



**Evaluation of the Artists'  
International  
Development Fund 2012-  
2015**

**Final Report**

**March 2016**

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## Summary

### About the programme

The Artists' International Development Fund (AIDF) is jointly funded by the British Council and Arts Council England. The programme offers early stage development opportunities for individual freelance and self-employed artists based in England to spend time building links with artists, organisations and/or creative producers in another country. The programme accepts proposals covering a range of artforms with artists able to apply for small grants of up to £5,000.

Following the launch of the programme in 2012 a total of 1,889 grant applications have been received by Arts Council England. These have resulted in a total of 389 awards and investment of £1,632,225 across 10 rounds.

### Investment profile

Since the launch of the programme the majority (52%) of applications have been received from artists based in London, a ratio that has remained relatively consistent across rounds 1-10. As such, 50% of the programme investment has, to date, been awarded to London-based artists. It is difficult to assess the extent to which this profile is a result of a greater proportion of artists wishing to work internationally being based in London or artists from outside of London being less aware of the opportunity presented by the AIDF programme. It is possible that London-based artists are better connected and networked and so may be more likely to benefit from a hearing about the AIDF via a non-Arts Council England communication channel.

The majority of investment awards for rounds 1-10 have been made for visual arts projects (44%) with theatre (16%), combined arts (13%) and music (13%) being the other main artforms supported.

Analysis of the programme investment by the location of activity reveals that the Americas (28%) and the European Union (25%) have accounted for the greatest proportion of awards across rounds 1-10. More detailed analysis of the countries visited by AIDF grantees shows that the United States of America accounted for 16% of all visits with Australia in second place with 7%, followed by Germany and India which each accounted for 5%.

### Attractions of the programme

The relative simplicity of the application process was highlighted by artists as a key attraction for submitting an application. Several artists also highlighted the pre-application guidance provided by Arts Council England and the on the ground support provided by the British Council as important elements of the programme, in particular for early stage or mid-career artists with limited experience of working internationally.

The relatively short decision making timeframe and eligibility criteria covering related travel expenses were also highlighted as important in enabling artists to progress their collaboration and take up opportunities.

### **Artistic development**

Artists in receipt of an AIDF grant are overwhelmingly positive about its impact on their artistic development with 98% agreeing that it has supported their development. For many, their AIDF grant has provided them with a new direction for their work, has challenged their existing practice, inspired them to explore different artistic techniques and encouraged them to take risks. The majority of artists (92%) also agreed that they have used the learning from their AIDF activity to support their practice in the UK thus providing benefits for UK audiences.

### **Market development**

The grant has been successful in supporting artists to enter new markets with three quarters (76%) reporting to have received bookings or invitations to make or show work as a result of their AIDF activity. For just under half (47%) of the artists their AIDF activity led to subsequent trips to the country visited following the completion of their project. Two fifths (40%) reported that their AIDF activity led to subsequent trips to new territories or international markets.

### **International collaboration**

The majority of artists (90%) agree that their AIDF grant has provided them with valuable practical and logistical experience of working in an international context. Cited examples include dealing with import/export regulations, securing a visa to cover the period of work and knowing how to use local resources and infrastructure to facilitate the delivery of their arts activity.

Just under two thirds of artists (62%) strongly agreed that they have been able to establish valuable international networks and contacts to support future collaborations. Following the completion of their grant activity nearly all of the artists (99%) responding to the online survey report to be actively pursuing international work and collaboration opportunities. In addition, some 96% of artists indicate that they have recommended international working and collaboration to other artists or creative practitioners.

### **Career benefits**

One of the key research questions for the evaluation was to understand the extent to which the AIDF programme has provided lasting career benefits for grantees. A majority (93%) of artists reported that they felt their AIDF experience has provided lasting career benefits. Some 91% of artists also stated that the experience of delivering their AIDF project has increased their confidence to work on an international basis.

### **Challenges and barriers**

Although several artists found the delivery of their AIDF activity challenging, they have been able to use their experience and associated learning to inform and shape future collaborations. In this regard the AIDF programme has been valuable in providing artists with an opportunity to experience international collaboration with a safety net of funding support and guidance from staff from Arts Council England and the British Council.

### **Areas for development**

There is merit in encouraging, and where possible, supporting the AIDF alumni to share learning from their international work. Enabling artists to share experiences of working in either the same territories/British Council regions or similar artistic projects would support a process of informal peer to peer learning. This in turn has the potential to lead to new collaborations (domestically and internationally) and joint bidding to funding opportunities.

### **Conclusion**

The AIDF programme has provided many artists with a new direction for their work, challenged their existing practice, inspired them to explore different artistic techniques and encouraged them to take risks. The programme has been successful in raising the profile and reputation of artists in receipt of a grant and for many has led directly to further bookings or invitations to make or show work.

The majority of artists have also used the learning from their AIDF activity to support their practice in the UK. This suggests that the AIDF programme has enabled audiences in the UK to experience artwork inspired by other cultures or artistic talent from across the world.

The positive outcomes outlined in this report and lasting benefits realised for AIDF grantees indicates that the programme is both achieving its main objectives and providing strong value for money for Arts Council England and the British Council.

### **Recommendations**

1. Continued efforts are required to encourage applications from artists from diverse backgrounds, different artforms and from different areas of England. Showcasing the artistic and career benefits from former grantees can assist in raising awareness of the programme and inspiring future cohorts of emerging and mid-career artists to consider applying to the fund.
2. The British Council should clarify the minimum support that artists can expect to receive in order to manage the expectations of future grantees.
3. Arts Council England and the British Council should explore the feasibility of signposting AIDF grantees to other sources of support, guidance and information in order to facilitate continued international collaboration and market development.
4. Opportunities for encouraging and supporting information sharing and exchange across the AIDF programme alumni should be explored as this has the potential to support a process of peer to peer learning and future collaborative activity.
5. The FAQs section of the Guidance for Applicants should be extended to include learning points, key considerations and practical experience from previous grant recipients.

## 1 Introduction

1.1 In January 2016 Consilium Research and Consultancy (Consilium) was commissioned by Arts Council England and the British Council to deliver an evaluation of the Artists' International Development Fund (AIDF). The fund was launched in 2012 and has made 389 awards to artists across ten rounds of funding.

1.2 The purpose of evaluating the AIDF programme was to determine the extent to which it has produced the following long-term outcomes:

- Artistic and/or market development for artists and creative practitioners;
- A cadre of artists and creative practitioners in the UK (and also globally) who have experienced the benefits of international working between the UK and other countries and are advocates for it among their peers; and
- An increase in the amount of international collaboration among artists and/or creative practitioners between the UK and other countries across the arts and creative industries.

1.3 This report presents the findings of the evaluation drawing on both primary and secondary data. Section 2.0 of this report provides an overview of the key research stages with further detail on the background and delivery of the AIDF programme provided in Section 3.0. An analysis of the programme investment data covering rounds 1-10 is provided in Section 4.0. Evidence of the extent to which the AIDF programme has achieved its aims and achieved lasting benefits for artists, cultural organisations and the creative sector from rounds 1-8 of the programme is presented in Section 5.0. Key conclusions and recommendations are presented in the final Section 6.0 of this report.

1.4 The research team has been supported by a large number of AIDF grantees that have kindly given up their time to contribute their experiences and feedback to the evaluation. Their time and support has been greatly appreciated.

## 2 Research Method

- 2.1 The evaluation has been delivered using a range of desk-based and primary research tasks. An initial desk-based exercise was undertaken to analyse the programme investment data provided by Arts Council England and also consider the internal 'light-touch' review undertaken in spring 2013. The research team also conducted a series of interviews with staff from both Arts Council England and the British Council in order to obtain views on the delivery of the AIDF programme to date and also to help to shape the research tools. A list of completed stakeholder consultations is provided in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 This was followed by a qualitative analysis of a sample of the Activity Report Forms that AIDF grantees are required to submit to Arts Council England following the completion of their project. The analysis of the Activity Report Forms enabled the research team to explore the experience of successful grantees at the completion of their project and highlighted a number of themes to investigate as part of the primary research fieldwork.
- 2.3 A total of 156 Activity Report Forms were reviewed across the first seven rounds of the programme, equating to 67% of all grantees. A breakdown of the sample of Activity Report Forms reviewed is provided in Appendix 2.
- 2.4 In order to capture views and reflections from artists on the longer-term impact and lasting benefit of their AIDF grant, an online survey was designed and disseminated to 265 grantees from rounds 1-8 on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016. This was left open until the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016 (see Appendix 3 for the survey questionnaire).
- 2.5 A total of 140 grantees responded to the online survey, equating to a response rate of 53%. The profile of artists responding to the online survey is provided in Appendix 4 and is broadly comparable to the profile of all artists securing grants from the AIDF Programme.
- 2.6 In order to explore the impact and lasting benefits of the AIDF programme on grantees in further detail, a series of depth qualitative interviews was undertaken with a sample of 20 artists. The sample was drawn from across rounds 1-7. The later rounds (8-10) were excluded given that there would have been limited time for longer-term outcomes to emerge. The sample also included artists from across eight English regions and whose projects covered different artforms (see Table 2.1 over page).

**Table 2.1 - Depth interview sample**

Round	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Number	3	2	6	4	1	2	2	0	<b>20</b>

Region	Number
East	1
London	7
North East	1
North West	3
South East	3
South West	2
West Midlands	2
Yorkshire & Humber	1
Total	<b>20</b>

Artform	Number
Combined	2
Dance	0
Literature	5
Music	3
Theatre	2
Visual	7
Other	1
Total	<b>20</b>

- 2.7 A full list of artists consulted using qualitative depth interviews is provided in Appendix 5. A series of case studies have been produced drawing on individual data included in the Activity Report Forms, survey responses and depth interviews. These are presented in Appendix 6.

### 3 Background to the AIDF Programme

3.1 Arts Council England has developed five strategic goals at the heart of their mission and ten-year strategy to ensure ‘Great art and culture for everyone’<sup>1</sup>. Key to achieving two of these goals is Arts Council England’s work to enable international activity of arts and cultural organisations. International activity delivers against:

- **Goal One:** Artistic excellence and talent development - a target included in the ten-year strategy is that England is known as a world centre of artistic excellence and visitors cite the arts as a reason to visit England.
- **Goal Three:** economic resilience and diversification of income sources. This is an enabler of Goal One, as a more economic resilience and sustainability allows for more talent development and opportunities.

3.2 Arts Council England refreshed its approach to international working in 2013. It is now founded on the three principles of exchange, partnership and growth with each working towards the two strategic goals summarised above<sup>2</sup>.

3.3 This approach to international investment aims to realise the benefits of cultural export and exchange with international collaborations between artists in order to improve the cultural offer available in England. It also aims to provide audiences with the chance to experience artistic talent from across the world, while enriching the practice of artists and organisations in England. Working internationally also provides artists and cultural leaders in England with opportunities to develop new markets and audiences overseas.

3.4 Arts are also a cornerstone of the British Council’s mission to create a friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and the wider world<sup>3</sup>. The mission also supports the development of stronger creative sectors around the world that are better connected with the UK.

#### **Artists’ International Development Fund**

3.5 The AIDF is jointly funded by the British Council and Arts Council England. The programme offers early stage development opportunities for individual freelance and self-employed artists based in England to spend time building links with artists, organisations and/or creative producers in another country.

<sup>1</sup> [www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/great-art-and-culture-everyone](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/great-art-and-culture-everyone)

<sup>2</sup> [www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/international/](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-priorities-2011-15/international/)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.britishcouncil.org/arts>

3.6 The programme is open to emerging and mid-career artists and/or creative practitioners:

- Who have received recognition for their work in England;
- Who do not have extensive international experience or whose international experience is limited to countries other than those that are the subject of their proposal;
- Whose work will benefit from launching better international networks - either artistically or in terms of developing an audience for their work; and
- Who can demonstrate an interest in their work from an overseas partner/host, demonstrated by a letter of support from the overseas partner/host.

3.7 Artists are able to apply for small grants of up to £5,000 (with a minimum award of £1,000) and can only apply once in any 12 month period. Although artists are able to re-apply to the programme in a subsequent year, the guidance is clear that repeat applications are unlikely to be successful as the intention is to use the fund to support as many individual artists and/or creative practitioners as possible.

3.8 Although the AIDF programme is aimed at individuals, small groups of artists and/or creative practitioners (including the applicant as 'lead artist') who normally collaborate in their work can also apply. This can include, for example, musicians and visual artists who usually create work together, or writers and their translators.

3.9 Resources do not cover residencies for larger groups such as whole theatre or dance companies, nor does it support curatorial work based from a gallery or museum which involves researching and setting up an exhibition. The programme can cover the targeted exchange of key creative people to develop new concepts or relationships.

3.10 The programme accepts proposals covering a range of artforms including:

- Combined arts;
- Literature;
- Music;
- Theatre;
- Dance;
- Visual arts; and
- Crafts and design (including architecture and fashion design).

### **Programme Review**

- 3.11 In late spring 2013, after the first year of the programme, an internal 'light touch' review was conducted by staff from the Arts Council and the British Council. The main purpose of the review was to explore whether, and to what extent, the programme was achieving its aims in the short-term.
- 3.12 The review concluded that artists who were awarded grants really liked the concept and set-up of the fund with most finding the application process straightforward, although some had problems with the financial side. Qualitative evidence gathered from a small sample of artists highlighted a range of achievements and positive impacts as well as 'process' learning points for the Arts Council and the British Council.
- 3.13 The review also highlighted a number of unintended outcomes, the most significant of which related to the credibility and validation that the award gave grantees, both when dealing with contacts and peers internationally and in their work on returning to England. Following the completion of the review a small number of case studies were produced to inspire and encourage future applicants to the programme<sup>4</sup>.
- 3.14 This evaluation report presents further evidence from artists three years from the completion of the review of the programme in 2013 and draws on feedback from artists across programme rounds 1-8. Engaging artists in receipt of a grant from the earlier rounds of the programme also provides an opportunity to assess the lasting benefits and longer-term outcomes achieved as a result of the funding provided through the AIDF programme.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/apply-for-funding/artists-international-development-fund/](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/apply-for-funding/artists-international-development-fund/)

## 4.0 Analysis of AIDF Programme Investment Data

- 4.1 Since the launch of the programme in 2012 a total of 1,889 grant applications have been received by Arts Council England across rounds 1-10 resulting in a total of 389 awards. The success rate for applicants has varied across the first ten rounds of the programme with the first four rounds recording the lowest success rate (see Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1 - Number of applications and awards Rounds 1-10**

Round	Applications		Awards		Success Rate
	No.	%	No.	%	%
1	291	15	25	6	9
2	135	7	26	7	19
3	214	11	22	6	10
4	190	10	20	5	11
5	75	4	35	9	47
6	215	11	52	13	24
7	209	11	51	13	24
8	197	10	34	9	17
9	209	11	70	18	33
10	154	8	54	14	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,889</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>21</b>

Source: Arts Council England

- 4.2 The programme has made an investment of £1,632,225 across rounds 1-10 with an average grant award of £4,196 (see Table 4.2). This falls approximately 16% below the maximum grant award available of £5,000.

**Table 4.2 - Average grant award Rounds 1-10**

Round	Awards		Awarded amount		Average award
	No.	%	£	%	£
1	25	6	100,996	6	4,040
2	26	7	93,675	6	3,603
3	22	6	86,347	5	3,925
4	20	5	65,089	4	3,254
5	35	9	144,542	9	4,130
6	52	13	225,901	14	4,344
7	51	13	207,358	13	4,066
8	34	9	165,477	10	4,867
9	70	18	302,778	19	4,325
10	54	14	240,062	15	4,446
<b>Total</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,632,225</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4,196</b>

Source: Arts Council England

- 4.3 Since the launch of the programme the majority (52%) of applications have been received from artists based in London, a ratio that has remained relatively consistent across the ten rounds. The South West and South East have accounted for 10% and 9% of all applications respectively. As such, 50% of the programme investment has, to date, been awarded to London based artists (see Figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1 - Amount awarded (£) Rounds 1-10**



Source: Arts Council England

- 4.4 Nearly half (48%) of applications across rounds 1-10 have focused on visual arts. Theatre and combined arts (each 14%) are the next most frequent artforms included within proposals (see Table 4.3). As a consequence the majority of investment awards for rounds 1-10 have been made for visual arts projects (44%) with theatre (16%), combined arts (13%) and music (13%) being the other main artforms supported.

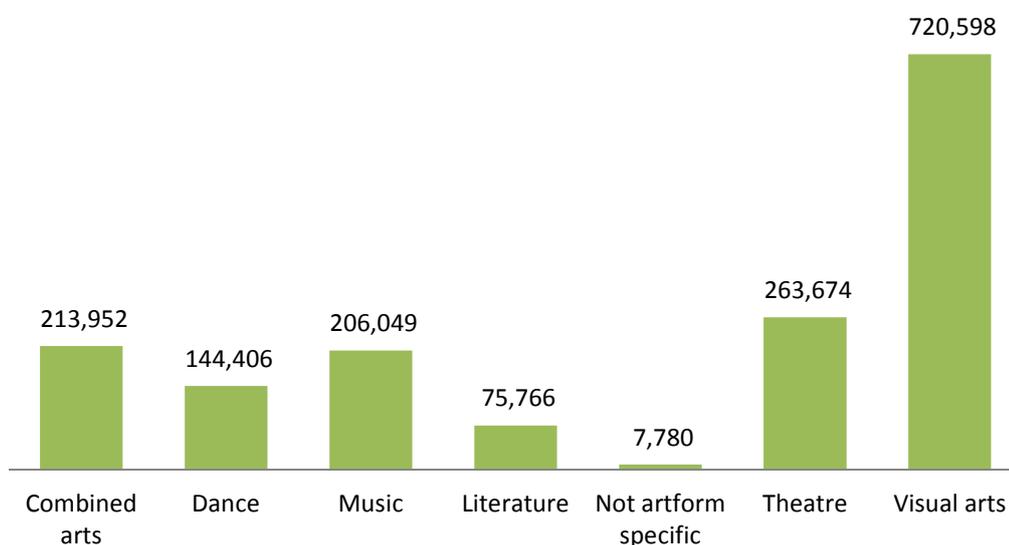
**Table 4.3 - Artform profile of applications and awards Rounds 1-10**

Artform	Applications		Awards		Success Rate
	No.	%	No.	%	%
Combined arts	259	14	53	14	20
Dance	140	7	33	8	24
Music	232	12	50	13	22
Literature	80	4	20	5	25
Not artform specific	14	1	1	0	7
Theatre	258	14	61	16	24
Visual arts	906	48	171	44	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,889</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>21</b>

Source: Arts Council England

- 4.5 Literature (5%) and dance (9%) have received the smallest proportion of investment to date which is consistent with the lower number of applications and awards for these artforms (see Figure 4.2 below for total investment made by artform).

**Figure 4.2 - Amount awarded (£) Rounds 1-10**



Source: Arts Council England

- 4.6 Analysis of the programme investment by the location of activity (British Council defined regions) reveals that the Americas (28%) and the European Union (25%) have accounted for the greatest proportion of awards across rounds 1-10. Table 4.4 provides an overview of the profile of awards by defined region and artform for the first ten rounds of AIDF.

**Table 4.4 - Profile of awards by defined region and artform Rounds 1-10**

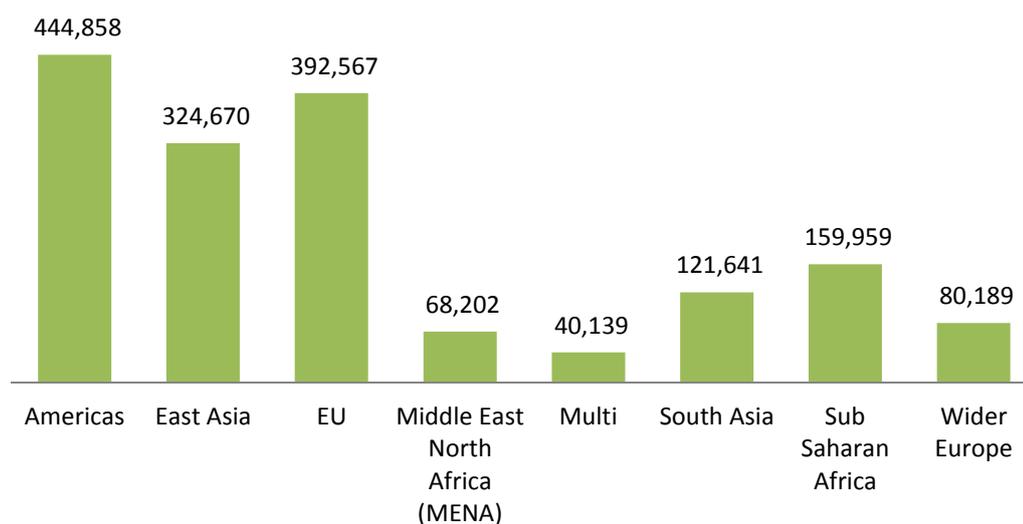
British Council defined region	Combined arts	Dance	Music	Literature	Theatre	Visual arts	Not artform specific	Grand Total
Americas	19	12	7	7	12	51	0	108
East Asia	6	8	5	3	14	36	1	73
EU	10	7	18	5	16	42	0	98
MENA*	1	2	2	1	5	5	0	16
Multi	1	1	2	0	0	4	0	8
South Asia	8	0	6	2	4	9	0	29
Sub Saharan Africa	4	3	7	1	7	15	0	37
Wider Europe	4	0	3	1	3	9	0	20
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>389</b>

\* Middle East North Africa

Source: Arts Council England

- 4.7 Correspondingly the Americas and the European Union received the greatest investment through rounds 1-10 as a result of the higher number of projects awarded funding focusing on these regions (see Figure 4.3). Middle East North Africa and Wider Europe received the lowest amount of investment which corresponds with the lower number of both applications and awards made to projects focusing on these regions.

**Figure 4.3 - Programme investment (£) by location of activity**



Source: Arts Council England

- 4.8 More detailed analysis of the countries visited by AIDF grantees across rounds 1-10 reveals that the United States of America accounted for 16% of all visits (66 visits) with Australia in second place with 7% of all visits (30 visits) followed by Germany and India which each accounted for 5% of all visits (21 visits)<sup>5</sup>. Further detail is provided in Table 4.5 below:

**Table 4.5 - Top 10 most visited countries AIDF rounds 1-10**

Rank	Country	Visits	% of total visits
1	United States of America	66	16%
2	Australia	30	7%
3=	Germany	21	5%
3=	India	21	5%
5=	Brazil	16	4%
5=	South Africa	16	4%
7=	China	15	4%
7=	Japan	15	4%
9	Canada	14	3%
10	Belgium	12	3%

<sup>5</sup> Source: Arts Council England

- 4.9 Equalities data for rounds 1-7 is incomplete due to changes in the Arts Council's grant management system. However analysis of the 408 applications and 85 awards in 2014/15 suggests that the AIDF programme is performing well in terms of attracting BME applicants and those applicants have an above-average success rate<sup>6</sup>.
- 4.10 Comparable statistics for applications in 2014/15 suggests that the programme may be under-performing in attracting applications from artists that have a disability or long-term illness although those applicants have a significantly above-average success rate<sup>7</sup>. Further efforts are recommended to attract applications from disabled artists which may include highlighting the opportunity to include access costs as part of the projected budget and including case studies of disabled artists who managed successful AIDF projects on the AIDF webpage.

### Summary

- 4.11 It is evident from the programme investment data that although 50% of grants across rounds 1-10 have been awarded to artists based in London, AIDF has reach across all of the other eight English regions.
- 4.12 It is difficult to assess the extent to which this profile is a result of a greater proportion of artists wishing to work internationally being based in London or artists from outside of London being less aware of the opportunity presented by the AIDF programme. Qualitative discussions with grant recipients revealed a relative lack of knowledge of the AIDF and/or its applicability to specific artforms or roles until being informed by word of mouth by fellow artists or arts agent/manager.
- 4.13 One recipient remarked that London-based artists tend to be better connected and therefore more likely to benefit from a hearing about the AIDF via a non-Arts Council England communication channel. It is also possible that a greater proportion of London-based artists may have links to other territories (either by themselves being a national from outside the UK or from previous international work).
- 4.14 Arts Council England could consider undertaking further analysis of the profile of artists applying to the AIDF programme, in particular to ascertain what proportion of artists have pre-existing links to other territories (i.e. their place or birth, family ties, previous work experience). This exercise may highlight a need to support artists that don't have any pre-existing links but who do wish to pursue international work, for example, identifying potential international collaborators/organisations and providing basic guidance on the practical and logistical considerations around international work.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Arts Council England. The success rate of BME applicants was 26%, compared to a 19% success rate for non-BME applicants and 21% for all applicants.

<sup>7</sup> Source: Arts Council England. The success rate of disabled applicants was 38%, compared to a 19% success rate for non-disabled applicants and 21% for all applicants.

- 4.15 Continued efforts are required to encourage applications from artists from diverse backgrounds, covering a range of artforms and from different areas of England. Showcasing the artistic and career benefits from former grantees can assist in raising awareness of the programme and inspiring future cohorts of emerging and mid-career artists to consider applying to the fund.

## 5.0 Impact Evidence

- 5.1 The main focus of the evaluation has been on capturing evidence of the impact of the AIDF programme on artists in terms of their artistic development, career progression, attitudes to international collaboration and the development of new international markets.
- 5.2 This section of the report presents evidence of impact drawn from rounds 1-8 based on:
- A review of the Activity Report Forms submitted to Arts Council England by grantees at the completion of their project;
  - Responses to the online survey; and
  - Qualitative depth interviews completed with a sample of artists.
- 5.3 A number of case studies have been used to illustrate the benefits that AIDF has delivered for a number of grantees across the first eight rounds of the programme. These are presented in Appendix 6. Anonymised quotations have also been used in the report to exemplify particular points and provide evidence against the key research questions.

### Attractions of the AIDF Programme

- 5.4 Artists outlined a range of reasons why they were attracted to submitting an application to the AIDF Programme. The relative simplicity of the application process was highlighted by a number of artists which is consistent with one of the findings of the light touch review of the programme.

*'It was easier than a normal Arts Council Application and it was specifically for emerging artists who didn't have large amounts of experience exhibiting abroad'.  
(Visual Arts)*

*'I was at an early stage of my creative career, and it seemed like a good place to start with funding creative practice. It was a short form and the activity was quite contained. (Visual Arts)*

- 5.5 A number of grant recipients highlighted the lack of alternative funding sources open to artists based in England to develop their practice internationally. This increased the relevance and usefulness of the AIDF with any alternatives stated to be linked to the country of origin and/or difficult to access.

- 5.6 Several artists also highlighted the pre-application guidance provided by Arts Council England and the on the ground support provided by the British Council as an important element of the programme, in particular for early stage or mid-career artists with limited experience of working internationally.

*'I was attracted to applying for the grant as I felt it would give me a supportive structure as a British artist within which to explore collaboration with a musician in Pakistan. I was attracted to the fact that the grant is given by both The Arts Council and The British Council who were able to provide support on the ground'. (Music)*

- 5.7 In many cases the funding rounds coincided with artists receiving invitations to collaborate internationally or simply explore the potential for international collaboration through networking activities. As such they were able to seize these opportunities or realise a project that had been under discussion with the AIDF grant helping to reduce the financial risk/commitment. As such the relatively short decision-making timeframe (i.e. approximately two months from the application deadline) and eligibility criteria covering related travel expenses in particular, were important in enabling artists to progress their collaboration.

*'I was offered the opportunity to do some research abroad, which I knew could be a career changing opportunity, yet also knew I couldn't afford to go without some financial help'. (Visual Arts)*

*'I had a project idea that linked Bangladesh with London, and this fund fitted the project and concept well'. (Music)*

*'I found out about the grant after receiving two separate opportunities to show work and participate in events internationally. As neither opportunity was funded, the main impetus for applying was to enable me to develop my work and participate in events outside the UK'. (Visual Arts)*

*'I wanted to travel to America to make contacts after a recent project and saw this as an excellent opportunity. I also saw the names of the other theatre directors who have received the fund and knew it must be a good thing from the names on the list'. (Theatre)*

*'I'd made some contacts in Hong Kong on a previous visit, and had been offered the opportunity to make contact with new organisations in Shanghai to explore the development of a new project. So, I decided that it was worth exploring these relationships further'. (Visual Arts)*

- 5.8 The flexibility of the eligibility criteria for the programme was also important in encouraging applications. A number of artists highlighted the value of a light-touch and open-ended grant programme which enabled them to shape their project to their own development needs and those of their international collaborator.

*'I researched some of the past recipients stories and saw how the programme was able to support them in their first steps working internationally. The freedom to create your own structure for your project was also another attraction that drew me to the project. This is because I could be in control of the outcomes that I was hoping for'. (Dance)*

## Aspirations

5.9 The main aspirations for their AIDF grant reported by artists are summarised below:

- To undertake research;
- To support the production of new artwork;
- To develop and/or deepen an understanding of other cultures and cultural practice in different territories;
- To establish networks with artists, arts organisations and cultural bodies that would lead to sustainable partnerships;
- To develop artistic practice and learn new skills; and
- To raise their profile both domestically and internationally.

5.10 It is evident that for a number of artists the AIDF programme was the first time that they had been able to secure funding to realise their ambitions to work internationally. Several artists highlighted the challenges they had experienced in trying to obtain funding to enable international collaboration with others also citing their lack of knowledge of how arts are funded in different territories. A number of grant recipients highlighted the apparent ease with which artists based in other countries could access funding similar to the AIDF to develop their international experience and practice.

*'I'm particularly interested in forging links outside of the UK, and making long term connections professionally, internationally. I'm also interesting in exchange, bringing culture from outside the UK to London and beyond, to enrich my work with new ideas'. (Literature)*

*'Support for international development is a rare opportunity for independent artists. Making contact and networks abroad means I am able to broaden my scope and exposure to potential future work development'. (Dance)*

*'I was keen to explore opportunities to both build stronger international new play experience and further extend networks with international artists. I was mindful of exploring a theatre culture outside of the UK, making use of my existing artistic experience and challenging myself to look outwards in a more diverse, engaged and culturally plural way'. (Theatre)*

*'I wanted to get more experience and a greater depth of understanding in my practice. I also wanted to widen the scope of my work, gain perspective, and get a fresh look at my work through another lens'. (Visual Arts)*

## Artistic development

- 5.11 Artists completing the online survey were asked to what extent they agreed with a number of statements about the impact of their AIDF grant. When asked about artistic development responses were overwhelmingly positive with 73% (101) of artists strongly agreeing and 25% (34) agreeing that the grant had supported their artistic development.
- 5.12 For many it is evident that their AIDF grant has provided them with a new direction for their work, has challenged their existing practice, has inspired them to explore different artistic techniques and encouraged them to take risks.

*'I profited creatively from my time in Burkina Faso immensely, and the experience has positively and holistically matured my artistic practice, and organisational skills'. (Music)*

*'The biggest benefit has been the opportunity to work with artists to create a new piece. This is something I rarely get to do in my home country and the chance to work in an immersive environment allowed me to take artistic risks I don't feel I could have taken here. It was so incredibly inspiring and enriching'. (Dance)*

*'Extending my networks, increasing visibility, enquiries and exchange, and developing new practice directions. It was generally a very positive experience which gave my practice time to develop in a new and critical context with direct commissioning results but also conversations and relationships which are continuing to inform my practice'. (Visual Arts)*

*'The research trip enabled me to explore the potential of a new audio-visual work and begin to develop new creative skills particularly filming and editing. The grant afforded me the time to work uninterrupted on my creative ideas, to explore, experiment, reject, reconsider and decide on various artistic components of the new work'. (Visual Arts)*

*'The visit reconnected me with my philosophy to art making, meeting like-minded artistic communities with common goals and aspirations which was a grounding experience many miles away from home. AIDF was a nurturing experience for me as an artist and came at a pivotal moment in my development after my first institutional solo exhibition in the UK. I say this because I was profoundly touched by my experiences and became open again to certain ways of seeing that I had become jaded to in the UK. This was possibly encouraged by being displaced in a very stimulating and exciting new environment'. (Visual Arts)*

*'I had been immersed in the UK London climate and arts market for over a decade, the research period was a catalyst for my understanding of a far wider international arts landscape, placing me with a global ecology and has subsequently underpinned my now working as an international artist'. (Dance)*

- 5.13 The majority of artists (92%) agreed that they have used the learning from their AIDF activity to support their practice in the UK. Evidence was provided of the contribution of the programme to supporting one of the aims of Arts Council England's approach to international investment, namely enriching the practice of artists and organisations in England.
- 5.14 As a result there is also evidence that the AIDF programme has been successful in enabling audiences in the UK to experience artwork inspired by other cultures or artistic talent from across the world hosted by grantees as a follow-up to their international activity.

### **Market development**

- 5.15 Just over half (55%) of artists strongly agree and over a third (37%) agree that their AIDF grant has enhanced their profile and reputation (both internationally and domestically).
- 5.16 The majority (76%) of artists report to have received bookings or invitations to make or show work as a result of their AIDF activity. For just under half (47%) of the artists their AIDF activity led to subsequent trips to the country visited following the completion of their project. Two fifths (40%) of grantees stated that their AIDF activity led to subsequent trips to new territories or markets other than the country visited during their funded project.

*'The exposure from the exhibition meant that I secured further international exhibitions and sold work at the show and made new contacts and buyers afterwards'. (Visual Arts)*

*'As a direct result of the trip, I was invited to exhibit in a group show called Islamapolitan at the Maraya Arts Centre in the United Arab Emirates, at Istanbul Design and the Expo Milano in Milan. It was a brilliant experience for me and wouldn't have happened without my initial AIDF trip to the region'. (Visual Arts)*

*'As a result of my AIDF activity, I have been able to consolidate my early, tentative links with writers across south east Europe and this has led to my working, not only with Kosovan writers, but also with other practitioners from across SE Europe'. (Literature)*

- 5.17 It is also evident that many artists recognise that they are ambassadors for the arts and creative sectors in the UK and through their international collaborations they are also developing markets in new territories and generating opportunities for other artists. Moreover, most artists interviewed expressed a desire to pass on good practice or key contacts to other artists with objectives to work or visit a specific territory in order to maximise the value of the AIDF and the time it allows artists to spend in other countries.

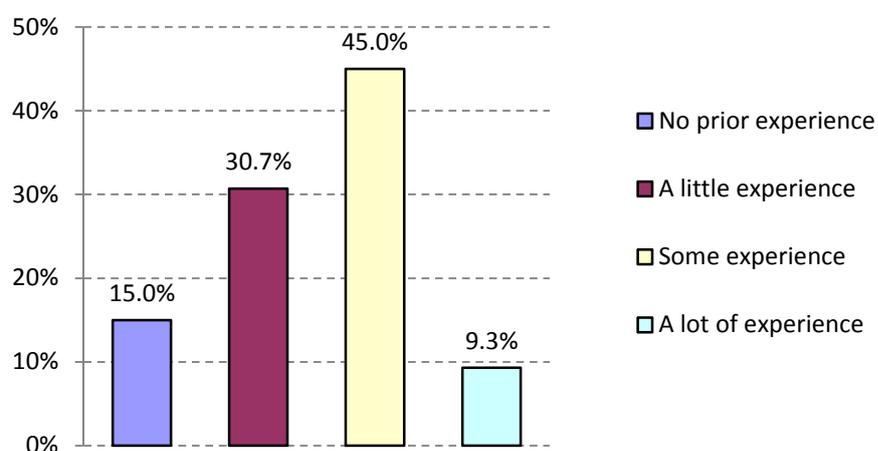
*'I made a number of incredibly valuable connections that I do not doubt will allow me to progress in Australia in the future. This will not occur immediately but will take continued work to ensure the next step is taken. The time and opportunity, funded by the AIDF, was absolutely invaluable and a vital first step towards my international development'. (Theatre)*

- 5.18 A number of artists cited the strong international reputations of both Arts Council England and the British Council as important in laying the foundations for collaborative work and opening opportunities for artists as part of the AIDF programme.

#### **International collaboration**

- 5.19 Prior to securing their AIDF grant the largest group (45%) of artists described themselves as having some experience of international working, whilst just under a third (31%) indicated they had little experience and 15% no experience. Less than 10% of artists stated that they had a lot of experience prior to securing their grant from the programme. This indicates that the application process has been effective in ensuring resources are allocated to artists who do not have extensive international experience (Figure 5.1).

**Figure 5.1 - Experience of international working prior to AIDF**



Source: Consilium Research & Consultancy

- 5.20 A strong majority of artists either strongly agreed (55%) or agreed (35%) that their AIDF grant had provided them with valuable practical and logistical experience of working in an international context. Examples emanating from qualitative discussions ranged from dealing with import/export regulations, the process of securing a visa to cover the period of work and understanding how to use local resources and infrastructure to facilitate the delivery of the arts activity.
- 5.21 Furthermore just under two thirds of artists (62%) strongly agreed that they had been able to establish valuable international networks and contacts to support future collaborations.

*'I feel I have established a great working relationship with art and dance organisations in Uganda that will inform my future work. In the future I plan to tour work in East Africa. I have developed the confidence to build international partnerships and begin to think about how I can create international creative exchanges between the UK artists and Kampala. AIDF has allowed me to develop my leadership skill which I feel will inform my career experientially in building my company that I hope to have an international presence'. (Dance)*

*'I made connections with people I would not have had the opportunity to in any other situation. I grew in confidence to pursue ambitious international projects and realised the value in international collaboration whereby young artists and designers can build networks outside of their own countries and cultures'. (Visual Arts)*

*'I feel that I have widened my connections in Pakistan, I have created a body of work that I can draw on, that will enter the public domain and promote me as a musician and composer in Pakistan, the UK and elsewhere. I have increased confidence and knowledge concerning managing a project internationally'. (Music)*

*'Having worked in both China and the Netherlands alongside this trip I feel as though I have the levels of experience of international working that will prove beneficial if other funded possibilities for such work arises. And although I have yet to return to Kosovo I have kept in constant contact with the organisations that I worked with and it is very likely that through Nottingham's newly declared status as a UNESCO city of world literature that there will be some form of longer term relationship between Pristina and Nottingham that will be established'. (Theatre)*

*'A number of potential projects have emerged from this award, which I hope to realise in the next two years. I built my knowledge and network, including a better understanding of Turkish contemporary art. I identified opportunities for cultural collaboration and exchange, including platforms for UK artists in Istanbul. I investigated country-specific sources of funding for future work. (Visual Arts)*

- 5.22 Following the completion of their grant activity nearly all of the artists (99%) responding to the online survey are actively pursuing international work and collaboration opportunities. In addition, some 96% of artists indicate that they have recommended international working and collaboration to other artists or creative practitioners.
- 5.23 The depth consultations with artists also highlight that they have been able to draw on their international networks established through the AIDF grant to generate opportunities for other artists and arts organisations. Examples include opportunities for UK-based artists and arts organisations to work with international artists visiting the UK as a follow-up to the completion of an AIDF grant. Others have shared international connections which have led to other artists and arts organisations taking-up opportunities to collaborate abroad.

*'Through developing [the festival] Transform I have visited two festivals in the Netherlands and spent time in Lebanon (also inspired by my AIDF experience) where I am developing a number of projects and key collaborations. In 2015 I hosted a residency between local artists and those from mainland Europe, some of whom I met during my AIDF project. I have made introductions to a number of local/UK based artists with international programmers'. (Theatre)*

### **Career benefits**

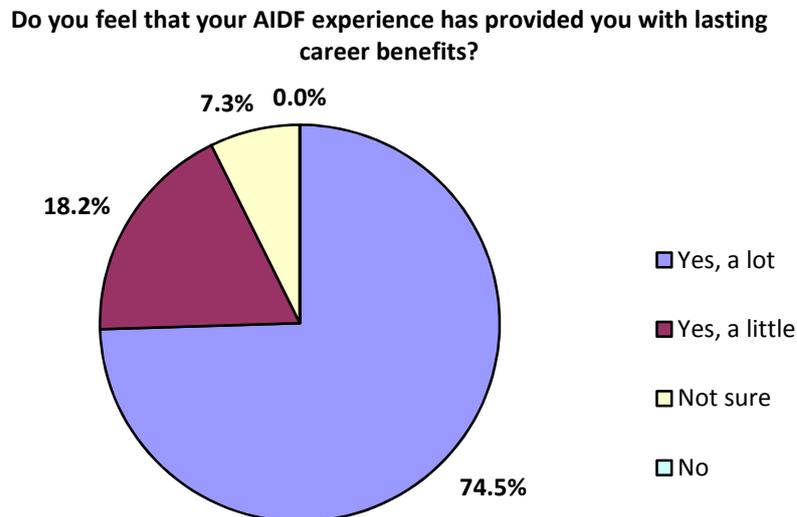
- 5.24 One of the key research questions for the evaluation was to understand the extent to which the AIDF programme has provided lasting career benefits for grantees. A majority (93%) of artists responding to the survey reported that they felt their AIDF experience had provided lasting career benefits. None of the artists responding to the survey reported that it hadn't provided any career benefits (Figure 5.2).
- 5.25 What is evident from the artist responses is that for the majority (91%) the experience of delivering their AIDF project has increased their confidence to work on an international basis.

*'The difficult aspects of this project were logistical and unforeseen. I have learnt many lessons and grown in confidence, acquired professional and emotional skills and have gained the courage to assert myself to get the best and most successful results from all future endeavours. Though this project took all that I had to negotiate, I am now a stronger artist with a clearer understanding of my abilities and strengths as well as my weaknesses'. (Visual Arts)*

*'Overall this opportunity has given me enormous confidence for future projects because I now have the experience of not only working in foreign contexts, but can also see how to apply myself and the conceptual grounding of my practice'. (Visual Arts)*

*'It has given me the confidence and understanding to take my work internationally. It has also enabled me to see how much we can learn from each other and to invite artists from other countries to exhibit work with me in the UK'. (Sculpture)*

**Figure 5.2 - Extent to which AIDF has provided lasting career benefits**



Source: Consilium Research & Consultancy

*'The difficult aspects of this project were logistical and unforeseen. I have learnt many lessons and grown in confidence, acquired professional and emotional skills and have gained the courage to assert myself to get the best and most successful results from all future endeavours. Though this project took all that I had to negotiate, I am now a stronger artist with a clearer understanding of my abilities and strengths as well as my weaknesses'. (Visual Arts)*

*'Overall this opportunity has given me enormous confidence for future projects because I now have the experience of not only working in foreign contexts, but can also see how to apply myself and the conceptual grounding of my practice'. (Visual Arts)*

*'It has given me the confidence and understanding to take my work internationally. It has also enabled me to see how much we can learn from each other and to invite artists from other countries to exhibit work with me in the UK'. (Sculpture)*

- 5.26 It is also apparent that for many grantees the project has increased their confidence more generally in terms of their artistic practice and undertaking collaborations.

*'Altogether I think the whole trip has built my confidence as an artist and enabled me to be more honest and clear about what I do and don't want to do. This has contributed to my thinking about the way I display the work in the UK and being really clear about where and why I want to do that'. (Visual Arts)*

*'I grew in confidence, realising that I could make my work anywhere and collaborate with many different people. It gave me confidence to network and talk about my work to new audiences'. (Visual Arts)*

*'It gave me a huge amount of new confidence and connections and ultimately led me to want to pursue the research I had begun on my AIDF trip in postgraduate study. As a direct result, I moved to London and enrolled on renowned Masters programme which has been invaluable for my career, practice and personal growth'. (Visual Arts)*

- 5.27 For many artists their AIDF activity provided a range of learning points and new skills which, in turn, contributed to their increased confidence and motivation to pursue further international work. Frequently referenced learning points and new skills highlighted by artists include:

- Planning skills and financial management;
- Experience in working up realistic costs for delivering international projects;
- Problem solving skills;
- Managing and/or working with partners/collaborators;
- Managing logistics and planning;
- Effective networking and self-promotion;
- Honing foreign language skills to improve performance and networking;
- Understanding differing international cultures and the context for arts;
- Scoping the nature of opportunities/the market; and
- Understanding the funding models and opportunities in different territories.

- 5.28 It is clear that although several artists report to have found the delivery of their AIDF activity challenging and in some cases a steep learning curve, they have been able to use their experience and associated learning to inform and shape future collaborations. In this regard the AIDF programme has been valuable in providing artists with an opportunity to experience international collaboration with a safety net of funding support and guidance from staff from Arts Council England and the British Council.

*'Numerous technical difficulties were encountered during the course of the project. These were more or less overcome eventually but took up valuable time. It was noted that for future projects that more advanced planning may be required, along with use of specialists for some tasks'. (Visual Arts)*

*'The AIDF has enabled me to move my career to the next level, to advance beyond the limited horizons of a career confined to British shores. I have made a number of significant connections in New York that I will be able to capitalise on over the coming months, so that my profile in the city is raised and a return trip will be possible. The AIDF is a fantastic resource that not only allowed me a chance to develop through travel. It also provided me with the flexibility to respond to what I had seen around me and to alter the focus of my research accordingly. I have never been afforded this opportunity before'. (Visual Arts)*

*'I have learned a vast number of lessons, which will benefit me greatly in future projects including budget, contracting, record keeping and managing logistical and unforeseen challenges'. (Visual Arts)*

*'One major aspect of our learning in Cambodia was in understanding that people use different terminology and language that is much more literal. Although possibly seen as offensive or not politically correct in western world, the language used reflects the ability of communities to understand, therefore is widely used and accepted'. (Combined Arts)*

- 5.29 Several artists reported that AIDF was an important step in their career and opened up new opportunities as a result of having a stronger profile and a CV that included international collaboration. A number of artists specifically cited their AIDF experience as contributing to their success in securing new roles within academia or arts and cultural organisations.

### **Raising awareness and understanding**

- 5.30 The AIDF programme has supported artists to work across a range of territories. For many artists their international collaboration has been at the leading edge of constructing space for a greater dialogue about and understanding of sensitive and challenging political and cultural issues. As such the programme has supported the British Council's mission to create a friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and the wider world.

5.31 Analysis of the Activity Report Forms in particular highlights a number of issues and themes covered by AIDF activities, including:

- Exploring perspectives of communities living through political unrest;
- Raising awareness of democratic struggle on an international stage;
- Providing insight into human trafficking, terrorism, gang culture and sexual violence;
- Promoting artistic works produced by LGBT or disabled artists in territories with no previous tradition or exposure to such work; and
- Raising awareness of the activities and struggles of groups that have shaped territories (e.g. conscientious objectors or anti-apartheid leaders).

5.32 The output and learning from AIDF activity has been used to inform and inspire arts activity in the UK and thus artists have provided a bridge between a range of international cultures and domestic audiences.

*'On my first visit I also taught the first ever Creative Writing workshops in the history of Burma. Throughout this process I gained significant new understandings about Burmese art and literature which will hopefully address the often one-dimensional narratives of how Burma is seen by the international community as it continues to strive towards a democratic government'.*

*(Literature)*

*'From the conversations that I had, there seems to be a problem of artists being unable to be fully outspoken, critical or reflective of their own time and place. This coupled with the issue that there is no public funding and very few institutions in existence purely for the purpose of showing work and not selling it, forces the hands of art students somewhat. Genuine creativity does exist but within a complex subculture. In a heavily censored country [China], people have grown up with self-censorship and so only in small, safe groups do they act and speak freely'.* (Visual Arts)

*'From our investigations of the deaf arts scene in California, we discovered various different ways in which deaf people perform, teach and implement their dance/art. What we also discovered is that sign-song / sign-rap performance is very popular in America amongst deaf performers, perhaps more so than dance'.*

*(Dance)*

*'Conscientious Objectors has been a deeply involving project for me, and my time in Israel has been hugely rewarding and very positive in a great number of ways. One of the key aspects of this project was the research. With such a sensitive yet hugely important subject, it was vital that I learned everything possible around conscription and conscientious objection in Israel and Palestine. This included not just the military arena, but also the socio-political aspects of modern Israel, its recent history and the various cultures and religions that form this nation. A further benefit of my visit to Holon [Israel] was that I was the first ever artist who openly identifies as being disabled to be resident at the [Art Centre]. I believe seeing the way I work and taking into account my access requirements has expanded their disability awareness and will open the doors for others in the future.* (Visual Arts)

### **Challenges and barriers**

- 5.33 It is evident from both the Activity Report Forms and consultation with AIDF grantees that some artists have experienced a number of challenges and barriers in delivering their AIDF activity. These challenges relate to their project activity and not to the fund itself. In several cases artists have been let down in some way by their international collaborator, for example being unavailable or unable to commit sufficient time to the collaboration, not being able to provide their funding contribution (although this isn't a requirement of AIDF) or failing to facilitate access to networks of contacts.

- 5.34 To a large extent these challenges aren't restricted to international collaboration but can also occur in UK-based collaboration. For many artists the process of delivering their AIDF grant has highlighted the importance of developing a clear schedule and having appropriate and sufficient dialogue with their collaborator in advance (for example Skype and telephone calls being preferable to relying on email). Consequently the process of experiencing these challenges will inform a stronger approach that mitigates delivery risk in future international collaboration.
- 5.35 A number of artists highlighted the value of the application process in helping them to plan and organise their time in a 'business-like' way. They were particularly conscious of the limited time available on the ground in many cases and the need to be efficient in targeting key contacts.
- 5.36 A related challenge highlighted by a small number of artists, and noted in the interim light touch review, was the difficulty of making contact with a representative from the British Council during their AIDF visit. One of the recommendations outlined in the light touch review was for the British Council to agree a minimum level of support that is guaranteed to artists while they are overseas or before they travel.
- 5.37 Many artists reported very positive support and productive links with the British Council and have established a continuing relationship with British Council staff in the territory in which they delivered their AIDF grant.
- 5.38 However, a small number of artists from later rounds expressed frustration with the lack of contact and support from the British Council including a reported lack of communication between neighbouring offices that would have supported more efficient and informed working.
- 5.39 It is not clear whether the frustration expressed by some artists is fuelled by an unrealistic expectation of what support can (or should) be provided by British Council staff or the difficulty for the British Council in providing a consistent, minimum level of support across different territories with varied levels of staff capacity. There is merit in the British Council clarifying the minimum support that artists are able to receive in order to manage expectations.
- 5.40 Another common challenge identified by artists was the difficulty of establishing an accurate schedule of costs for their AIDF project and managing their budget effectively during their visit.

5.41 Specific challenges referenced include:

- Fluctuating exchange rates which served to eroded the value of their grant;
- Estimating travel costs (in particular flights) on the lowest price available and not factoring in price rises associated with booking travel nearer to the proposed visit date; and
- Failure to include a reasonable contingency budget in the project costs (permitted in the AIDF application guidance).

5.42 These challenges all provided learning points for the artists that experienced these difficulties and will help them in planning future collaborations. There may be value in incorporating some of the challenges and learning points outlined by previous AIDF grantees as part of the FAQs section of the existing guidance for applicants. Indeed, one artist stated that she receives two or three enquiries a year from people applying to the AIDF requesting support and guidance from someone who has successfully navigated the application process and completed their 'project'.

#### **Areas for development**

5.43 When asked what would help artists in building on their AIDF experience and pursuing future international work a number of common themes emerged. The most frequent response was the possibility of securing continuation funding to enable them to both sustain and build on their AIDF supported international collaboration.

*'If there was a secondary fund in place to which past successful applicants could apply to for follow up trips/projects that resulted from the first or were related in some way. I had to turn down an opportunity that arose from the first [AIDF grant] due to lack of funding. The amount needed was relatively small and was similar in scale to my first grant, however at this point in my career I was unable to access it by other means'. (Visual Art)*

*'I believe that there should be opportunities to apply for follow up support for initial contact made in host countries. My experience has been so strong but I am not able to continue these links with my own finances. At the current moment artists who have received an AIDF award are not eligible to apply again. This makes any potential push to take any connection/links or creative development to the next level quite challenging. I wonder if there are an opportunities to access a bit more financial support to build upon previous awards in order to develop further'. (Dance)*

5.44 Notably several artists understood that they were not eligible to submit a second AIDF application although the current guidance indicates that artists can only apply to the fund once in any 12 month period. Although artists are able to submit a second application in a subsequent year the guidance does manage expectations by advising that artists that have already secured an award are unlikely to receive a second given the desire to support as many individual artists and creative practitioners as possible.

5.45 Another common theme was a desire from artists to receive follow-up support from Arts Council England and the British Council to assist them in making the most of their AIDF experience. Specifically referenced were:

- Guidance and information on international grant opportunities;
- Support in brokering links and facilitating collaborations in new territories;
- Support with hosting visits from international collaborators engaged as part of an AIDF grant;
- Access to business, regulatory and legal advice to support international work (e.g. import tax, licensing);
- Creating the opportunity for AIDF grantees to share practice to not only further their own international work but inform future applications and international activities of other artists; and
- Showcasing events to promote the work of AIDF grantees and raise their profile internationally.

*'AIDF was crucial to help to kick start a process that will help me to secure future exposure internationally. But I feel that further support in helping to secure funding to present the work is a crucial aspect in order secure lasting international partnership'. (Dance)*

5.46 There is merit in encouraging and where possible supporting the AIDF alumni to share learning from their international work. Enabling artists to share experiences of working in either the same territories/British Council regions or similar artistic projects would support a process of informal peer to peer learning. This in turn has the potential to lead to new collaborations (domestically and internationally) and joint bidding to funding opportunities (Arts Council England and wider).

*'I feel the British Council could also maybe provide past AIDF recipient with a series of workshops on sustainability working internationally, also meeting and learning about key creative organisations, producers, funding abroad. The premise of these workshops is help artists navigate planning and learning about the cultural artistic sector outside of the UK'. (Dance)*

*'Being part of an online platform to meet other AIDF grant holders (current and past), exchanging contacts and having information on [funding] opportunities. (Music)*

- 5.47 Several artists also raised the possibility of establishing some kind of mentoring scheme to support artists in all stages of the AIDF activity (planning, delivery and follow-up). There is potential for an informal or peer-to-peer mentoring scheme to be facilitated as part of the process of supporting contact across an AIDF alumni network.

## 6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

### Conclusions

- 6.1 Since the launch of the programme in 2012 a total of 1,889 grant applications have been received by Arts Council England across rounds 1-10 resulting in a total of 389 awards. Across the first ten rounds of the programme just over half of the applications have been received from artists based in London and exactly half of awards have been to London-based artists. It is difficult to assess the extent to which this is a result of a greater proportion of artists wishing to work internationally being based in London or artists from outside of London being less aware of the opportunity presented by the AIDF programme.
- 6.2 Continued efforts are required to encourage applications from artists from diverse backgrounds and from different areas of England Arts Council England. Relationship Managers have an important role in promoting the AIDF programme in addition to existing arts networks (for example Arts Development UK), academic institutions and the 663 arts organisations in receipt of investment through the National Portfolio 2015-18.
- 6.3 Artists outlined a range of reasons why they were attracted to submitting an application to the programme with many highlighting the lack of alternative funding sources open to artists based in England to develop their practice internationally. The relative simplicity of the application process was also highlighted by a number of artists which is consistent with one of the findings of the light touch review of the programme.
- 6.4 In many cases the AIDF funding rounds coincided with artists receiving invitations to collaborate internationally or explore the potential for international collaboration through networking activities abroad. As such the relatively short decision-making timeframe for the AIDF programme and eligibility criteria covering related travel expenses are important in enabling artists to realise these opportunities.
- 6.5 In terms of artistic development for many artists their AIDF grant has provided them with a new direction for their work, has challenged their existing practice, inspired them to explore different artistic techniques and encouraged them to take risks. The majority of artists have also used the learning from their AIDF activity to support their practice in the UK. This suggests that the AIDF programme has enabled audiences in the UK to experience artwork inspired by other cultures or artistic talent from across the world hosted by grantees as a follow-up to their international activity.

- 6.6 Nearly all artists agreed that their grant has enhanced their profile and reputation which is evident in the large proportion that have received bookings or invitations to make or show work as a result of their AIDF activity and the fact that for nearly half their AIDF activity led to subsequent trips to the country visited following the completion of their project. For two fifths of the artists their AIDF activity led to subsequent trips to new territories or markets other than the country visited during their funded project thus further expanding their international experience.
- 6.7 A number of artists cited the strong international reputations of both Arts Council England and the British Council as important in laying the foundations for collaborative work and opening opportunities for artists as part of the AIDF programme. The perceived competitive nature of the fund and inferred quality standard associated with successful applicants was also regarded as helpful in reassuring international collaborators as to the value of working with English artists through the AIDF programme.
- 6.8 Consultation with artists reveals the value of the AIDF activity in providing them with practical and logistical experience of working in an international context and establishing valuable international networks and contacts to support future collaborations. The importance of being able to engage with potential collaborators on a face-to-face basis, as opposed to contact through digital channels, cannot be underestimated and as such the AIDF programme has facilitated a method of engagement recognised by artists as most likely to generate sustainable and productive working relationships.
- 6.9 It is also evident from the artist responses that for the majority their experience of delivering their AIDF project has increased their confidence not only to work on an international basis and more generally in terms of their artistic practice and undertaking collaborations within the UK.
- 6.10 Nearly all artists agree that their AIDF experience has provided lasting career benefits including contributing to success in securing new roles within academia or arts and cultural organisations based in the UK and abroad. In some cases the AIDF activity has led to additional opportunities (international and domestic) for other artists based in England thus providing strong evidence of additionality and value for money for the Arts Council and British Council investment.
- 6.11 Although the experience of delivering their AIDF activity has proven challenging for some, including for example being let down by their international collaborator during their visit, the process has provided a range of learning points which can assist them in planning and delivering future international work.

- 6.12 A small number of artists highlighted difficulty in making contact with a representative from the British Council during their AIDF visit. It is not clear whether this is fuelled by an unrealistic expectation of what support can (or should) be provided by British Council staff or the difficulty for the British Council in providing a consistent, minimum level of support across different territories with varied levels of staff capacity. It is also clear that many artists have successfully engaged and been supported by the British Council and this support has been greatly valued.
- 6.13 Arts Council England and the British Council should explore the feasibility of signposting AIDF grantees to other sources of support and information in order to facilitate continued international collaboration and market development.
- 6.14 To a large extent the level of demand from artists for continuation support is a measure of the success of the AIDF programme in building a cadre of artists that have experienced the benefits of international working and are actively pursuing future international opportunities to support their artistic development and realise new markets.
- 6.15 The positive outcomes outlined in this report and lasting benefits realised for AIDF grantees indicates that the programme is both achieving its main objectives and providing strong value for money for Arts Council England and the British Council.

### **Recommendations**

1. Continued efforts are required to encourage applications from artists from diverse backgrounds, different artforms and from different areas of England. Showcasing the artistic and career benefits from former grantees can assist in raising awareness of the programme and inspiring future cohorts of emerging and mid-career artists to consider applying to the fund.
2. The British Council should clarify the minimum support that artists can expect to receive in order to manage the expectations of future grantees.
3. Arts Council England and the British Council should explore the feasibility of signposting AIDF grantees to other sources of support, guidance and information in order to facilitate continued international collaboration and market development.
4. Opportunities for encouraging and supporting information sharing and exchange across the AIDF programme alumni should be explored as this has the potential to support a process of peer to peer learning and future collaborative activity.
5. The FAQs section of the Guidance for Applicants should be extended to include learning points, key considerations and practical experience from previous grant recipients.

## Appendix 1 - List of stakeholder consultations

### **Arts Council England**

Anna Mandlik, Senior Relationship Manager

John Sprackland, Senior Officer, Data Analysis (Investment Partner, AIDF)

Nick McDowell, Director, International

Nicola Smyth, Senior Manager, International

Pascale Falempin, Administration and Co-ordinator, International

### **British Council**

Kate Arthurs, Director of Strategy, Global Arts

Katrina Schwarz, Curator, Visual Arts

Rosemary Parkhill, Executive Assistant to Director of Arts

## Appendix 2 - Activity Report Form Analysis

### Profile of Activity Report Forms Reviewed

A total of 156 Activity Report Forms were reviewed across the first seven rounds of the programme, equating to 67% of all grantees. A breakdown of the sample of Activity Report Forms reviewed is provided below.

### Activity Report Form sample

Round	Total grantees	No. Provided	Reviewed
1	25	11	11
2	26	23	23
3	22	18	18
4	21	19	19
5	35	35	35
6	52	49	25
7	51	49	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>156</b>

## Appendix 3 - Survey of grantees

### About You

**1. Your Name** (optional)

**2. Your Age**

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Below 20 years | <input type="radio"/> 60-69             |
| <input type="radio"/> 20-29          | <input type="radio"/> 70-79             |
| <input type="radio"/> 30-39          | <input type="radio"/> 80+               |
| <input type="radio"/> 40-49          | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="radio"/> 50-59          |   |

**3. Your Sex**

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Male   | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="radio"/> Female |   |

**4. Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> White British                    | <input type="radio"/> Black or Black British |
| <input type="radio"/> Asian or Asian British           | <input type="radio"/> Other                  |
| <input type="radio"/> Mixed/multiple ethnic background | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say      |

**5. Do you consider yourself to have a disability or long-term illness?**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Yes, day to day activities limited a lot    | <input type="radio"/> No                |
| <input type="radio"/> Yes, day to day activities limited a little | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |

**6. In which region do you live?**

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> East          | <input type="radio"/> South East         |
| <input type="radio"/> East Midlands | <input type="radio"/> South West         |
| <input type="radio"/> London        | <input type="radio"/> West Midlands      |
| <input type="radio"/> North East    | <input type="radio"/> Yorkshire & Humber |
| <input type="radio"/> North West    | <input type="radio"/> Other              |

### Your Experience

**7. When did you receive your AIDF award?**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Round 1 - July 2012     | <input type="radio"/> Round 5 - November 2013 |
| <input type="radio"/> Round 2 - October 2012  | <input type="radio"/> Round 6 - March 2014    |
| <input type="radio"/> Round 3 - February 2013 | <input type="radio"/> Round 7 - June 2014     |
| <input type="radio"/> Round 4 - June 2013     | <input type="radio"/> Round 8 - March 2015    |

**8. What attracted you to applying for a grant through the AIDF Programme?****9. Which art form did your AIDF activity cover:**

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Combined arts | <input type="radio"/> Theatre              |
| <input type="radio"/> Dance         | <input type="radio"/> Visual Arts          |
| <input type="radio"/> Literature    | <input type="radio"/> Other (please state) |
| <input type="radio"/> Music         |  |

**10. What were you hoping to achieve from your AIDF activity?****11. Prior to securing your AIDF grant how would you describe your experience of international working?**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> No prior experience | <input type="radio"/> Some experience     |
| <input type="radio"/> A little experience | <input type="radio"/> A lot of experience |

**Impact of Your AIDF Project****12. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?**

(Response options Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither agree or disagree, Disagree and Strongly disagree)

- The AIDF grant has increased my confidence to work on an international basis
- The AIDF grant has supported my artistic development
- The AIDF grant has enhanced my profile / reputation
- The AIDF grant has provided me with valuable practical / logistical experience o working in an international context
- I have used the learning from my AIDF activity to support my practice in the UK
- I have been able to establish valuable international networks and contacts to support future collaborations

**13. Following your AIDF grant have you recommend international working and collaboration to other artists or creative practitioners?**

- Yes  No

**14. When you originally applied, did any of the criteria or restrictions in the AIDF programme put limits on what you wanted to achieve through the fund? (e.g. when the activity could take place; the amount you could apply for; what sort of activity was permitted; etc.)**

#### **Longer-term benefits**

**15. Have you received any bookings or invitations to make or show work as a result of your AIDF activity?**

- Yes  No  Don't Know

**If yes, please provide details.**

**16. Did your AIDF activity lead to any other subsequent trips (after completion of the funded project) to the country visited?**

- Yes  No

**17. Did your AIDF activity lead to any other subsequent trips to new territories or markets (other than the country visited during your funded project)?**

- Yes (please state)  No

**18. Are you actively pursuing international work and collaboration opportunities?**

- Yes  No

**19. Do you feel that your AIDF experience has provided you with lasting career benefits?**

- Yes, a lot  
 Yes a little  
 Not sure  
 No

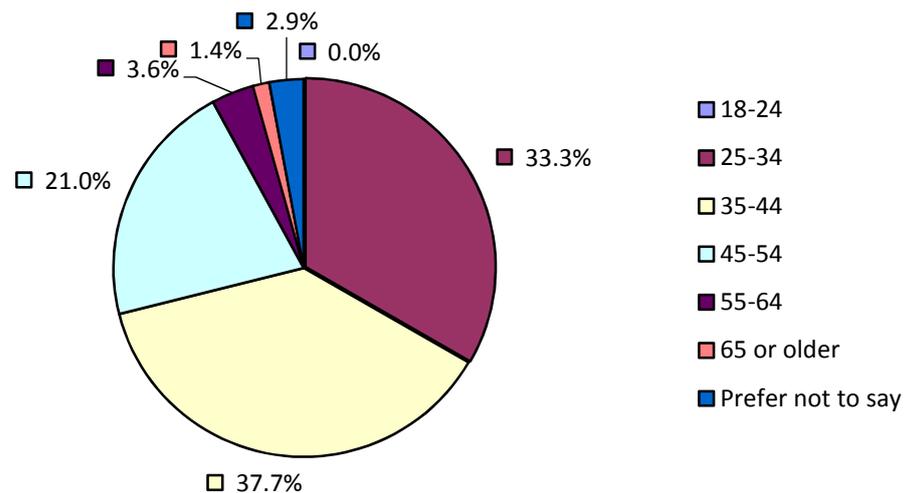
20. [If yes] What sort of benefits and why?
21. [If no] Why do you say that?
22. What would help you in building on your AIDF experience and pursuing future international work?
23. Do you have any suggestions for improvements to the AIDF Programme that would strengthen the benefits for artists and creative practitioners?
24. Please use the space below to provide any further feedback on the impact of your AIDF grant.

## Appendix 4 - Data Tables

### Profile of Artists responding to survey

A total of 140 grantees responded to the online survey, equating to a response rate of 53%. Just over two thirds (71%) of artists responding to the online survey were aged between 25 and 44 years old with only a minority of 1.4% aged 65 or over. The majority (60%) of artists responding to the survey were female.

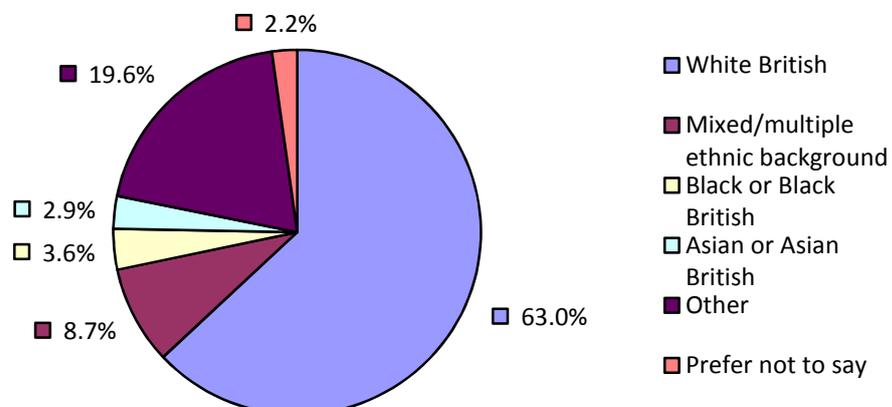
#### Age profile of survey respondents



Source: Consilium Research & Consultancy

Of the 139 artists electing to provide a response only a small minority (11%) considered themselves to have a disability or long-term illness, which is broadly comparable with the profile of all grantees. Nearly two thirds (63%) of the artists responding to the survey classified themselves as 'White British' with one fifth (20%) selecting the 'Other' category to describe their ethnic origin.

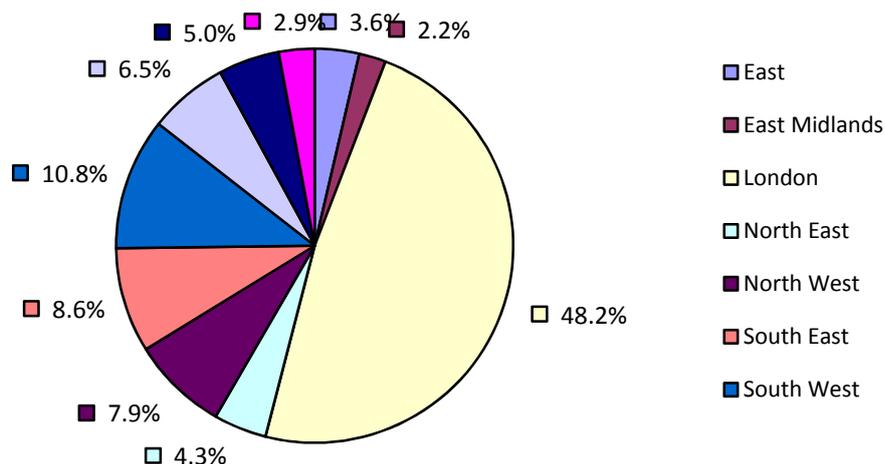
#### Ethnic origin of survey respondents



Source: Consilium Research & Consultancy

Just under half (48%) of the respondents lived in London with the South West (11%), South East (9%) and the North West (8%) representing the next most frequent responses. The North East, East and East Midlands regions are home to the lowest proportions of respondents.

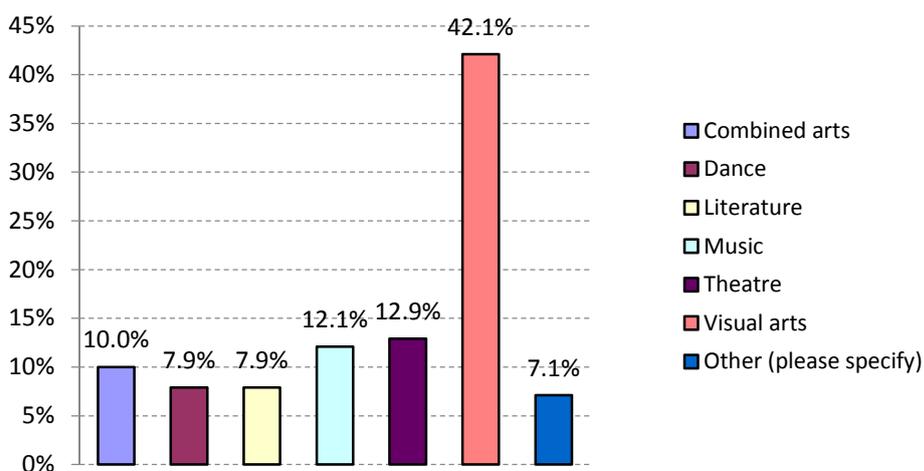
**Profile of the region where artists live**



Source: Consilium Research & Consultancy

Visual arts were by far the most common artform area for AIDF projects accounting for 42% of all grant activity. There was a relatively even spread across other artforms.

**Main artform area for AIDF project**



Source: Consilium Research & Consultancy

### Artists' responses to impact statements

Impact statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree or disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
The AIDF grant has increased my confidence to work on an international basis	84	<b>61</b>	42	30	10	7	2	1	0	0
The AIDF grant has supported my artistic development	101	<b>73</b>	34	25	3	2	0	0	0	0
The AIDF grant has enhanced my profile / reputation	76	<b>55</b>	51	37	10	7	1	1	0	0
The AIDF grant has provided me with valuable practical / logistical experience of working in an international context	76	<b>55</b>	48	35	12	9	2	1	0	0
I have used the learning from my AIDF activity to support my practice in the UK	89	<b>64</b>	39	28	8	6	2	1	0	0
I have been able to establish valuable international networks and contacts to support future collaborations	86	<b>62</b>	41	30	8	6	3	2	0	0

N= 138 Bold denotes most frequent response

Source: Consilium Research & Consultancy

## Appendix 5 - List of artist consultations

Name	Region	Round	Artform
Alice Lickens	London	Round 2	Visual arts
Alexander Hawkins	South East	Round 1	Music
Andrew Mckeown	North East	Round 1	Visual arts
Bea Herhold de Sousa	London	Round 7	Visual arts
Carol Pemberton MBE	West Midlands	Round 7	Music
Christopher Daniels	North West	Round 6	Visual arts
Clare Gasson	London	Round 6	Other
Daniel Merrill	South East	Round 4	Music
Dr Stephen Willey	London	Round 4	Literature
Flora Parrott	London	Round 3	Visual arts
Francesca Baglione	South East	Round 2	Combined arts
Grevel Lindop	North West	Round 3	Literature
Guinevere Glasfurd-Brown	East	Round 3	Literature
Jonathan Davidson	West Midlands	Round 5	Literature
Jonathan Man	London	Round 4	Theatre
Nathan Jones	North West	Round 1	Literature
Nathan Witt	South West	Round 3	Visual arts
Nola Marshall	Yorkshire & Humber	Round 3	Combined arts
Sharon Clark	South West	Round 3	Theatre
Jo Verrent	Yorkshire & Humber	Round 8	Other

## Appendix 6 - Case Studies

## Carol Pemberton MBE

### AIDF Round 7

### Area of Activity: USA

Carol is the founder and Music Director of Black Voices, a cappella ensemble, which has its base in Birmingham. The group is noted for its harmonious and unique repertoire of contemporary and classical songs and arrangements rooted in the black oral tradition.

### Description of Activity

The grant enabled Carol to undertake a ten day collaboration visit to Fisk Jubilee Singers in Nashville, Tennessee, USA. The Fisk Jubilee Singers are vocal artists and students at Fisk University, who sing and travel worldwide. The original Jubilee Singers introduced 'slave songs' to the world in 1871 and were instrumental in preserving this unique American musical tradition known today as Negro spirituals. They broke racial barriers in the USA and abroad in the late 19th century and entertained Kings and Queens in Europe. The purpose of the visit was to explore original SBOT repertoire and resources promoted by the Fisk Jubilee Singers and also to explore new opportunities for collaboration/exchange and international opportunities for future joint tours of Black Voices and Fisk.

The collaboration was highly successful project for Black Voices, providing access to new resources, film, books, songbooks and the history of the Fisk Jubilee Singers from a range of previously untapped sources at the Fisk University Special Collections Library. The AIDF grant enabled Black Voices to forge new links, made possible through Dr Paul Kwami, Musical Director of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, with a range of key individuals directly involved with SBOT. This has provided lasting links in Black Voices' mission to build a comprehensive resource on the Fisk Jubilee Singers in the UK.

### Lasting Benefits

The experiences and knowledge gained on the visit has enabled Black Voices to broaden the group's collection and archives on SBOT. Materials from the visit have been used to expand and inform Black Voices' singing workshops and summer school programmes in the UK including some new arrangements by Dr Kwami.

***'The knowledge and materials collected during this trip will be an invaluable resource for Black Voices as well as the choral groups and educational institutions with whom we work'.***

In particular, the ideas and material generated through the collaboration with Fisk Jubilee Singers have benefited the Community Spirit project which is based at Town Hall & Symphony Hall in Birmingham and focuses on celebrating and developing community choirs and new choral music. These ideas and works were presented jointly to audiences during The Fisk Jubilee Singers visit to the Town Hall & Symphony Hall in May 2015.

Black Voices have also developed a range of learning resources drawing on the Fisk Jubilee Singers archives as part of a Heritage Lottery Fund project 'We Will Remember Them' which commemorates West Indian soldiers who fought under the British West Indies Regiment during World War 1.

The AIDF grant has helped to raise the profile of Black Voices within the USA and has added to the rich tapestry of Singing in the Black Oral Tradition in the UK generally, but specifically in Birmingham. Black Voices are exploring further collaborations with The Fisk Jubilee Singers including joint performances scheduled to coincide with the 50 year anniversary of the death of the leader of the African-American Civil Rights Movement Martin Luther King in 2018.

### Links

Black Voices - <http://blackvoices.co.uk/home>

Community Spirit - <http://www.thsh.co.uk/learn-and-join-in/previous-projects/community-spirit>

Fisk Jubilee Singers - <http://www.fiskjubileesingers.org>

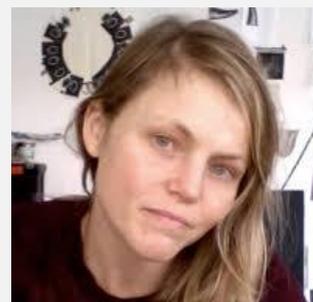


## Flora Parrott

### AIDF Round 3

### Area of Activity: Brazil

Flora studied Fine Art at the Michaelis School of Art in Cape Town and the Glasgow School of Art before graduating from the Royal College of Art with a Masters in Printmaking in 2009. She is currently making work from a studio in South East London and is the Artist in Residence at The Royal Geographical Society 'Swallet' Project.



### Description of Activity

Flora used her AIDF grant to take up an opportunity to travel, make new connections in another country and try to build lasting relationships - both creatively and in business and make contacts in the then flourishing art market in Brazil. The opportunity arose from discussions with a gallerist in London which led to informal invitations to build on the interest in contemporary art in Brazil and the reviews of her own work.

The AIDF grant enabled her to explore and exploit these invitations, covering her travel and accommodation costs, whilst she strengthened the contacts into productive relationships. She capitalised on her time in Sao Paulo by meeting a variety of independent curators, galleries, writers and artists, forming networks in both Sao Paulo and Rio with which she remains in contact today.

***“It was difficult to write an application that was more focused on business development rather than creative content but I found the process extremely useful.”***

Her six-week visit to Brazil also included a research trip to the Petar caves in Sao Paulo hosted by Mariana Amaral, the Project Coordinator at the Nara Roesler Gallery. The visit continued Flora’s fascination with caves, using the inspiration gained from the natural environment with the Brazilian culture more widely to further influence her work.

### Lasting Benefits

Flora reports strongly increased confidence in her work, especially on an international basis and specific benefits of the AIDF grant in understanding how to approach new markets and creative arenas. The benefits of generating quality contacts to support international projects was also emphasised with contacts, including a gallery representative, providing a continued source of support to inform future work.

The value of face to face networking was further underlined by the result of meetings with Maria Montero, the director of the independent Phosphorus gallery. The relationship led to an exhibition in the space in the centre of Sao Paulo which mirrored by an exhibition, co-curated by Maria, at the Tintype Gallery in London.

Flora recognises the value of the AIDF grant in helping to generate a cultural exchange between the UK and Brazil with the interchange of shows in Sao Paulo and London furthering her own career and raising the profiles of the respective galleries. She credits the AIDF grant with having an enormous impact on her artistic potential, building her confidence and expanding her work content by opening her practice up to new ways of working.

In 2015 Flora returned to Brazil to show work in a project space and in the University Sao Paulo. She has more plans to return in 2016.

### Links

Flora Parrott - [www.floraparrott.com](http://www.floraparrott.com)

Tintype Gallery - [www.tintypegallery.com](http://www.tintypegallery.com)

## Daniel Merrill

### AIDF Round 4

### Area of Activity: Lebanon, Jordan & Egypt

Daniel is UK Based musician, violinist, composer and performer and one third of the renowned experimental folk ensemble Dead Rat Orchestra.



### Description of Activity

The AIDF grant provided Daniel with the opportunity to collaborate with Teatro Alexandria and I-ACT to conduct research, network and develop audiences for future large scale international touring. During his tour of the Middle East Daniel was able to form creative collaborations with contemporary Arabic musicians from Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon and participate in Mousiqa Al Sharq Al Awsat, in Alexandria, Egypt.

Daniel was able to secure additional funding to extend his project from thirty to forty-four days. His activity supported by the AIDF grant included two concert performances in Alexandria, producing a studio EP in collaboration with Lebanese artists Fadi Tabbal and Charbel Haber, creating two short films including one on a musical collaboration with the Jordanian composer Tareq Al Nasser and another documenting his collaboration with Alexandrian based musician Ayman Asfour.

### Lasting Benefits

The grant helped to increase Daniel's confidence to work internationally and has also successfully raised his profile in Egypt and across the Middle East. The AIDF grant represented the longest period of solo travelling that Daniel had undertaken and provided a range of practical, logistical, commercial and artistic learning points in relation to working in the Middle East. The tour also provided him with a better understanding of some of the cultural and political challenges presented in working across a range of territories.

***'In terms of personal development this project has provided many amazing opportunities. I now have the confidence that I can plan and organise a project of this scale'.***

Following the completion of his AIDF project Daniel received invitations to perform in Alexandria and Beirut and was invited to perform his violin due with Ayman Asfour at the Fano Free Folk Festival (Denmark) and Copenhagen Jazz Festival in 2014. In partnership with Alexandrian based cultural entrepreneur and arts manager Amina Abodoma he has formed El-Wekala UK, an intercultural arts agency for the development and promotion of cross cultural collaborations between UK musicians and those from the Middle East and Arab Mediterranean Region. He has also developed a musical collaboration with Egyptian Flautist Fayrouz Kaddal to develop a set of musical works around the environmental, social and political implications of damming.

Drawing on his experience of working in the Middle East Daniel was also successful in a grant application to the European Cultural Foundation which has helped him to further extend his international collaboration. He is currently exploring opportunities for an inter-cultural exchange between the UK and the Middle East drawing on the networks established during his AIDF project. The contacts established in Egypt have also provided opportunities for Dead Rat Orchestra who are in discussion with collaborators to perform in Egypt in late 2016.

### Links

Dead Rat Orchestra – <http://deadratorchestra.co.uk/home/4568359502>

El-Wekala UK - <https://www.facebook.com/ElWekalaUK/>

## Dr Steve Willey

### AIDF Round 4

### Area of Activity: Palestine

Steve is a poet, researcher and critic, and as an organiser of several London-based poetry readings, is committed to the development of dynamic poetry communities both in the UK and internationally.



### Description of Activity

The grant supported a three week visit to the Palestinian Territories in 2013 to establish networks and undertake research to support the development of the artist's long-form poem 'Living In'. The process of conducting interviews with Palestinian based artists, former political prisoners, book shop owners, writing tutors and child refugees enabled Steve to gain insight into the impact of occupation on poetry and on the poet's social function.

As part of his AIDF visit Steve delivered six poetry workshops to groups in Aida Refugee Camp, Jalazone Refugee Camp and at the Palestine Writing Centre (Birzeit). He also delivered a poetry reading alongside Palestinian poets at Cafe La Vie in Ramallah. His work in the Palestine was facilitated by the Lajee Center, PalFest and the Palestine Writing Workshop.

The experience of working in the Palestinian Territories provided Steve with greater confidence to work internationally as well as practical and logistical learning points on working in the West Bank. Steve is currently studying Arabic to support the delivery of future creative writing workshops in the Palestine.

### Lasting Benefits

On returning from the Palestine Steve performed his material at 'Syndicate', an initiative organised in collaboration with New Media Scotland, that brings together writers, musicians, artists and researchers working in, and in response to, digital technologies, new media and evolving network practices. He subsequently used the poem-flag he made at Syndicate in a performance of new work produced for the launch of Zone poetry magazine, held at the London-based reading series Crossing The Line.

**'The project allowed me to develop artistic work, to build relationships with key partners and potential collaborators and to gain experience in working in another culture'.**

The work produced during his AIDF project has been anthologised in international publications, most notably Extraordinary Rendition produced by American Writers in Palestine, where Steve was one of only three British contributors.

The experience of delivering the work supported by the AIDF grant was valuable in raising Steve's profile both domestically and internationally. Following the completion of his grant Steve successfully applied for the position of Poet in Residence at the University of Arizona Poetry Center. During his residency Steve was able to further work on the creative material gathered during visit to the Palestinian Territories and enter into discussions with an American based publisher on opportunities to publish new work.

On his return to the UK Steve applied for the post of Lecturer in Creative and Critical Writing in the Department of English and Humanities at Birkbeck University of London. He credits his international experience, AIDF visit and the network of contacts established in the Palestine as contributing to his appointment to this post given the institution's interest in developing international collaborations.

### Links

Extraordinary Rendition - <http://www.orbooks.com/catalog/extraordinary-rendition/>

Living In - <http://www.stevewilley.com/living-in/>

## Sharon Clark

### AIDF Round 3

### Area of Activity: USA

Sharon is the Creative Director of the Raucous Collective and has worked with Bristol Old Vic, The National Theatre, Theatre 503, Watford Palace Theatre and Cheltenham Everyman. She is currently writer on attachment at Bristol University and lecturer at Bath Spa University in Writing for Theatre. She is also a freelance dramaturg and Literary Producer at Bristol Old Vic.



### Description of Activity

Prior to applying to the AIDF programme Sharon had no experience of working internationally. Following a positive response to a speculative contact exploring the possibility of hosting a visit the AIDF grant enabled Sharon to spend time with the Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago. They were really enthusiastic to share ideas and investigate collaborative opportunities and provided Sharon with practical support in terms of finding accommodation and scheduling a programme of meetings for the two week duration of her visit.

During her visit Sharon was able to network with a range of playwrights, academics and artists. She was also able to deliver a number of workshops on dramaturgy to playwriting undergraduates at St Paul's University in Chicago.

***'My AIDF experience provided me with the confidence to approach new markets and audiences and to know that my work is valued internationally'.***

The visit provided Sharon with an opportunity to learn more about the theatre scene in Chicago and through the process of working with another organisation, helped her to critically reflect on her own work. The visit was also useful in helping to clarify the distinction between British and American theatre making and understanding how the different financial models inform the work put on stage, the audiences they attract and the ethos they need to embrace.

### Lasting Benefits

Following her AIDF visit, and in her role as Literary Producer at the Bristol Old Vic, Sharon has been able to explore opportunities for collaboration between the Old Vic and Steppenwolf. This has the potential to raise the profile of Bristol Old Vic and also facilitate collaborative works that can engage audiences in the UK and exchange between the creative communities of Bristol and Chicago.

In her role as lecturer at Bath Spa University in Writing for Theatre she has also been able to establish links with DePaul University in Chicago and it is hoped that this may result in an exchange programme. Sharon has maintained contact with a number of Chicago playwrights she met during her AIDF visit and regularly exchanges scripts and ideas.

***'Seeing how the Steppenwolf Theatre Company made work informed my own practice and introduced me and my work to a new audience in the USA'.***

She was also invited to write an article for HowlOut website, a renowned US website for writers and theatre makers. The experience of international work provided by the AIDF grant has provided Sharon with the confidence to look for future international opportunities. She is hoping to schedule a visit to Russia during 2016 to undertake research and development for a new play she is working on which is set in St Petersburg.

### Links

Bristol Old Vic - <http://www.bristololdvic.org.uk/>

Raucous Collective - <http://www.raucous.org.uk/home>

Steppenwolf Theatre Company - <https://www.steppenwolf.org/>



[www.consiliumresearch.co.uk](http://www.consiliumresearch.co.uk)

Tel: 08448 484 885