; Diversity; Health and Wellbeing; Economic Growth). Later, in an updated strategy, (Cultural Strategy Refresh 2022-2025), another goal of 'Coventry's Green future' was added.

The strategy aims not only at *expanding the opportunities for engagement with art and cultural heritage to diverse groups*, but also *including cultural activities in other social, economic, health and educational strategies and initiatives*. The ultimate goal of the strategy is inclusive growth and wellbeing of the city, something which has been re-emphasised in their new Cultural Strategy Refresh 2022-2025.

The design of actions to implement the strategy are shaped around '*seven big ideas*' (detailed below):

- *Coventry the place partnership*: Establishing a new independent cultural place partnership.
- *Creative production hubs*: Provision of support and workplaces for the local industries and creative workers; extending the access to art to local residences.
- *The city is the festival*: Increasing 'dwell time' in the city including growing night-time economy and developing public celebrations reflecting the identity and diversity of the city.
- *Seven years younger*: Focus on youth engagement through culture considering younger population in the city than the England average.
- *The nation in Coventry*: Nurturing existing relationships with national cultural agencies (e.g., NESTA, ACE, Creative England).
- *Diverse City*: Examples include establishing refugee arts festival, Coventry Godiva festival for diverse ages, cultures and abilities, and a neighbourhood-level ethnic diversity focused ACE's 'Creative people and places' project.
- *Getting Coventry moving*: Promoting dance, physical activities and active lifestyle to support the health and emotional wellbeing of the city.

Linked to the above, Coventry was also awarded UK City of Culture status by DCMS and as such hosted a wide variety of cultural events and activities from May 2021. However, despite several positive outcomes on impact and contributions of the programme to the region, as demonstrated in the 'Progress reports' of the Trust, the specific legacy activities associated with the City of Culture Year which were to be delivered by the City of Culture Trust have not proceeded as expected, with the Trust entering administration.

Coventry has also innovated in the use of new data tools to support cultural activities and cultural organisations through the development of a Cultural Place Profiler. The Profiler provides local data to support cultural organisations in understanding local community needs (<https://coventry.culturalplaceprofiler.co.uk/>).

¹¹ The case study is based on information from [Coventry Cultural Strategy](#), [Coventry Cultural Strategy report](#) and [Cultural Strategy Refresh report](#)

GLASGOW – INCLUSIVE GROWTH THROUGH CULTURE AND CREATIVE ECONOMY¹²

The Glasgow City Region (GCR)'s 2035 vision sets strategies to implement new economic governance to improve both the region's economic future and people's lives under two major pillars of 'Increasing Competitiveness' and 'Tackling Inequality'. GCR has identified the following eleven objectives to achieve this aim as below:

- Attract and retain talent and enterprises relocating to GCR;
- Improve economic outcomes for all through addressing long standing barriers in the labour market such as skills and health, both for those who are currently out of work and those on low incomes;
- Create a skills and employment system that meets the current and future needs of GCR businesses and supports our residents to access jobs and progression opportunities;
- Grow the presence of Scotland's Growth Sectors in the city region so that we increase the total number of GCR's businesses and employees who work in these sectors;
- Significantly improve the productivity of GCR's diverse business base through increased investment, innovation and exporting;
- Increase the number of sustainable and high growth start-ups surviving beyond five years;
- Grow GCR supply chain activity whose growth underpins the success of GCR sectors;
- Building on the City Deal bring forward in parallel strategic programmes, projects, and associated investment that maximise the value of the Deal;
- Maximise the potential of the key GCR economic assets;
- Actively promote GCR globally, with a focus on international investment opportunities; and
- Increase in the number of housing and commercial completions and decrease the amount of derelict and vacant land.

GCR maps out opportunities and challenges regarding 'people, businesses and place' to set out the action plan for the first three years (2017-2020) of the strategy. Since having been designated as a European Capital of Culture in 1990, the creative sector in the region has grown significantly, with a growth rate of 17 per cent (more than double of that at national level) (OECD, 2022). One of the GCR's action plans is to continue to *strengthen and build diversity in their business base*, including creative industries, by investing in skills, employment and enterprises.

In line with the GCR's Vision 2035 strategy, social inclusion and well-being has also been a strong focus of the cultural policies in the region. The Glasgow Economic Leadership (GEL) intends to produce a Creative Economy Strategy for the eight local authorities of the GCR. In this strategy, the policy interests will be focused on 'creative economy thinking' rather than the industry as a key sector, and *the role of the culture in community wellbeing*.

Skill gap issues, precarity of work and lack of diversity in the sector which have long been recognised at the national level are also found in the region. Challenges from Brexit and Covid have also affected the region's industry and there have been interventions such as the Hardship Fund for Creative Freelancers and The Screen Hardship fund. Nonetheless, the overall support for creative industries has been criticised as being too generic. Lack of specialist provision has been raised as an issue, although the screen sector was the exception (e.g., the Glasgow Film Office, TRC Media, Film City Futures are screen sector specialist support provision).

¹² The case study is based on information from Glasgow City Region [Economic Strategy 2017-2035](#), [Economic Action plan](#) and (OECD, 2022) [report](#)

LONDON – DIGITAL AND THE GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY MAYOR'S ACADEMIES PROGRAMME¹³

There are important under-representation issues in parts of London's digital sector – with women and disabled workers under-represented, and the sector is less ethnically diverse than London as a whole (Giles, et al., 2023). This under-representation provides the context for the development of a new *sector-based approach to inclusion and diversity in London*.

To seek to increase diversity and improve inclusion in the sector, digital was one of the priority sectors that the Greater London Authority has focused on. Although London is globally important in digital, and provides significant numbers of skilled and well-paid jobs, there are also important skills and labour shortages in parts of the sector. The digital sector is one of the priority sectors for the *Mayor's Academies Programme (MAP)*. The MAP was developed as part of the London Recovery Programme enacted during the pandemic. The MAP aims 'to support Londoners hardest hit by the pandemic into good work in sectors key to London's recovery and long-term economic growth'.

The MAP has awarded funding to employers, education and training providers and sector bodies in order to work collaboratively to develop *pathways into employment* which coordinate the training offer with work experience and advice and guidance.

Funding has also been provided to organisations to develop and deliver *sector-focused hubs to support access to good work*. The Hubs are focused on engaging and supporting groups who are underrepresented in the priority sectors, or groups who had been disproportionately affected by the Pandemic. As part of the employer-facing offer, the Hubs will provide support and tools for employers to use to help them address workforce diversity issues within their organisations.

The focus of the programme is designed to be demand-led with an emphasis on utilising the opportunity of skills or labour shortages in specific occupations as a means to open-up access to employment opportunities.

3.3 Case study synthesis and learning

In addition to providing valuable examples of place-based, sector-focussed policies that aim to promote inclusive growth, we are able to draw wider learning when examining the suite of UK case studies collectively.

What is clear is that, while the case studies are all concerned with approaches which seek to link opportunities for growth (either within a place or a specific sector) with inclusion aims, they are designed in quite different ways to meet this aim. These differences, as well as similarities, are discussed in Box 3.1 overleaf.

¹³ The case study is based on (Giles, et al., 2023) "*Workforce Integration and Inclusion in London's growth sectors*"

Box 3.1: Examining similarities and differences between the UK Case Studies

A. Strategies, interventions, and models

- Some of the approaches are more strategic, providing an overall framework for change, and others more programmatic, focused on specific outcomes and often with time-limited funding. The more strategic designs tend to be associated with place-based approaches which are led by public sector actors (particularly local government).
- Across the case studies there is a reliance on partnership working among different stakeholders – including the public sector, education (including universities), sector bodies and institutions. These partnerships facilitate action across different domains which influence inclusive growth. One weakness in a number of the case studies appears to be the relatively limited engagement of private-sector employers in an inclusive growth agenda. Mechanisms for private-sector engagement include voluntary frameworks around good or inclusive work, the use of selective investment in specific employer-led projects, and, seeking to use the levers of public procurement to influence employer behaviours.

B. Defining Inclusion

- There are different definitions of inclusion used to guide interventions across the case study areas. In some, inclusion is defined primarily in relation to individual characteristics such as sex, ethnicity and disability – in particular where there is significant underrepresentation in the sector of focus. In others the focus of targeting is more by economic position – particularly being unemployed or having low-earnings.
- Inclusion can be considered in relation to equality of opportunity or equality of outcomes. There is little explicit comment on this distinction within the case study materials. Where the focus is on diversity issues in relation to workforce profile and gaps in representations, the implicit focus is largely around equality of opportunity through providing access to the sector/s. However, in a number of examples there is also a focus on progression aims and some of the structural issues which inhibit career progression in particular sectors for some groups of workers.
- A distinction can be made between approaches which seek to more evenly distribute the proceeds of growth, and those which seek to influence the form of growth in order to generate more inclusive outcomes. Elements of both can be seen across the case studies, although the balance is towards to former definition, whereby the emphasis is on connecting (disadvantaged individuals, groups) to growth.

C. Aims, ambitions and scale

- The scale of transformation the different case studies are seeking to support varies significantly, as does the resources on which organisations are able to draw. The differences in scale of aims and ambitions vary in a way that relates to both the size of the challenge (in population terms), the resources available, and the duration of the commitment.

D. Sectoral or cross-cutting approaches

- The approaches represent a mix, including those focused on wider place-based economic development and those interventions which are focused on particular sectors. In a number of areas, however, both place and sectoral perspectives are combined.

E. Measuring impact and outcomes

- There is relatively little evidence on outcomes across the case study areas. In part this reflects the relative recentness of many of the approaches. In both Bristol and Belfast, the focus has been on developing monitoring dashboards, so that progress on measures of core importance can be tracked over time. In other case studies other forms of monitoring information are collected aligned to core programme aims. Diversity monitoring has been a specific concern for the Clwstwr programme – collecting a range of quantitative and qualitative data to analyse this. In Coventry there has been significant evaluation activity based around the UK City of Culture, as well as the development of The Coventry Cultural Place Profiler to allow for assessment of place-based change.

3.4 Key learning for future policy-making

Several themes emerge from the case studies collectively. A number of these highlight the issues of potential connections between sector-based and place-based approaches to inclusive growth (with an emphasis in some of the case studies on strengthening these connections). However, in practice the definitions of inclusion which these two perspectives adopt tend to be different, with the former more focused on characteristics, and the later more on economic position. There is a sense in several of the case studies that *an overall approach which better integrates sector-based and place-based interventions offers a significant potential opportunity* (but that perhaps different types of conversations set the context for what is meant by inclusion in sectors versus place). Here there is a central role for national organisations and place-based stakeholders to work more closely together to effectively coordinate approaches, and to embed these within the specific needs of the local area for the greatest local impact.

Related to this discussion, much of the focus of interventions across the case studies tends to operate at the level of recruitment, so the emphasis is on opening-up access to employment opportunities in particular sectors. There is some focus on changing employer practices – with an emphasis on good work – but there are *fewer examples that seek to change the economic structures which generate exclusion and disadvantage to begin with*. One example where efforts to do so can be seen in a sectoral context is the work of the Clwstwr programme in Cardiff which seeks to embed inclusion with R&D and innovation practice in the media sector. Where there are other activities seeking to change employer behaviours these are a mixture of more voluntaristic approaches – charters and toolkits, but also some promising work around procurement frameworks (there is however limited evidence currently on the impacts of these activities). Overall, however, there is relatively little evidence of interventions successfully engaging with addressing some of the important structural issues within the sector which generate exclusion and precarious employment.

Across the case studies four themes are apparent which capture the overall approach to inclusive growth. Some of the main factors which determine the alignment to these themes are the extent to which existing patterns or strengths in local growth are used as a means to improve inclusion outcomes (linking inclusion to growth), or whether they look more at inclusion as an integral part of growth. In a number of case studies, narrowly defined economic growth is secondary to building well-being and social and cultural inclusion. However, the themes are not always clearly defined within the case studies themselves, and a number of case studies have a range of interventions which align to different themes. The themes which can be identified in the case studies are:

- *Linking growth to inclusion through employment and skills support* – this is perhaps the most widespread and longstanding approach to inclusive growth. Here employment and training programmes are used to support economically disadvantaged groups to enter employment (and at times with a focus also on progression). This approach can be seen in London, Belfast and Glasgow, and can be linked to specific economic sectors which are growing, have skills shortages or which offer potential for access to 'good jobs'.
- *Expanding good practice in recruitment and progression* – these approaches seek to influence employer practices in recruitment and progression, including seeking to address diversity issues in the workforce through employer networks and/or influencing strategies such as charters and action plans (Brighton, Belfast)
- *Building a more inclusive form of (sectoral) growth* – where the focus is on the types of (sector) growth being prioritised, with efforts directed to forms of growth which embed inclusion (Cardiff), or on encouraging practices to grow the base of good quality jobs through policy actions such as social procurement (Belfast).

- *Building well-being and cultural inclusion* – in some of the case studies, elements of the focus were less about economic growth per se and more about cultural inclusion and well-being in the population (Coventry), or embedding in a wider societal vision for the city which includes well-being, housing, economy and community (Bristol, Glasgow).

4. Lessons from international cities and regions

4.1 Introduction

While addressing economic inequality is a national policy priority, the UK is not alone in its ambition to more closely couple economic and social outcomes. Promoting shared prosperity features across a range of the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#), including more inclusive and equitable education; gender equality; sustained and inclusive economic growth; decent work for all; and inclusive and resilient cities. Indeed, widening access to economic opportunities is a key concern for policy makers in cities and regions across the globe and the focus of major global interventions, such as the [OECD's Champion Mayors for Inclusive Growth](#) initiative.

To complement the review of sub-national policy and practice in the UK, the Creative PEC has also developed an international strand to this research which has sought to understand what could potentially be learnt from international approaches to promoting more inclusive growth of clusters.

This chapter summarises the findings from the international research. Our review identified a wide range of policies and programmes that policymakers in international cities and regions are deploying to promote more inclusive growth of regional sectoral clusters, with the long-listing process identifying over 60 potential case studies.

Given this, rather than embarking on an in-depth study of a handful of cities or regions that would present only a partial picture of international practice, we present a larger number of examples and high-level case studies which we hope will stimulate thinking on the range of potential policy directions and options that could be implemented in cities and regions across the UK. In total we identify over 30 examples of interesting or effective practice, drawn from 15 different countries across the globe. We structure these case studies around five international strategies for promoting inclusive growth of clusters, explored in further detail throughout this chapter. These should be viewed as complementary and mutually reinforcing.

4.2 International strategies for driving inclusive growth of creative clusters

STRATEGY 1: DIVERSIFY EDUCATION PATHWAYS

Employment prospects and occupational choices are shaped early in life: by childhood experiences, the quality of education, access to information and guidance, parental influence and role models (Hofer, et al., 2020). This is a particularly important concern for the creative industries because there is strong evidence that early life experiences significantly impact the likelihood of accessing and progressing in work in the sector (Carey, et al., 2022; Allen & Hollingworth, 2013). Activities to promote more inclusive employment and greater workforce diversity must, therefore, start early: improving awareness of employment opportunities in growing parts of the economy, supporting skills acquisition aligned to the needs of employers and providing work experience opportunities that build networks, instil confidence and enhance work-readiness.

Our review of international practice offered a number of examples of city regional policymakers advancing *targeted careers interventions, employer inspiration and other outreach activities*, designed to encourage and enable young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue careers in growth sectors.

One such example is the BRIDGE project led by Rotterdam City Council, which has sought to

encourage young people living in one of the most deprived areas in the Netherlands to select vocational pathways into good jobs in growing parts of the economy. The project highlights the importance of developing a deep understanding of labour market changes and key industry shifts; of targeting the most vulnerable; looking upstream by offering sustained support from a young age; and for strong political leadership, given project impact would only be realised over the long term and complex to fully capture. Partnership is seen as key to the success of the Bridge project, which has engaged industry employers, worked closely with schools and teachers to raise awareness of the changing world of work and skill needs of growing sectors of the economy; with parents through active outreach and careers resources; and engaged children and young people as participants and mentors.

Case study: Targeted careers interventions, employer inspiration or other outreach activities

The BRIDGE project, Rotterdam (The Netherlands)

The Building the Right Investments for Delivering a Growing Economy (BRIDGE) project aims to better align young people's educational choices with future labour market needs. It was designed in response both to rapid transformation of the regional economy driving a shift in the skills required in the workforce and high rates of socio-economic disadvantage in the target area of South Rotterdam.

The project was launched in 2016 and set out to encourage children in Rotterdam South to select vocational pathways that were likely to lead to employment into key growth sectors, specifically the technical, port and health sectors. Project activities were implemented in 68 primary schools, 20 secondary schools and 3 vocational schools and included:

Career orientation: starting in primary school (aged 9) and continuing to when students entered the labour market. This included employer talks and site visits; training for teachers; and engaging parents in career guidance and skills development programmes. A digital talent portfolio was also developed to enable pupils to examine their talent and interests and explore how these fit into the labour market.

Mentoring: including 1-2-1 mentoring for pupils in secondary education in Rotterdam South, including peer-to-peer mentoring amongst students.

Career Start Guarantee: where employers offer pupils entering secondary vocational education a guaranteed career when they graduate, subject to them selecting and achieving the necessary vocational qualifications for the sector.

A comprehensive approach to monitoring and evaluation was embedded in the project at the outset, which enabled project partners to regularly assess their impact and draw lessons to inform wider policy design. The number of Career Start Guarantees reached 702 in 2019, with evidence of an increase in pupil registrations for courses linked to these careers. There has been a significant shift in career choices amongst the target population, with the share of children opting for courses aligned to the target sectors increasing from 33% in 2011/12 to 46% in 2019/20, which now exceeds the average of other major Dutch cities. BRIDGE has now been extended to other parts of Rotterdam, the Career Start Guarantee has been embedded within the city's model for supporting unemployed adults and the multi-partner approach and focus on key industry sectors now features as part of Rotterdam's major employability programme.

Source: <https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/just-urban-transitions/skills-green-future/uia-case-study-rotterdam#main>

Under-developed and under-valued vocational education and training for the creative industries plays an important role in determining who can access and progress in work in the sector (Carey, et al., 2022). *Strengthening technical education pathways* will therefore be important in ensuring that more people are able to benefit from opportunities created as creative clusters expand.

While wholesale reform of the UK's technical education system remains largely the province of the Department for Education and Devolved Governments, city-regional stakeholders can influence and enhance the skills ecosystem in their areas. In doing so, they can draw lessons from countries with well-developed vocational educational and training (VET) systems. For

instance, the strength of Switzerland's VET system – regularly recognised as one of the most advanced in the world – is underpinned by collective governance and strong employer engagement. As such: federal Government provide strategic oversight; local government promote local coordination and implementation; and employers and industry associations drive the system, taking the lead in programme development, ensuring adequate numbers of apprenticeship opportunities and contributing around 60% of the total cost of the VET system (Hoffman & Schwartz, 2015).

Other nations and regions have sought to enhance technical routes through place-based and sector-focussed initiatives. One regularly cited example of international best practice is Skillnet Ireland, which brings together businesses to identify skills needs, gaps in existing training and develop customised training, operating across different regions and sectors in Ireland, including the creative industries.

Case study: Strengthening technical education pathways

Skillnet (Republic of Ireland)

Skillnet Ireland runs sectoral and regional enterprise networks, which bring together employers to design education and training aligned to their needs. Skillnet Ireland's 70+ Business Networks play a central role in identifying gaps in existing provision and working with external providers, including universities, colleges, and private training providers, to design and deliver training courses. They operate under a joint investment model, part-funded by the Irish National Training Fund, but matched by contributions from enterprise.

The Cultural & Creative Industries Skillnet designs, develops and delivers responsive, bespoke, flexible and relevant skills and talent development programmes to address the ongoing needs of the cultural & creative sectors. The network was established through the consolidation of the separate Animation, Screen, and Immersive Technologies Skillnets. It now provides bespoke training and networking events across the sector footprint, with membership free to private enterprises and freelancers across the sector.

In addition to developing and delivering training, Skillnet Business Networks work with businesses to help them identify skill needs, develop training plans and design training. Skillnet also offers wider programmes. These include: *Mentors Work* to enhance management capability and workplace practices within Irish SMEs; *Innovation Exchange* to connect businesses facing digital transformation challenges with solution providers; and *Skills Connect* to support the rapid re-skilling of workers seeking to re-enter the workforce.

Skillnet programmes have a broad reach, having supported nearly 25,000 businesses and upskilling 92,400 people.

Source: <https://www.skillnetireland.ie/>

Another example is the [Southern California Regional Energy Network's Emerald City Collaborative](#) - a partnership of employers working in green industries, unions and community organisations who curate apprenticeship routes that connect participants (often from disadvantaged backgrounds) to high quality training and long-term career opportunities. Similarly, in Portugal, the [Aveiro STEAM City project](#), led by the City Council, has established a labour observatory to better understand changing skill needs in the economy and a multi-faceted STEAM education programme, which aims to enhance the development of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths (STEAM) skills at all stages of the education system. Early evaluation evidence is promising, pointing to improved STEAM skills, job entry and job quality amongst those that participated in training and education activities.

Case study: Strengthening technical education pathways

Aveiro STEAM City (Portugal)

Shaped in response to skills shortages in the local economy and the desire to improve the socio-economic wealth generated by job creation, the Aveiro STEAM project deploys two innovative approaches:

Experimenting with 5G and IoT technologies to encourage the development of new products and services in the city, including Tech City challenges, which aim to establish Aveiro as a 'living laboratory'; tech labs, festivals and prototyping events that draw innovators from across the globe; tech days or week-long innovation competitions;

Enhancing the responsiveness of the skills system to labour market needs: including establishing a 'Responsive Observatory' to examine changing skills demand in the economy and delivering the multi-faceted Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Creativity, and Maths (STEAM) Education Programme, that comprises a wide range of activities that aim to enhance the development of STEAM skills, including an online platform providing curriculum content for schools; artist residences; competitions for secondary and tertiary students; online training courses; skills bootcamps; open days for university students to visit companies; and Tech Labs which provide experimentation spaces in schools with access to electronics, robotics, 3D printers and various other materials.

Aveiro also aims to provide knowledge leadership in STEAM, for example hosting an online symposium to share models and approaches to delivering STEAM education, sharing learning and showcasing good practice.

Programme monitoring and evaluation suggests the training and education activities have increased the STEAM and digital skills of unemployed people by 69% and in the school community (students and teachers) by 82%. The project has also increased job entry for participants, particularly into better paying, more sustainable, and highly qualified roles.

Source: <https://www.aveirotechcity.pt/pt/atividades/educacao-steam> and <https://www.uia-initiative.eu/en/news/aveiro-steam-city-project-journal-n3>

Other initiatives offer *network building activities and mentoring to aid transition between education and work*, often targeted at young people disadvantaged in the labour market. For instance, [COSTI's netWORKS programme](#), funded by the United Way Greater Toronto (Canada), is a networking and mentoring initiative that aims to create opportunities for young people facing barriers to establish professional connections needed to find meaningful employment. Through the programme, mentors and mentees receive training, participate in networking sessions and have the opportunity to connect for individual networking or more structured mentoring. Since 2015, the programme has given over 1,000 participants access to 23 employer partners and 694 mentors, with over 95% of participants reporting increased confidence in their networking abilities and a better understanding of employment opportunities in some of the City's growing sectors (OECD, n.d.).

STRATEGY 2: CONNECT THOSE DISADVANTAGED IN THE LABOUR MARKET WITH JOBS IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Widening access to the opportunities created in high-growth sectors is a key concern for policy makers in cities and regions around the world. Often efforts have centred on Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) that connect those disadvantaged in the labour market to jobs created in growing parts of the economy, in response to de-industrialisation or (more recently) to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The research has found several examples of interventions that target support at those disadvantaged in the labour market. These 'individual-facing' programmes define 'disadvantage' in different ways, often reflecting distinct local issues and the way in which wider strategies are framed. This can include, for example, active targeting of: adults on low incomes, including those who are out of work or earning below a living wage; young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET); those who suffer poor labour market outcomes, including migrant communities, people of colour, disabled people or those with health conditions, ex-offenders or care-experienced young people; those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds; or individuals living in deprived neighbourhoods within cities.

Programmes can feature a range of interventions, at different points of the employment pathway¹⁴. Some efforts prioritise the *reskilling or upskilling of displaced workers* who are unemployed, low-skilled or working in jobs that are in decline in future. One such example is the [Rotterdam Schooling Fund](#) (The Netherlands), which provides vouchers for residents impacted by Covid-19, to cover the cost of training in professional areas with high demand.

A multitude of schemes provide *targeted employment or training opportunities for disadvantaged groups*. [Year Up](#) (United States of America, USA) for example, provides a year of training, work experience and job search support for disadvantaged young people to help them to access high quality technology or finance jobs. The Arsht Center in Miami has developed a three-year, [paid Apprenticeship program](#) to introduce residents aged 18-24 from diverse backgrounds that are underrepresented in the arts to a career in technical theatre. In contrast, the Cleveland Museum of Art runs a [Curatorial Arts Mastery Program](#) providing students from underserved neighbourhoods with training in the development and curation of exhibitions.

With the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) requiring States to develop and implement *sector-focussed employment, retention and advancement programmes* for in-demand industry sectors or occupations and the federal government investing considerably in programme evaluation, the US provides a range of relevant examples. Crucially too, many of these have been rigorously evaluated and demonstrate significant and sustained positive impact on participants' earnings. This includes Project Quest in San Antonio and Work Advance – a programme providing active support across the employment pathway (see Box overleaf)

¹⁴ The pathway to employment can be conceptualised as comprising four stages: pre-employment (helping individuals move towards being work-ready); employment entry (supporting job-ready participants to move into employment); sustaining employment (helping participants to stay in work, with the same or a different employer); in-work progression (enabling workers to advance in their careers, including increasing earnings and progressing into more senior / experienced roles) (Green, et al., 2015)

Case study: Sector-focussed employment, retention and advancement programmes

Project QUEST, Texas, US

Following the decline in low-skill manufacturing jobs in the 1980s, two community organisations in San Antonio, Texas – COPS and Metro Alliance – founded Project QUEST in 1992, to help low-skill, low-paid workers gain skills needed by employers in growing sectors of the local economy.

QUEST's services include:

- Counselling to address academic and personal concerns, provide emotional support and signpost to wider services (e.g., financial assistance, food, childcare);
- Weekly life skills sessions, which are mandatory and cover a range of skills such as time management, study skills, critical thinking, conflict resolution;
- Basic skills training, to improve maths and reading skills, to help participants to pass college placement tests;
- Financial support for occupational skills training, including tuition fees and wider costs for classes, books, transport, uniforms, and licenses;
- Job placement assistance, including help with CV writing, interview technique, as well as referrals to employers that are hiring.

The programme has been evaluated extensively over its lifetime. Participants have been shown to achieve substantially greater earnings than a control group, with earnings impact growing over time. They were consistently more likely to be employed, and reported greater financial stability than control group members. Over the past 25 years the total impact of the programme, including increased participant income; direct, indirect and induced economic impact; and social security savings are estimated to amount to \$1.67bn – equivalent to \$19 impact per funded dollar.

Source: (Elliott & Roder, 2017; Project QUEST, 2021)

Work Advance, New York, Ohio and Oklahoma, US

Launched in 2011, Work Advance is a workforce development programme for adults who are unemployed or earning low wages (less than \$15 per hour), operating in three locations in the United States: New York; Oklahoma; and Ohio.

Designed by the New York Center for Economic Opportunity (CEO) and MDRC (a social research organisation), it aims to go beyond the previous generation of employment programs by introducing demand-driven skills training and a focus on jobs in specific industries and occupational clusters where there is strong local demand and the opportunity for career advancement. The sector focus varies between locations, but includes IT, transport, manufacturing, healthcare and environmental services.

The programme offers multiple services, including:

- Intensive screening of applicants – to ensure that participants' are likely to have the ability to undertake and complete the training, as well as to meet the needs of employers. Screening also functions to try and limit programme deadweight by not taking on candidates likely to find good opportunities in the absence of the programme;
- Career-readiness services – including support with the application and interview process which have previously been shown to be effective, but with these adapted to be focused on the specific sector;
- Sector-specific occupational skills training – linked to a credential and closely aligned to specific employer and local labour market needs;
- Sector-specific job development and placement – with access to employment supported by strong links between providers and employers;
- Post-employment retention and advancement services – including provision to support ongoing career coaching, continuing contact with employers to assess performance, and access to additional skills opportunities needed to progress in work.

The interim and final evaluations suggest sector-focussed programmes can increase earnings in the longer-term and support career advancement over time.

Source: (Kanengiser & Schaberg, 2022; Schaberg & Greenberg, 2020)

Other programmes are “dual-facing”, looking to both offer support to individuals that are marginalised in the labour market while also helping industry employers to recruit from wider, more diverse and skilled talent pool and enhance their workplace practices. The [Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership](#), for example, was established in the 1990s in response to growing skill shortages as the regional economy transitioned from a traditional industrial base to service-based industries. By providing education, training and supportive placement opportunities for underemployment and underrepresented people, the programme aims to enhance the ability of public and private sector organisations to recruit, develop and retain a more diverse, qualified workforce in construction, manufacturing, and emerging sectors of the regional economy. Crucially, industry employers and stakeholders are viewed as key partners in creating career pathways and opportunities that are safe, skill-focused, and inclusive. The engagement of multiple stakeholders in the design and delivery of programmes is increasingly recognised more widely as an important factor critical to the success of such programmes and their positive outcomes for participants (OECD, 2019; OECD, 2019b; OECD, 2019c). Similarly, the Illinois Job Training and Economic development programme had two strands – one focused on job entry and other on incumbent workers. Community-based providers act as a connection between local employers in need of a better trained workforce and their low wage/low skill workers.

STRATEGY 3: ADVANCE GOOD WORK AND INCLUSIVE WORKING PRACTICES

While many of the above schemes aim to support workers into sectors or occupations that offer comparatively well-paid work with progression opportunity, other interventions have a more explicit focus on improving job quality and promoting workplace practices that support diverse talent to thrive and progress. This is particularly important in a creative industries context, where research has shown that pay can be low, work precarious, work environments challenging and investment in training and development limited (Carey, et al., 2023).

In recent years, we have seen a proliferation of *employment standards to drive improvements in job quality* – some economy-wide seeking to advance work that is ‘good’, ‘fair’ or ‘decent’, others focussed on specific dimensions of job quality (earnings, working hours or work conditions); particular businesses or workers (specific sectors or freelancers); or in specific cities or regions.¹⁵

Barcelona was one such city, that began developing an employment standard in the mid-2000s. Developed through a process of social dialogue, the [Barcelona Agreement for Quality Employment](#) is an ambitious and wide-ranging framework that establishes a shared mission and roadmap for promoting inclusive employment and high-quality jobs in the City and promotes co-responsibility in addressing the economic and social challenges facing the city.

Case study: Using employment standards to drive improvements in job quality

Barcelona Agreement for Quality Employment (Spain)

The Barcelona Agreement for Quality Employment aims to position Barcelona as a leading international city for fostering equity and quality in the job market, speaking directly to the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the areas of decent employment, reducing inequalities and high-quality education.

The Agreement was established in 2008, through social dialogue between Barcelona City Council, the Government of Catalunya, trade unions and business organisations. It aims to promote social consensus among social and economic stakeholders, in pursuit of common goals for fostering inclusive employment and high-quality jobs in the City.

The latest iteration of the Agreement defines quality employment as that which offers: work stability;

¹⁵ ‘Good’ work in the Creative Industries is characterised as offering: fair reward commensurate to skill and contribution, that counterbalances security and flexibility; provides autonomy and personal fulfilment; where workers have agency, voice and representation and the opportunity to utilise their skills, develop and progress; in a healthy, respectful and inclusive environment. This experience of work must be fair and equal for all Creative workers, irrespective of their gender, age, ethnicity, disability or socio-economic background (Carey, et al., 2023).

adequate wages; work flexibility; continual training and skills acquisition; opportunities for professional development; that supports work-life balance; with health, safety and ethics at work; representation and a protection of rights; inclusion of young people in the labour market; diversity and non-discrimination.

The Agreement features three areas of intervention: equity and inclusive quality employment; innovation and improved processes; and governance and social consensus. Within these areas there are 12 strategic goals, which then guide 38 lines of action, including taking an intersectional approach to promoting access to employment; measures to continually improve work conditions and relations; activities to tackle youth unemployment; the promotion of vocation training, upskilling and reskilling; social procurement; support for self-employed workers and entrepreneurs; and investing in monitoring and evaluation of pilot actions (amongst others).

In 2022, over sixty organisations signed the agreement, in doing so committing to reduce labour market inequalities through quality employment, to provide more opportunities and better workplace practices. All signatories must produce bi-annual action plans for addressing important societal challenges faced by Barcelona, such as long-term and youth unemployment and inequality.

Source: <https://www.barcelonactiva.cat/documents/20124/259890/ABOQ-ENG.pdf/f8cbdf62-4f6d-5d54-ffe4-b6251eddd3ba?t=1666251957824>

Similar schemes are now in place in UK cities and regions, such as the [Mayor's Good Work Standard](#) in London, the Greater Manchester [Good Employment Charter](#) and the Liverpool City Region [Fair Employment Charter](#).

It is recognised that establishing employment standards and charters will not in itself drive behavioural change and some cities have used *financial and non-financial incentives to improve job quality and workplace practices*. Under the [Singapore Enterprise Training Scheme](#), for example, employers can apply for public financial subsidies to support projects aimed at improving skills utilisation. These can include: strengthening human resource systems to better link skills acquisition to career trajectories; and hiring consultants to review compensation structures, examine scope to better retain skilled workers or assess a firm's training needs.

Other examples seek to create non-financial incentives for businesses to improve job quality, including through the use of social clauses in public procurement contracts and grant agreements. With growing evidence that well-designed social procurement policies can expand employment, training and contract opportunities for marginalised groups, sub-national government in many countries are exploring how they can better leverage their spending to support inclusive development (OECD, 2022). While most sectoral schemes have tended to focus on construction, linked to major capital projects (such as the Sydney Metro – see case study below), they have wider relevance for the creative industries. Reviews of the efficacy of a range of international approaches¹⁶, emphasise several core factors. This is not least: the need to co-design approaches with sector partners; embed social objectives into the subject of the contract; establish practical targets and indicators that are proportionate to the scale of the contract; to invest in the internal capability of procurement staff; and to work with wider partners to support and build the capacity of businesses to deliver contract requirements.

Case study: leveraging public procurement to support local employment and training

Sydney Metro Workforce Development and Industry Participation Strategy, Australia

Sydney Metro is Australia's biggest public transport project. Recognising its potential skills legacy, Sydney Metro City and Southwest and New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education formed an agreement to be one of the first demonstration projects in NSW Government's wider programme to

¹⁶ See, for example, (OECD, 2021) (European Commission, 2019)

increase and extend the benefits of major infrastructure projects.

Sydney Metro committed to a range of minimum training and diversity targets, including minimum number of apprenticeships and traineeships; to increase the number of women and Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people employed in trade and non-trade positions; and to employ and train people from the local region. A Skills and Employment Advisory Group, bringing together government, industry bodies, employers and education and training providers, co-designed a range of projects to deliver these aspirations, including:

- Industry curriculum: aims to increase workforce capability and capacity by developing transferrable skills and competency of individuals across the industry, including mandatory pre-commencement to site training for designated occupations and all levels of management and leadership in order to address safety risk and skill gaps
- Pre-employment programme: to provide accredited entry-level technical skills and employability training for long-term unemployed and other under-represented groups in the workforce, with programs developed in consultation with potential employers and delivered in line with specific job roles and existing vacancies;
- Apprentice programme: provides contractors with short or long-term placements options based on the length of their package and apprentices with rotation service options to continue their apprenticeship while gaining experience on other packages within Sydney Metro projects;
- Aboriginal Participation initiatives: including requiring delivery partners to sub-contract 2% of contract value to Recognised Aboriginal businesses; to participate in Aboriginal business forums and other initiatives to support capacity building; to ensure Aboriginal peoples comprise 2.5% of the workforce; and a minimum number of sustainable jobs for pre-employment programme graduates.

Crucially, delivery partners were required to have a Workforce Development manager to drive outcomes during delivery and NSW Department for Education funded a dedicated Infrastructure Skills Legacy Project Officer to deliver workforce development initiatives and provide expert advice and guidance to the contractors.

Source: <https://www.sydneymetro.info/workforce-development-and-industry-participation>

Stakeholders also recognise the importance of *enhancing management capability to improve workplace practices* and the benefits of this for productivity and success, as well as economic inclusion. Workplace innovation programmes are promoted by the European Commission and evident in a range of nations - Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands, Nordic countries, Singapore and South Korea - as they grapple with the future of work and seek to drive improvements in productivity through better management practices. One well known example is the [Workplace Development Programme in Finland](#), latterly known as Liideri, which ran in various guises from the early 90s to 2018. The programme aimed to disseminate new and innovative work, organisational and management practices, models and tools, and to develop a "learning organisation" culture. The most common areas of focus for the development projects were work processes, the organisation of work, and the development of HR management and supervisory work. Evaluation evidence suggests that the project had positive impacts, both on organisational performance and the quality of working life.

There is growing evidence that bringing business communities with common interests together to work around shared goals can prove effective in securing and sustaining improvements and driving innovation. There are a range of examples internationally of programmes that aim to promote peer-to-peer learning and nurture communities of practice. These encapsulate a range of networks or forums that take varying forms, being sector-focused, supporting different professional groups and often being geographically based, but they can be vital in binding groups of businesses together, alongside other respected partners and experts, around a common purpose. Ireland's [PLATO Business Development Network](#), for example, is a long-standing peer to peer learning network, where participant groups work together to address shared business issues over an 18-month development programme.

Case study: enhancing management capability to improve workplace practices

PLATO Business Development Network, Ireland

PLATO is a peer-to-peer support and development network for owner-managers, established in Ireland almost 30 years ago. Delivered through Local Enterprise Offices, IBEC and Chambers Ireland, Plato is an 18-month development programme for managers of established small to medium sized businesses in every sector.

While there are various activities and support available to participants, including training and networking, at the core of the programme are participant groups. Each Plato Group has around twelve to fifteen participants and the make-up of each group is carefully considered by PLATO to incorporate the best mix of expertise and range of business experience. Groups meet for 3-hour, monthly sessions facilitated by large 'parent' companies. These sessions provide a vehicle to share information, expertise and experiences, where participants are able to raise issues relevant to their businesses and then discuss, confidentially, with the group. Groups decide what topics they want to discuss, and external business experts can be brought into group meetings to advise on specific topics.

The programme has assisted over 4,000 businesses across Ireland, and participants report improved management awareness and effectiveness; productivity, profitability and growth.

Source: <https://plato.ie/about-plato/>;

STRATEGY 4: PROMOTING INCLUSIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Alongside activities to promote more inclusive employment outcomes, there is also a need to consider how to support inclusive entrepreneurship and the scale-up of minority-led businesses.

In the UK, there exist significant gender, racial and socio-economic disparities in business start-up and success. Across the economy, female entrepreneurs, Black, Asian and other ethnic minority entrepreneurs and poorer entrepreneurs all have fundamentally different experiences of entrepreneurship and far worse outcomes, even when controlling for a wide range of factors linked to the individual and their business venture (British Business Bank & Oliver Wyman, 2020).

While we lack robust evidence for the creative sector, it is hard to imagine a more level playing field. The factors that inhibit women, people of colour, disabled people and those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds from accessing and progressing in work in the creative industries – not least a lack of financial and social capital – might be expected to present similar barriers to starting and scaling a business in the sector. As policymakers contemplate how best to nurture and expand creative clusters and exploit emerging opportunities in fields like 'Createch', they must therefore consider how to ensure people from all backgrounds can contribute to, and benefit from, commercial success, how the next wave of Creative entrepreneurs can be more diverse than those that went before them.

The challenge of promoting inclusive entrepreneurship is well-recognised in the international policy discourse - arguably much more so than in the UK. There is a long history of interventions that both seek to increase awareness and entrepreneurial appetite amongst underrepresented groups and address the barriers they face in establishing sustainable businesses (OECD, 2016). While these interventions have tended to focus on target cohorts rather than sectors, there remain some valuable examples of interventions with transferability to the national / sectoral context.

The significant impact that prior exposure to role models has on entrepreneurial intentions and behaviour is well-evidenced in the academic literature¹⁷ and we find a range of interventions that deploy *entrepreneurial role models to inspire entrepreneurship amongst underrepresented*

¹⁷ See (Abbasianchavari & Moritz, 2021) for a summary

groups. In Europe, this has often centred around the promotion of successful women entrepreneurs as role models in education, learning materials and promotional campaigns and celebrating success through awards. For example, Germany's [EXIST-Potentials](#) programme aims to increase the start-up potential of female students and scientists through the use of role models (OECD, 2021). Similarly, between 2008 and 2014, Sweden's [Women Ambassadors](#) programme engaged approximately 1,000 women entrepreneurs, who undertook a range of activities such as speaking in schools and developing networks of women in business, reaching an estimated 170,000 women, with programme participants found to have greater interest in entrepreneurship after meeting an ambassador (OECD, 2016).

There has been sharpened focus globally on embedding entrepreneurship at every stage of education and a growing number of examples of *targeted entrepreneurship education and training* for marginalised groups. These pre-start up activities can take a variety of formats, including: classroom-based or online training; workshops, masterclasses and bootcamps; coaching and peer to peer learning; and training that is integrated with other types of support (discussed further below). All such activities aim to develop the technical, business management and personal skills needed for business start-up and self-employment, while also improving confidence. The Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship – a programme run in Slovenia provides one such example, offering a suite of in-person training sessions for female entrepreneurs, with high rates of sustainable start-up amongst participants.

Case study: Targeted entrepreneurship education and training

Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship, Slovenia

The Slovenian entrepreneurship agency SPIRIT, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and Public Employment Service launched the Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship to help unemployed women with tertiary education back into work through self-employment.

The programme operated between 2016 and 2019 across five cities in Slovenia: Ljubljana, Maribor, Celje, Nova Gorca and Novo Mesto. Its overarching aim was to prepare and equip participants with the necessary knowledge, skills and networks to launch successful ventures.

Key activities included an introductory workshop, coupled with 15 in-person training sessions delivered by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and local partners, covering a range of topics: idea development, business planning, legal advice, and the varying measures and support for entrepreneurship on offer in Slovenia. Those that completed the training were awarded a start-up lump sum of €5,000, as well as follow-up training and mentorship.

The Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship programme received €1m per annum in public funding. In total, the programme supported 1,500 women – 90% of which established businesses that were active for at least two years.

Source: (OECD, 2023) Policy brief on improving the effectiveness of inclusive and social entrepreneurship training schemes

Other programmes provide an integrated series of learning opportunities, targeted to the needs of the target cohort. The [Enterability](#) programme in Berlin (Germany), for example, supports people with severe disabilities to become self-employed by offering seminars covering general start-up issues and disability-specific topics. [Digital Undivided's BIG program](#) (United States) offers experiential learning and peer-to-peer support for founders who identify as Latina, Black or both, who benefit from access to information and resources, 1-2-1 mentoring, coaching, peer-learning, and immersive learning experiences. Peer to peer learning is also central to Ireland's [Starting Strong](#) programme, which leverages volunteer contributions from successful entrepreneurs who facilitate peer support round tables, working through a structured approach over a six-month period to nurture a culture of trust and collaboration and facilitate the sharing of experiences and challenges.

Indeed, evaluation evidence generally emphasises the positive impact associated with customised programmes. Those that offer more intensive and sustained support, those with

an element of peer-to-peer learning, and schemes that integrate education and training into wider enterprise support that addresses multiple barriers faced by marginalised groups have also been shown to provide significant and sustained benefits (OECD, 2023).

There is a well-developed evidence base on *targeted business start-up support for entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds*. Access to finance has been a long-standing concern and an area where there are many well-established examples of organisations, funds and programmes that seek to overcome financial barriers. These can take a variety of approaches, including grant-funding, discounted loans and micro-finance, and bridging loans that provide financial support (sometimes through the welfare system) while entrepreneurs establish (and later scale) their business (OECD, 2016).

Most programmes blend financial support with wider services, customising support to the needs of participants. The [Inkubator Foundation](#) in Poland, for example, is comprised of two distinct units: one that offers financial support in the form of loans at preferential rates; and another that offers wider support, including information, training, advisory and consultancy services.

Case study: targeted business start-up support for entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds

The Inkubator Foundation, Łódź (Poland)

The [Inkubator Foundation](#) was established in 1992 by the City of Łódź and the Łódź Regional Development Agency to support entrepreneurship, economic development, innovation and the competitiveness of SMEs in the Łódź region of Poland.

The Foundation consists of two main organisational units: a centre for Entrepreneurship Support, which provides training, advisory, consulting and information services for entrepreneurs and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises; and the Entrepreneurship Development Fund, which provides loans on preferential terms for business creation for people from the target groups, including women, people with disabilities, individuals at risk of poverty or social exclusion; the unemployed; and younger or older people.

The Inkubator then draws on these units in designing and operating a wide range of projects tailored to specific target groups, generally including training and workshops on how to start a business, motivational, professional, legal and psychological support, business advice, and financial support for business creation.

The quality of services offered by the Inkubator Foundation is also guaranteed by external supervision by The Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) and by regional institutions implementing European Union programmes.

The survival rate of the companies established by the participants is very high. For example, 419 companies were set up between 2008 and 2013, of which 332 (79%) were still active in 2014.

Source: <https://inkubator.org.pl/> and (OECD, 2023) *Policy brief on improving the effectiveness of inclusive and social entrepreneurship training schemes*

Another example, the [Unternehmerinnenbrief](#) (translated as Entrepreneur Letter) – is an initiative run North Rhine Westphalian (NRW, Germany) which aims to build a network of support for women in starting and growing businesses. Women entrepreneurs can apply to Unternehmerinnenbrief in eight regions in NRW, submitting their business plan to an independent committee of experts. Those accepted to the network receive a certificate which provides access to a network of banks, business associations, chambers of commerce and business consultants and each certified member is also assigned a mentor for one year to provide support and advice.

[Startup Refugees](#) – a non-profit organisation based in Finland – takes this one step further in personalising services. By capturing a wide range of information on the refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants it helps on its 'Match Made Platform, it can better shape service provision and match participants with those providing support, offering a range of start-up and

business development services.

Case study: targeted business start-up support for entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds

Startup Refugees (Finland)

Founded in 2015 in response to an influx of asylum seekers, Start-Up Refugees is a social enterprise that provides support to asylum seekers, refugees and other immigrants in starting or scaling a business in Finland.

A key starting point for the programme was to develop the Match Made platform to capture information on the participants' education, work experience, skills, motivations, ambitions, potential business ideas and needs. These personal profiles both helped align support to the needs of the individual and to support a good match between participants and those providing support (e.g. mentors).

The Start-up Refugees Entrepreneurship Course is a ten-week course for immigrants that want to start a business in Finland, with training sessions, workshops, group working and mentoring to cover a range of topics including idea development; marketing, financial and legal issues; building a customer base and market research. Priority is given to those who face challenges in accessing information and support due to language, cultural or educational barriers.

The organisation also offers Business Development Services for refugees that are already running a business, including matching entrepreneurs with business experts who can provide support and coaching; as well as organising workshops, events and networking opportunities.

Startup Refugees now has a network of over 2,000 members, including companies, private and public sector organisations and individuals, that offer support to participants in skills development, employment and entrepreneurship. The organisation has collected over 8,000 immigrant profiles, provided 12,500 educational opportunities, supported over 1,625 people into employment and trained over 900 businesses.

Source: <https://startuprefugees.com/>

Creating opportunities for entrepreneurs to build networks has long been viewed as vital to business start-up and success and there is growing recognition of the particular importance of *network-building activities for entrepreneurs from disadvantaged backgrounds* who tend to have smaller entrepreneurial networks (OECD / European Union, 2015). Strategic networking is often a core component of business incubation, enabling entrepreneurs to meet investors, financial institutions and other support providers, as well as other entrepreneurs, helping entrepreneurs to build diverse networks and become better embedded within the entrepreneurial ecosystem (OECD / European Union, 2019).

Traditionally, the focus has been forging connections through chance meetings that occur through co-location (for example in specialist innovation centres, incubators or enterprise hubs) or more deliberative matching through events or other meet-ups, pitch days, hackathons and so on. One such example is [Curating Entrepreneurs NEW INC incubator](#), that provides a collaborative space in Manhattan's Lower East Side (New York, USA) for a group of 100 artists, designers, technologists, futurists, and creative entrepreneurs.

Case study: Network-building activities for under-represented entrepreneurs

NEW INC, New York (USA)

NEW INC was established in 2013 and being based in the New Museum in New York City became the first museum-led incubator for people working at the intersection of art, design and technology.

It provides workspace including community seating, bookable conference rooms, events space, resources and equipment. It also offers a professional development programme comprising workshops, panel discussions, guest speakers, mentorship, social events and peer working groups which build business proficiency, cultivates confidence and strengthens networks.

A decade on since its inception, NEW INC supports 100+ creative entrepreneurs each year, with 120+ mentors. There were 550+ alumni over a seven-year period, of which 50% were women, 12% were gender non-conforming and 54% were Black, indigenous and people of colour. It is estimated to have

created 595 jobs and 324 businesses to date.

Source: <https://www.newinc.org/> and (Culture Commons, 2019)

In contrast, the [Virtual Women's Business Centre in Croatia](#) takes an alternative approach, encouraging networking by organising local business hubs for women as well as encouraging women to join more mainstream business incubators. It also hosts the annual Business Women's Congress, sponsored by the President of Croatia and promoted by high-profile public figures.

STRATEGY 5: UNLOCKING THE POWER OF CULTURAL ANCHORS

What is abundantly clear from the examples presented above is the vital role that businesses can (and do) play in promoting inclusive growth. This has not escaped the attention of policymakers, with extensive global debate concerning co-responsibility for addressing economic, societal and environmental challenges and major international initiatives such as the OECD's [Business for Inclusive Growth Initiative](#).

One particular area of focus, particularly in the United States, has been the potential role that Anchor Institutions¹⁸ can play in ensuring local communities benefit more from local growth. In the UK context, this is often framed around the 'Preston Model', an approach deployed by city policymakers in the face of economic stagnation and under-investment that sought to mobilise local assets to the benefit of local communities, with a particular focus on promoting local and social procurement to reduce leakage and enhance activity in the local economy and delivering wider social impact.¹⁹

While there is growing focus on 'creative placemaking'²⁰, to date cultural institutions and major creative businesses have often been overlooked in the policy discourse concerning Anchor Institutions, despite the important and wide-ranging contribution they can make to the inclusive growth agenda in cities (Zueli, et al., 2019).

Like other large organisations, they will have considerable procurement budgets and be intertwined with local supply chains, creating scope to *better leverage the procurement levers of cultural and creative anchors* to support inclusive development of the local economy. This could include proactively targeting a greater share of their spend towards local, minority-led businesses. The [Smithsonian in Washington \(USA\)](#), for example, sets ambitious targets for the extent to which their procurement budget benefits small, minority-led businesses, deploying a range of measures to help achieve them.

Case study: Maximising the procurement levers of Cultural and Creative Anchors

Smithsonian Supplier Diversity Program, Washington D.C. (United States)

Established in the early 1990s, The Smithsonian's Supplier Diversity Program aims to provide advocacy for and direction to small and disadvantaged businesses, including minority, socially and economically disadvantaged and veteran led businesses. A key concern is ensuring these firms receive equal opportunity and appropriate consideration in the Smithsonian's procurement of goods and services.

The programme includes a variety of components, including:

- Outreach activities to enhance the awareness amongst small businesses and those located in historically underutilised business zones (HUSBs) of contracting opportunities with the Smithsonian;

¹⁸ Anchor institutions are large organisations that are fixed in a particular place; rooted in the local economy and community; organisations like Local Authorities, Universities and Colleges, Hospitals, Housing Associations and large private sector businesses

¹⁹ A fuller discussion of the Preston Model, in the context of the Creative Industries, can be found [here](#).

²⁰ Creative placemaking generally refers to the use of arts, culture and creative thinking to shape community planning and development. While this often focuses on the physical realm, expanded models are emerging, acknowledging the scope for wider impact on a range of community outcomes, including expanding opportunities for people with low incomes.

- Resources to assist small businesses and HUSBs with their marketing efforts;
- Maintaining a database of qualified small businesses and HUSBs used to inform vendor searches for Smithsonian buyers;
- Training seminars to educate Smithsonian buyers of the benefits of utilising small and HUSBs;
- Evaluation of large contractors' subcontracting plans, including the negotiation of goals for the participation of small businesses and HUSBs and the monitoring of performance across the supply chain after contract award;
- The establishment and monitoring of gaps for the inclusion of small and HUSBs.

In 2022, 29% of the Smithsonian's procurement spend went to small businesses (equivalent to over \$200m); 17% to small disadvantaged businesses (equivalent to \$120m+ and exceeding the target of 5%).

Source: <https://www.si.edu/OEEMA/SupplierDiversity> and (Zueli, et al., 2019)

However, the potential impact of anchors is not limited to their ability to spend more locally. The relationship between anchors and their suppliers can, for example, be leveraged to enhance capacity amongst small, minority-led enterprises within their supply chain. One such example is the [POSCO HRD Consortium in South Korea](#), where POSCO – a major producer of steel – works with its extensive supply chain to encourage greater investment in skills, while also working with vocational education and training providers to help shape skills provision.

Case study: Ambitious, multi-faceted social impact strategies

POSCO HRD Consortium, South Korea

Larger firms can encourage the better use of skills through their supply chain management practices. The POSCO HRD Consortium addresses company human resources management issues by involving change management, whereby POSCO's HRD Consortium provides leadership education to managers on developing a common company vision in partnership with employees.

POSCO has a large number of suppliers and outsourcing contractors that deliver goods and services for the production of steel in Korea. These companies, which are mostly SMEs, are located in the supply chain of POSCO and are not direct competitors.

Through the POSCO HRD Consortium, SMEs are encouraged to increase investments in their own education and training programmes. POSCO also partners with local vocational education and training providers to provide 130 courses in technology, safety, information technology, and ethics, including an E-MBA curriculum for executive members.

Source: <https://newsroom.posco.com/en/posco-s-national-human-resource-development-consortium-cultivates-talents-smes/>

As noted earlier, major businesses are frequently involved in outreach activities to schools or provide targeted employment and training opportunities for minority groups or those that live in deprived neighbourhoods. The Arsht Center paid apprenticeship programme for young people from diverse backgrounds or the Cleveland Museum's curatorial training for those from underserved neighbours provide two such examples.

There is an opportunity for city-regional policy makers to *encourage Creative and Cultural Anchors to develop ambitious, multi-faceted social impact strategies*, which leverage the full breadth of their potential influence. This could include local and social procurement; offering fair pay and quality jobs for workers; directing education and employment opportunities towards under-represented groups; strengthening the management capability and employment practices of SMEs, minority-led businesses and other firms in their supply chain; as well as unlocking the potential role of creative place-making in shaping urban development and neighbourhood renewal. The Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC)'s Strategic Anchor

Framework provides a useful tool for thinking about the potential range of impacts local Creative and Cultural Anchors could achieve (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: ICIC's Strategic Anchor Framework



Source: (Zueli, et al., 2019)

In addition to encouraging Anchors to extend their reach and impact, there is also scope to promote greater collaboration between Anchors. Across the world, many cities are working to *develop collaborative, multi-Anchor programmes* which support more significant and sustained action and the ability to work to deliver more transformative impact.

For instance, the [Chicago Anchors for a Strong Economy \(USA\)](#) is a network of 15 Anchors committed to harnessing their collective purchasing power to promote economic vitality across Chicago. In addition to redirecting spend locally and making information about suitable contracts available through the network, CASE also facilitates direct matching to Anchors for high potential businesses, coupled with ongoing advisory services throughout the procurement process; cohort-based capacity-building programmes for potential suppliers requiring support, covering general business readiness topics; and one-to-one support and cohort-based training for businesses requiring more advanced, customised intervention.

One of the best-known and most extensive multi-anchor strategy is the [Greater University Circle Initiative \(GUCI\) in Cleveland \(USA\)](#) which brings together several Anchors from across the city to address critical issues and maximise their collective impact.

Case study: Developing collaborative, multi-anchor programmes

Greater University Circle Initiative, Cleveland (USA)

The Greater University Circle Initiative (GUCI) was launched in 2005 by the Cleveland Foundation to foster opportunities for economic inclusion of neighbourhood residents and businesses in the Greater University District in Cleveland, Ohio. Its goals were to create jobs, address poverty, build community wealth and family assets, and promote environmental sustainability in development.

Originally a partnership between Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals, the initiative has expanded over time to include a larger range of local Anchors, including the Cleveland Institute of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art creating a collaborative structure which allows diverse institutions to identify and lead mutually beneficial projects.

Early in the initiative, the group sought to focus its efforts on four major work streams: Buy Local, Hire Local, Live Local, and Connect Residents. Activities are wide-ranging, including:

- Developing new cooperatively owned businesses that serve institutional needs, employ neighbourhood residents and build community wealth;

- A business growth and retention program that has secured millions of dollars of investment;
- Incentives for new residents to move to GUCI target areas and for existing residents of these areas to improve their homes;
- A new institute that provides workforce training programmes for adults and after school programmes for children;
- A community engagement programme that connects residents with each other and with local leaders, while also funding various projects that promote neighbourhood renewal;
- The completion of a mixed-use project and nearby transportation

Evaluation evidence demonstrates wide-ranging impact, including an increase in anchor procurement in the city and increased hiring from GUCI neighbourhoods, including disadvantaged residents. Anchors themselves also report the considerable value of having a place to exchange ideas, address critical issues and maximise their collective impact – facilitated by the convening power of the Cleveland Foundation.

Source: (Cleveland Foundation, 2013) (Zueli, et al., 2019) (Schnoke, et al., 2018)

4.3 Key learnings for future policy-making

Our examination of international practice shows that the UK is not alone in its ambition to address economic inequality and promote shared prosperity, and the research sought to explore what could potentially be learnt from international approaches to promoting more inclusive growth of clusters.

We identify over 30 examples of interesting and effective practice, drawn from more than 15 different countries across the globe, which we hope will stimulate thinking on the range of potential policy directions and options that could be implemented in UK cities and regions. These constitute what we describe as *five, mutually reinforcing, international strategies for promoting inclusive growth of clusters*:

1. Diversify education pathways, by advancing targeted careers interventions, employer inspiration and outreach activities; strengthening technical education pathways; and through network building activities and mentoring to aid transition between education and work;

2. Connect those disadvantaged in the labour market with jobs in growth sectors, by re/upskilling displaced workers; providing targeted employment or training opportunities for disadvantaged groups; and sector-focussed employment, retention and advancement programmes;

3. Advancing Good Work and inclusive working practices, by establishing employment standards; utilising financial and non-financial incentives to drive improvements in job quality; and investing in activities that enhance management capability to improve workplace practices;

4. Promoting inclusive entrepreneurship, deploying entrepreneurial role models to inspire entrepreneurship amongst underrepresented groups and providing targeted entrepreneurship education and training; business start-up support; and network-building activities for entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds; and

5. Unlocking the power of cultural anchors, by better leveraging their procurement levers to support inclusive development; encouraging more ambitious, multi-faceted social impact strategies; and developing collaborative multi-anchor programmes that deliver more transformative impact.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

Against the backdrop of the creative industries Sector Vision and with the city-regional devolution agenda regaining momentum, this research has sought to consider how to position equality and inclusion more firmly at the centre of the creative cluster development agenda, and the place-based approaches that might ensure the opportunities created during this next phase of growth benefit a more diverse group of people and places across the UK.

We have found much good work underway across the country and internationally. Even with the UK's highly centralised political economy, cities and regions can and are taking measures to promote inclusive growth and enhance equality, diversity and inclusion in the creative industries and beyond.

Reflecting on our in-depth study of the Yorkshire screen cluster, case studies of other UK cities and regions and review of international practice, we provide five key recommendations for policymakers and practitioners:

1. Baseline equality and inclusion in regional creative clusters

While we are developing better evidence on creative clusters and micro clusters across the UK, we still lack robust evidence on whether the opportunities created as clusters expand are equitably distributed, benefitting people from diverse backgrounds and those living in social mobility 'cold spots' within these regions.

While the publication of data from the 2021 Census provides a once-in-a-decade opportunity for robust regional sectoral analysis, there is a need to develop new intelligence systems that can baseline and track trends in equality, diversity and inclusion in creative clusters.

Our experimental primary research in the Yorkshire and Humber Screen Cluster provides some important learnings in this regard, highlighting a need to develop mechanisms to include emerging sectors within sampling frames; to promote a sense of ownership and buy-in amongst employers in order to improve response rates; and to simplify and streamline the survey questionnaire, using modularisation and follow-up research to manage the trade-off between the depth of information the survey provides and response rates.

2. Make *inclusive growth* the primary objective of the creative cluster development agenda and connect with wider place-based strategies that share this aim

The research has highlighted promising examples of UK cities and regions positioning Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles into the core of the creative cluster's growth strategy. This represents a significant shift: moving away from past approaches that have limited EDI to a 'workforce issue', to better recognise the value of diversity not just as a social good but as a key driver of innovation and creativity, integral to growth ambitions.

In addition to making inclusive development the primary concern, the research also highlights scope to promote greater connectivity between sector-focussed and place-based approaches to inclusive growth. This means better situating activities to promote greater equality and inclusion in the creative industries within wider place-based strategies, while ensuring the latter also recognise the important role of sectoral policy interventions in delivering inclusive growth ambitions. Our research suggests that promoting a common definition of inclusion and agreed measures of this outcome will be key, and this means moving away from narrowly defined measures of economic growth towards those that capture shared prosperity, wellbeing, social and cultural inclusion.

3. Advance a multi-faceted, integrated set of active policy measures to promote equality and inclusion

A vast body of evidence suggests that inequality in the creative industries is often rooted in the structural features of the sector, yet our review of policy and practice in the UK suggests the weight of our current effort tends to focus on individual barriers and promoting access to work. While we have seen increased focus in recent years on improving job quality and incentivising and enabling more inclusive business practices – as seen in Yorkshire, Belfast, Sussex, Bristol & Bath – more work is needed to address structural issues. This demonstrates the central role that employers must play in shaping and re-shaping production systems, in the fair design of contracting and procurement, and in their approaches to innovation and skills development as core aspects which fundamentally shape job quality and opportunity in the creative industries.

There is also a need to accept that workforce diversity is only part of the challenge. For example, several of the AHRC-funded R&D Partnerships, including XR Stories, B&B CREATIVE R&D and Clwstwr have examined how to embed EDI principles within their R&D programmes. Inclusive entrepreneurship features considerably in the international policy discourse and there are valuable lessons to be drawn from international policy approaches if we are to ensure that people from all backgrounds contribute to, and benefit from, the commercial success of the creative industries moving forwards.

Altogether this points to a need for policymakers to expand the range of strategies and activities that are being deployed and this report illustrates the wide range of potential policy directions and options (summarised in Figure 5.1 overleaf).

Our in-depth study of the Yorkshire screen cluster and case studies of other UK city regions also provide some promising examples of an evolution of the approach, away from stand-alone programmatic activities to wider-ranging strategies that embed equality and inclusion more centrally within organisational priorities and programmes.

Figure 5.1: Strategies and policies for driving inclusive growth of creative clusters

	Policy approaches	Examples
1. Diversify education pathways	Targeted careers interventions, employer inspiration and other outreach activities	The BRIDGE project (Rotterdam, The Netherlands) Inclusive Growth City Charter (Belfast, UK)
	Strengthen technical education pathways	Centre of Screen Excellence (Yorkshire & Humber, UK) Mayor's Academy Programme (London, UK) Skillnet (Republic of Ireland) Southern California Regional Energy Network Emerald City Collaborative (South California, US) Aveiro STEAM City (Aveiro, Portugal)
	Network-building activities and mentoring to aid transition to work	COSTI's netWORKS programme (Toronto, Canada)
2. Connect those disadvantaged in the labour market with jobs in growth sectors	Reskilling / upskilling of displaced workers	Rotterdam Schooling Fund (The Netherlands)
	Targeted employment or training opportunities for disadvantaged groups	Beyond Brontës (Yorkshire & Humber, UK) Year Up (USA) Arst Center Apprenticeship Program (Miami, USA) Cleveland Curatorial Arts Mastery Program (Cleveland, USA) Inclusive Growth City Charter (Belfast, UK) Bristol Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy (Bristol, UK) Glasgow Vision 2035 (Glasgow, UK)
	Sector-focussed employment, retention and advancement programmes	Next Level (Yorkshire & Humber, UK) Project Quest (Texas, USA) Work Advance (New York, Ohio and Oklahoma, USA) Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (USA) Mayor's Academy Programme (London, UK)
3. Advance Good Work and inclusive workplace practices	Employment standards to drive improvements in job quality	Barcelona Agreement for Quality Employment (Spain) Inclusive Growth City Charter & Good Work Standard (Belfast, UK)
	Financial and non-financial incentives to drive change	Enterprise Training Scheme (Singapore) Sydney Metro Workforce Development and Industry Participation Strategy (Australia)
	Enhancing management capability to improve workplace practices	Wired Sussex Diversity & Inclusion Working Group and Toolkit (Sussex, UK) Employment Academies, peer to peer learning & accreditation (Belfast, UK) New Talent Fellows inclusive leadership model (Bristol & Bath, UK) Workplace Development Programme (Finland) Plato (Republic of Ireland)
4. Promote inclusive entrepreneurship	Targeted entrepreneurship education and training	EXIST- Potentials (Germany) Women Ambassadors (Sweden) Promotion of Women Entrepreneurship (Slovenia) Enterability (Germany)
	Targeted enterprise support, including access to finance, advice, coaching & mentoring; and peer-to-peer support	The Inkubator Foundation (Poland) Unternehmerinnenbrief (Germany) Startup Refugees (Finland) Clwstwr support for innovation (Cardiff, UK)
	Network-building activities for entrepreneurs from disadvantaged backgrounds	NEW INC (USA) Virtual Women's Business Centre (Croatia)
5. Unlock the potential of cultural anchors	Maximising procurement levers	Smithsonian Supplier Diversity Program (Washington, USA)
	Building out anchor activities	XR Stories and the Screen Industry Growth Network (UK) ICIC Strategic Anchor Frameworks POSCO HRD Consortium (South Korea)
	Multi-Institutional Anchor Programmes	Chicago Anchors for a Sustainable Economy (USA) Coventry Cultural Strategy (Coventry, UK)

4. Maximise local partnerships and employer engagement to promote collaborative action, customisation of programmes and policy continuity

Across a wide range of case studies, there is strong evidence of partnership working among different stakeholders – including the public sector, education (including universities) and sector bodies. This is shown to deliver multiple benefits, not least the ability to weave together a wide range of services, activities and expertise in a way that supports the customisation of programmes to local needs and that facilitates action across the range of different policy domains which influence inclusive growth.

We do, however, find a need to strengthen the engagement and investment of private-sector employers in an inclusive growth agenda. This is an area where a sector-based approach can yield real dividends, uniting business communities with shared interests and promoting peer-to-peer learning. Strong established partnerships forged in local places can also help to mitigate the impact of shifting national policy priorities and funding streams, promoting policy continuity and action over the long-term, which is vital in addressing deep-rooted inequalities and structural challenges.

5. Build our collective understanding and evidence base of 'what works' in promoting more inclusive development of creative clusters

Finally, while several of our case studies have established EDI targets and monitoring dashboards, our research echoes wider work in finding a dearth of robust evaluation evidence on the impact of interventions seeking to enhance equality and inclusion in the creative sector. There is often a reliance on anecdotal evidence or limited project monitoring and a tendency to advance more EDI programmes, before the impact of existing measures has been fully realized or examined.

While the UK is not alone in this regard, our review of international practice did find a wider array of better-evaluated programmes. In particular, the extensive evaluation of programmes funded through the US Government's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity act – some of which over a 25 year timespan – demonstrate the value of robust evaluation evidence in drawing lessons from their successes and failures to inform future policy making and programme design.

Ring-fencing funding for programme evaluation, promoting consistency and comparability in impact measurement and developing mechanisms that support knowledge exchange between creative clusters could therefore be pivotal in improving our collective understanding of 'what works' in promoting more inclusive development of creative clusters.

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