



Research report 32  
August 2003

# The Regional Arts Lottery Programme

## An evaluation

Annabel Jackson and Graham Devlin,  
Annabel Jackson Associates

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## Foreword and acknowledgements

I am very pleased to introduce this report on the evaluation of the Regional Arts Lottery Programme (RALP). Between July 1999 and September 2002, RALP made more than 2,000 awards, worth in total £59.3 million. With an average award of just under £27,000, RALP clearly addressed a need for medium-scale funding which was not met by either the small grants made by the Awards by All programme or the large-scale awards made by the Arts Capital Programme.

The programme had two stages. The first stage, RALP1, made awards only for projects. RALP2, drawing on the lessons of Arts Council England's stabilisation and recovery programme, widened the remit to include awards for capital and for organisational development. The case studies presented in this report show how effective RALP2 was in helping organisations develop not only their artistic product, but also their own staff and organisation.

The evaluation of RALP was very timely, as it coincided with the development of Arts Council England's grants for the arts programme. The team designing grants for the arts were able to use the results of the evaluation to inform the development of the programme and to address some of the issues raised by the evaluation.

I would like to thank Annabel Jackson and her team for their careful analysis of RALP application data and for carrying out and analysing the interviews with RALP applicants and Arts Council England regional staff. Graham Devlin carried out the interviews for and wrote up the case studies. The steering group, consisting of Pat Abraham, Ann Bridgwood, Anita Favretto and Diane Fisher-Naylor, are thanked for managing the project. Jenny Trusty provided valuable administrative support.

Most of all, I would like to thank those RALP applicants and Arts Council England regional staff who generously gave their time to be interviewed. They will be pleased to know that their views and opinions have helped to improve the way in which we channel funding to artists and arts organisations.

Andrew Dixon  
Executive Director  
Arts Council England, North East

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## Executive summary

### Introduction

The Regional Arts Lottery Programme (RALP) was one of a number of lottery-funded schemes for the arts. Until the end of March 2003, it was the main national programme of small and medium scale funding for the arts, providing grants of over £2,000, with multi-year grants possible for up to three years. RALP was able to provide a second stage of funding following on from Awards for All (a joint distributor programme managed by the Community Fund), which provides grants of less than £5,000. The Arts Capital Programme (now grants for the arts – capital) is designed to support arts capital projects, including buying equipment and commissioning public art, and funds projects costing £100,000 and above. RALP therefore occupied an intermediate position between the large-scale projects funded by the Arts Capital Programme and the small-scale ones funded by Awards for All.

RALP had three strands of funding: capital (up to £100,000), projects (up to £30,000), and organisational development (usually up to £30,000). The key programme aims were:

- access to the arts
- education through the arts
- production and distribution of the arts
- investment in artists, and
- organisational development.

RALP made more than 2,000 awards since its start in July 1999. Applications could be made at any time: there were no fixed deadlines.

RALP was the first lottery programme for which the then Arts Council of England delegated full responsibility to Regional Arts Boards (RABs)<sup>1</sup>. RALP also funded cross-region projects. In previous programmes, such as Arts for Everyone, responsibilities were shared between the Arts Council and the RABs.

From April 2003, five types of grants for the arts will be made through open application programmes:

- grants for the arts
  - individuals
  - organisations
  - national touring
- grants for the arts - capital
- grants for the arts - stabilisation & recovery

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<sup>1</sup> In April 2002, the Arts Council of England and the Regional Arts Boards joined together to form a single development organisation for the arts. This report uses the term 'region' or 'regional office' except where clearly referring to the former Regional Arts Boards.



Grants for individuals will be paid out of grant-in-aid. The other grants will come from lottery funds.

In July 2002 Arts Council England commissioned Annabel Jackson Associates to carry out an evaluation of RALP.

## **Methodology**

There were five elements to the research: statistical analysis of the pattern of applications and awards; analysis of 630 final report forms; a telephone survey of 202 interviewees selected randomly from the overall population (including 30 applicants who were rejected); interviews with regional offices and case studies of 20 projects – two from each region.

## **Key findings**

### ***Awards***

RALP made more than 2,000 awards amounting to some £59.3 million since its start in July 1999. The average success rate was 58%, which is relatively high and therefore a positive use of organisations' time in applying.

The average (mean) award by RALP was around £27,000, which shows that the programme had a good intermediate position between other funding programmes. Analysis of the rejection reasons showed that RALP had effectively communicated the terms of the programme: relatively few organisations submitted applications that were outside the funding criteria for RALP.

### ***Assessment of applications***

Applications were assessed against three sets of criteria: five national objectives, regional priorities as one of the five objectives and funding principles such as value for money. This was a relatively complicated set of requirements. The scoring system that was used to rate these different priorities could have been clearer, more objective and more transparent. Regional offices varied in the way criteria were interpreted and in the assessment processes adopted. There is anecdotal evidence that these variations meant that some art forms or areas of activity were systematically excluded from funding in some regions. The evaluators were unable to analyse the extent to which funding was focused on regularly-funded clients of the Arts Council because this information was recorded on the application form but not entered onto the RALP database.

### ***RALP's achievements***

RALP has demonstrated that, in some cases, a small amount of money can make a huge difference. Interviews and final report forms show relatively positive results for each of RALP's objectives.

- **Access to the arts.** Ninety two per cent of award recipients interviewed said that the project enabled the organisation to reach new groups of

participants as well as increasing the number of participants. According to the final report forms, 96% of projects included performances of some kind. The average (mean) number of performances per project was 28.6. Multiplying the figure of 28.6 by the 2,203 awards funded by RALP suggests the programme could have generated some 63,000 performances.

- **Education through the arts.** In the final report forms, 91% of projects claimed to have generated educational outputs from their projects. The average number of educational sessions was 43.2 per project. Multiplying the figure of 43.2 by the 2,203 awards funded by RALP suggests the programme could have generated 95,000 educational sessions. In addition to these direct educational outputs, 90% of award recipients interviewed believed the project developed the skills of participants.
- **Production and distribution of the arts.** Eighty three per cent of respondents said on their final report forms that they had produced new work. The average number of pieces of new work produced was 13.4. Multiplying the figure of 13.4 by the 2,203 awards funded by RALP suggests the programme could have generated 29,500 pieces of new work. Fifty six per cent of interviewees said that their audience numbered in the thousands or tens of thousands rather than in the hundreds. This figure is consistent with the figure of 64% obtained from the final report forms.
- **Investment in artists.** The average number of artist days recorded on final report forms was 196.5. Multiplying the figure of 196.5 by the 2,203 awards funded by RALP suggests the programme could have generated over 430,000 artist days of work.
- **Organisational development.** More than 70 per cent of interviewees said that the project helped the organisation to develop new partnerships; improved the quality of its work; increased its confidence; made the organisation more adventurous; increased its project management skills; and increased its credibility with Arts Council England. Eighty-nine per cent of interviewees said that the project was a success in terms of its impact on the organisation. Ninety-two per cent of award recipients said that the project met their organisation's original objectives. Ninety-three per cent of interviewees said the RALP project had a long term impact on their organisation. It clarified the vision for the organisation, established partnerships that have endured or raised the status of the organisation. In some cases, RALP 'saved' the organisation.

### ***Strengths of RALP***

RALP built on the earlier programmes such as Arts for Everyone. The programme had many strengths especially in its principles:

- **flexibility.** RALP was flexible in its overall criteria; its combination of different funding streams; its non-alignment with art form boundaries; its timing; and its responses to changes in the project once the money had been approved
- **funding criteria.** RALP was seen by interviewees as broadly balancing social objectives with the needs of arts organisations

- **levels of funding.** The level of funding and the ability to spread funding over several years were helpful in providing organisations with a degree of certainty
- **rolling programme.** Allowing applications at any time, rather than to fixed deadlines, gave greater flexibility to applicants
- **local delivery.** Organisations valued the advice which was available from the regional offices
- **cross art form work.** RALP reflected and fostered cross-art form practice
- **partnership.** RALP encouraged many new partnerships between arts organisations and other organisations involved in social services, health, economic development, regeneration and a host of other fields

### ***Weaknesses of RALP***

RALP clearly achieved quantifiable results. However, the programme was applied inconsistently between regions. Regional offices varied in the number and structure of regional priorities; the form and delivery of support; the assessment and moderation processes; in recording of data on the RALP database; the format and use of final report forms; and, most importantly, in the way RALP funding was used.

RALP projects exhibited the following broad weaknesses:

- **compromised marketing.** Award recipients often lacked the resources or the knowledge to deliver the level of marketing that their often innovative or targeted award activities demanded
- **artistic quality.** Regional officers expressed strong concern about the low level of evaluation of the artistic quality of award activities
- **the lack of openness to new or inexperienced organisations.** A minority of applicants found the application process to be complicated or intimidating
- **sustainability.** Ninety per cent of award recipients interviewed would have liked to continue the work started by their project. RALP needed greater attention to developing exit strategies

### **Recommendations**

#### ***The application process***

- A future funding programme should have a simpler application form for small applications. There should be additional sections for larger applications, over and above this core application form
- Questions should be revisited to take account of the requirements of capital projects
- Questions dealing with the project description, additionality and management of the project should be written so as to elicit precise, factual information
- Procedures for cross-region applications should be simplified

### **Support**

- The Arts Council should evaluate different mechanisms for providing specialist support to award recipients during the delivery of their project. These could include a central business unit, nationally available seminars, peer group learning or mentoring
- Links with the stabilisation programmes (or the successor to the stabilisation programmes) should be strengthened in order to develop and apply lessons of good practice in organisational development

### **Assessment**

- Arts Council England should aim to identify a short list of, say, five national priorities, with each regional office adding not more than five additional regional priorities to reflect local identity
- The scoring system should be reviewed so that it takes greater account of the range of regional priorities and the quality of applications
- Regions should use preliminary outlines or pro-formas consistently in order to gauge an applicant's eligibility and likelihood of success
- There should be a standardised approach to the roles of advisers and assessors across the assessment process
- Each region should ensure there is a moderating capacity to 'equalise' scores
- Arts Council England should review the ways in which it involves external assessment in the process, in order to address some of the concerns about inadequate quality assessment
- Each region should commit to a monthly decision-making meeting
- Arts Council England should agree and publish clear guidelines as to how, and in what circumstances, it might reduce an award from the sum offered. When a regional office makes the decision to reduce an award in this way, it should ensure that the applicant understands the reasons behind that decision and the areas of the project that should be affected
- Regions should have the option of awarding more than the sum requested where there is a compelling reason to do so. In particular, they may wish to revise awards upwards in instances where they believe the budget does not allow for adequate remuneration to the artists involved or where the recipient is required to undertake in-depth monitoring or self-evaluation, over and above that envisaged in the application
- Regional offices should be urged to streamline their approaches and set ever more rigorous targets for customer service

### **Use of RALP funds**

- A future funding system should consider the specific needs of community organisations and the voluntary arts
- The grant management database should be expanded so that it can measure the profile of applicants and award recipients. Fields should include size, age, voluntary or professional sector and funding history
- Final report forms should be expanded to include consideration of exit strategies

### ***Post-project***

- Monitoring and evaluation should be a higher priority and possibly receive additional resources
- Arts Council England should review its application and assessment procedures to ensure that judgements about artistic quality are given greater emphasis
- There should be one common form for final report forms. The form should be reviewed to avoid ambiguity and to encourage reflection. The specific needs of capital projects should be taken into account in drafting this form
- There should be a procedure for checking that final report forms are completed in full
- The final report form should be available on-line across the regions
- Larger projects would benefit from independent evaluation, funding for which should be included in the RALP grant

### **Commentary from Arts Council England on the recommendations**

In April 2003, Arts Council England's existing grant schemes, including RALP, were replaced by grants for the arts. The evaluation carried out by Annabel Jackson Associates was timely in that it helped inform the design of the new grants scheme. Many of the issues highlighted in this report have been addressed by the new scheme.

### ***The application process***

Grants for the arts has a very basic application form, supported by an applicant's proposal. The information requested in the proposal depends on the size of the grant being applied for and there are specific headings which need to be addressed by capital applicants. Applicants are given a set of headings and sub-headings to address in their proposals which, coupled with the suggested word limits, should encourage the provision of more factual information. Applicants need to apply to one regional office only. Any cross-region communication will be the responsibility of Arts Council England staff.

### ***Support***

Arts Council England will be exploring different mechanisms for providing specialist support to award recipients. During the design of grants for the arts, there was a determined attempt to improve the availability of advice to potential applicants to reduce the chance of people being 'funded to fail'. Links with the stabilisation programme are being explored.

### ***Assessment***

Grants for the arts has five priorities which are common across all regions. Unlike RALP, there are no different regional priorities. Artistic quality will always be an essential criterion for Arts Council England.

The second phase of 'overview' scoring has been further developed to allow greater differential in the scoring mechanism. If further or outside assessment

is judged to be necessary, it will be sought. A 'quality assurance' stage, which will be followed consistently in all regional offices, has been built into the process.

Customer service targets are set out in the grants for the arts application pack. Applications for £5,000 or less will be dealt with in six weeks, those for more than £5,000 in 12 weeks. Each region has put in place mechanisms to ensure its ability to meet the new challenging turnaround times Arts Council England has set itself. Arts Council England has given a commitment to explain any reduction in the sum applied for.

### ***Use of RALP funding***

The grants for the arts application form asks organisations to state whether they are voluntary or community organisations. Arts Council England will monitor and review the success of the voluntary and community sector in accessing funding. The grants management system for grants for the arts will include the ability to record information about organisations, including whether they have previously had a funding relationship with Arts Council England.

### ***Post-project***

One common activity report form will be available and used across all regions. The form makes clear that capital projects are not expected to complete most of it. In due course consideration will be given to post-completion monitoring for capital projects.

The application form, activity report form and IT systems have been developed in co-operation with Arts Council England's research department so as to ensure that the available data are robust and can form the basis of thorough monitoring and evaluation.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Introduction and background

The Regional Arts Lottery Programme (RALP) was one of a number of lottery – funded schemes for the arts. Until the end of March 2003, it was the main national programme of small and medium scale funding for the arts, providing grants of over £2,000, with multi-year grants possible for up to three years. RALP was able to provide a second stage of funding following on from Awards for All (a joint lottery distributor programme managed by the Community Fund), which provided grants of less than £5,000. The Arts Capital Programme (now grants for the arts – capital) is designed to support arts capital projects, including buying equipment and commissioning public art, and funds projects costing £100,000 and above. RALP therefore occupied an intermediate position between the large-scale projects funded by the Arts Capital Programme and the small-scale ones funded by Awards for All.

RALP had three strands of funding: capital (up to £100,000), projects (up to £30,000), and organisational development (usually up to £30,000). The key programme aims were:

- access to the arts
- education through the arts
- production and distribution of the arts
- investment in artists, and
- organisational development.

RALP made more than 2,000 awards since its start in July 1999. Applications could be made at any time: there were no fixed deadlines.

RALP was the first lottery programme for which the then Arts Council of England delegated full responsibility to the ten Regional Arts Boards (RABs<sup>2</sup>). RALP also funded cross-region projects. In previous programmes, such as Arts for Everyone, responsibilities were shared between the Arts Council and the RABs.

From April 2003, five types of grants for the arts can be awarded through open application programmes:

- grants for the arts
  - individuals
  - organisations
  - national touring
- grants for the arts - capital
- grants for the arts - stabilisation and recovery

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<sup>2</sup> In April 2002, the Arts Council of England and the Regional Arts Boards joined together to form a single development organisation for the arts. This report uses the term 'region' or 'regional office' except where clearly referring to the former Regional Arts Boards.

Grants for individuals will be paid out of grant-in-aid. The other grants will come from lottery funds.

## **1.2 Aims of the evaluation**

In July 2002 Arts Council England commissioned Annabel Jackson Associates to carry out an evaluation of the Regional Arts Lottery Programme (RALP). The brief was to:

- analyse the pattern of award distribution
- analyse the different groups of applicants and relative success rates
- describe and compare regional outreach initiatives (eg roadshows and seminars)
- find out how successfully the five programme aims had been met
- evaluate the benefits to the community made possible by the programme
- evaluate the positive and negative experiences of applicants
- find out how participants and external observers viewed the outcomes of the project

The second of these was more difficult than anticipated because the RALP database contains very little information on the profile of applicant organisations. For example, the database does not record whether applicants are regularly funded clients of the Arts Council, although this information is contained on the application form. The recommendations contain measures to fill this gap in the future.

## **1.3 Methodology**

There were five elements to the research.

### ***Statistical analysis***

Using the data provided by the Arts Council the evaluators analysed information on:

- the number of applications and awards
- the strand of RALP under which the application was made for applications and awards. As mentioned above, RALP had three strands of funding: capital, projects and organisational development
- the art form of applications and awards
- the size of applications and awards
- the types of applicants and award recipients. The evaluators had intended to examine the age of the organisation; size of the organisation in terms of number of employees, volunteers and turnover; its ownership of a building; its ethnicity; and relevance to disability. However, none of these variables is available for individual organisations from the RALP database. The ethnicity of applicant organisations and awards is available on an aggregate basis but the data are not complete or up to date
- the regional distribution of applicants and awards
- the intended audience of applicants and award recipients
- the partnership funding offered by applicants and award recipients



- applicants' and award recipients' estimates of the number and type of beneficiaries
- the estimated number of artists involved

### ***Final reports***

The evaluators coded and analysed copies of the 630 final reports so far submitted by award recipients, representing 52% of the expected total. These contained information on:

- the financial outturn for the project in comparison with the budget
- the scale of participation
- the profile of participants
- job creation
- perceived success in meeting the project's objectives

The open questions on the final report forms also provided valuable information on the process of carrying out the RALP-funded projects.

### ***Telephone survey***

The evaluators carried out a telephone survey of 202 interviewees selected randomly from the overall population of 3,812 applicants. This included interviews with 30 rejected applicants.

The evaluators employed a specific form of telephone interviewing, evidence-based interviewing, which asks questions directly of the grant recipient and then requires examples or evidence to justify the answer. This approach provides one method of linking cause and effect, narrowing down reported impacts to those that can most reasonably be attributed to RALP funding rather than to wider circumstances.

The interviews with successful applicants asked about:

- **the character of the award:** its aims, the stage it had reached and area of activity
- **the relationship of the award to RALP:** whether the planned award activity was changed to fit RALP criteria, whether the actual activity differed from intentions and whether the activity would have gone ahead without RALP
- **the accessibility of RALP:** whether the organisation had more than one grant from RALP, how the organisation heard about RALP, their perception of their chance of success, what support they received and how valuable this support was
- **the process of applying for RALP:** whether it was easy to get hold of an application form, whether the application form was simple to complete, whether the guidance notes were clear, whether it was easy to obtain information about the progress of the application, whether the decision timing was appropriate, the effect of any scaling down of the amount applied for and any problems with delivering the award activity

- **organisational impact:** the amount of time the organisation spent on the award activity; any media coverage; whether the award activity made the organisation more adventurous, increased its confidence, increased its project management skills, improved the quality of its work, helped to develop new partnerships, increased its credibility with Arts Council England; and whether jobs were created
- **community impact:** whether the award activity raised awareness about social problems, developed participants' skills or improved the quality of life for the local community; the scale of participation, depth of participation and profile of beneficiaries; the perceived success of the award activity
- **sustainability:** whether the award activity will continue, whether the impact on the organisation is long term and any additional funding obtained
- **views on RALP:** perceived strengths and weaknesses of RALP, lessons learnt and other applications made to RALP

A copy of the interview schedule is included in Appendix 1.

Interviews with unsuccessful applicants asked:

- whether they went ahead with the award activity without the RALP funding
- if they did, whether they obtained any external funding and if so from whom
- whether the application process for RALP was helpful to the organisation
- whether the reasons for refusal were clear
- whether the organisation felt better prepared to apply for funding in the future

### ***Interviews with regional offices***

The evaluators visited each regional office and asked a range of individual officers about:

- how RALP is organised, including procedures for outreach such as roadshows and seminars
- any problems experienced in running RALP
- how practice has evolved over time
- possible improvements to RALP processes
- views on the impact of RALP projects
- views on the objectives of RALP

### ***Case studies***

The evaluators researched case studies of 20 RALP awards, two from each region, to illustrate general issues about RALP. Case studies were chosen from a longer list put forward by the regional offices. Case studies investigated:

- the history and background of the organisation

- the activities of the organisation and how the RALP activity fitted in with this
- how the organisation was constituted, its expenses and resources
- the scale and character of audiences and participants
- the character of the award activity
- the problems of the award recipient and how RALP related to these
- the experience of the application process
- comments on the regional outreach initiatives such as roadshows and seminars
- the problems of delivering the award activity and whether the organisation received any support
- how RALP affected the artistic quality of work done
- what RALP achieved for the organisation and the local community
- the interviewees' views on RALP

The interviews with regional offices and the case studies were conducted by Graham Devlin. The other elements of work were carried out by a team of researchers at Annabel Jackson Associates led by Annabel Jackson.

#### **1.4 Structure of the report**

Chapter 2 analyses the pattern of award distribution and provides some information on the different groups of applicants and relative success rates. Chapter 3 examines the RALP processes, including the use of outreach initiatives and the positive and negative experiences of applicants. Chapter 4 considers evidence of the achievement of the five programme aims and the benefits the project generated in the organisations and the community. It also describes how participants and external observers viewed the outcomes of the project. Chapter 5 pulls the different strands of evidence together to draw conclusions and make recommendations for future funding programmes serving similar purposes to RALP. Chapter 6 presents the case studies.

## 2 The pattern of applications and awards under RALP

### 2.1 Introduction

The RALP programme had two stages: RALP1, which lasted from June 1999 until July 2000; and RALP2 which lasted from July 2000 to March 2003. The RALP2 data in this report covers July 2000 to September 2002<sup>3</sup>. RALP2 was a wider programme than its predecessor and included grants for capital and organisational development alongside project funding (Table 2.1). The criteria for these two stages varied, as did the way data were recorded on the RALP database. Where the data were inconsistent between the two stages, this report presents results for the two stages separately.

**Table 2.1 Funding strands for awards and applications (RALP2)**

RALP strand	Applications		Awards	
	No.	%	No.	%
Projects	2,094	76	1,329	78
Capital	815	29	500	29
Organisational development	428	15	319	19
Total*	2,766	100	1,697	100

Source: RALP database

\*Note: Awards could be funded under more than one strand, so the totals exceed the number of applications.

### 2.2 Applications and awards

Between the start of RALP in June 1999 and the time of the analysis in September 2002, RALP received 3,812 applications and made 2,203 awards. The average success rate was 58% (Table 2.2). This compares very favourably with Arts for Everyone Main<sup>4</sup> where the success rate was 12% (Annabel Jackson Associates, 1999).

The average success rate increased from 48% for RALP1 to 61% for RALP2. This increase was in part a reflection of the larger budget for RALP2 (from £10 million a year for RALP1 to £22 million a year for RALP2). However, regional officers suggested that the increased success rate also reflected three additional factors:

<sup>3</sup> There was a transitional period during July 2000 when the RALP database contained both RALP1 and RALP2 applications.

<sup>4</sup> Arts for Everyone (Main) was a lottery-funded open application programme, which offered funding to organisations for projects lasting up to three years. It was open for applications in 1997.

- RALP2 was refined, learning lessons from RALP1. The five criteria of RALP2 provided a better match with current arts practice and organisations' ambitions
- overall, the quality of applications improved. Applicants deepened their understanding of the purpose and systems of RALP, and what was likely to be funded. The support that regional offices gave to applicants increased in scope and quality
- regional officers extended their knowledge of ways of using RALP. For example, officers were using RALP2 more strategically. There was a cultural change in the funding system which meant that regional officers were more prepared to take risks

It may also be the case that the broader scope of RALP2, compared to RALP1, contributed to the higher success rate. The inclusion of support for organisational development enabled RALP2 to strengthen organisations that would not otherwise have been accepted onto the programme.

**Table 2.2 Applications and awards by region**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Success rate %</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Rejected</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Total applications</b>
East England	49	134	129	9	272
East Midlands	46	126	129	17	272
London	49	283	283	10	576
Northern	74	236	69	12	317
North West	55	336	221	55	612
Southern	73	224	80	4	308
South East	60	182	84	37	303
South West	43	178	217	22	417
West Midlands	79	250	61	7	318
Yorkshire	61	254	149	14	417
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>2,203</b>	<b>1,422</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>3,812</b>

Source: RALP database

RALP awarded £59.3 million over the two stages of the programme from June 1999 to September 2002 (Table 2.3). Eighty per cent of the total awarded was accounted for by RALP2. The total amount for which applicants applied was £27.4 million for RALP1 and £81.1 million for RALP2. In RALP1 each region received between £800,000 and £1.6 million. In RALP2, each region received between £3.7 million and £8.5 million. The distribution between the regions was based on a formula that reflects population, geographical area and levels of deprivation.

**Table 2.3 Total financial value of applications and awards by region**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Applications £</b>	<b>Awards £</b>
East England	9,526,114	5,579,260
East Midlands	10,187,409	4,691,353
London	13,524,675	6,668,125
Northern	7,261,525	4,986,243
North West	18,542,433	10,083,001
Southern	7,849,556	4,915,377
South East	8,274,478	4,922,801
South West	12,473,987	5,010,106
West Midlands	9,367,458	6,745,541
Yorkshire	11,469,052	5,721,251
<b>Total</b>	<b>108,476,687</b>	<b>59,323,058</b>

Source: RALP database

RALP operated as a rolling programme; that is, applications were accepted on a continuous basis, with no fixed deadlines for the receipt of applications. Regional officers strongly prefer a rolling programme to the use of rounds with fixed deadlines. It is seen as more flexible, more customer-focused and more manageable. Although rounds can be helpful to officers in allowing applications to be compared, such benefits incur the concentration of effort for applicants and assessing officers, which causes delays and provides limited windows of opportunity. Moving from a system of rounds to a rolling programme was one of the recommendations from the researchers' earlier evaluation of Arts for Everyone Express<sup>5</sup> (Annabel Jackson Associates, 1997).

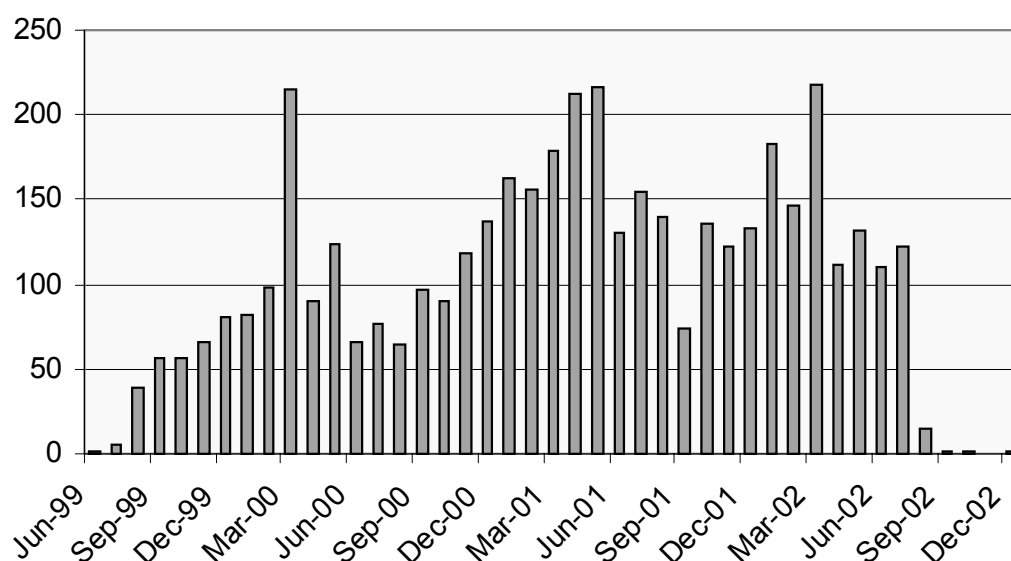
Applications showed a clear seasonal pattern, peaking in March of each year (Figure 2.1). This probably reflects the practice of issuing application packs that are valid until March of each year. It seems that even without stated rounds some applicants work to a self-imposed deadline.

### **2.3 Project costs**

The average (mean) project cost was £65,118 (Table 2.4). The average project cost increased from £57,037 for RALP1 to £69,200 for RALP2. The average amount awarded was £26,928. Seventy five per cent of the applications for RALP1 and 66% of the applications for RALP2 were under £30,000. The average award was £23,770 for RALP1 and £27,870 for RALP2. For RALP2, the average amount awarded varied across the regions, from £21,628 for the Northern region to £47,665 for the Eastern region.

<sup>5</sup> Arts for Everyone Express (A4E Express) was a lottery-funded scheme which offered awards to smaller-scale groups and projects than A4E (Main).

**Figure 2.1 Months in which applications were received**



**Table 2.4 Average project costs, amount requested and awarded by region (£)**

Region	Project cost	Requested amount	Amount awarded
East England	71,393	35,022	41,636
East Midlands	72,155	37,454	37,233
London	66,568	23,480	23,562
Northern	47,089	22,907	21,128
North West	63,034	30,298	30,009
Southern	62,495	25,486	21,944
South East	64,500	27,309	27,048
South West	60,970	29,914	28,147
West Midlands	79,420	29,457	26,982
Yorkshire	66,829	27,504	22,525
All	65,118	28,457	26,928

Source: RALP database

Partnership funding was below £15,000 for 37% of applications. However 24% of awards had partnership funding of £50,000 or more.

**Table 2.5 Amount of partnership funding: total cost of project minus the amount awarded**

<b>Amount</b>	<b>Number of applications</b>	<b>%</b>
£0 - £4,999	433	13
£5,000 - £9,999	417	13
£10,000 - £14,999	357	11
£15,000 - £19,999	281	9
£20,000 - £24,999	219	7
£25,000 - £29,999	195	6
£30,000 - £34,999	167	5
£35,000 - £39,999	142	4
£40,000 - £44,999	124	4
£45,000 - £49,999	102	3
£50,000 or more	786	24
Data not available	49	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,272</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: RALP database

Categories of income and expenditure are difficult to interpret for RALP1 because the figures on the RALP database (which are taken from the application form) exclude East Midlands, the Eastern Region, London and West Midlands. Figures are available for RALP2, but almost half of the cases miss out the sub-categories within income and expenditure.

For RALP2 the average (mean) amount of public funding (eg local authority) income was £9,175 (Table 2.6). Figures for London (£5,080) were the lowest of all the regions but this was balanced by the highest average figures for other public (eg RAB) income (£19,738 compared to an average of £10,414). Yorkshire also had a high level of other public funding income (average £17,058). The West Midlands had a high average amount of public funding income (£30,493). These figures suggest great variations in the sources of funding in different regions, but perhaps also reflect differences in the extent to which regions channelled RALP money to their own clients.

The average amount of private income was far higher in London than elsewhere (£77,513 compared with an average of £17,688). However, this result is affected by two extreme values of £5 million and £18.8 million. Excluding these two projects reduces the average to £7,498. The average amount of income in kind was £5,475, with no great variations between the regions. Looking at total income, the average figure ranges from £23,002 for the Northern region to £107,878 for London.



**Table 2.6 Average amount of partnership funding by region (RALP2) (£)**

Region	Public funding	Other public funding	Private	In kind	Total
Eastern England	11,232	10,387	8,154	8,171	37,945
East Midlands	6,227	5,107	8,777	6,134	26,244
London	5,080	19,738	77,513	5,547	107,878
Northern	6,422	5,236	7,307	4,037	23,002
North West	8,420	8,321	8,493	5,771	31,005
Southern	6,076	7,685	7,548	5,867	27,176
South East	8,608	7,137	7,988	6,417	30,150
South West	8,565	6,389	8,485	4,332	27,771
West Midlands	30,493	10,694	6,786	4,710	52,684
Yorkshire	7,426	17,058	7,183	4,841	36,508
All	9,175	10,414	17,688	5,475	42,753

Source: RALP database

The average amount of artistic expenditure was £31,271. The lowest figure was for the Northern region and the highest for the Eastern region (Table 2.7).

**Table 2.7 Average amount of expenditure by region (RALP2) (£)**

Region	Artistic	Marketing	Overheads	Capital	Other	Total
Eastern England	39,704	7,692	16,252	18,049	4,661	86,358
East Midlands	32,959	4,843	16,286	14,204	6,350	74,642
London	31,946	10,289	15,273	16,489	4,586	78,584
Northern	22,765	3,306	8,975	9,651	3,793	48,491
North West	35,357	5,969	12,612	9,882	3,162	66,983
Southern	29,064	4,632	13,550	11,081	3,087	61,414
South East	31,487	6,274	10,791	13,880	3,898	66,331
South West	24,161	4,447	9,386	16,720	2,995	57,709
West Midlands	39,510	4,506	11,822	39,325	2,532	97,695
Yorkshire	27,816	4,770	13,082	13,955	4,265	63,887
All	31,271	5,874	12,694	15,546	3,830	69,216

Source: RALP database

For both RALP1 and RALP2, projects varied widely in the amount requested as a percentage of the total project cost, ranging from 20% to 90%. The figures confirm the impression that RALP served different purposes at different levels of funding.

## 2.4 Art form

RALP reflected, but also partly encouraged, cross-art form work (Table 2.8). The number of awards in combined arts increased from 19% in RALP1 to 33% in RALP2. Two regions (Northern and South West) made more than 40% of their awards in combined arts during RALP2.

**Table 2.8 Number and percentage of awards in each art form**

Art form	Number	%
Broadcast	6	0
Collaborative arts	101	5
Combined arts	649	29
Crafts	25	1
Dance	189	9
Drama	376	17
Film/video	109	5
Literature	98	4
Music	314	14
Other	18	1
Photography	15	1
Visual Arts	299	14
No information	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,203</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: RALP database

## 2.5 Profile of applicants

The RALP database does not contain important information about the profile of applicant organisations, such as their size, age, sector (voluntary or funded), and funding history. The Arts Council collected aggregate data on the ethnicity and the proportion of disabled participants in RALP projects, but these data were not complete or up to date.

The data that are recorded are of limited interest. For RALP1, 33% of the award recipients were companies limited by guarantee and 20% fell into the 'Other' category. Nine per cent of awards went to unincorporated groups. Only 3% were companies limited by shares and 4% were local authorities. The proportion of applications received from companies limited by guarantee rose to 50% for RALP2, partly as a result of a smaller number of responses classified as 'Other'. The number of awards going to local authorities increased to 13%.

The data for RALP2 are more detailed. Sixty two per cent of award recipients described themselves as arts organisations. Seven per cent were voluntary organisations and a further four per cent described themselves as community groups. Only 2% were colleges or universities and 1% schools.

### **3 RALP processes: application, support, assessment, decision making and monitoring**

#### **3.1 Applying for funding**

The RALP application process was developed by drawing on the lessons from earlier programmes such as Arts for Everyone. There was a consensus among interviewees that the process was broadly adequate (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the interview schedule). Looking firstly at the perspective of applicants, interview data were generally positive:

- 94% of the 172 award recipients interviewed said that they found it easy to get hold of an application form
- 91% said that the guidance notes were clear
- 67% said that the application form was at the right level of detail
- 63% said that the application form was simple to complete
- 47% did not contact the regional office about the progress of their application. Of those that did, 64% found it easy to obtain information
- 56% of rejected applicants interviewed found the process of applying to RALP helpful either in clarifying the objectives for their project or in understanding the funding system

A minority of applicants, especially those without experience of the funding system, found the application process extremely difficult. They thought the application form was repetitive and the process intimidating and inaccessible. There was a fear that applications would only be successful if they used certain words or formulae and that only organisations that were already funded would have this inside knowledge. Although the different strands of funding in RALP were a strength of the programme, they could also add to the complication of presenting a project proposal. Several award recipients felt that the application process was opaque. One applicant said:

The application asks you to show that your project will be a success, but this is difficult to prove in advance and is more about whether you're good at devising this sort of rhetoric, with little bearing on your ability to make a project work.

The case studies suggest that the level of information required was too onerous for small applications. Regional officers also felt that, too often, successful applications depended on either good external advice or experience of form – filling. They were aware that newcomers to the funding system worry about 'not having the language'. This probably remains the most important challenge for the new grants programmes. Several regional officers suggested that smaller applications should initially be asked only for limited information, with larger applications being subject to the current interrogation. Indeed, some suggested that even more information, that is, a full business plan, should be demanded of the largest applications.

Interviewees made a number of detailed comments on the application process.

- The application form, a copy of which is included in Appendix 1, did not fit capital applications. While the concepts implied were broadly valid, the wording could be changed to match capital projects. For example, questions 2.1 d and e refer to the 'activity' of the intended project, while Section 3.7 refers to the 'marketing' of the activity. Most organisations would not think of a capital acquisition as an activity and might refer to 'encouraging use' rather than marketing of equipment or other capital
- The question asking for 'Details of your proposal', which is the core of the application, needs to be more precise. The question as posed was seen by some regional officers as being an invitation to 'flowery language'. It was suggested, accordingly, that guidance notes should steer applicants more towards fact (what, who, when, where) rather than to producing publicity material. This lack of precision was also acknowledged by some former applicants who said that they were unsure about how much detail to put in this section
- The question which asks 'Please describe how this proposal will be additional to the work your organisation is already funded to deliver' was seen as presenting some difficulty to applicants
- One regional officer identified a need for more guidance on the question 'what systems and structures will you use to make sure that the proposal is well managed and run efficiently'. Applicants sometimes recounted their management history rather than their plans for the project itself
- Cross-regional processes should be simplified. Some organisations applied to several regions for different parts of their work. One organisation that held workshops in three different regions complained about having to apply three times. 'A bigger saving in administrative terms could, of course, be achieved if it was easier than it is to submit one application for cross-regional activities instead of three.'

## 3.2 Support to applicants

### *Application support*

Each regional office had its own procedures for guiding potential applicants through the application process. All provided road shows and workshops/seminars. However, some only provided road shows to limited geographical areas or to categories of applicants considered to be priorities due to their fit with corporate priorities or historical under-representation. The frequency of support, especially the road shows, varied widely from region to region.

Through the above strategies, the regional offices tried to ensure that they did not receive a large number of 'cold' applications, that is those without prior contact. They sought to develop an iterative approach to the application's development. Techniques to this end included:

- **providing pro-formas or outline proposals.** These could be used as an initial assessment tool and, where appropriate, enabled the regional office to deter hopeless applications. Commenting on outline proposals rather than draft applications was seen to give officers a distance from the actual application, which was useful when the assessment stage began

- **reading and commenting on draft applications.** Several regions offered this facility only to first-time applicants or to those from under-represented communities (eg culturally diverse or disability organisations or those working in low-income areas). Others offered it to any who asked. It was stressed by several regional officers that comments were generally in the form of questions rather than prescriptions. In the words of one regional officer, 'it's their application not ours'. In one instance, interviewees reported that senior management discouraged officers from looking at draft applications since they felt that an inability to fill out the form indicated poor ability to manage the project
- **one-to-one conversations with officers and external advisors.** One officer suggested that this sort of session was useful in alerting applicants to the region's strategies and priorities implicit in its corporate plan
- **pro-active encouragement.** A strong invitation strategy was seen by some regions as helping to maximise the opportunities for success of strategically important initiatives

The amount of time involved in support varied considerably. Some applications received as much as four days of officer-time. In addition, at least one region offered paid assistance to potential applicants who did not have the capacity to make a major bid.

### ***Problems with and lessons from the project***

Fifty-one per cent of award recipients said they had no problems with delivering the project. The most common area of difficulty, as confirmed from analysis of the final report forms, was in marketing the award activity. Marketing problems fell into four groups.

- **Lack of control.** Organisations had problems where they were reliant on other organisations or where responsibilities in partnerships were not clear. In many cases marketing was left to the venue, host organisation or local authority and on occasions was less comprehensive or effective than the organisation expected. Several organisations decided to take more responsibility for their marketing in any future partnerships. Linked problems arose where organisations such as publicity companies or television channels had offered free publicity and then reneged on their promises because of other opportunities. Gaining media coverage was another area over which organisations had less control than they would have liked. For example, one event took place in the middle of the fuel crisis of September 2000 which meant it received no regional television coverage.
- **Insufficient effort.** Some organisations had underestimated the amount of new marketing they needed, for example where they were changing their product, working in new areas, or using new venues or partners. There were many comments that marketing was difficult because the organisation left it too late, sometimes because of a lack of lead-in time, but often because of giving priority to programming activities. Successful projects tended to have built up their public image, for example by using a weekly newspaper column or word-of-mouth through volunteers. On the other hand, a couple of organisations had problems because materials

were produced too early and therefore did not reflect the product as it developed. Insufficient effort was often attributed to insufficient funding. Several organisations had cut the marketing budget because of their RALP bids being scaled down.

- **Difficulty in marketing the project.** Some projects were so innovative that they were difficult to communicate. As one interviewee said 'It was difficult to get our message across since what we were doing was beyond people's imagination.' Another commented that 'The product was ready but few saw its potential.' The final report forms contain a number of examples where organisations had to amend or refine their marketing plans as the programme developed because they had under-estimated the challenge of marketing an innovative or complex product. Furthermore, access objectives often demanded targeting techniques that were outside the experience or connections of the organisation.
- **Lack of knowledge.** There were examples where organisations missed the deadlines for publications or printing because of ignorance of the lead times required

Many of these problems would be solved by giving a higher priority to marketing. The elements that defined RALP projects also made them more difficult to market: innovation, flexibility, partnership and access objectives. The marketing of a RALP project needed to be as creative, pro-active and well planned as the project itself. There is plenty of experience within Arts Council England of addressing these issues, for example, through the Arts Council's New Audiences Programme (Jermyn and Joy, 2000). Future funding programmes following on from RALP could benefit from this expertise.

Problems with marketing led to other weaknesses with RALP activities: low levels of participation, smaller audiences and lower income than planned. Many organisations found the project presented a steep learning curve. Lessons from the RALP process included:

- **planning.** Interviewees found that tasks took longer than they expected and that co-ordination was complex, especially where the organisation was running several projects simultaneously. This was also noted in the evaluation of Year of the Artist (Hutton and Fenn, 2002). Where organisations had applied to different funding sources for different projects the uncertainty about which combination of these, if any, would be funded, added to the planning work. Consultation with project participants added another area of change as the nature of the project and its budget sometimes had to be changed to meet participants' needs. Smaller organisations learned valuable lessons about thinking strategically and prioritising the often long list of tasks and opportunities different projects presented. The planning process was less linear and more iterative than some organisations expected. For example, one interviewee commented that 'You need to evaluate and learn continually.'
- **focus.** Several organisations had presented their projects positively in their application form by promising large numbers of workshops or other activities. Organisations sometimes felt that they had spread themselves too widely and could have achieved a greater impact from concentrating

their efforts. Focusing was also seen as helpful in managing expectations from participants.

- **realistic budgeting.** A number of award recipients had put minimal budgets in their application forms on the assumption that this would increase their chances of being funded. The practice of attempting to run the project on a cut price budget taught them that they needed to budget more realistically and possibly include a contingency budget.
- **audience needs.** RALP often introduced organisations to new groups of participants or audiences, or allowed them greater time to reach people that they had been targeting unsuccessfully before. Many organisations found RALP a one-off learning process that would inform future work.
- **partnership working.** RALP encouraged many new partnerships between arts organisations and other organisations involved in social services, health, economic development, regeneration and a host of other fields. The process of developing partnerships was often more time consuming and less predictable than originally envisaged. Organisations learned how to ensure that partnerships were balanced, how to clarify expectations and how to develop trust. Several organisations emphasised the importance of being very specific in negotiations.

Some of these issues appear to reflect the challenge of delivering projects that organisations devised in part to meet (perceived) funding criteria rather than local needs or circumstances.

### ***Award recipients' experience of support***

The interview survey of 172 award recipients asked about the support they had received with their award. The analysis shows broad satisfaction. Seventy per cent of award recipients said that they received advice with filling in the application form. The most common form of support was one-to-one advice. Eighty-one per cent of respondents described the advice from regional offices as very helpful.

During the project a small proportion of organisations received support with planning and marketing the award activity (11% and 13% respectively), but few received support with evaluation (six per cent). Seventy-six per cent of interviewees said that they did not need additional support in delivering the award activity.

Forty-two per cent would not change their award activity in retrospect. The remainder would make it less ambitious, spread it over a longer period of time, or improve planning, marketing and links to local projects. These areas where further support is needed tie in with those suggested by the regional officers.

The underlying desire to focus projects more tightly, which comes across from this analysis and from the early comments on lessons from RALP is, interestingly, the opposite to that from an earlier analysis of Awards for All



Scotland (Annabel Jackson Associates, 2002)<sup>6</sup>. Here award recipients wished their projects had been more ambitious.

### ***Post award support***

Regional officers acknowledged that some form of post-award support would be useful, particularly to first-time awardees or to those organisations with ambitious multi-year bids. Particular areas of need were identified as:

- marketing
- project management
- business planning
- cultural diversity
- equal opportunities

Officers in Arts Council England do not have the resources (or, in some areas, the skills) to assume responsibility for this development programme.

Interviewees suggested other mechanisms that could be used including:

- the development of a specialist business unit that could help with organisational development, business health checks etc, thereby saving on consultancy fees
- engaging agencies to run nationally-available seminars on particular topics for organisations facing similar issues, thus enabling peer group learning
- encouraging organisations to include a small organisational development strand in applications in order to build capacity
- using a small number of (paid) advisers as an on-tap mentoring resource

## **3.3 Assessment**

### ***Responsibilities for assessment***

Procedures for assessing applications varied from region to region. In most regions, the same officer both advised the applicant on the development of their project and assessed it. That assessment then fed into the decision-making process. Clearly, this arrangement could be open to charges of bias or favouritism. Under these circumstances, the mechanisms for moderating advice and making final decisions are critically important.

In three regions, the assessment was not done by the lead officer responsible for the proposal's development. In two of these, it was done by outside assessors with officer input added before final recommendations were made. In the third region assessments were done by a business development officer in conjunction with the art form officer. Sometimes development and assessment were done by assistant officers.

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<sup>6</sup> Seventy eight per cent of interviewees said they would not have changed their project. The most common change (12% of total respondents) was to make it more ambitious.

### Scoring of projects

Applications were assessed using a five-point scale for each of the programme criteria. Analysis of the database demonstrates the way the scoring system was used (Table 3.1). For RALP1, around five per cent of applications received a score of 0 for each of the five criteria: artistic and educational merit, regional priority, public benefit, project management and financial ability. Scores of 1 or 2 were given to 13-18% of projects. Between 48% and 60% of projects received a score of 4 or 5 for the criteria. The lowest scored criterion was financial ability.

For RALP2 the criteria were artistic quality, regional priority, public benefit, financial viability and project management. Around seven per cent of applications received a score of 0. Between 10 and 14% of applications received a score of 1 or 2 for each of the criteria. Scores of 4 or 5 were awarded to between 55% and 66% of applicants on most of the criteria. The exception is financial viability, on which 44% of applications were given scores of 4 or 5.

**Table 3.1 Scoring of RALP applications**

Criterion	Score						No score	Total
	0	1	2	3	4	5		
RALP1	Percentage							
Artistic and educational merit	5	4	12	21	36	19	3	100
Regional priority	5	5	10	17	29	31	3	100
Public benefit	5	4	13	24	35	16	3	100
Project management	5	4	9	22	36	21	3	100
Financial ability	5	5	13	26	32	16	3	100
RALP2								
Artistic quality	7	2	11	21	37	22	0	100
Regional priority	7	2	13	23	39	16	0	100
Public benefit	7	2	8	23	37	23	0	100
Project management	7	2	10	17	33	31	0	100
Financial viability	7	3	12	34	34	10	0	100

Source: RALP database

Very few projects that scored 0, 1 or 2 were funded. The average scores for awards across the criteria were between 4.1 and 4.4 for RALP1, and between 3.8 and 4.4 for RALP2. Criteria were heavily correlated, with some projects scoring lowly on all criteria, and most projects scoring highly on all criteria. Scoring varied between the regions.

This analysis shows that decisions were indeed being made on the basis of the scoring system. However, the scoring system was not being used to its potential. The full range of scores was not being used, most fundable projects being in the range 3–5.

Regional officers expressed concerns about the scoring system. Comments included:

- it was inconsistent and relatively subjective, which led to huge discrepancies
- it was often ‘fiddled’ by officers who wanted to ‘pass’ a particular project
- crude scoring did not allow for the interpretation of complex projects or for easy comparison between very different projects
- scoring criteria did not always match the essence of the project
- it did not work for capital, so the scoring across programme strands was inconsistent

From a technical point of view, the scoring system had three flaws:

- the five-point system was set up to do two jobs simultaneously – the binary task of inclusion/exclusion and a simultaneous grading of potential awardees. This is an over-ambitious mechanism which results in a blunt instrument, allowing for little discrimination between eligible projects. Scores of 1 or 2 almost automatically resulted in a project being rejected with the consequence that all potentially fundable projects sat within a narrow score-spectrum of 3–5
- the scoring standards were not applied consistently. Some assessors treated ‘5’ as an indication that a project was good; others that it was exemplary or outstanding. As a result, the scoring system was not sufficiently objective; rather, it required a level of interpretation on the part of decision-makers who had to know how and whether to re-grade an assessor’s score
- the applicants did not have access to the scoring standards; consequently, they did not know the basis on which their applications were being assessed. In the interests of transparency the funding system might consider making any such guidelines available on request in the future

### ***Moderation and decision making***

Given Arts Council England’s understandable concerns that the conflation of its advisory and assessing functions should not be perceived as creating conflicts of interest – and the widely-held reservations about the efficacy of the scoring system – the robustness of the moderating and decision-making processes become particularly important. In general, officers believe that, providing the moderating process is sound, the conflation is acceptable.

In most regional offices a moderating group reviewed the individual scores. This group was generally made up of officers from different parts of the organisation (art form, finance and business). The moderating system appeared to work fairly well, particularly in instances where a range of views was involved. In most cases the moderating group made recommendations to

a decision making group, which may have consisted of the region's senior management team or directorate. In one case recommendations went to a recommendation panel (made up of a lottery officer and a member of management team) with the final decision signed off by the Chief Executive.

One region, which had recently removed this moderating stage, compensated for its absence with a more elaborate decision-making process involving two senior managers, a finance officer and two arts officers (who were not involved in any applications under consideration).

The moderating group could, on occasion, over-rule the initial recommendation and revise the scores. This was resented by many front-line officers because it seemed to imply a lack of respect for their specialist arts knowledge. The evaluators were told about one weak application which was funded despite poor narrative assessments and very low scores. The reason for that decision is unclear: it would seem to be either because there was, at that time, a surfeit of funds available or for corporate, strategic and/or political reasons. In the event, the artistic value of the project lived down to its initial assessment. These human resource issues mirror the wider dilemma about balancing artistic and non-artistic aims in RALP.

In most cases the decision-making forum met monthly, although a minority had a six-week cycle. Given the concerns about the length of time taken by the overall RALP process, it would be better if the decision-making cycle could be kept as short as possible.

In general officers thought that current practice, centred on executive decision-making, was preferable to earlier independent panel-based processes (which sometimes involved the whole Regional Arts Board). Any advantages of the earlier system were, they believe, outweighed by the additional burden the process imposes.

### ***Use of RALP***

As mentioned above, the assessment of RALP applications included one scale for rating against regional priorities. Some regional offices had five regional priorities, others had 20 or so. This presented the impractical scenario of having to give an application (with perhaps several different strands) one score to represent its performance against 20 different regional priorities. Furthermore, regional officers said that it can be difficult for applicants as well as assessors to inter-relate regional and national priorities.

Within this general context different regional offices took very different approaches to the way they used RALP. One regional office had a conscious policy of making fewer, bigger awards in order to address the lack of artistic infrastructure in the region. By contrast, another regional office, where there was very stiff competition in the region, encouraged smaller applications.

These different approaches might be perfectly proper reflections of regional differences. However, it is important to monitor their effects to ensure that artists in certain parts of the country are not disadvantaged. There is, for

example, anecdotal evidence that in some art forms one region's approach to RALP was resulting in a scale of grant that was insufficient to develop award activities adequately. Research and development were possible, but there was a perception that moving a project on to completion was much more difficult than it was under the old system of development grants supported by voted funds.

The use of RALP as a substitute for development funds once resourced from grant-in-aid raises questions about the extent to which the programme was being used to welcome new organisations and arts activities into the funding house and how much it was providing opportunities for established organisations to extend their activities. The evaluators would have liked to have produced hard evidence on the extent to which RALP funding concentrated on regularly funded organisations. However, as mentioned earlier, the RALP database did not collect this important data from the application forms. Information from one region showed that 25% of RALP awards went to fixed-term clients, 38% to organisations which had previously received some kind of funding and 37% to organisations which had never previously received funding. It is not known, however, how typical this was.

Evidence from interviews with regional officers suggests that procedures favoured existing clients: this could be due to more regular contact or because organisational development funding was reserved for strategically important clients, or simply because existing organisations can speak the funders' language. Several regions commented that unknown or very new organisations rarely got support. New names are only now beginning to emerge – including amateur or voluntary organisations. Grants were only given to organisations, not individuals, so potentially exciting ad hoc new collaborations were ineligible. By contrast, and underlining the variation between regions, some regions tried to weight assessment towards smaller applications and organisations, for example, through awarding two points (out of a total of 40) just for being a first-timer.

Information from the survey of 172 award recipients provides partial information on the take up of RALP. Forty three per cent of award recipients said they had had more than one RALP grant. The majority (66%) of interviewees said that they heard about the programme through an Arts Council or RAB contact or mailing. Very few made contact with the programme as a result of media information or from websites.

For 53% of projects RALP fitted the activity the organisation wanted to do. However, 28% of organisations designed their award activity around RALP criteria. This information suggests that RALP was less demand-led than other programmes like Millennium Awards and Awards for All, perhaps inevitably so given the larger sums of money involved (Annabel Jackson Associates, 2001, 2002b)<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> In Awards for All Scotland, 86% of interviewees said the programme allowed the organisation to carry out the project they wanted to do. The figure for Awards for All England was 78%.

Only nine per cent of award recipients interviewed said that they had never applied to the arts funding system before. Seventy four per cent of respondents had subsequently applied for funding since the RALP project and 90% had been successful. Sixty two per cent of interviewees said that their organisation intended to reapply to RALP and 19% said that their organisation had already re-applied.

### ***Scaling down applications***

Scaling down refers to the practice of awarding applicants smaller sums than those for which they applied. The number of applications that were scaled down was 29% for RALP1 and 27% for RALP2. For both stages, more than 40% of those applications were scaled down by less than £5,000. However, there was a range from £5,000 to £30,000, with a small proportion of applications scaled down by £50,000. For both rounds the East Midlands region seems to have had a disproportionately high level of scaling down: the average amount by which awards were scaled down was £33,985 - £31,117 for RALP1 and £42,500 for RALP2 (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2 Average amount by which awards were scaled down by region**

<b>Region</b>	<b>£</b>
East England	12,310
East Midlands	33,985
London	6,197
Northern	12,723
North West	10,706
Southern	8,554
South East	9,407
South West	12,926
West Midlands	13,978
Yorkshire	12,710
All	11,438

Source: RALP database

Previous evaluations of stabilisation, the Scottish Advancement programme, Awards for All and Millennium Awards have shown that scaling down of awards can be a source of grievance with applicants, especially for organisational development projects (Annabel Jackson Associates, 2000a, 2000b, 2002<sup>8</sup>).

<sup>8</sup> Page 26: 'Arts organisations are critical of the effects when their initial bid is scaled down. Even late in implementation arts organisations often speak of the part of their budget that was cut back as integral to their plan.'

The interviews with RALP award recipients put these comments into perspective. Eighty two per cent of the award recipients interviewed received the sum they applied for. The effects of scaling down were generally not serious: the most likely outcomes were that the money was made up elsewhere or that the organisation intended to re-apply for the other part of the project in the future. However, in a small number of cases, scaling down the amount offered undermined the success of the project. For example, one interviewee commented: 'We didn't get money for office space so our new workers have no desks.'

In general, regional offices said that they did not scale down applications without good reason. When they did reduce an award, it was usually done because:

- elements were deemed ineligible or unnecessary
- costings seemed too high for the stated award activities
- there were concerns about the organisation's capacity to manage the project

Regional officers approached the cut-back by:

- suggesting a phased approach to the bid
- reducing multi-year programmes to single-year awards
- removing a specific area of a proposal if it was seen as inappropriate or weak
- shaving up to 10% off budgets. This was usually done in the areas of contingency and marketing

In some cases the region made a provisional offer to the applicant and requested a re-budgeted proposal. More usually the cut was made without consultation.

There is nothing intrinsically wrong in offering a smaller grant than that which is requested. However, the practice should be operated in a consistent way across Arts Council England, according to clear, transparent guidelines. Scaling down bids for the sake of it is not desirable. Nor is it sensible to reduce marketing or contingency budgets, both of which are essential to a well-managed project but which risk being seen as 'soft' figures.

Arts Council England should agree and publish clear guidelines as to how and in what circumstances it might reduce an award from the sum requested. When a regional office makes the decision to reduce an award in this way, it should ensure that the applicant understands the reasons behind that decision and the areas of the project that should be affected.

Conversely, it should also be noted that a number of regions have, on occasion, given larger awards than have been requested. Reasons for doing so include otherwise strong projects where artists' fees were not budgeted for adequately, or where in-depth monitoring and evaluation was requested as a condition of award.

### ***Processing times***

The average length of the award activities was 365 days. The average time between the date the application was received and the date of decision was 93 days. A small proportion of applications took as long as 150 days to process. Fewer than 10% of cases were decided in less than 50 days.

Processing times seem a little slow. The evaluation of Arts for Everyone Express in 1997 found that 90 per cent of applications were decided within 60 to 90 days. While Arts for Everyone Express had a simpler process, with smaller amounts, it was also new.

Award recipients would like decisions to be faster, especially for smaller applications. Forty-four per cent of interviewees thought the time taken to decide whether to fund the application was too slow. As well as faster decisions, applicants said they would be able to plan better if they had a clearer idea of when a decision would be received.

Regional officers agreed that the published 16-week turn-around was too long. There was concern that the delay in receiving a decision might deter some applicants. There is no hard evidence of this, although the discussion above suggests that the uncertainty about the timing of decisions could complicate project planning for some award recipients. Several contributors suggested that smaller applications should be turned round in four to six weeks.

Regional officers suggested the following reasons for delays to the assessment process:

- the volume of detail in the application form encouraged woolly applications and did not help officers to understand the heart of the project
- officers did not identify the need for additional material at an early stage in the process, leading to the clock stopping at a late stage in the process
- officers were overworked and there was insufficient cover for staff absences. At peak times RALP could take 20% of an officer's time on top of other responsibilities
- time management could be improved
- final decisions by senior management were sometimes deferred because of the pressure of other business
- applicants were slow in providing additional information requested

As the earlier analysis of applications showed, application was more seasonal than would be expected for a rolling programme. This means that assessment work was more concentrated than it could have been.

Most of these factors appear to reflect a low priority to RALP in regional offices as well as applicant organisations. It should, of course, be noted that part of the period under review coincided with the joining of the then Arts Council of England and the ten regional arts boards into a single development organisation for the arts. Staff turnover appeared to be very high in some regions. In one region, for example, 25% of posts were vacant at the time of



interview and, in another, 50% of the staff had been in post less than 12 months. Two other regions also reported huge problems with the lack of continuity and the consequent gaps in historical knowledge caused by staff turnover. In one instance, the sole RALP co-ordinator post had been filled by four different people in just three months. Conversely, one office reported that, despite high staff rotation, RALP had not suffered because the lottery officer had been in continuous post for three years.

In the single organisation now in place, it is to be hoped that many of these organisational barriers will no longer exist. Regional offices should be urged to streamline their approaches and set ever more rigorous targets for customer service in this area. In addition, Arts Council England should seek to simplify the application form, investigate the possibility of a shorter form and application process for small grants, and review the use of external advice in order to reduce the demands on officers.

### ***Reasons for rejecting applications***

The RALP database contains rejection reasons only for RALP2 (Table 3.3). Thirty per cent of rejections were immediate rejections. The Northern region had a higher rate of immediate rejections: twice the average. London had a relatively low level of immediate rejections (21%).

The main assessment criteria on which applications were rejected were: financial viability, public benefit, quality of activities, rating on regional priorities, management and limited funds (Table 3.4). The total number of rejection reasons exceeds the number of rejected applications because applications could be rejected for more than one reason. The 1,950 rejection reasons apply to 750 projects.

**Table 3.3: Number of rejects which were immediate rejects by Regional Arts Board (RALP2)**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
East Midlands	53	37
East England	38	25
London	70	21
North West	119	29
Northern	43	60
South East	36	28
South West	90	30
Southern	39	27
West Midlands	23	36
Yorkshire	71	36
All	582	30

Source: RALP database

**Table 3.4 Assessment criteria on which applications were rejected (RALP2)**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Financial viability	381	20
Public benefit	371	19
Quality of activities	315	16
Regional priorities	315	16
Management	225	12
Limited funds/uncompetitive	195	10
No reply	48	2
Not constituted	26	1
Additionality	23	1
Retrospective project	16	1
Request too high	12	1
Request too low	10	1
From individual	6	0
Not arts	6	0
Not in region	1	0
Total	1,950	100

Source: RALP database

Very few applications had to be rejected because they were received from individuals, for activities outside the region, requests above or below the limits, or retrospective activities. This analysis suggests that the Arts Council successfully communicated the assessment criteria for RALP. This is an important achievement compared to earlier programmes such as Arts for Everyone (Annabel Jackson Associates, 1999)<sup>9</sup>. The pattern of rejection reasons could mean that applicants need more help with their project proposal, for example with financial management. Further evidence of the success of managing expectations emerged from the interview question about perceived chance of success. The average response was that interviewees thought they had a 66% chance of success, which is not too far from the actual success rate of 61%.

### 3.4 After the project

#### *Final report forms*

Regions varied widely in their progress with final report forms. Projects lasted on average just over a year. Therefore, all of the RALP1 projects and 40% cent of the RALP2 projects should have submitted their final report forms: roughly 1,200 forms. The number received was 630, 52% of this number, and only 29% of the total number of awards. Caution should therefore be exercised when interpreting the results.

**Table 3.5 Number of final report forms by region**

Region	Number of completed forms	% of total number of awards
East England	42	31
East Midlands	23	18
London	116	41
North West	38	11
Northern	82	35
Southern	77	34
Yorkshire	84	33
South East	53	29
South West	51	29
West Midlands	64	26
All	630	29

Source: AJA analysis of final report forms

<sup>9</sup> About 40 per cent of applications failed at the first stage, for example, because the application arrived after the deadline, was outside the eligibility criteria or contained basic errors such as not signing the equal opportunities form.

Quantitative analysis of the final report forms was undermined by the lack of a standard form. Eight of the regions had their own form that was slightly different: different enough to reduce consistency but not sufficiently different to bring any benefits in diverging from the base form<sup>10</sup>. A review of forms shows clearly that where regions have shortened the form, presumably to reduce the burden on the award recipient, the result was to diminish the seriousness of the form in the eyes of award recipients and therefore to greatly diminish the quality of the data produced. Forms with generous space for comments on the scores (and space before the scoring section) communicate that respondents' views were valued, presenting a challenge to which organisations seem well able to respond.

Regional officers were generally negative about the final report forms. Criticisms included:

- they are a formality
- they don't address the core questions of assessment so the paper record is inadequate
- applicants do not know how the forms are used. They suspect responses may be used in the assessment of future applications, which encourages overly positive replies
- self-assessment is too subjective. Award recipients have insufficient understanding of evaluation to provide meaningful responses
- forms are not properly integrated into the process; they are skimpy and, because they are linked to the final payment, there is pressure to turn them round very quickly. As a result they are only given cursory treatment
- in particular, final report forms were seen as inadequate for assessing capital projects. This inadequacy was characterised as 'I got a grant for lighting equipment. I plugged it in. It worked. End of report.' Some capital projects would benefit from a re-evaluation some time later when the asset has been working for a time

Overall, regional officers believe final report forms do not give any true sense of a project's quality or other measures of success. Regional officers suggested that final report forms would be made more helpful if:

- they were used to frame exit strategies or next steps for the organisation
- there was more liaison between the assessing and resources officers
- they contributed to a more robust qualitative assessment

Award recipients were more positive than the regional offices about the final report forms. For example, one respondent commented that:

I would like to complement the designer of this final report form. It is very clear, easy to understand and a pleasurable way of seeing the project as a whole.

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<sup>10</sup> The most common change was for the form to omit questions asking about the ethnicity of beneficiaries and job creation in the organisation awarded the grant.

Award recipients often valued the chance for reflection presented by the final report form.

The main problems with the final report forms would appear to be the way they are used:

- answers were often incomplete. That award recipients are not contacted to complete their responses underlines the message that the regional officers do not take the final report forms seriously
- many are completed by referring to evaluation reports submitted to the regional office. In some cases these evaluations seem to have been carried out in some detail. These evaluation reports were not copied to the evaluators with final report forms and there was a lost opportunity to gather and integrate these reports
- as already mentioned, they are not relevant to capital projects, for which the impact is often spread over a period of time starting rather than ending with the expenditure, and not definable in terms of the number of participants or level of activity

Monitoring should be a higher priority and possibly receive additional resources. Where final report forms are submitted with gaps, the officers should telephone to talk through the explanation.

There should be one standard form. The original form, which contains a blank page for comments before the scoring section, was clearly better than the modified versions. The comment section on each objective rating is extremely useful and should be developed. Several of the quantitative questions could be re-worded slightly to produce more usable information. For example, a number of respondents interpreted the marketing question as asking about whether they did the marketing, not whether it was effective.

The form would benefit from an open question about ways to improve the grants programme. This would emphasise the value of the form and could yield useful information. The form should be available on-line across the regions. Hand written forms are far more difficult to read and often less detailed. A different form for capital projects is needed.

### ***Evaluation of artistic quality***

The subject of the evaluation of the artistic quality of RALP projects generated some of the most concerned and deeply-held views of the whole review process. While there was a wide discrepancy between the practice in different regions, officers from enough regions expressed disquiet for this to warrant consideration. In many cases regional officers had insufficient time to see projects and they lacked information on their artistic quality. There was a strong concern that a good application writer could receive a grant by pressing the right buttons, undertake a poor project which (apparently) met its targets and thus go on to receive repeated funding.

If true, these assertions are worrying. The evaluation of RALP applications was mainly paper-based. While this should create a more level playing field in

which applicants new to the arts funding system can compete on even terms with experienced organisations, it tended to reduce officers' ability to take into account past track records and to use their on-the-ground experience.

While recognising that the volume of RALP applications received by the RABs made detailed qualitative assessment challenging, the evaluators believe that qualitative judgements should be strengthened – both at the application stage and in the post-project evaluation. Arts Council England should consider this need as a matter of urgency.

### ***Sustainability***

Ninety per cent of award recipients interviewed would like to continue the work started by their project. Numbers were fairly evenly split between those that would like to continue the RALP project and those that would like to start a new project.

Several projects commented that their organisation had grown as a result of the RALP funding, but this growth would not be continued without additional funding. There were several aspects to this problem:

- **responding to immediate and sometimes urgent opportunities.** RALP projects often generated enthusiasm and commitment as well as raising expectations from participants. As one award recipient said: 'Each avenue of exploration has opened others.' Some organisations were frustrated at the lack of an immediate route to channel this energy. There was concern that achievements would be lost or even reversed by the end of funding
- **obtaining core funding.** Several organisations emphasised that they would be able to achieve stronger and better developed projects if they had core funding. There was widespread concern that continual fund raising draws resources that would be better used for programming
- **rolling out projects.** Several projects seem to have potentially wide applicability. The case study of Daisi (Section 6) is one example. A mechanism for replication is needed

These comments would apply to other project-based programmes and are not unique to RALP.

## 4 Impact

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter uses information from final report forms and interviews. In most cases this information is subjective and has not been corroborated by independent evidence. The impacts are those that the award recipients believe have been achieved.

Award recipients rated the success of their projects in their final report forms. Only 7-13% of respondents missed out these questions (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1 Scoring for the ten assessment criteria**

Criterion	Score					No reply	Total %
	1	2	3	4	5		
	<b>Percentage</b>						
Artistic or educational experience	0	0	2	22	69	7	100
Artist involvement	0	0	5	26	60	9	100
Regional priorities	0	0	6	25	63	7	100
Targeting	0	1	10	34	47	9	100
New audiences	0	1	8	33	47	10	100
Marketing	0	5	22	36	26	10	100
New partnership	0	1	6	29	55	8	100
Impact	0	1	11	29	52	7	100
Value for money	0	1	4	20	68	7	100
Organisational development	0	1	6	28	52	13	100

Source: AJA analysis of final report forms

Between 60% and 69% of organisations rated the artistic quality or educational experience, artistic involvement, performance on regional priorities and value for money of their project at the highest level (5). Between 52% and 55% of organisations rated new partnerships, impact and effect on the organisation at the highest level. Forty seven per cent of organisations rated new audiences and targeting at the highest level. Marketing plans received the lowest score, with only 26% rating them at the highest level.

The figures suggest that organisations placed the highest weight on artistic quality, and were rewarded with work of a good standard (in their opinion). Artistic involvement was a perceived success of the projects, as were performance on regional priorities and value for money. Marketing plans were less successful than anticipated, which can reduce the scope to reach new

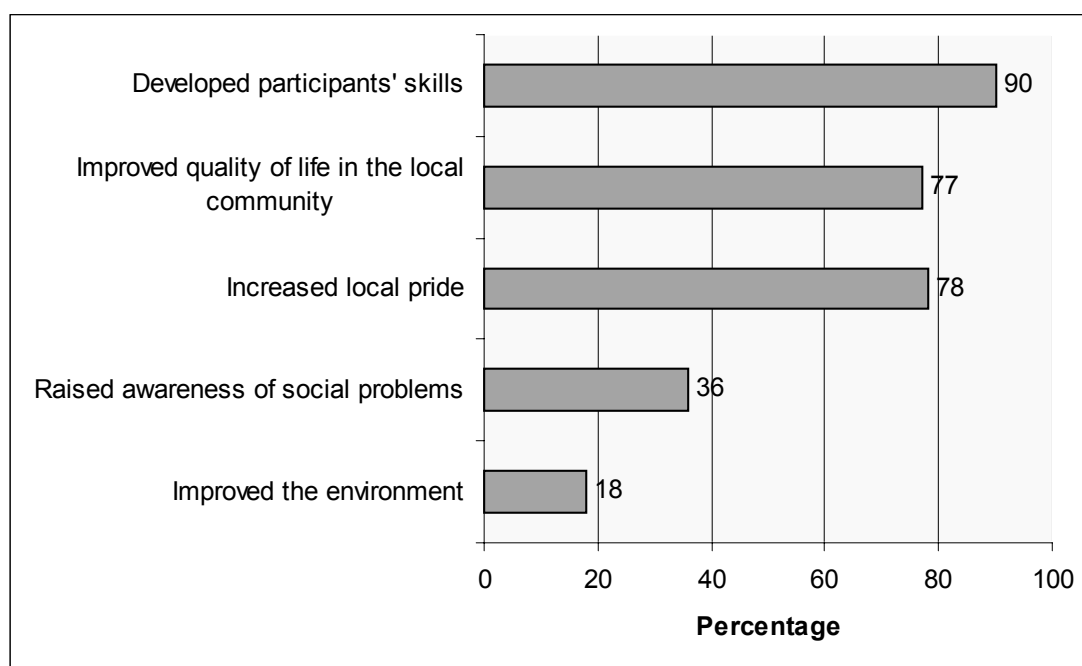
audiences or target priority groups. The development of new partnerships, impact and organisational capacity were qualified successes. The qualification is probably in terms of the amount of work involved and the difficulty in drawing conclusions at this early stage.

## 4.2 Community impact

The interviews with award recipients obtained broad information on the community impact. Nine out of ten thought the award had developed participants' skills. Eighty eight per cent of interviewees described the project as a success for the local community. Almost 80% believed the project improved the quality of life in the local community and increased local pride (Figure 4.1).

**Figure 4.1 Interviewees' views on social impact of the award**

Base = 172



Final report forms give further (also subjective) information on community benefit for awards, for example:

- **filling spatial gaps in provision.** Many projects involved bringing art to remote rural areas or deprived areas that would otherwise lack provision
- **developing new audiences.** There were some strong examples of developing audiences. For example, one theatre worked with a football club and received an enthusiastic response:

The impact of the project has far exceeded our expectations. More football fans came to the play than we predicted and the company has never received so many phone calls, emails and letters from the



general public expressing their delight with the project and asking when it is going to happen again.

The subject of new audiences is also covered below under distributing art

- **acting as a focus for community action.** A small number of arts organisations developed such a strong relationship with the estate or community in which they were working that they were asked to act as a conduit to outside agencies and bodies
- **enthusing new groups of volunteers.** RALP projects had a widespread role in empowering volunteers, rewarding their participation, and providing them with new challenges and a sense of achievement
- **encouraging creativity.** ‘The presentation of new works, several by artists over 50, offers encouragement and support to others.’
- **challenging stereotypes.** ‘The project developed and interrogated the notion of “what is a performer” since the untrained children were capable of the most extraordinary performances, sometimes unwittingly’

### ***Access and cultural diversity***

The RALP database shows that 14% of applications and 17% of awards were related to the ‘access’ programme aim. For RALP2, 32% of projects were described as having a special focus, ie contributing to areas of need such as social exclusion, young people or rural areas (Table 4.2). The percentage of projects claiming a special focus was especially high for the Eastern region and the East Midlands.

**Table 4.2 Number of projects with a special focus by region (RALP2)**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Number of projects</b>	<b>%</b>
East England	99	53
East Midlands	107	46
London	181	36
Northern	120	42
North West	202	37
Southern	94	33
South East <sup>11</sup>	1	0
South West	146	44
West Midlands	130	43
Yorkshire	0	0
<b>All</b>	<b>1,080</b>	<b>32</b>

Source: RALP database

<sup>11</sup> Subsequent information from the South East region indicated that 69 projects (38%) had a special focus. The table was not amended to ensure that data from all regions was used on a consistent basis.

For RALP1, more than half of applications and awards were recorded on the database as having children as participants, and nearly three quarters included children in their audience. The question about age was more detailed for RALP2, listing specific ages. Between 60% and 70% of applications and awards said their participants or members and audiences included children aged 5-15.

Only 35% of final report forms contained data on the ethnicity of beneficiaries (Table 4.3). The gap was caused partly by shorter versions of the final report form used by some regions (see Section 3.4), which omitted these questions, and partly by non-response from award recipients. Some respondents commented on the questionnaire that they did not want to ask their audience for such personal information. Eighteen per cent of respondents said that they drew more than 10% of their audience from black and ethnic minority groups. The data should in any case be treated with care since ethnicity is self-defined, and there is no information on the methods that people use to assess the ethnicity of their audience.

**Table 4.3 Ethnicity of beneficiaries**

<b>Percentage of Black and minority ethnic beneficiaries</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
0%	22	3
0.1% - 0.9%	16	3
1.0% - 9.9%	63	10
10.0% - 29.9%	52	8
30.0% +	67	11
No reply	410	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: AJA analysis of final report forms

Eight per cent of respondents claimed on their final report form to have had more than 100 disabled people benefiting from their project (Table 4.4).

The analysis of final report forms suggests that RALP contributed to cultural diversity aims in seven different ways:

- funding organisations that are rooted in black and minority ethnic communities
- employing black and minority ethnic co-ordinators or administrators
- working in partnership with black and minority ethnic organisations
- employing black and minority ethnic artists
- supporting the development of culturally diverse art forms
- having a subject matter partially or entirely focused on issues of tolerance
- targeting black and minority ethnic audiences

**Table 4.4 Number of disabled beneficiaries**

<b>Number of disabled beneficiaries</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
0	23	4
1–9	64	10
10–99	67	11
100–999	36	6
1,000–9,999	12	2
10,000 +	1	0
No Reply	427	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: AJA analysis of final report forms

The quantitative data on the ethnicity of participants reported above do not, then, capture the complexity of engagement with cultural diversity. For example, many projects have an implicit message about tolerance or a role in celebrating or developing culturally diverse art forms. One interviewee commented that: 'The project produced a much more positive and proactive attitude to social inclusion and disability issues among staff.' Another comment was:

We would go so far as to say that it was a life transforming experience that money could not possibly buy. We are certain that there are now many groups of people in the South East that will never be racist because they will always remember their friends in the group and the wonderful time they had with them. We are now totally confident that theatre work in other traditions is well worth importing and is well received, so much so that we are considering developing a far more ambitious project in the future.

It is important to remember that the benefits from projects often arise from the contact between different groups or practices.

### **4.3 Education through the arts**

The RALP database records 60% of applications and awards as having an educational element. Ninety one per cent of projects mentioned educational outputs in their final report forms. The median number of educational sessions was 20 per project<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> The median is used rather than the mean (average) because it is less strongly affected by extreme figures.

**Table 4.5 Number of education sessions**

<b>Number of sessions</b>	<b>Number of projects</b>	<b>%</b>
0	48	9
1–9	121	23
10–49	235	45
50–99	68	13
100–999	49	9
1,000 +	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>523</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: AJA analysis of final report forms

The educational impact might have exceeded these figures. As noted earlier, 90% of award recipients interviewed believe the project developed the skills of participants (Figure 4.1).

**Table 4.6 Number of participants during the project**

<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Number of projects</b>	<b>%</b>
0	15	3
1–9	25	5
10–49	186	35
50–99	225	42
100–999	63	12
1,000 +	22	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: AJA analysis of final report forms

Final report forms record 290,000 participants for the 536 projects for which data were supplied. Forty nine per cent of respondents said that their project had hundreds or thousands of participants. Participation of more than a thousand seems excessive given the level of funding. In a small number of cases organisations attributed their entire activity to RALP, for example, where organisational development support such as foot and mouth crisis grants were seen as saving an organisation from closure. In most cases high figures for participation related to theatre, festival or educational projects. Figures for participants and audience numbers were often similar on final report forms, suggesting that respondents did not always understand the difference between the two.

#### 4.4 Production and distribution of the arts

Thirty four per cent of applications and 35% of awards on the RALP database had a production/distribution element. The interviews of award recipients found that 90% of projects produced art work of some kind. Eighty three per cent of respondents said on their final report forms that they produced new work. The median number of pieces of new work produced was two.

**Table 4.7 New works produced**

<b>Number of new works</b>	<b>Number of projects</b>	<b>%</b>
0	83	17
1–9	334	67
10–49	43	9
50–99	17	3
100–999	4	1
1,000 +	19	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: AJA analysis of final report forms

Ninety two per cent of award recipients interviewed said that the project enabled the organisation to reach new groups of participants as well as increasing the number of participants in the organisation. Comments include:

This project has greatly helped to strengthen and develop our organisation and its activities. We were able to extend our activities nationally. We are also for the first time extending our activities beyond the April-June time slot into the autumn.

The grant enabled us to work with more performers over an 18-month period than we have done in our 15-year history.

Being able to run the project consistently has meant that people are starting to take it seriously and realise its great potential. The number of people now involved is far greater than ever before.

According to the final report forms, 96% of projects included performances of some kind. The median number of performances per project was 12.

**Table 4.8 Number of performances**

<b>Number of performances</b>	<b>Number of projects</b>	<b>%</b>
0	20	4
1–9	208	40
10–19	96	18
20–29	59	11
30–39	42	8
40 or more	101	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: AJA analysis of final report forms

The total number in the audience was given as three million in the final report forms. Sixty four per cent of projects said that their audience figures were in the thousands. This figure is consistent with that obtained from the telephone survey, in which 56% of respondents said that the audience numbered in the thousands or tens of thousands rather than in the hundreds.

**Table 4.9 Size of audience during the project**

<b>Size of audience</b>	<b>Number of projects</b>	<b>%</b>
0	15	3
1–9	1	0
10–99	11	2
100–999	167	31
1,000–9,999	232	44
10,000 +	106	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: AJA analysis of final report forms

#### **4.5 Investment in artists**

Thirty one per cent of applications and 33% of awards are recorded on the RALP database as investing in artists. The total number of artists involved was given as 11,000 on the final report forms, although data were missing for more than half of the forms. Nearly 95% of respondents said on their final report forms that their project included work for artists. The median number of artist days was 84.

**Table 4.10 Number of artists and artist days during the project**

Number	Artists		Artist days	
	Number of projects	%	Number of projects	%
0	8	3	26	5
1–9	89	31	26	5
10–99	145	51	130	25
100–999	32	11	103	20
1,000–9,999	5	2	227	43
10,000 +	5	2	11	2
Total	284	100	523	100

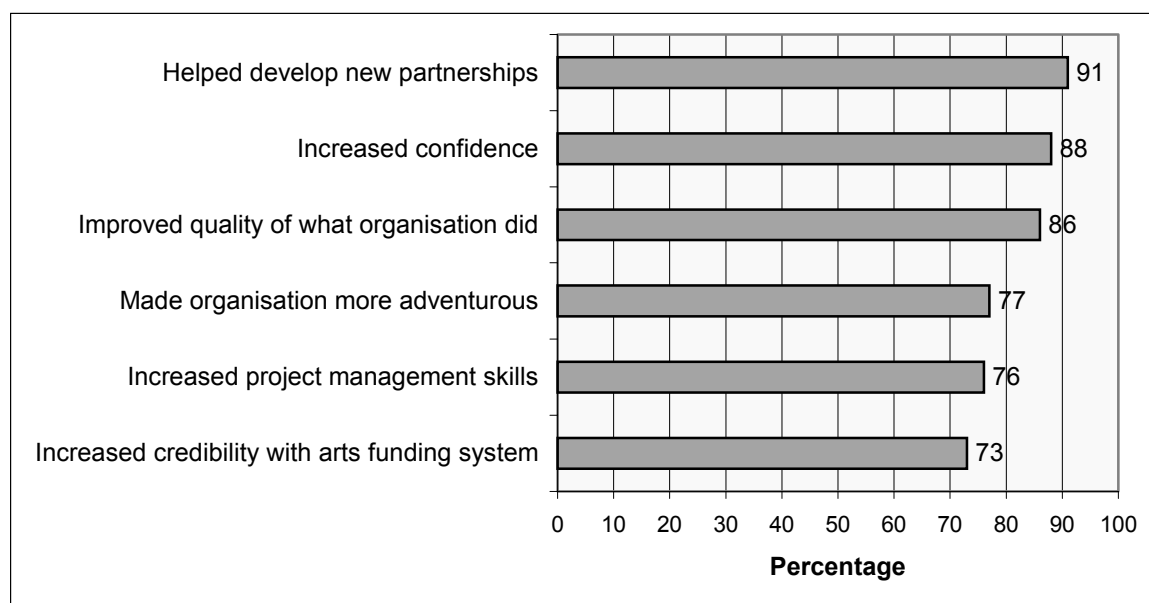
Source: AJA analysis of final report forms

#### 4.6 Organisational development

Thirty-seven per cent of applications and 36% of awards are recorded on the RALP database as having an organisational development element.

However, the survey of award recipients suggests that organisational benefits extended well beyond those projects with an organisational development element.

**Figure 4.2 Interviewees' views of the impact of the award on their organisation**



Base = 172

More than 70% of interviewees said that the project helped the organisation develop new partnerships (91%); increased its confidence (88%); improved

the quality of its work (86%); made the organisation more adventurous (77%); increased its project management skills (76%); and increased its credibility with the arts funding system (73%).

### ***Innovation***

RALP enabled organisations to be adventurous in what they did and how they did it. The combination of capital with organisational development support was particularly suited to information technology projects.

Comments from interviews and final report forms included:

Funding has enabled us to experiment, be flexible and ultimately hone the work to get the best out of everyone.

The programme for this course has been used as a model for accreditation through the Open College Network and has provided the organisation with a valuable template for future programme development.

From an ambivalent view of digital media the company has been helped to take on the full creative implications of the digital age.

### ***Confidence***

Receiving funding gave organisations a boost. Satisfaction with the level of achievement, and the ability to overcome practical problems, further helped to increase the confidence of organisations:

After a sell out-afternoon, the feeling between the group was amazing. We had successfully completed a massive project on a shoestring and everyone had developed through the process.

Artistically we believe we have matured, tackling our concerns with a greater understanding and creating works that are even more challenging and engaging.

It was a huge morale boost for the company.

### ***Skills***

The previous chapter has already mentioned the lessons award recipients learned. The funding from RALP gave organisations a rare opportunity to improve their organisational skills:

This has been one of the most far-reaching and important grants we have received. Like most artist-led organisations we were self taught in the business of running a business.



We have learned a great deal, which will be invaluable in our future work and development. The business of managing projects away from base is difficult.

The project has made us more competent in understanding budgeting principles and effective project planning.

### ***Quality of the work***

Many of the final report forms were very enthusiastic about the quality of the work produced. Some were able to produce external validation, often in the form of critical reviews or awards. RALP helped to raise quality through the involvement of professional artists, new partnerships or the purchase of new equipment.

Comments included:

I had a piece of some substance rehearsed and performed (very well) by an excellent group of players in front of a receptive audience in my home town - more than this a composer has no right to ask.

It was brilliant. The bringing together of international composers with eager young beginners in an informal atmosphere was made formal by the obvious quality of all the participants. A well-structured series of events over several months reached a richly appreciated conclusion.

Having a fully professional production team meant that the participants worked on material to a very high standard.

Sometimes the teams of artists did not work well together: as one respondent said 'you can't plan for empathy'. There were also problems with recruiting artists because some were busy on Year of the Artist projects.

### ***Partnerships***

Developing partnerships takes time and effort, which RALP helped to provide. Elements included:

- **identifying and contacting partners.** RALP gave organisations the incentive to develop partnerships to develop their art form or broaden their audience base
- **developing trust.** As mentioned above, many organisations found partnership to be demanding. As one interviewee commented: 'Partnership continues to be a challenge. It is subject to personality, different agendas and competing interests. More time needs to be spent on the development of the RALP bid in partnership with all involved'
- **understanding the constraints on partners.** RALP helped organisations to understand the strengths and weaknesses of partners and therefore to develop reasonable expectations and practical working arrangements

RALP often encouraged new partnerships, for example between an ensemble and a folk group, between a theatre company and an unemployment project for young people. These partnerships brought strong potential benefits to both sides and were often maintained well beyond the RALP funding.

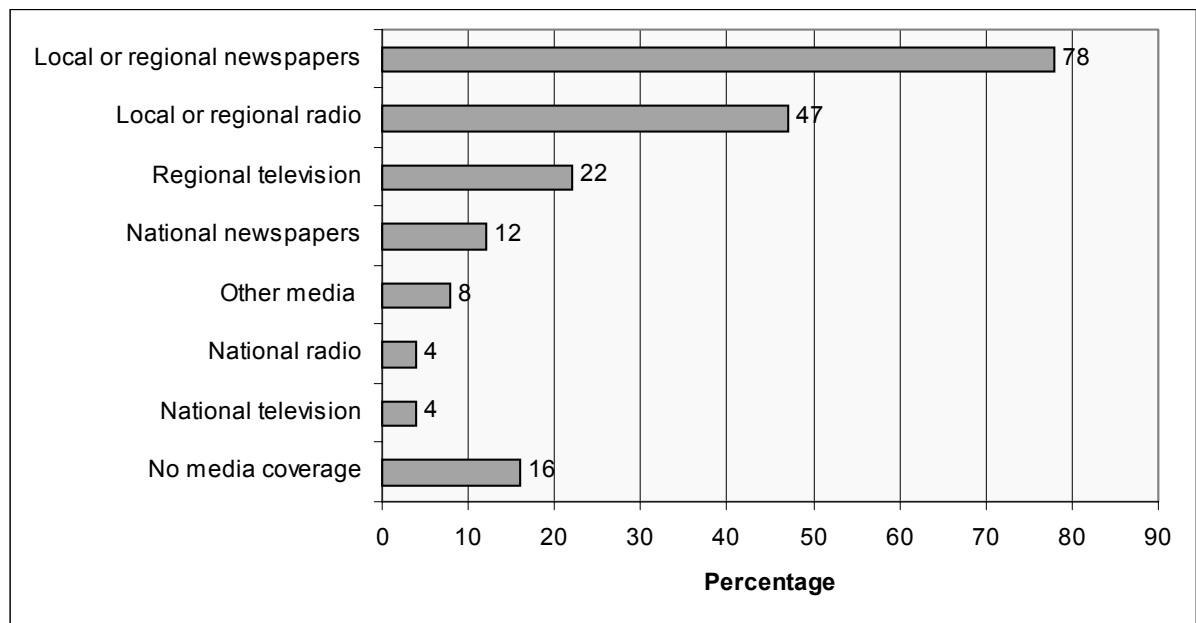
**Profile and status**

Eighty four per cent of organisations interviewed said that they received media coverage. Local and regional coverage were particularly common, although a significant number of projects also received coverage in the national and specialist press.

The other organisational benefits included improved quality; confidence; partnership and raised profile; and higher status of the organisation with external organisations like funding bodies. Comments included:

Our group is now seen quite differently by the outside world as a community arts group producing quality work. This has had a very positive effect on the confidence of our members who now believe in their artistic ability and self worth.

**Figure 4.3 Media coverage received**

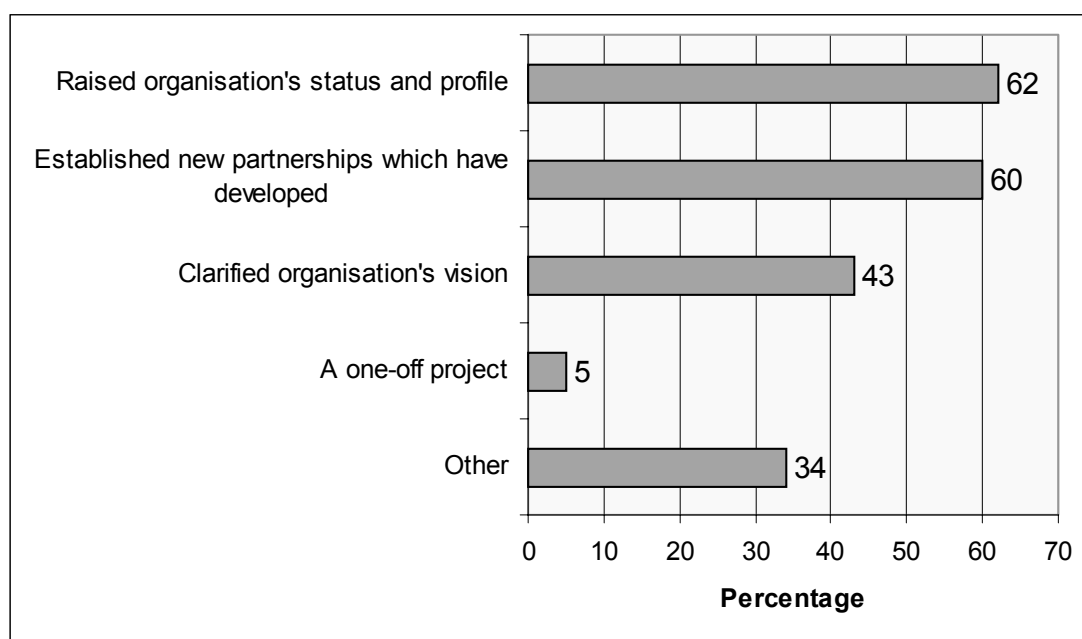


Base = 172

**Long-term impact**

Ninety three per cent of interviewees said the RALP project had had a long-term impact on their organisation. It clarified the vision for the organisation, established partnerships that have endured or raised the status of the organisation. In some cases, RALP saved the organisation.

**Figure 4.4 Interviewees' views of the long-term organisational impact**



Base = 172

In many cases respondents emphasised that the RALP grant had enabled the organisation to make a quantum leap in its development. For example, they progressed from a volunteer organisation to one with employees; from sporadic to regular activity; or from a reactive organisation to one with strategic direction. One comment was: 'A key milestone in our development, demonstrating what can be achieved with the right personnel supported by the right structure.'

Eighty-nine per cent of interviewees said that the project was a success in terms of its impact on the organisation. Ninety-two per cent of award recipients said that the project met their organisation's original objectives.

Organisational impacts were not always positive. A couple of organisations commented that their energies and resources were depleted at the end of the project. Comments included:

The management team was successful, despite being too small and hence grossly overworked. The success of the project would have been severely threatened if any member of this team had been lost for whatever reason.

One organisation that had received an equipment grant found the purchase process draining:

In reality, the impact of the project on the staff team was frustration, stress and time-wasting.

In most cases, however, the hard work was seen as justified:

The production team felt at times that the ambition of the project stretched resources to the limit but all felt that the success of the final product made all the hard work worthwhile.

#### 4.7 Employment

Data on employment were missing from more than half the final report forms and should therefore be treated with caution<sup>13</sup>. Thirty two per cent of those who answered this question (12% of those who completed a final report form) said they had created full-time jobs, while 73% created part-time jobs. The median number of jobs was three. Sixty one per cent of respondents said that their number of volunteers had increased, and again the median was three.

**Table 4.12 Employment and volunteering created**

Number	Full-time jobs	%	Part-time jobs	%	Volunteers	%
0	164	68	74	27	96	39
1–4	38	16	95	35	80	32
5–9	23	10	51	19	28	11
10–14	13	5	19	7	15	6
15–19	2	1	16	6	8	3
20+	0	0	18	6	22	9
Total	240	100	273	100	249	100

Source: AJA analysis of final report forms

#### 4.8 Financial outturn

Eighty four per cent of projects claimed on their final report forms to be within £10,000 of their budgeted income, and the same proportion claimed to be within £10,000 of their budgeted expenditure.

Around 80% of projects claimed to be within £10,000 of a breakeven situation. In most cases income and expenditure moved in parallel: for 32% of projects actual income and expenditure were both below budget; for another 31% cent of projects actual income and expenditure were both above budget. Ten per cent of projects said that income and expenditure matched the budget.

**Table 4.13 Income and expenditure compared with budget**

Amount	Income		Expenditure	
	Number of	%	Number of	%

<sup>13</sup> Qualitative data suggest that the main reasons for non-response are: respondents thinking the question is not relevant to them; the answer is zero so respondents miss the question out; respondents find the question annoying because it ignores the artistic objectives of the organisation; and questions being omitted from forms in some regions.

	projects		projects	
£30,000+ under budget	11	2	11	2
£20,000–£29,999 under budget	6	1	5	1
£10,000–£19,999 under budget	16	3	10	2
£1–£9,999 under budget	233	36	213	33
£0	111	18	75	11
£1–£9,999 over budget	194	30	249	40
£10,000–£19,999 over budget	18	3	15	2
£20,000–£29,999 over budget	4	1	6	1
£30,000 over budget	8	1	11	2
No reply	29	5	35	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: AJA analysis of final report forms

**Table 4.14 How projects performed on their income budgets**

	Number	%
Actual income less than budget income	266	42
Actual income equal to budget income	111	17
Actual income more than budget income	224	36
No reply	29	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: AJA analysis of final report forms

**Table 4.15 How projects performed on their expenditure budgets**

	Number	%
Actual expenditure less than budget expenditure	239	38
Actual expenditure equal to budget expenditure	75	12
Actual expenditure more than budget expenditure	281	44
No reply	35	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: AJA analysis of final report forms

Award recipients were asked to give an explanation for discrepancies in income or expenditure, and most did. These comments provide a vivid insight into the dynamics of balancing budgets in small arts projects – and also increase the weight the evaluators are prepared to place on the figures given. The majority of award recipients described changes, often major changes, in their financial circumstances during the project.

The 45% of award recipients for whom expenditure exceeded budgets mentioned a wide range of factors. The most common comments were that artistic and technical costs rose, for example because of the details of the production or its presentation. There were also administrative factors, such as higher interest charges following delays in the project; external factors such as increases in venue costs; increased marketing costs; or unexpected problems such as the uninsured theft of materials or art work.

The 42% of applicants for whom income fell below budget mentioned a narrower range of circumstances. The most common comment was that local authority funding was cut. Although less frequently mentioned, respondents also referred to the impact of foot and mouth disease and September 11<sup>th</sup> on ticket sales, and a reduction in the value of European funding because of currency fluctuations of the Euro.

Thirty-six per cent of award recipients said that their income exceeded the budget. Some respondents mentioned increases in grant funding. However, more common factors were increases in earned income because of higher ticket sales or raised prices, or increased contributions in kind. Both of these were likely to be responses to escalating costs or to an overall increase in the scale of the project.

Thirty-eight per cent of award recipients said that their expenditure was lower than budget. This figure was frequently the result of falls, sometimes relatively small ones in income. The main ways of reconciling budgets were to cut marketing or to replace purchasing with contributions in kind.

Respondents' comments suggest the presence of a complex infrastructure of support for award recipients, taking in the public, private and voluntary sectors, who are able to help when external factors affect the project finances.

#### **4.9 Value for money**

The survey of 30 unsuccessful applicants found that only four interviewees carried out their proposed project without the RALP money. Ten had completed part of the proposed project, three were part way through and 13 did none of it.

Sixty seven per cent of award recipients interviewed said that the project would not have gone ahead without the RALP funding. Twenty eight per cent said it would have gone ahead in a weaker or smaller form. These figures suggest the additionality from the projects was relatively high.

Award recipients invariably described their projects as value for money on their final report forms (Table 4.1). Many respondents emphasised the large amount achieved for the small sum of the grants. One respondent commented:

It is difficult to put a monetary value on the pleasure and sense of achievement that our participants experience. Devising and mounting a full-scale show (as opposed to workshops that are more straightforward

to plan) is so demanding and unpredictable, it is always difficult to estimate what it will cost in terms of time, effort and money, so professional artists continue to give much more than they can be paid for.

Other comments emphasise the amount of art work bought for the grant, the help in kind levered by the money, and the benefits to the organisation relative to the cost.

Some respondents said that the final report form should state from whose perspective value for money should be defined. One respondent made the comment that:

The audiences received splendid value for money. If we are able to convert our artistic success to a greater self-dependency in the future then value for money will be improved for grant donors and sponsors too.

The evaluators have a concern that value for money is often achieved by artists working beyond the fee. The evaluation of Year of the Artist found this to be the case (Hutton and Fenn, 2002). Future funding programmes need to consider whether they should upgrade objectives about encouraging appropriate payment to artists. Some regional offices increased awards for RALP where they judged artists' fees to be too low and this practice could be applied more consistently.

## 5 Conclusions and recommendations

### 5.1 Strengths of RALP

RALP has progressed from the earlier programmes such as Arts for Everyone. The programme had many strengths, especially in its principles.

- **Flexibility.** RALP was flexible in its overall criteria; its combination of different funding streams; its non-alignment with art form boundaries; its timing; and its responses to changes in the project once the money had been approved. RALP was perceived as having a distinct role in the arts funding system, which was strongly appreciated by award recipients. Many organisations emphasised that there would be no other way of funding their intended project without RALP. The survey of a small sample of rejected applicants confirmed that few were able to carry out their project without RALP funding
- **Funding criteria.** RALP was seen as broadly balancing social objectives with the needs of arts organisations. Criteria such as the low level of partnership funding required were important in allowing RALP to reach different types of organisations. Data illustrated that partnership funding offered in applications was modest in the majority of cases
- **Levels of funding.** The level of funding and the ability to spread funding over several years were helpful in providing organisations with a level of certainty. The average award for RALP was around £27,000, which shows that the programme had a good intermediate position between other funding programmes. Multi-year funding was seen as particularly helpful for projects addressing social inclusion because results take time to develop
- **Rolling programme.** Allowing applications on a rolling programme gave greater flexibility to applicants. However, there was still a seasonal pattern to applications, which appears to reflect the expiry date of application packs
- **Local delivery.** Organisations valued the advice that was available from the regional offices. This advice was seen as responsive and helpful. Organisations felt that engaging with regional officers was an endorsement of their work
- **Cross art form work.** RALP reflected and fostered cross-art form practice. The proportion of projects spanning art forms increased between RALP1 and RALP2
- **Partnership.** RALP encouraged many new partnerships between arts organisations and other organisations involved in social services, health, economic development, regeneration and a host of other fields. These partnerships have often continued after the RALP funding has stopped

One award recipient interviewed said 'RALP is the clearest, fairest and best funding we have had in the last 20 years'.

### 5.2 The achievements of RALP

RALP has demonstrated that in some cases a small amount of money can make a huge difference. Interviews and final report forms show relatively



positive results for each of RALP's objectives. In Chapter 4, information about outputs and outcomes was presented using 'medians'. Given the varying length of RALP projects, with some lasting up to three years, use of the median avoids results being skewed by a few large numbers. This chapter, which reports on the achievements of the programme as a whole, uses the average (or mean), as this can be multiplied by the number of awards to produce an estimate for the whole programme. These averages may look large *as an average* for some RALP projects. It should be remembered, however, that they are based on all awards, including ones lasting two to three years. Medians would give intuitively more reasonable, but technically less valid, figures.

- **Access to the arts.** Ninety two per cent of award recipients interviewed said that the project enabled the organisation to reach new groups of participants as well as increasing the number of participants in the organisation. According to the final report forms, 96% of projects included performances of some kind. The average (mean) number of performances per project was 28.6. Multiplying the figure of 28.6 by the 2,203 awards funded by RALP suggests the programme could have generated some 63,000 performances.
- **Education through the arts.** In final report forms, 91% of projects claimed to have generated educational outputs from their projects. The average number of educational sessions was 43.2 per project. Multiplying the figure of 43.2 by the 2,203 awards funded by RALP suggests the programme could have generated 95,000 educational sessions. In addition to these direct educational outputs, 90% of award recipients interviewed believe the project developed the skills of participants.
- **Production and distribution of the arts.** Eighty three per cent of respondents said on their final report forms that they had produced new work. The average number of pieces of new work produced was 13.4. Multiplying the figure of 13.4 by the 2,203 awards funded by RALP suggests the programme could have generated 29,500 pieces of new work. Fifty six per cent of interviewees said that the audience numbered in the thousands or tens of thousands rather than in the hundreds. This figure is consistent with that obtained from the final report forms.
- **Investment in artists.** The average number of artist days recorded on final report forms was 196.5. Multiplying the figure by 196.5 to the 2,203 awards funded by RALP suggests the programme could have generated over 430,000 artist days of work.
- **Organisational development.** More than 70 per cent of respondents said that the project helped the organisation to develop new partnerships, improved the quality of its work, increased its confidence, made the organisation more adventurous, increased its project management skills and increased its credibility with the arts funding system. Eighty-nine per cent of interviewees said that the project was a success in terms of its impact on the organisation. Ninety-two per cent of award recipients said that the project met their organisation's original objectives. Ninety-three per cent of interviewees said the RALP project had a long term impact on their organisation. It clarified the vision for the organisation, established partnerships that have endured or raised the status of the organisation. In some cases, RALP saved the organisation.

RALP clearly achieved quantitative results. However, the programme was applied inconsistently across the regions. Regional offices varied in the number and structure of regional priorities, the form and delivery of support, assessment and moderation processes, recording of data on the RALP database, the format and use of final report forms and, most importantly of all, in the way RALP was used. Before looking at ways in which future funding programmes can learn from RALP, it is worth considering general weaknesses in the programme.

### 5.3 Weaknesses of RALP

RALP projects exhibited the following broad weaknesses:

- **compromised marketing.** The main problem award recipients experienced was in marketing their projects. RALP projects were often relatively innovative and complex. They required specialist marketing skills, for example, in targeting socially excluded audiences. Award recipients often lacked the resources or the knowledge to deliver this specialist skill. Reliance on newly developed partnerships often increased uncertainty rather than increasing resources. In some cases the problems with marketing derived directly from a lack of resources because of marketing budgets being scaled back during assessment. Some regions appear to have seen marketing as a 'soft' budget that could be cut. Problems with marketing led to other weaknesses with RALP projects: participation and audiences below target and lower income than planned.
- **unclear priority to artistic quality.** Regional officers expressed strong concern about the low level of evaluation of the artistic quality of projects. The inclusion of national and regional priorities as well as access and education objectives could have given applicants the impression that artistic quality was a low priority. Although award recipients expressed strong satisfaction with the artistic quality of their projects, there was also an impression that RALP gave too high a priority to quantitative evaluation. Many award recipients promised more than they could reasonably deliver in their applications in an attempt to make their project more attractive. The result was organisations spreading themselves too thinly, where greater focus might have achieved a higher quality result. The main way in which award recipients would change their project in retrospect was to make it less ambitious.
- **the lack of openness to new or inexperienced organisations.** A minority of applicants found the application process complicated and intimidating. Assessment and support roles were often combined in the regional offices, which created the risk of conflicts of interests. Strong moderation has only partly countered this effect. There was anecdotal evidence that funding was concentrated on regularly funded clients, but objective data were missing from the RALP database.

Although not fairly seen as a criticism of RALP, several award recipients reiterated familiar criticisms of project funding. This can appear to disadvantage voluntary or community-based organisations that cannot define their activities as projects or to require applicants to spend time redefining

their activities into apparent projects. There was also a frustration that organisations had to tailor their projects to fit RALP, emphasising what was novel rather than core activities that might better match local needs. A couple of interviewees emphasised that the demands of continual fund-raising work benefits neither the funder nor the participants and a new approach to funding is needed.

#### **5.4 The application process**

The application process was generally positive. The application form was judged by applicants to be easy to get hold of, clear and at the right level of detail. However, a minority of applicants, especially those without experience of the funding system, experienced the application process as intimidating, repetitive, and unwieldy or unsuitable to the character of their project.

#### ***Recommendations***

- A future funding programme should have a simpler application form for small applications. There should be additional sections for larger applications, over and above this core application form
- Questions should be revisited to take account of the requirements of capital projects
- Questions dealing with the project description, additionality and management of the project should be written so as to elicit precise, factual information
- Procedures for cross-region applications should be simplified

#### **5.5 Support**

Regions provided a range of support to applicants varying from road shows, workshops and seminars to individual advice and comments on draft applications.

There are reasons to extend support to the post-award period, particularly to first-time awardees or those organisations with ambitious multi-year bids. Many organisations seemed to experience problems with marketing and to a lesser extent with planning their projects. Evidence from the final report forms suggests that the elements that defined RALP projects also made them more difficult to market: innovation, flexibility, partnership and access objectives. Each of these elements makes projects more difficult to communicate, target groups more difficult to reach and co-ordination more difficult to organise. The implication is that the marketing of a RALP project needed to be as creative, pro-active and well planned as the project itself.

The organisational development strand of RALP was originally intended to constitute a small-scale version of the stabilisation programme. In practice RALP has had few links with the stabilisation team or with its work in the Arts Council. The organisational development strand of RALP in particular could gain from understanding the lessons from the stabilisation programme as well as perhaps adopting some of their tools. For example, stabilisation sometimes adopts a prescriptive approach to ensure that required changes are made.

### ***Recommendations***

- The Arts Council should evaluate different mechanisms for providing specialist support to award recipients during the delivery of their project. These could include a central business unit, nationally available seminars, peer group learning or mentoring
- Links with the stabilisation programmes (or the successor to the Stabilisation programmes) should be strengthened in order to develop and apply lessons of good practice in organisational development

### **5.6 Assessment**

Applications were assessed using a five-point scoring process. There was some concern that this system was heavy handed, subjective and opaque. It was complicated by the fact that one of the scores was used to assess a number of regional priorities and by an uneven process of moderation.

Twenty seven per cent of applications for RALP2 were scaled down and offered a lower sum than that for which they applied. There is nothing intrinsically wrong in offering a smaller grant than that which is requested. However, the practice should be operated in a consistent way across Arts Council England, and must avoid cutting marketing or contingency budgets, both of which are essential to a well-managed project but risk being seen as 'soft' figures.

The average time between the date the application was received and the date of decision was 93 days. A small proportion of applications took as long as 150 days to process. Both award recipients and regional officers would like to see decision times speeded up, especially for small awards.

### ***Recommendations***

- Arts Council England should aim to identify a short list of, say, five national priorities, with each regional office adding not more than five additional regional priorities to reflect local identity
- The scoring system should be reviewed so that it takes greater account of the range of regional priorities and the quality of applications
- Regions should use preliminary outlines or pro-formas consistently in order to gauge an applicant's eligibility and likelihood of success
- There should be a standardised approach to the roles of advisers and assessors across the assessment process
- Each region should ensure there is a moderating capacity to 'equalise' scores
- Arts Council England should review the ways in which it involves artistic assessment in the process, in order to address some of the concerns about inadequate quality assessment
- Each region should commit to a monthly decision-making meeting
- Arts Council England should agree and publish clear guidelines as to how, and in what circumstances, it might reduce an award from the sum offered. When a regional office makes the decision to reduce an award in this way,

it should ensure that the applicant understands the reasons behind that decision and the areas of the project that should be affected

- Regions should have the option of awarding more than the sum requested where there is a compelling reason to do so. In particular, they may wish to revise awards upwards in instances where they believe the budget does not allow for adequate remuneration to the artists involved or where the recipient is required to undertake in-depth monitoring or self-evaluation, over and above that envisaged in the application
- Regional offices should be urged to streamline their approaches and set ever more rigorous targets for customer service

## **5.7 Use of RALP funds**

Applicants' main concern about RALP was about its accessibility to different types of organisations and the sustainability of projects funded. Ninety per cent of award recipients interviewed would like to continue the work started by their project.

### ***Recommendations***

- A future funding system should consider the specific needs of community organisations and the voluntary arts
- The grant management database should be expanded so that it can measure the profile of applicants and award recipients. Fields should include size, age, voluntary or professional sector, and funding history
- Final report forms should be expanded to include consideration of exit strategies

## **5.8 Post-project**

Final report forms have often been completed with care by award recipients, but have a low status in the regional offices. The quality, consistency and use of final report forms need to be improved. Assessment of the quality of projects is perceived to be a major area of weakness during and after assessment.

### ***Recommendations***

- Monitoring and evaluation should be a higher priority and possibly receive additional resources
- Arts Council England should review its application and assessment procedures to ensure that judgements about artistic quality are given greater emphasis
- There should be one common form for final report forms. The form should be reviewed to avoid ambiguity and to encourage reflection. The specific needs of capital projects should be taken into account in drafting this form
- There should be a procedure for checking that final report forms are completed in full
- The final report form should be available on-line across the regions
- Larger projects would benefit from independent evaluation, funding for which should be included in the RALP grant

## **5.9 Commentary from Arts Council England on the recommendations**

In April 2003, Arts Council England's existing grant schemes, including RALP, were replaced by grants for the arts. The evaluation of RALP carried out by Annabel Jackson Associates was timely in that it helped inform the design of the new grants scheme. Many of the issues highlighted in this report have been addressed by the new scheme.

### ***The application process***

Grants for the arts has a very basic application form, supported by an applicant's proposal. The information requested in the proposal depends on the size of the grant being applied for and there are specific headings which need to be addressed by capital applicants. Applicants are given a set of headings and sub-headings to address in their proposals which, coupled with the suggested word limits, should encourage the provision of more factual information. Applicants need to apply to one regional office only. Any cross-region communication will be the responsibility of Arts Council England staff.

### ***Support***

Arts Council England will be exploring different mechanisms for providing specialist support to award recipients. During the design of grants for the arts, there was a determined attempt to improve the availability of advice to potential applicants to reduce the chance of people being 'funded to fail'. Links with the stabilisation programme are being explored.

### ***Assessment***

Grants for the arts has five priorities which are common across all regions, Unlike RALP, there are no different regional priorities. Artistic quality will always be an essential criterion for Arts Council England.

The second phase of 'overview' scoring has been further developed to allow greater differential in the scoring mechanism. If further or outside assessment is judged to be necessary, it will be sought. A 'quality assurance' stage, which will be followed consistently in all regional offices, has been built into the process.

Customer service targets are set out in the grants for the arts application pack. Applications for £5,000 or less will be dealt with in six weeks, those for more than £5,000 in 12 weeks. Each region has put in place mechanisms to ensure its ability to meet the new challenging turnaround times Arts Council England has set itself. Arts Council England has given a commitment to explain any reduction in the sum applied for.

### ***Use of RALP funding***

The grants for the arts application form asks organisations to state whether they are voluntary or community organisations. Arts Council England will monitor and review the success of the voluntary and community sector in

accessing funding. It is planned to produce specific guidance for the voluntary sector later in 2003. The grants management system for grants for the arts will include the ability to record information about organisations, including whether they have previously had a funding relationship with Arts Council England.

***Post-project***

One common activity report form will be available and used across all regions. The form makes clear that capital projects are not expected to complete most of it. In due course consideration will be given to post-completion monitoring for capital projects.

The application form, activity report form and IT systems have been developed in cooperation with Arts Council England's research department so as to ensure that the available data are robust and can form the basis of thorough monitoring and evaluation.

## 6 Case studies

### 6.1 Bathysphere Collective: Sonorous

Region: East Midlands

Award: £85,308

#### *The organisation*

Bathysphere consists of three young men on the music scene in Leicester. Stuart Smith, Steve Gibbs and Chris Cousin are astute musicians and creative entrepreneurs.

Bathysphere aims to work across a range of media, including video, installation and various forms of digital arts. Their primary focus, however, is music.

Set up in 1998, the collective began – as do all such ventures – very much as a cottage industry, operating out of the partners' bedrooms. The limitations of working from a home environment, with all its attendant difficulties and compromises naturally proved frustrating. So when a community arts project, Soft Touch, offered the group accommodation with the potential for more professional studio facilities and the opportunity to become more involved with other musicians, the offer was eagerly accepted. Soft Touch also suggested that the group constituted themselves formally as a co-operative (which enabled them to access free business advice from the Co-operative Development Agency).

Once established in this new base, Bathysphere went to see the head of popular music at Leicester City Council who recommended that they should consider themselves as a community organisation – but one whose 'community' was musicians.

This valuable advice helped the collective to re-focus its ambitions. It was backed up by a small (£500) grant from the council and, soon after, Bathysphere were successful in their £3,750 application to Awards For All to acquire a new mixing desk. This allowed them to develop their plans for a studio and recording workshop in Soft Touch, through which they could begin to train other musicians.

The next step was a conversation with Graham Wall, an officer at Arts Council England with responsibility for popular music who suggested an application to 'Firestart' a small-scale grants programme. At the same time, the music officer at the then East Midlands Arts (EMA) suggested an approach to RALP.

Bathysphere's initial reaction to this proposal was 'that's for big boys, not for us'. Nevertheless, in early 2000, they put together a successful application for a project (Deepwater) with £1,000 of Firestart funds, £500 from the City Council and £18,500 from RALP1.



Deepwater built on Bathysphere's achievements to that point through establishing a record label to produce and release 12" vinyl. The project involved the management of artists, participating in the processes of writing and producing, and responsibility for the distribution and promotion of the finished product. It also allowed the members of the collective to draw a wage for the first time, thereby beginning a process of professionalisation.

Despite being originally a 'wild' idea, Deepwater was a perceived success, generating considerable interest and feedback which indicated a substantial demand. The project demonstrated quite clearly that the region housed a community of like-minded musicians who were not achieving the exposure or the recognition they deserved. Consequently, Bathysphere began to discuss with EMA the possibility of building on – and expanding – the project through a second RALP bid.

### ***The project***

Sonorous, Bathysphere's second RALP project was, in effect, a continuation of the Deepwater idea. However, while Deepwater had set out to be a sustainable project, Sonorous was designed to help Bathysphere become a sustainable company. To that end, Bathysphere supported its application with a full and very persuasive business plan which identified the areas of cultural productivity that the company would develop, the financial implications of those activities, the potential markets and the training needs associated with them. Following from that analysis, the RALP application combined a project proposal with organisational development (OD) and capital investment.

The project is a two-year development programme through which the collective is working closely with a number of regional artists to record, release and market music on the Deepwater label, using the latest internet technology. Over the two years, it will:

- release 12 vinyl EPs, backed up by full internet support and career planning for the artists involved
- release two compilation albums of individual artist and two collaborative albums
- develop the existing Deepwater website into a cutting-edge multi-media resource for regional artists, providing music, video, information, contacts and secure on-line trading
- incorporate web, multi-media and musical developments through inter-linked live performance experiences

All of these initiatives rely on ground-breaking digital developments and the use of digital media and distribution techniques alongside established CD and vinyl formats, incorporated within a traditional record label framework.

At the time of writing (November 2002), Bathysphere is just over halfway through the Sonorous programme. Its most conspicuous success in its first year has been with the artist Hint (a.k.a. Jonathon James) whose debut EP on Deepwater brought his music to the attention of a major record label, Ninja Tunes, to which he is now signed.

In addition to this landmark, the first year of Sonorous has delivered:

- studio development work with over 20 artists
- the manufacture, release and distribution of five 12" EP's
- an international distribution deal for Deepwater with Kudos records
- live appearances by Deepwater artists at the Essential and Respect festivals in London, the Big Chill in Wiltshire and Abbey Park Festival in Leicester
- airplay on Radio 1 (including a John Peel session)
- national and international press coverage in leading music periodicals (including two 'singles of the month' in the Ministry of Sound's magazine)
- construction, development and launch of the Deepwater label's website

The ambitious programme producing these successes has made new demands on Bathysphere. In recognition of those demands, the three young entrepreneurs who set up the company are undertaking a major programme of organisational development in order to equip themselves better for an existence within the highly-competitive and commercial world of the music business.

The OD programme focused on:

- developing new Internet, database and multi-media skills through a series of professional training courses
- training a member of the collective in music industry marketing and public relations
- undertaking a marketing consultancy to enable the organisation to optimise its operation

In pursuing these objectives, during the first year of **Sonorous**:

- Stuart Smith successfully completed a Flash and Dreamweaver course at Mac People Training in Manchester, which provided him with the skills needed to generate Bathysphere's websites. As a result, Bathysphere is able to do all of its web (and other) design work in house. This not only saves money; it provides the organisation with a valuable skill-base which can, in future, be used commercially – and for the benefit of the musicians' community which Bathysphere serves
- Steve Gibbs attended a three-day music industry training seminar in London which significantly helped Bathysphere negotiate their international distribution deal, arrange publishing administration through a leading international music publisher and develop a much more successful approach to the manufacture of their records
- Chris Cousin undertook database training, enabling Bathysphere to build a database of clients and contacts as well as tracking marketing and sales
- the company engaged Christon Davies Strategic Marketing to research information, which is underpinning all of Bathysphere's

current work. Until that work is over, this programme cannot be fully evaluated; early indications, however, suggest that it will contribute greatly to the progress of the company

The project also required upgraded digital equipment to provide Bathysphere with a suite containing equipment capable of both delivering high-quality multi-media and web-publishing projects and responding to the needs of smaller music projects. This equipment has been acquired, resulting in:

- the use of digital video in performance at the Big Chill Festival
- collaboration with visual artists at the *Dots and Squiggles* event in Leicester
- the development of the website
- numerous live shows and DJ slots in London, Brighton, Wiltshire and Leicester

Overall, the RALP bid has improved Bathysphere's production capacity, its knowledge of the market and its sales figures. It has also enabled the company to cut better deals in terms of its promotional and marketing activities. The capital investment has also allowed Bathysphere to develop into a real company in contrast with its 'cottage industry' origins. Also, significantly, the growth and achievements of the company provide a role model for many other aspirant groups of musicians in the East Midlands and, potentially, nationally.

This last point is significant. East Midlands Arts, understandably, were nervous about investing in three young men embarking on a commercial undertaking in a notoriously shark-infested sea. However, it decided to take the risk and, two years in, that decision looks wholly justified. The business is progressing (at a much faster rate than could have been envisaged without the grant), the individual artist/entrepreneurs running it have acquired a range of essential (but new) skills, and the company's success can act as inspiration to a whole raft of aspirant companies trying to start out in the creative industries. As an example of how Arts Council England can contribute to the development of fledgling creative industries, this story could hardly be bettered.

### ***The legacy and the future***

RALP has provided Bathysphere with a launch pad. However, in summer 2003, the grant will stop. The company, understandably, do not want to go back to a hand-to-mouth existence, recognising that the RALP awards have brought not only stability (and, for the first time, a wage); they have also bought the dedicated working time that has enabled the art to grow and the business to develop.

There is, however, no reason why Bathysphere should revert to its pre-RALP level of operation. The company now has many more strings to its bow.

- The individual members have a range of new skills (including marketing, database management, music business savvy and web-

design) which can be deployed within the Bathysphere umbrella to generate income

- The company has the potential to develop into a self-sustaining organisation, operating across a number of inter-connected media rather than as a string of discrete independent projects
- Bathysphere's experience over the last two to three years has given it a professionalism that could be translated into a training capacity (eg passing on professional attitudes and habits to other emerging artists)

The company is also looking at new or adapted initiatives to improve their sustainability. For example:

- finding new approaches to record pressing in order to release more resources for marketing
- offering more artistic and career development to its artists' roster in parallel with the development of the label
- potential collaborations with NESTA and the museums sector

Finally, the lessons learned through RALP have provided Bathysphere with enough organisational maturity to enable them to make an application to grants for the arts –national touring for 2003.

### ***The role of RALP***

From all the above, it is clear that RALP has been seminal in Bathysphere's development to the position it is in today. The award has enabled the three partners to develop their skills and devote themselves whole-heartedly to growing their business – and their art form. Most practically, the financial security provided by RALP has given Bathysphere a buttress against the vagaries of cashflow. As a result, the company has been able to release discs on a regular, pre-determined schedule, suitable to the needs of the music and the market, rather than waiting for the returns on one release to replenish the company's bank account sufficiently to allow the release of the next.

Put at its most eloquent: 'we've been able to make mistakes without it costing us our business'.

## 6.2 DAISI: The DAISI File

Region: South West

Award: £8,800

### *The organisation*

DAISI (Devon Arts in Schools Initiative) was set up informally in 1996 from a series of meetings between artists, teachers and school governors who were concerned about the lack of arts provision in Devon schools. The resulting steering group was led, unusually, by some concerned governors and also had representation from Devon County Council, the then South West Arts (SWA), Devon Local Education Authority (LEA) and independent artists.

In 1997, the fledgling organisation made a successful bid to Arts for Everyone (A4E) for a three-year programme. The A4E award of £210,000 was matched, initially by £40,000 of other funds and, later, by about £50,000 more. These funds supported a ten-strand programme of arts in schools, covering a range of different art forms.

In May 1998, Zannah Chisholm joined as director and DAISI was constituted as a registered charity. The A4E programme was launched in October that year, continuing through to 2001.

As the A4E programme drew to a close, DAISI was confronted with a number of options for the future: (a) wind up operations; (b) continue at a much lower level of activity or (c) seek other funds to continue the project.

Given that the project had, in its first three years become a 'nationally recognised model of good practice', it was hardly surprising that DAISI targeted the last of these three options. The company, however, recognised that, in addition to its core work, it also had to confront issues of sustainability. Accordingly, it submitted RALP bids both for a programme of work arising from the work of the previous three years (primarily dance and visual arts based) and for a programme of organisational development (OD).

This study will focus on the OD strand of DAISI's RALP project. However, before turning to that, it is worth noting that the artistic programme, following on from A4E, is also proving very successful. In dance, for example, DAISI is building on a programme piloted in the last year of A4E, whereby young dance artists/ choreographers were enabled to base themselves in the region for a period of time in order to make work in a variety of settings. Whereas the pilot was undertaken in conjunction with London's Laban centre, the RALP programme is using more mature artists (in their early-to-mid twenties) with different degrees of experience. Over the two-year period of the programme, three different sets of three artists, many of whom will be of Devon origin, will be invited to participate in the programme. One of the current incumbents, for instance, was brought up through the Devon education system.

### ***The project***

With the end of A4E, not only did DAISI's programming resources dry up, so too did the organisation's core funding. Recognising the need to sustain an excellent organisation, the Hamlyn foundation provided essential bridging finance of £26,000. This allowed DAISI to stay operating while it mapped out options for the longer-term. In order to do that, DAISI recognised that it needed external support and, accordingly, applied for an OD award.

The bid was modest (£8,800) and unusual in that DAISI elected not to turn to an established management or cultural consultancy company for their advice. Instead, the company put together a team of two teachers, a 'finance person' and an artist. The only conventional consultant in the team was used as a facilitator. The team worked very closely throughout with the company's stakeholders.

The team consulted widely with Devon schools about how DAISI might best work with them in the future; in particular, it considered what sort of financial model might be established to give the company a degree of self-sufficiency. The company was very concerned that the process should have a practical outcome so they dedicated one-third of the project budget to the production of a tangible outcome which would provide a model for the future.

An early notion was that DAISI might be able to levy a subscription charge from the schools with which it worked. The company itself, however, was sceptical of this idea. It believed that local authorities would provide no additional funding and that schools would be unable or unwilling to subscribe out of locally held budgets. Market testing, however, suggested that this – if pitched right – could provide a sustainable level of income. After research into issues such as cost-tolerance, the OD team produced the desired tangible outcome - The DAISI File, a prospectus for the company.

The file was sent out in October 2001, with the express objective of attracting 50 subscribers by January 2002. In practice, that target was achieved by late November 2001. While the subscription list could have been greater, DAISI prudently chose to cap it at 50 for the time being in order to ensure that the company did not become over-stretched. In the past six to nine months, however, as DAISI has become accustomed to managing the scheme, the list has grown to 67.

The subscription buys schools reduced-price access to DAISI's services. This includes the organisation of artists coming to schools, training (increasing the capacity of teachers) and networking.

This process has brought considerable benefits. Without the RALP award, for example, DAISI would have not been capable of doing the research that has produced its new operating model while continuing to undertake its core artistic programme. The RALP award, therefore, has given DAISI a 'new lease of life'. It has also significantly raised its profile with local schools, both through the consultation process and the new service level agreement.

Within the company, too, there have been developmental benefits. The original administrator, for instance, has learned a lot through the process and has been promoted to schools' project manager. In addition, the volume of schools who want to buy DAISI's services is such that the company has now added a part-time administrator (three days a week) and increased the time required from the book-keeper.

The A4E work provided DAISI with a high level of credibility. The process and outcome of the RALP award has increased that level of public confidence. LEAs are now beginning to purchase DAISI's services to strengthen schools.

Overall, the OD project has enabled DAISI to develop the staffing and organisational models it now needs and to create a structure for income generation. Its funding base is now one-third from the public sector, one-third from trusts and foundations, and one-third self-generated. These developments allow the company also to support a broad base of strategic work which complements the more responsive market-driven area of its work. Through its income generating activities, DAISI is also, for the first time, creating a small reserve (£15,000).

Other benefits for DAISI have included the strengthening of relationships with the organisation's stakeholders and a new level of understanding about potential financial models for the future.

Finally, the choice of teachers and artists for the consultancy team has had an unexpected benefit in that the individuals involved have all developed new skills. The (excellent) DAISI File, for example, was produced by someone with no experience in marketing or graphic arts although the quality of the final product suggests that he could develop in that direction if he chose to.

### ***The legacy and the future***

The 2,000 existing copies of the DAISI file provide a tangible legacy of the project. Currently being updated, this material could serve as a template for arts in schools programmes all over the country. Indeed, it may well be that DAISI should consider the further exploitation of the document (and the approach) through, perhaps, franchising or by developing a consultancy arm.

The project has also provided 'people' benefits in terms of staff development and additional employment – both within DAISI, as described, and among the artistic community where some 90 artists are now contracted annually. The project has also built up the skills base, experience and general capacity of teachers and school governors.

DAISI is an exemplary project. While, in this life, nothing is certain save death and taxes (and public funding for the arts falls a long way behind those two in terms of its predictability), the company's success over the last four years suggests an optimistic future. DAISI will continue to work more directly with individual schools and, as time goes on, the new operating model may well lead to new opportunities (eg consultancy work, as mentioned earlier).

***The role of RALP***

Daisi describe the RALP OD programme as 'perfect'. Further comment is superfluous.



### 6.3 Heir of Insanity : Atlantis

Region: East England

Award: £58,951

#### ***The organisation***

In 1995, Julia Dixey and Simon Schofield, both aerialists and graduates of Circus Space, set up Heir of Insanity, a new circus company. Over the next five years, the company built its reputation with a mixture of street performances, corporate events, cabaret shows and gigs in a wide range of formal and informal settings (eg raves). During the summers, they also mounted a larger-scale production touring to outdoor spaces, particularly in Europe.

Since its inception, the company has been based in rural East Anglia. It is now recognised as the region's best practitioner in the emerging field of new circus and as excellent ambassadors for the East of England. Despite that growing reputation, however, the company has received very little public subsidy. A grant from the Foundation for Sports and Arts allowed them to buy a van and, later, an arts capital grant provided a caravan, in which the three performers travelled, changed, made-up and slept. The only other support they have received has come from small occasional grants (less than £1,000) from the then East England Arts (EEA) for specific purposes such as help with print.

By 2001, the company had been touring its very successful outdoor show, *Crystal/Vita* for three years and, while its popularity meant that they could have 'carried on touring it forever', the artists knew that they had to take another creative step.

They wanted to make a new show to tour nationally and internationally; moreover, they wanted it to be a development from *Crystal/Vita*, which had been produced 'on a shoestring', with little rehearsal time, subsidised by their corporate work and based around a number of existing routines. For the new show, Heir of Insanity aspired to a 'proper' rehearsal period, higher production standards and the opportunity to develop their skills.

Encouraged by the East England Arts officer with responsibility for dance and new circus, Heir of Insanity applied for a RALP award to develop a new project, *Atlantis*.

#### ***The project***

*Atlantis* was designed to fuse innovative aerial and acrobatic dance skills with up-to-the minute technology. For this, Heir of Insanity wanted to work within a custom-designed frame and use a range of inflatable props and settings. The RALP grant of just under £59,000 included a capital award of £41,500 to enable these artistic ambitions to be achieved (and for the company to acquire additional transport to accommodate their new kit). As a result, Heir of Insanity was able to collaborate with a costume designer from the London College of Fashion, a theatre director, the innovative American circus company Project Bandaloop and a musician (to create an original score).

The project also allowed Heir of Insanity to strengthen its roots in the Eastern region and forge new partnerships - particularly with the Hippodrome in Great Yarmouth and Sea Change Arts, an organisation working with young people. The Sea Change partnership enabled the company to work with local children in Great Yarmouth, undertaking a series of one-day workshops on circus skills. The Hippodrome offered space for rehearsals and premiere.

The Hippodrome is an extraordinary Edwardian building designed specifically for circus. Rescued from disuse by a local businessman, it is now being used again for occasional commercial circus presentations. The *Atlantis* project, however, succeeded in raising the profile of the Hippodrome and, through the Heir of Insanity relationship, the theatre now has the potential to develop more into areas of new circus.

Heir of Insanity was in residence at the Hippodrome for eight weeks. The residency allowed them to erect their free-standing aerial rig and inflatable set (both of which were acquired through the RALP award). At the end of that period, they premiered *Atlantis*. The performance played to over 1,000 people in three performances and received extensive and very favourable coverage in the local media.

Following the premiere (and a degree of re-working), *Atlantis* went on tour, starting at the Falkirk Festival at the end of May 2002 and finishing in Dublin in August. Approximately 60,000 people saw the 26 performances in a variety of venues, including arts events, city centres and music festivals.

The tour will continue through the summers of 2003 and 2004. Some of the venues from 2002 have already expressed interest in re-booking *Atlantis* and the company anticipates that the new levels of professionalism and quality that the show represents will enable them to break into the highly competitive European festival market.

To date, *Atlantis* appears to represent very good value for public investment. RALP contributed only £59,000 to a total project cost of £222,000 (including the tour). All of that investment went into the initial production process – getting the show on: the £41,500 capital award allowed the company to spend the money needed for technical equipment and the £17,000 project funding enabled Heir of Insanity to have adequate rehearsal time through the residency at Great Yarmouth.

The company received the sum for which they applied. Although they had to juggle budgets once the project started (mainly because they found that they needed slightly different transport from that anticipated), this presented no real difficulties. *Atlantis* was the largest project the company had undertaken but, despite a few ‘teething problems’, they felt confident managing it. The income projections are holding up and Heir of Insanity is confident about the future of the tour, which will generate income to cover all of the company’s operating costs.

### ***The legacy and the future***

The most tangible legacy of the project is clearly the three-year tour. Without the RALP grant, Heir of Insanity would not have been able to invest either the time or the resources necessary to create a touring show of real quality. British new circus is still an emerging art form and, while new training

opportunities – for example at Circus Space and Circus Media in Bristol (as well as the legacy of the Millennium Dome) – have helped produce more performers of quality, there are still very few companies of stature. European, Canadian and Australian new circus has longer-established traditions and a longer history of public support. Consequently, companies from those countries have a considerable advantage over British groups. The *Atlantis* project enabled Heir of Insanity to raise its game enough to be able to compete against international peers in the festival market.

The scale of the show itself also provided Heir of Insanity with a benefit that should have long-term implications. Through the project's ambition and its professional excellence, the company believes that its status has been enhanced and that new doors will open.

Finally, of course, the workshop programme that formed an important part of the Great Yarmouth residency will leave a residual benefit for many of the young people who participated.

The benefits referred to above form a substantial part of the project's legacy. But there are others too. Most particularly, the company believe that the RALP project has helped them become (and be seen as) more professional. This is evident in:

- the commitment to three years of touring
- the increased quality of the artistic work
- the development of key strategic relationships (the Hippodrome, Sea Change, Arts Council England East, other artists)
- a development of the company's infrastructure enabling them to be more strategic in the way they work
- a large number of new promoter contacts, some of which are fast becoming consolidated

All of this has produced an Heir of Insanity that functions more as a fully professional company. This is evidenced by the way in which the company is dealing with Julia Dixey's proposed sabbatical next year. As a founder member, Julia has clearly been central to the success of the company to date – and she has been a very significant element in the creation of the *Atlantis* production. In the past, it would have been inconceivable that the company could have carried on performing such a show without her; now, however, they feel confident enough that they intend to recast her role and continue the tour. The company thus becomes more than just the sum of the individuals and has, as a result, a much better prospect of long-term survival and success.

### ***The role of RALP***

If Heir of Insanity had not succeeded in its RALP application, it would not have been able to do the *Atlantis* project. In that circumstance, the company would not have mounted an artistically-orientated show in 2002. Instead, it would probably have pursued a programme of corporate work which, while financially lucrative, would be unlikely to produce any artistic growth for the company.

The company believe that the RALP project was made possible by the commitment of the lead East England Arts officer and by the specialist officer from Arts Council England national office, both of whom worked very hard to understand and communicate the needs of the art form.

Overall, Heir of Insanity did not find the RALP process intimidating. The company's first experience of funding was the Foundation for Sports and Arts, which was 'easy'. After that, Heir of Insanity made a capital application which 'nearly killed us' so the RALP application was seen as 'very straightforward' by comparison.

While (overall) very positive, Heir of Insanity's individual experience of the RALP process raised certain issues. In particular, the company was affected by the fact that 10% of the cash allocated for its capital spend was reserved against final accounts (ie until the end of the project in three years' time). This rule – recognised as a constraint by the officers – meant that Heir of Insanity could not incur some capital expenditure as early as needed. As an extreme example, stage lighting could not be bought before the tour. It can, however, be acquired once the show is over.

Overall, Heir of Insanity believes that it has grown significantly through RALP. As a direct outcome of the award, the company will be able to play more widely in Europe and grow both its reputation and its skill-base. The **Atlantis** project will, accordingly, continue to provide artistic and business dividends over the next three years as the company is able – for the first time – to plan longer-term.

## 6.4 Music For Change: World Music in Education

Region: South East

Award: £90,000

### ***The organisation***

**Music For Change (MFC)** is a rewarding example of how a very small organisation can be encouraged and enabled to grow by appropriate support from Arts Council England.

Following a project, *Under One Sky*, which provided world music performances and schools workshops in Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells, Tom Andrews set up MFC in 1996 in order to explore how participation in music of different cultures could help develop respect for those cultures. Having promoted music for several years, he believed strongly that high-quality music had, in addition to its intrinsic value, great potential for community development and other social benefits. In particular, he was concerned that schools were not exploring world music – partly for financial reasons and, partly, because, few teachers had knowledge of the subject and were, consequently, nervous of it.

Working (virtually unpaid) out of his bedroom, Tom set out to disseminate information about the rich variety of music available in the world and began to build a network of artists and teachers. In 1997, he applied for – and got – his first grant, £4,000 from A4E Express, which enabled him to buy his first computer and undertake his first mail-out. Without that initial award, it is very unlikely that MFC would have survived, let alone flourished to the extent that it has: it now employs six people year-round (with another seven or eight working on a project-by-project basis) and provides more than 500 performances and over 1,000 workshops a year throughout the South East and nationally. That initial award offered MFC a way into the funding system and the simplicity of the A4E Express process encouraged Tom to make an application to the A4E Main programme.

That second application was also successful. This time, MFC was awarded about £40,000 for a project - *Access The World* - which ran over the next three years. This enabled the company to subsidise performances and workshops in schools and to provide them with information packs. Starting with one-off workshops or one-day residencies, MFC began to grow, working in primary and secondary schools as well as with Youth Music Action Zones, community organisations and youth groups. Lack of financial security, however, meant that the work was not as long-term or focussed as Tom and his colleagues desired.

### ***The project***

The RALP project is designed to address those ambitions. Starting in early 2002, it is running over three years, allowing MFC to develop long-term relationships with host organisations.

This programme – entitled *World Music In Education* – has a number of different strands:

- Nine long-term residencies (5–10 weeks) in schools and youth centres, leading to community performances and followed up with return visits by the artists. While the work will remain centred on music, this project will also include visual arts, dance, video production and storytelling. Through this process, MFC should be able to offer each host organisation a much greater depth of experience, working throughout the school and impacting on many key points in the curriculum
- Research on attitudes. Before, during and after the project, MFC is undertaking a survey to explore the participants' attitudes to the various countries and cultures whose music will form the basis of the project. Through this, it will track how the work is achieving the social objectives of the company. It will also demonstrate how firmly the music itself has become embedded in the young people's consciousness
- Regular in-service training days with local education/music services. These will enable a large number of teachers, arts officers, youth workers and council staff to learn more about culturally diverse music and so enable it to become more naturally part of the everyday music and cross-curricular activity of schools
- Information. The first tangible output of this RALP project is the enhanced quality of *Talking Drum*, MFC's magazine. Formerly produced on a shoe-string, this is now an attractive full-colour publication which includes interviews with world musicians, reports on projects, news snippets and information about upcoming gigs. Produced three times a year and with a broad circulation, this magazine will make a big difference to the profile of world music in the region (and of MFC itself). MFC is also upgrading its website to serve more effectively both as a portal and as an educational tool
- Evaluation. MFC has an impressive record of evaluating all the work it does (even single workshops are carefully evaluated). Every part of the *World Music In Education* programme will be assessed through a variety of methodologies: questionnaires, interviews, statistical analysis, email and internet notice boards
- A conference. At the end of the three years, MFC will share the outcomes of the different strands with a broad range of interested parties from within and outside the region. In so doing, it expects to identify lessons learned and disseminate good practice so that more and more schools can bring this range of music into their work

### ***The legacy and the future***

Each strand of *World Music In Education* will leave its own legacy.

- the young people will carry the legacy in their memories and, it is hoped, in their attitudes towards other cultures
- schools and other host organisations will have their capacity enhanced by the process of working with MFC and the demands of the residency programme; they should, accordingly, emerge better able to host future creative projects

- music services, teachers, youth workers and other participants in the residencies and/or In service training days will be more aware of – and knowledgeable about – a wide range of world music
- the in service training day programme should also help develop new sets of skills in the participants – as will practical sessions at the final conference
- the outcomes of the whole process will be widely disseminated through publication and the final conference
- new models of working will have been developed which can be used by other organisations
- MFC will be left with a higher profile (through, among other things, the magazine) and enhanced skills and managerial capacity. In order to secure these gains, MFC has already decided that it will apply for an organisational development award from RALP's successor (grants for the arts) towards the end of the project, further consolidating its growth through arts lottery programmes

As *World Music In Education* is only in its first year, it is too early to be able to illustrate its benefits with tangible examples. MFC has, however, already achieved an impressive track record (a previous project drew from a primary school head the comment that it was 'the best workshop from outside in 10 years'). The educational and artistic benefits are, therefore, likely to be substantial, touching on issues of cultural diversity, social inclusion and regeneration. The project also contributes significantly to the National Curriculum Key Stage One objective about music from other cultures. In so doing, it will undoubtedly help schools.

The benefits to the children themselves are self-evident. In addition to the intrinsic benefits of music workshops (aesthetic understanding, appreciation, articulacy, manual dexterity, hand-eye co-ordination, numeracy etc), the specialist nature of this project offers a range of social and cultural benefits to do with community relations, broadening the children's world-view and citizenship.

To other arts organisations and schools, *World Music In Education* will offer a model to emulate and MFC itself will gain tangible benefits through learning how to develop a much richer, more complex project than any on which it has worked to date.

### ***The role of RALP***

MFC, like many small organisations, does not have a level of revenue funding commensurate with its fixed costs. The books are balanced by earnings from 'trading'. Each project, therefore, has to contribute to the organisation's fixed-cost base.

For *World Music In Education*, RALP contributed £90,000 to a total budget of £158,150. This represents the maximum award available through the then South East Arts (SEA). In retrospect, Tom Andrews believes that he under-budgeted in two areas - the research programme and the distribution of the magazine. Since, however, the first of these areas is a pioneering initiative

which will contribute greatly to the project's legacy and the second is already making a difference to the organisation's profile by improving the information available about the sector, it has been decided to fundraise to cover the shortfall rather than cut them back.

Other principal sources of funding for the project are trusts and foundations (£37,000), Local authorities (£6,000), earned income (about £14,000) and, significantly, voluntary help on the design and administration aspects of the project (about £11,000). This last contribution is an earnest of the enthusiasm and dedication of people connected with MFC and, more generally, illustrates the way in which so many individuals in small arts organisations subsidise their work, thereby extracting every ounce of value out of public investment.

Mention has already been made of the support provided for MFC by A4E (Express and Main) and now by RALP. Without those stepping stones, the company would probably not exist in its present form, nor would the current project have been possible. Moreover, the different programmes have allowed MFC to develop its practice. A4E allowed MFC to extend its remit more widely; RALP is allowing it to deepen the experience it offers and increase its quality.

*World Music In Education* should enable MFC to develop further their mixture of high-quality world music in the educational context. Tom Andrews says that the ease of access to A4E Express and the subsequent help he has received from officers within the funding system has changed his perception of that system. He no longer sees it as intimidating and is already thinking about how to use it to further MFC's vision. MFC is now regularly-funded by Arts Council England.

From Arts Council England's point of view, *World Music In Education* provides exactly the sort of high quality, culturally diverse activity that it wants to support; moreover it links that work to coherent educational contexts. The development of MFC through lottery-funded projects may, in time, lead to the company's taking a more secure place in the cultural infrastructure.



## **6.5 Watermans Arts Centre**

Region: London

Award: £100,000

### ***The organisation***

Watermans is a long-established arts centre in Brentford, West London, an area with a high proportion of (particularly young) Asian people. It houses a gallery, theatre, cinema and two flexible workspaces.

During the later 1990s, the centre experienced financial and organisational difficulties. Most pressingly, the organisation's cashflow had deteriorated and the local authority (Hounslow) was 'keeping the centre afloat' by covering its payroll. This accumulating deficit culminated in a crisis in early 2000. At that point, Waterman's was admitted to the Arts Council's Recovery programme and a new director was appointed.

Through the recovery programme, Watermans analysed that it was trying to be 'everything for everybody' and that it had to re-focus. Asking itself 'what is Watermans for', the centre determined that it should re-emphasise its work for the Asian community, an area of activity in which it was particularly strong. It also recognised that its record in participatory arts was good.

Finally, Watermans concluded that an important future strand of its artistic activity - particularly given the demographic of its target audience - was likely to involve new media. At that time, the centre's new media plans were 'not fully thought through' but it recognised the opportunity to pursue its potential in this field and link it to the two existing areas of strength.

In setting that objective, Watermans knew that it was being ambitious. At that point, the capacity gap in the organisation was 'huge'. Indeed, the centre had only a handful of computers (which were not networked) and the building was not wired. In addition, it was clear that the new hardware needed to realise this vision would have to be accompanied by skills development in the staff.

The Arts Council accepted Watermans' analysis and its recovery strategy but requested that the funders all re-commit to the centre. Hounslow responded to that challenge by agreeing to commute the accumulated debt to a 10-year interest-free loan. This reduced the financial pressure on Watermans considerably. The recovery plan remained, however, dependent on the success of the centre's new media strategy and, for that to work, substantial investment in new technology was needed. At that point, the then Arts Council for England solicited a bid from Watermans for capital equipment.

### ***The project***

Watermans' RALP bid contained two constituent parts - New Media Artists Support Project (NMAS) and Management Information Systems.

The more creatively exciting element of the project was described as the New Media Artists Support Project (NMAS). This focused on providing space and

resources for artists and the exhibition of new work. Two main strands of digital art are planned: 'lens-based' (eg video or photography) and digital (ie activated through a computer, including web-based work, digital kinetics and robotics or software programming acting on sensors and triggers). Watermans' new (recovery-funded) website is linked to these and is becoming an important channel for debate and the dissemination of research and information.

This digital arts focus will, in particular, offer Asian artists access to quality digital technology. The availability of this resource will also allow the artists to retain cultural and artistic control of their work, in contrast to many situations where the lack of access results in control being lost as the process moves further and further away from the artist. Training and support in the use of new equipment and software is also available.

In addition to the development of Asian artists, the RALP project is making a considerable contribution to Watermans' other core strand of activity – participation. The Mac-based system, with digital cameras and projectors, is used for participatory projects with residents of local estates, children and older people (many of whom had never used a computer before).

NAMS comprised the 'sexy' creative elements of the RALP proposal. However, that work could not be sustained with the support of only four stand-alone personal computers. The second dimension of the RALP project - the Management Information Systems - is, therefore, equally important.

The new support systems that comprise this strand of the project include computer programming applications for programme planning, space booking, box-office, marketing and fundraising. Moreover, these are running on a network that will support 25 staff.

All the applications - in both NAMS and Management Information Systems - are complementary (and essential) to Waterman's recovery strategy. Further, in order to ensure their continued efficiency, the centre has appointed a digital and new media manager.

### ***The legacy and the future***

At its simplest, the principal legacy of this RALP award is the continued existence of Watermans. Without recovery, the centre would not have survived and, without the RALP grant, the recovery strategy would not have been achievable. The current success of Watermans – and the new mood of confidence in the building – is a testament to a constructive synergy between the two programmes.

Creatively, the benefits are also clear. Without the RALP investment, it would not be possible to run the new media programme, which is the most useful tool for attracting young people into the building. Hounslow has a higher-than-average proportion of young people and, historically, the centre has found it difficult to reach that section of its community. Now, Watermans is offering live

new media events and installations and re-defining its profile in the eyes of its younger customers.

On an individual and organisational level, the programme has also provided skills-benefits. The technological improvements introduced to Watermans set a steep learning curve for the whole organisation but is producing a staff with a new set of sophisticated skills.

On a practical level, the Management Information Systems aspect of the project has improved the operation of Watermans immeasurably. It has 'got rid of the logistical nightmare of having four computers: Watermans is now a normal organisation.' The new software has already made a significant difference, freeing up time and making the organisation more creative. This time-benefit is especially critical in an organisation that is open to the public 12 hours a day, seven days a week. From the public's perspective, as well, the new website provides Watermans with a clearer brand and an enhanced profile.

The NAMS programme is attracting a new generation of users to Watermans – young participants who are learning about the creative potential of new media. Some of these may well go on to express themselves creatively through these disciplines; others will become more sophisticated consumers of media arts. In both cases, Watermans is helping develop a new critical consciousness in these young people.

This is particularly important in that there is no other new media centre available to the public in West London, an area which is home to large numbers of young Asian people. By developing awareness of this form in that community – and by offering facilities to young artists emerging from it – Watermans is sowing seeds that may well bring forth very interesting fruit over time.

In the short term, Watermans intends to use its developing profile within the Asian arts community to stimulate a critical debate through its website and through seminars and conferences. It will also take an active role (in conjunction with Thames Valley University) in developing accredited media modules and professional opportunities for new graduates, focusing on Asian arts. In the medium term, it will be able to offer a new level of business support to emerging artists and small cultural organisations from the Asian communities.

### ***The role of RALP***

The constructive synergy between RALP and recovery has already been noted – as has the essential contribution RALP has made to the survival and turnaround of Watermans.

Watermans is a mature organisation, well used to the vagaries of the funding system and the business of form-filling. The application process, accordingly, did not present it with any problems. The length of the process, however, did cause some concern. While the synergy between the two funding

programmes already mentioned was, overall, positive, the organisation itself had the impression that there were disjunctions at an operational level. In summary, Watermans believes that London Arts was (understandably) cautious about releasing RALP funds lest the centre 'went pop'. In the end, however, the London Arts lead officer (of whom Watermans is very appreciative) resolved the issue and funds were released.

The funds allocated (£100,000) were the maximum possible under the scheme and, while not allowing too many technological luxuries (new media being an expensive pastime), allowed Watermans to acquire what they needed. The process of acquisition, however, was tricky. New media kit is one of the most volatile areas of consumer spending; prices and specifications fluctuate on an almost weekly basis. The lottery requirements for three quotes prior to authorisation can, accordingly, cause difficulties. This has been noted by many RALP awardees, including Watermans.

Watermans also faced the challenge – caused by its initial difficult financial circumstances – of managing a very tight cash-flow. It has, however, succeeded in doing so.

## 6.6 Irene Taylor Trust at Askham Grange: Fair's Fair

Region: Yorkshire

Award: £28,779

### ***The organisation***

The Irene Taylor Trust (ITT) is committed to encouraging and establishing the use of music as part of a rehabilitative, educational and therapeutic process within the criminal justice system and in other areas of social disadvantage. It came about through the collaboration of two extraordinary women.

Lady Taylor was the wife of a former Lord Chief Justice. Very interested in the arts (with a special interest in music) she became aware – through her involvement with the Butler Trust – of the value of music for people in penal establishments. Her interest was intensified by the work undertaken in Wormwood Scrubs by its then music co-ordinator, Sara Lee. As a result of that interest, the Butler Trust awarded Sara a travel scholarship in 1995; she used the time to explore the issue of the decreasing amount of arts activity within the prison service. Following the death of Lady Taylor, ITT was established with Sara as its project co-ordinator.

ITT now employs two part-time workers. It sets up music projects in penal establishments, makes annual awards to two individuals within the UK penal system, and monitors and evaluates the work it undertakes in order to ensure the best possible service.

### ***The project***

ITT had already undertaken a couple of week-long projects at Askham Grange open prison for women in North Yorkshire and had established a good relationship with its head of education, Carol Burke. Carol and Sara together decided that they wanted to attempt ITT's most ambitious project to date – the creation from scratch of a new musical, devised and performed by prisoners.

The resulting project, *Fair's Fair*, was prepared in six short working periods spread out over two months. The final production involved 11 performers, supported by a professional team, made up of Sara Lee and four other workshop leaders, employed on a project basis. That creative team was drawn from the core of arts professionals with which ITT regularly works. It hence had both a long-standing relationship with the company and a body of experience in the difficult area of working within penal institutions, which placed particular restrictions on the creative process.

In addition, the Askham Grange project included four musicians with a wide range of experience (from a co-principal with the BBC Concerts Orchestra to a York University MA student in community music). These four all wanted to explore the idea of working in prison settings although they had no experience of this type of work. Yorkshire Arts imaginatively agreed to fund their participation in *Fair's Fair* as a training project.

Although the final show involved 11 performers, several more came and went along the way. Prisoners are not in control of their own destiny and, during the

course of the project, some would-be participants were lost because they were released early or were 'ghosted' back to closed conditions. Others left because they were hostile to the project and/or disruptive. These difficulties were exacerbated by the fact that Carol had been ill immediately before the project started and, as a consequence, the anticipated preparatory work had not been done. As a result, ITT describes the start of this project as 'one of the most difficult and stressful we have experienced in many years of this work'. One team member likened the task of bringing a sceptical group of prisoners on-side to 'pulling teeth'.

Despite this environment, however, the creative team built a high level of trust with the prisoners over their first few visits and, in the end, only one woman had to be excluded from the project (for bullying). This process clearly required a complex mix of artistic, counselling and negotiating skills. The ITT report on the project clearly demonstrates the justifiable sense of satisfaction that the process of the show generated.

The show itself was presented twice in Askham Grange (once to other prisoners and once to an invited audience, mainly consisting of prisoners' friends and families). It was deemed a great success by participants, audiences and prison authorities alike.

A project as socially complex as *Fair's Fair* has a number of different stakeholder groups, all of whom can benefit in different ways. The most important of these groups was probably the women themselves. ITT conducts evaluations throughout their projects and so can map the developing attitudes of the participants (and of prison staff). The following comments from some of the prisoners reflect the attitudes produced by *Fair's Fair*.

The performance was important for me because I could show that I'm still alive inside basically.

I am considering doing performing arts at university because of the project.

You know, when I leave this prison, what I will remember is doing this musical.

The musical's a bit like the North Star shining up in the sky at night. It was summat that looked unattainable at the start and all of a sudden we were holding that star in our hands. I realise now that the pen is mightier than the sword.

For the staff of the prison too, the work of the ITT team was inspiring. As Carol Burke said:

When I first said about doing a music project, a lot of the women closed themselves behind their computers and shied away saying 'I can't do that'. For me, the way the Irene Taylor Trust worked with disaffected women and the way they became engaged in it and proud of their achievements – it's just incredible...what amazing potential the piece has for schools – it's got a message, real pathos and entertaining at the same time.

Other staff observed that a high number of the group had had 'immense difficulty' in seeing anything through before and that their commitment to this project was remarkable.

Comments from the two audiences were equally positive, ranging from a visiting officer from Strangeways who said 'I was moved and thoroughly enjoyed the show. I would like to invite you to Strangeways to do a similar project' to the young daughter of one of the performers who, on being asked if she was embarrassed to see her mother performing, replied 'No; I was really proud'.

The trainees too were of the opinion that they had gained a lot from the process and ITT believes that two or three of them could develop into highly proficient practitioners in this field.

### ***The legacy and the future***

ITT notes in its assessment of the project that it is difficult to deal with the inevitable come-down after the excitement of the creative process. Nevertheless, *Fair's Fair* has managed a substantial legacy.

In any such successful project, there will be observable (but largely immeasurable) benefits of increased empowerment and levels of motivation. ITT works hard at maximising these social and personal benefits; for example, by:

- providing a de-escalation period for chatting, de-briefing, dismantling the stage etc
- sending personal thank-you notes to each participant
- presenting each individual with a certificate of achievement
- ensuring that they knew the details of the BBC *Music Live* broadcast which included footage of the project
- giving them CDs of the performance
- one of the trainees continuing to visit, with a view to running a music class, if there was a demand
- discussing further project ideas

*Fair's Fair* produced some other, tangible legacies. The CD and the participation in the BBC broadcast have been referred to above. In addition, the enthusiasm for the show was so great that, six weeks after the Askham Grange performances, the company re-convened to undertake a short tour of four other prisons in the North of England.

ITT is now planning to publish a version of the *Fair's Fair* script. This will be re-worked to consolidate some of the improvisational elements through a 15-day residency at HMP Rampton later this year.

The success of *Fair's Fair* should enable ITT to develop comparable productions around the country and, in some cases, to tour those shows or disseminate them in other ways. Through the RALP process, the trust has made a connection with Arts Council England that, it is hoped, will support and develop that programme.

From Arts Council England's point of view, this RALP project has allowed contact with an impressive organisation working in an under-resourced and often marginalised area. The experiences of ITT, and organisations like them, should enable Arts Council England to learn how better to support this sort of activity, adapting its procedures where necessary.

### ***The role of RALP***

It is clear from a financial analysis of *Fair's Fair* that, without RALP, it would not have been possible. Furthermore, ITT expressed gratitude and appreciation for the then Yorkshire Arts' involvement with the project. The funder was seen to be helpful and cooperative, working with ITT to prepare the application. As a result, ITT saw the process as a useful learning experience which will help its future relationship with Arts Council England.

Having said that, ITT feels that there has been a lack of consistency across the arts funding system. London Arts has been supportive (and share with Yorkshire the view that ITT generates exemplary projects) but one or two other RABs were seen as being far less approachable. Hopefully, the new single Arts Council will eradicate this sort of anomaly and application procedures will become more consistent.

The only reservation expressed by ITT concerned the length of time that the RALP process took. Sara found it difficult to understand why it should take four months to come to a decision. Indeed, as a result of that time-scale, ITT's award was only confirmed three weeks before the project was due to start.



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## Appendix 1: Interview Questionnaires

REGIONAL ARTS LOTTERY PROGRAMME (RALP): QUESTIONNAIRE  
Annabel Jackson Associates has been appointed by the Arts Council of England to evaluate RALP. The main focus is on evaluating the process of RALP and ways of improving it (ie we are evaluating the programme not them).

Interviewer		Your interview no.	
Name of group		Interviewee	
Interviewees' tel. No		Art form	
Funding strand	a. Projects b. Capital c. Organisational development	RALP Reference number (important)	
Do you think this project or group is especially interesting and would make a good case study?			

### A) DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

1. What is your project? What did the project actually do?			
2. What was the aim of your project?			
3. What stage is your project at? Open q, then code	√		√
a. In progress/doing it		b. Finished	
c. Continuing beyond award period		d. Failed part of the way through, not continuing	
e. Failed before it started			
4. Has your organisation had more than one RALP grant? Open q, then code. If they have had more than one: ensure they understand which one you are talking about, using the details on the interview sheet			
a. Only one RALP grant		b. Applied for more than one but only got one	
c. Received two or more RALP grants		d. Have an application pending	
5. How did you hear about RALP? Open q, then code			
a. Word of mouth		b. From websites	
c. From the local authority		d. From ACE/RALP mailing	
e. From newspapers or the media		f. Other, please specify:	
g. Don't remember			
6. Did you have to change your intended project to fit RALP criteria? Open q, then code			

a. Project was designed for RALP		b. RALP fitted the project they wanted to do	
c. An existing project was adapted to fit into RALP		d. Other, please specify:	
7. When you submitted your application, what did you think was your chance of being successful? The answer should be in the form of a percentage			%
8. Would the project have gone ahead without RALP? Open q, then code			
a. Would have gone ahead		b. Might have gone ahead	
c. Would have gone ahead in a smaller/weaker form		d. Would have been done by another organisation	
e. Would not have gone ahead		f. Other, please specify:	
9. Did/does your project differ from your original intentions? If yes, please explain Open q, then code			
a. No		b. Yes: different content/activity but same scale	
c. Yes: larger event or activities		d. Yes: different participants/beneficiaries same scale	
e. Yes: smaller		f. Yes: other difference, please specify:	

**B) PROCESS OF CARRYING OUT THE PROJECT**

10. Was it easy to get hold of an application form? Open q, then code			
a. Yes		b. No	
c. Do not remember		d. Other, please specify:	
11. Did you find the application form for RALP simple to complete? Open q, then code all that apply			
a. Yes		b. No: did not have the information	
c. No: did not understand the criteria		d. No: other, please specify:	
12. Did you receive any help with filling in the application form? Open q, then code			
a. No help		b. Attended a workshop on RALP	
c. Received one to one help		d. Other, please specify:	
12a. If yes, from whom and how helpful were they? Please tick			
	Very helpful √	Helpful √	Unhelpful √
a. Arts Council of England (ACE)			
b. Regional Arts Board (RAB)			
c. Local authority arts officer			
d. Umbrella organisation			
e. Other, please specify:			
13. Was the application form at the right level of detail? Open q, then code			
a. Yes		b. No: too detailed	
c. No: too broad		d. No: other, please specify:	

14. Were the guidance notes on the application form clear? Open q, then code		
a. Yes		b. No
15. Did you find it easy to obtain information about the progress of your application? Open q, then code		
a. No		b. Yes
c. Not applicable/did not contact the regional arts board		d. Partly
16. Was the time taken to decide your application right for you? If no, please explain. Open q, then code		
a. Yes		b. No: too slow
c. No other, please specify:		
17. Did you get the amount you applied for in your application? Open q, then code		
a. Yes		b. No, amount was scaled down
c. No, amount was increased		d. Other, please specify:
17a. If the amount was scaled down, did this have an effect on the success of the project? Open q, then code		
a. No noticeable effect: money was made up elsewhere		b. Marketing was cut
b. Undermined the success of the project		d. Will re-apply for the other part
e. Other, please specify:		
18. Did your organisation receive any support during the project? Open q, then code		
a. Yes		b. No
18a. If yes, for what? Please tick		
		√
a. Planning the project		
b. Marketing the project		
c. Doing the project		
d. Evaluating the project		
e. Other, please specify:		
19. Did your organisation encounter any problems in carrying out the RALP project? Open q, then code. Tick all that apply.		
a. No problems		b. Insufficient money
c. Marketing and getting people to participate		d. Problems finding the right artists
e. Underestimated time needed for planning		f. Inexperience and lack of skills in the group
g. Tight deadlines to deliver the project/lack of lead time		h. Partnership funding difficult to obtain
i. Too much paper work for RALP		j. Difficulty with regulations or approvals

k. The unexpected eg weather, foot and mouth, Sept 11 <sup>th</sup>		l. Other, please specify:	
20. With hindsight, did you need more support in delivering the project? Open q, then code			
a. No		b. Yes: more detailed	
c. Yes: earlier in the project		d. Yes: other, please specify:	
21. Is there anything you would change about your project in retrospect? Open q, then code			
a. Yes: less ambitious		b. Yes: more ambitious	
c. Yes: obtain more help with the project		d. Yes: spread over longer period of time	
e. Other, please specify:		f. No: would not change the project	

**C) IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON THE ORGANISATION**

	Yes	No	N/A	Please give an example to illustrate the effect
22. Did the project make you more adventurous?				
23. Did the project make you more confident?				
24. Did the project increase your project management skills?				
25. Did the project allow you to improve the quality of what you do?				
26. Did the project help you develop new partnerships?				
27. Did the project increase your credibility with the arts funding system?				
28. How many people worked on the project?				
28a. How many people worked on the project for more than 75% of their time?				
29. How many employees did you have during the project?				
29a. How many employees do you have now, after the project?				
30. Did you receive media coverage for your project? Open q, then code all that apply				
a. No media coverage				b. Local/regional newspaper
c. Regional television				d. Local/regional radio
e. National newspapers				f. National television
g. National radio				h. Specialist press
i. Other media				
31. Overall, do you think your project has been a success in	Total	Not	Partial	Comment:

terms of its effect on your organisation?				
<b>D) IMPACT OF THE PROJECT ON THE COMMUNITY</b>				
	Yes	No	NA	Comment
32. Did the project enable you to reach more people/participants?				
33. Did the project enable you to reach new groups of people/participants?				
34. How many people took part in your project? (ie audience not media coverage) Open q then code				
a. Tens of people		b. Hundreds of people		
c. Thousands of people		d. Tens of thousands of people and above		
e. Don't know yet				
34a. What proportion of these:				%
a. Had a one off involvement in the project? (eg attended an event)				
b. Had a detailed involvement in the project? (eg on more than one occasion, receiving a service)				
35. Who are/were the main users/clients of your project? Open q then code				
a. A local neighbourhood		b. The young		
c. Women and girls		d. The elderly		
e. A particular ethnic group		f. A group with a particular health problem		
g. A group with a particular disability		h. An isolated rural community		
i. A mix of different ages and groups		j. Other, please specify:		
36. What was the effect of your project on the participants and the wider community?				
Open question, then prompt. Did it:	Yes	No	NA	Please give an example to illustrate the effect
a. Raise awareness about social problems?				
b. Develop the skills of participants?				
c. Improved the environment?				
d. Improve the quality of life in the local community?				
e. Increase local pride?				
37. Overall, do you think your project has been a success for	Yes	No	Partly	Comment:

the local community?				
38. Did your project meet your organisation's original objectives?				Comment:

E) THE FUTURE, AFTER THE PROJECT

39. Did/will you produce a new piece of work as a result of your RALP project? Open q, then code, prompt if necessary				
		√		√
a. No			b. Visual art	
c. Report			d. Music	
e. Film			f. Dance	
g. A play			h. Other, please specify:	
40. Are you planning any future activity that will extend the life of the project? Open q, then code				
a. Yes: a new project			b. Yes: extension of existing project	
c. No: project is self contained			d. No: would like to, but can't continue	
e. Possibly, in the future				
41. Did the project have a long term impact on your organisation? Open q, then				
a. No, a one-off project			b. Clarified the vision for the organisation	
c. Established new partnerships that have developed			d. Raised the status and profile of the organisation	
e. Other, please specify:				
42. Did you learn lessons from the RALP project?				
43. Had your organisation had money from the arts funding system before your RALP application? Open q, then code				
a. No, applied but been unsuccessful			b. No, never applied for arts funding before	
c. Arts Council of England (ACE)			d. Regional Arts Board funding	
e. Local authority funding			f. Other, please specify:	
44. Has your organisation received money from the arts funding system since your RALP project? Open q, then code				
a. No, applied but been unsuccessful			b. No, not applied for arts funding since	
c. Arts Council of England (ACE)			d. Regional Arts Board funding	
e. Local authority funding			f. Other, please specify:	
45. Are you intending to apply to RALP for future funding? Open q, then code				
a. Yes: already plan to			b. Yes: already have applied	
c. No			d. Don't know, might	

F) GENERAL VIEWS ABOUT RALP

46. What is good about RALP as a grants programme? Prompt then tick		
a. Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. Cross art form funding
c. Straightforward application process	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Speed of decision
e. Regional delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>	f. Combining volunteers and professionals
g. Mix of capital and revenue	<input type="checkbox"/>	h. Encouraging partnerships
i. High quality work	<input type="checkbox"/>	j. Other, please specify:
47. How could RALP be improved? Prompt then tick		
a. Nothing	<input type="checkbox"/>	b. More money
c. Simpler application process	<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Wider criteria
e. Faster decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	f. Faster payment
g. More support with the project	<input type="checkbox"/>	h. More long term funding
i. More feedback on reasons for decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	j. Payment up front
k. Fewer conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	l. Less monitoring
m. Fewer non-art objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	n. Other, please specify:

Thank you for helping us with this survey.

Now please re-read the questionnaire and check all the questions are answered. Thank you!

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