

New Horizons: Evaluation of the UK/Georgia season 2019

A report prepared for the British Council

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Executive Summary

The UK/Georgia season 2019 was a joint programme presented by British Council Georgia and the British Embassy Tbilisi between September and December 2019. The joint programme featured over 60 events across the three-month period, all of which took place in Georgia.

This evaluation is focused on the 20 arts and cultural events that were led by the British Council across the three-month period.

British Council-led activities (including those co-led by the British Council and the British Embassy) engaged a total of 108,000 in-person attendees. In addition to physical attendance, the season engaged 1.5 million people online (via the British Council social media channels), and 1.8 million people via television, radio and print media.

The range of activities was broad, including performances, exhibitions, workshops, professional development programmes, conferences, co-productions, competitions, DJ sets and fellowships. The programme included a mix of public-facing and sector-facing activities, the majority of which incorporated some level of active participation. Activities varied from 'one-off' performances to multi-day events, while some were accompanied by an online programme.

The programme was designed against a Theory of Change outlining the intended inputs and activities, outputs, medium-term and long-term outcomes and impact. This evaluation was designed to gather data relating to these outcomes and explore the extent to which the season met its intended aims and impacts. From the outset we have acknowledged that it is difficult to establish the impact of the season given the short time since season activities ended (December 2019). We therefore present the evaluation findings as a summary of emerging impacts, with an anticipated stronger focus on immediate and medium-term outcomes, and commentary on longer-term impacts where possible.

Medium-term outcomes

Medium-term outcome 1: Cultural professionals and artists develop their knowledge, artistic practice, skills and networks to contribute towards greater social and economic development

Evidence of progress:

- 2 major conferences focused on skills development and knowledge exchange: The Unlimited Forum and the Creative and Cultural Industries Youth Forum.
- 39 participating organisations (UK and Georgia)
- Over 70 artists and cultural professionals engaged (UK and Georgia)
- 78% felt that they had gained skills and confidence through the season activities. This was even more pronounced for those engaging in 'higher dosage' projects
- 75% of participants indicated that they had increased their professional network through their involvement in the season

Examples of shifting practice:

- Following the success of the DePict! competition at the Tbilisi International Film Festival, Bristol's Encounters Festival are now looking at replicating the competition in other countries as a new model for their international work
- Tbilisi International Film Festival are hoping to make the short film competition a permanent feature of future festivals
- Tbilisi Youth Orchestra had a very positive experience incorporating electronic elements into the performance, which particularly resonated with the young musicians, and will continue to explore new forms of orchestral music in future

Medium-term outcome 2: More young people, especially girls, have access to programme activities improving their ability to take up opportunities, building their confidence in pursuing career pathways in

cultural and creative industries and increasing their employment prospects

Evidence of progress:

- 64% of face-to-face audiences and 67% of participants were aged between 16 and 35
- 70% of face-to-face audiences and 72% of total participants were female
- 10 dedicated Youth Board members (8 women) represented the needs and requirements of Georgian young people
- 83% of participants felt that their understanding of the creative industries developed positively as a result of taking part
- 82% agreed that the skills and knowledge they had learned would have tangible benefits for their work
- 82% were likely to explore further opportunities to develop their creative and cultural skills as a result of taking part

Medium-term outcome 3: Increased awareness of the role of art in social development through exposure to the UK experience in disability led art

Evidence of progress:

- 4 activities and events featuring disability led art and performers
- 1 major conference focused on disability led art at the Georgian Parliament: The Unlimited Forum
- 5,880 people at disability led events and performances
- 6 organisations (British and Georgian) participated in the delivery of disability inclusive activities
- 95% of practitioners and cultural professionals who took part in the season's disability inclusive events reported significant developments in their understanding of disability inclusive practice
- 95% of participants were more likely to explore inclusive arts practice in future following their participation

- 75% of participants felt that they had developed their understanding of the role of the arts in social development

Examples of shifting practice:

- As a result of their partnership with Candoco, Marjanishvili Theatre are working towards making the theatre more accessible and the arts in general more accessible

Long-term outcomes

Long-term outcome 1: Young people in Georgia develop greater understanding of UK arts as diverse, inclusive and innovative and gain knowledge of existing and potential opportunities for fostering collaboration and networks

Evidence of progress:

- Georgian audiences were already broadly familiar with cultural outputs from the UK prior to the season, with 75% saying that they were familiar with a wide range of UK arts and culture
- For most audiences, the season activities either built on existing positive perceptions or acted as a positive introduction to UK culture: 78% agreed they were more likely to explore UK arts and culture following their experience. A further 93% agreed the UK produces innovative arts and culture
- There was an even stronger recognition among audiences of the UK/Georgia season that the programme created an opportunity for cultural dialogue: 94% agreed that the events and activities provided a space for different cultures to exchange ideas
- For project participants, 93% were aware of a wide range of culture from the UK and 74% of professionals agreed that they had developed their understanding of the UK through their participation

Long-term outcome 2: UK's reputation is enhanced through providing expertise for supporting the development of creative and cultural industries, triggering new partnerships with national governments, cultural institutions, creative entrepreneurs, arts professionals and developing their capacity

Evidence of progress:

- Some clear existing examples of how new partnerships are being established and relationships intended to continue
- Studio Wayne McGregor are hoping to offer a residency for Georgian choreographers in London
- Tbilisi International Theatre Festival are in conversations with Studio Wayne McGregor about programming them for next year's festival
- The Georgian Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport expressed a desire to work more closely with the British Council Georgia following the season
- Tbilisi International Film Festival are planning to continue their partnership with Encounters Film Festival next year and extend their partnership to include Bristol Film Festival
- Encounters Film Festival have reported increased submissions from Georgian filmmakers following the season
- Following their curtain-raiser performance at Tbilisi International Theatre Festival, The Argonauts (a piece featuring performers from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine commissioned as part of the Unlimited/Making the Right Moves disability arts programme) has been programmed at LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre)

“ The aim on the UK side was to showcase the UK but also to ensure engagement. The process was very mutual and involved many stakeholders, and the activities were designed in a way that made it possible to engage broad representatives from Georgia. [it was] not about delivering a message to the 'foreign public' but engaging in mutual conversations. Georgians

responded very positively to this.

Policy Stakeholder, Georgia

Long-term outcome 3: Work by disabled artists and disabled-led companies mainstreamed into cultural life in Georgia by promoting inclusive economic growth and by widening partnerships and networks between UK and Georgia disability led arts institutions

Evidence of progress:

- Clear emerging evidence of improved networks and intentions to build from the work commissioned as part of the season
- Strong and senior representation at the Unlimited forum at the Georgian Parliament and plans to hold a similar event focused on disability led arts in future
- A need to further track and explore longer-term effects of the season on this particular outcome

Long-term impact

Intended long-term impact: Contribute to a safer and more stable region, directly supporting UK priorities for competitiveness, stability and prosperity through increased skills for individuals, opportunities for inclusive economic growth and capacity building through the arts and creative industries and increased knowledge of the UK and engagement with UK culture

Evidence of progress:

- Overall the evaluation findings for the UK-Georgia Season show strong emerging impact. This is especially the case for increased awareness of and improved perceptions of UK culture among both general audiences and more closely involved cultural professionals and cultural stakeholders. The season clearly contributed to the skills, knowledge and networks of those taking part, and has significantly shifted understanding relating to disabled-led and inclusive arts practice. Further work will be required to track and

explore whether the relationships catalysed by the season go on to achieve further impact over the months and years ahead.

- Extrapolating the influence of the season on longer-term impacts relating to inclusive economic growth, stability and prosperity is challenging and risky. However, the hypothesis driving the theory of change that improved connections and knowledge between the UK and other countries can have a positive reciprocal impact on understanding, trust, and in some cases trade, continues to be explored across the British Council portfolio.
- The UK-Georgia Season deserves to be considered a best-practice example of how strong partnerships and planning, mutual and respectful development between organisations and stakeholders across nations, and a clear Theory of Change enables focused delivery and strong emerging outcomes to be achieved. While further research is required to properly explore whether the season affects the intended long-term impacts, the findings of this evaluation indicate confidence in a positive onwards trajectory.

Further key findings and lessons:

- Prior British Council programmes in Georgia meant the season could ‘hit the ground running’. A number of Georgian policymakers and cultural professionals had existing positive perceptions of/ good relationships with the British Council, gained through previous experience of programmes such as the Unlimited programme or Creative Spark. This contributed to a mutual understanding around the aims of the season from stakeholders from both countries and meant that the British Council and British Embassy could easily secure buy-in from Georgian partners.
- The additionality of the season came from a programme that was bespoke rather than ‘tried-and-tested’. Recognition of the specificities of the Georgian context differentiated the season from regional British Council programmes and strengthened bilateral relations between participants from the UK and Georgia.
- There is emerging evidence that the season contributed positively to wider UK-Georgia relations, reflected by the Georgian government’s plans to host a Georgia/UK season in the UK in 2021. The British Embassy also noted that the season created a conducive environment for the conclusion of the new UK/Georgia Strategic Partnership Agreement in November 2019 (during the

season), the first of its kind signed by the British Government in Eastern Europe.

- Higher dosage activities generally had more impact, but the programme’s balance of light-touch public-facing events and more involved sector-facing events helped to guarantee both reach and impact.
- Facilitation of inward networking and cross-sector dialogue contributed to perceptions of the British Council as a trusted partner. While this element of the programme was valuable in relation to creative industries capacity building, it also meant the season was received by Georgian stakeholders as ‘not just a showcase’.
- Aims and objectives that were clearly articulated before the start of the season kept the programme coherent and targeted. An established Theory of Change focused the planning process and kept impact on track.
- The short timeline increased impact but put pressure on the delivery team. The three-month timeline helped the season to maintain momentum and audience focus but meant the small delivery in team in Georgia was stretched. Staff capacity should be considered alongside timelines of future seasons.
- Marketing for the programme should be considered right from the start. The success of the season’s marketing approach, which reached millions, highlights the impact a well-considered strategy can have. Conversations around marketing could have been built in even earlier in the planning stage, to capitalise on this reach and opportunity.
- The partnership between the British Council and the Embassy added clear material and strategic value. The British Council and British Embassy have closely related priorities but different ways of working. It was important to step up communication and invest additional time in the relationship before, during and after the season to ensure effective working and to successfully deliver a joint programme.

1. The UK/Georgia season

The UK/Georgia season 2019 was a joint programme presented by the British Council Georgia and the British Embassy Tbilisi between September and December 2019. The joint programme featured over sixty events across the three-month period, all of which took place in Georgia¹.

The British Embassy Tbilisi planned the season as a touchpoint to develop mutual understanding between the nations of Georgia and the UK, celebrate their cultures and create more and deeper ties between stakeholders and organisations between the two countries. The UK Ambassador to Georgia (Justin McKenzie Smith) initiated the season and played a key role throughout; fronting the season in the media, chairing the advisory board, and fundraising with a range of corporate partners. The Embassy-led events included film screenings, conferences and discussions on contemporary social and political issues and a range of 'pop-up' Embassy events across Georgia.

The range of British Council-led activities was broad, including performances, exhibitions, workshops, professional development programmes, conferences, co-productions, competitions, DJ sets and fellowships. The programme included a mix of public-facing and sector-facing activities, the majority of which incorporated some level of active participation. In terms of length, activities varied from 'one-off' performances to multi-day events, while some were accompanied by an online programme.

This evaluation is focused on the twenty arts and cultural events that were led by the British Council across the three-month period (henceforth the British Council programme). For a full UK/Georgia season programme, including Embassy-led activities, see Figure 13 in the Appendix.

1.1 Context

A key driver behind the season was an acknowledgement of the dynamic and innovative cultural landscape in Georgia that has gained greater international

attention over the past few years as well as a young, growing and increasingly international creative community. The Embassy and the British Council recognised that increased partnerships with the UK could further develop the creative economy in Georgia, especially when focused on young people and other more marginalised groups (specifically disabled artists and cultural producers in the Georgia context).

A second driver was existing good relations with the culture sector and cultural policymakers, developed in part through the British Council's wider portfolio of work in Georgia and across the region. This work includes the Unlimited programme, a disability led arts initiatives in Georgia since 2012, and the Creative Spark: Higher Education Enterprise Programme, which supports institutional partnerships with the aim of developing the creative economy.

While this prior engagement provided a foundation or 'primer' for the season, the programmed activities were commissioned especially for the season, and represented a 'burst' of concentrated activity.

1.2 Aims of the British Council programme

The British Council programme was developed to build the capacity of the cultural and creative industries in Georgia, increasing skills, opportunities and networks, ultimately increasing knowledge of and engagement with UK culture and creating new, lasting connections between the UK and Georgia. These aims were set out in a programme Theory of Change, developed by the British Council Georgia team (Figure 2).

In April 2019, BOP Consulting was commissioned to evaluate the programme. This evaluation was designed to explore progress in relation to three overarching objectives from the Theory of Change:

1. Cultural professionals and artists develop their knowledge, artistic practice, skills and networks to contribute towards greater social and economic development

¹ The full list of joint events is detailed in Figure 13 in the Appendix, page 41.

2. More young people, especially girls, have access to programme activities improving their ability to take up opportunities, building their confidence in pursuing career pathways in cultural and creative industries and increasing their employment prospects
3. Increased awareness of the role of art in social development through the exposure to the UK experience in disability led art

Alongside the Theory of Change, the season had the following target outputs:

- Double face-to-face audiences (66,000) through showcasing, training and meetings with national and local government, cultural institutions, arts professionals, local NGOs and programme participants.
- Treble the number of people reached through digital channels (86,000 through website, e-newsletter, live streams, Facebook, Twitter and a number of other popular digital platforms).
- 30-40% growth (500,000 to 750,000 people) of television and radio audiences.

1.3 Methodology

The evaluation distinguishes between audiences and participants in order to understand how the level of engagement ('dosage') affected the overall impact.

Audiences refers to members of the general public who observed or attended an event.

Participants refers to those who actively engaged with the activities beyond attendance or observation (e.g. a participant of a professional development workshop).

Cultural professionals refers to those working in the creative or cultural sectors, largely targeted by the season's participatory activities

A further breakdown of our evaluation methodology against the Season outcomes is provided in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Evaluation Methodology

Tools	Outcome explored	Evaluation actor/s
Document review and group process review	Process outcomes (i.e. knowing how the project design and execution has led to broader impacts)	British Council staff
Benchmarking data review	Digital and media reach of season against engagement benchmarks	British Council marcomms staff
Light-touch public audience surveys	Knowledge (existing Vs new) and perceptions of UK culture (innovation, intercultural dialogue)	General public
Professional development surveys and interviews	Depth of new connections and partnerships Perceptions of UK culture sector Understanding of art and social inclusion (specifically disability-focused) Skills and knowledge	Cultural professionals
Participant surveys, interviews and focus group with Youth Forum	Understanding of and aspirations for creative careers Understanding of and connection to UK cultural sector Perceptions of UK culture	Youth participants
Policy and diplomacy interviews	Mutual perceptions of cultural outputs and impacts Future political implications/catalysed	Georgia/UK diplomatic or public policy representatives

Figure 2 UK/Georgia season Theory of Change



Source: British Council Georgia (2019)

2. Audiences and participants

Key figures:

- 108,000 face-to-face audiences across events led or co-led by the British Council over the season, of which 86,000 were festivals and fairs attendees and 22,000 were professionals, officials, entrepreneurs, artists and researchers.²
- 1.5 million reached digitally via British Council social media channels and 1.8 million through television and radio
- 64% of face-to-face audiences and 67% of participants were aged between 16 and 35
- 70% of face-to-face audiences and 72% of total participants were female

Key findings:

- Face-to-face audiences reached by the British Council greatly increased during the season, but not as much as targeted.
- The programme succeeded in engaging a high proportion of young people, especially girls and women
- The season mostly met, and in some cases exceeded relationship building targets
- Audiences engaged through digital and traditional media exceeded targets several times over

2.1 Audiences

The total face-to-face audiences reached across the British Council events amounted to 108,000 people³, which vastly exceeds the total Season target of 66,000 face-to-face audiences.

A key focus of the season was to increase the employment prospects, confidence and ability of young people, with a particular focus on young women, to take up opportunities in the cultural and creative sector.

- The demographic breakdown of face-to-face audiences (those observing/attending rather than taking part) from the British Council programme shows that the activities were successful in reaching a predominantly young, predominantly female audience. 64% of total audiences were aged between 16 and 35, while 70% were female.

2.2 Participants

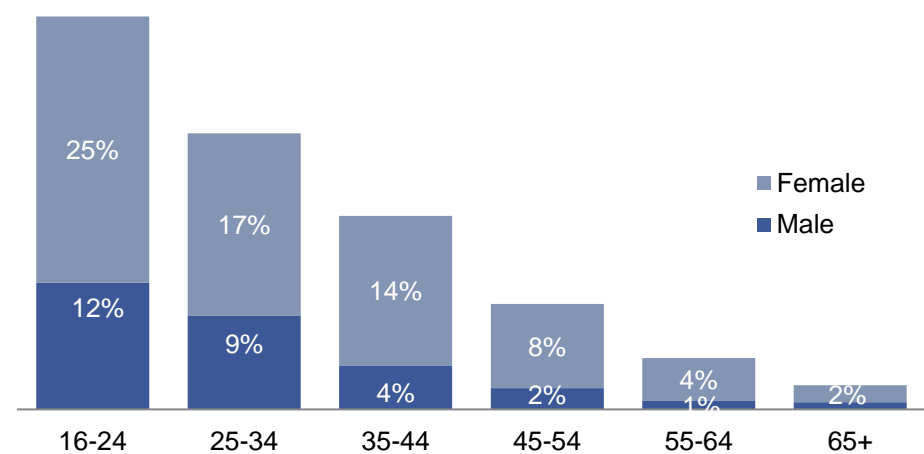
This demographic breakdown was similar for UK/Georgia season *participants* (those who actively took part in activities). 67% of participants were between 16 and 35, although the majority fell into the 25 – 34 age group as opposed to the 16 – 24 age group that made up the largest proportion of audiences (see Figure 2). This may be because most of the participatory activities were targeted towards young professionals rather than those still in education.

The age of participants varied depending on the focus of the activity. Disability focused events attracted a smaller proportion of young people: 26% were under 34 compared to 64% who were between 35 – 54. Activities where the focus on young people was explicit rather than implicit – i.e. the Creative and Cultural Industries Youth Forum and the Tbilisi Youth Orchestra programme- attracted the youngest participants groups, with 81% between 16 – 34 .

² This figure covers: events led by the British Council, events co-led by the British Council and the British Embassy and events led by the British Embassy which had significant British Council involvement. It does not include face-to-face audiences reached by British Embassy events where there was no British Council involvement..

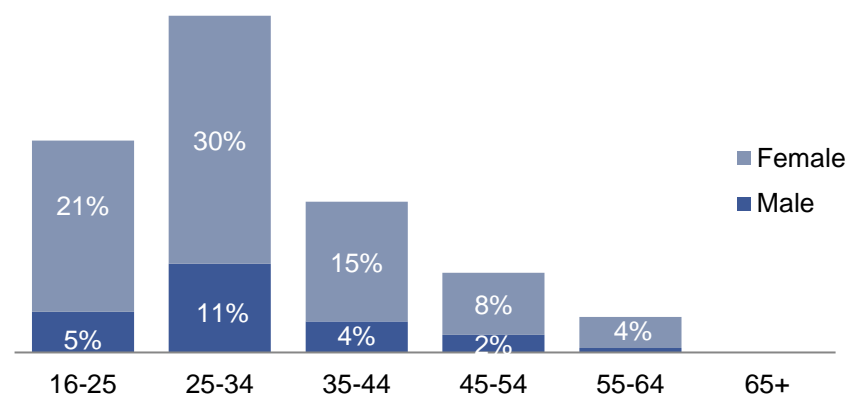
³ British Council, 2019, End of season report. Audience statistics for the UK/Georgia 2019 season were compiled using the RECA framework (reach, engagement, conversion and advocacy). This figure covers: events led by the British Council, events co-led by the British Council and the British Embassy and events led by the British Embassy which had significant British Council involvement.

Figure 3 Audience demographics for British Council programme



Source: BOP Consulting, 2019, n = 739

Figure 4 Participant demographics



Source: BOP Consulting, 2019, n = 184

As with audiences, the programme succeeded in engaging a high proportion of female participants: 72% in total. For a more detailed demographic breakdown, see Appendix (Figures 15 and 16).

2.3 Partnerships and stakeholders

The UK/Georgia season aimed to strengthen the networks of the cultural professionals and artists who participated, ultimately creating new partnerships with national governments, cultural institutions and creative entrepreneurs.

Figure 5 shows the key performance indicators (KPIs) established prior to the season, alongside the actual number of partnerships and relationships established. See Figure 17 in the Appendix for a full list of stakeholders engaged.

Figure 5 Stakeholders and relationships

KPI	Engaged through the season
7 new institutional relationships	8 new institutional relationships
20 arts leaders	20 arts leaders (7 existing)
10 government leaders	11 government leaders (6 existing)
50 UK artists & other creatives	34 UK artists and creatives
100 Georgian artists & other creatives	200 + participants in professional development activities
10 UK arts organisations	11 UK organisations
30 Georgian arts organisations	28 Georgian arts organisations

Source: BOP Consulting, 2020

2.4 Media coverage and online audiences

The digital reach of the entire season greatly exceeded expectations, with a total digital audience of 1.5 million engaging through the British Council social media channels. This is over six times the initial target set out at the start of the season and significantly larger than the engagement achieved across all British Council Georgia activities in the previous year (942,727, with Arts at 24,536).⁴

Digital audiences included:

- 130,000 people reached via online outlets
- 82,000 website visits
- 3,600 new followers on social media
- 59,000 social media shares and comments
- 88,600 minutes of video viewed online
- 92,200 #ukgeorgia2019 mentions earned

Similarly, the 1.8 million people reached through radio and television channels was more than 3 times greater than targeted.⁵

Reaching audiences outside of Georgia's capital, Tbilisi, was a consideration when designing the season programme. Relative to the targets established prior to the season, the UK/Georgia programme was especially successful at engaging audiences remotely. The British Council and British Embassy may want to consider ways to consolidate these audiences, in particular digital audiences, beyond the season.

⁴ See Figure 13 in Appendix for targets

⁵ British Council, 2019, End of season report. Audience statistics for the UK/Georgia 2019 season were compiled using the RECA framework (reach, engagement, conversion and advocacy).

3. Participants gained knowledge, skills and contacts

Key figures:

- 16 different opportunities to actively participate in season activities
- 10 dedicated Youth Board members to represent the needs and requirements of Georgian young people
- 67% of participants were aged between 16 and 35 years old
- 72% of participants were female

Key findings:

- The season has contributed significantly to approaches within the creative and cultural industries in Georgia, particularly in issues relating to access and inclusion
- Impact related to skills, confidence and network building were more evident with higher dosage events
- Inward networking opportunities were particularly valued by Georgian cultural professionals who spoke of an underdeveloped sector network
- The Youth Board help to empower young Georgians as advocates for the creative and cultural industries

A key aim of the UK/Georgia season 2019 was to develop the knowledge, artistic practice, skills and networks of participating cultural professionals and artists, towards greater social and economic development.

This focus was reflected in the British Council season programme, which, where possible, sought to create opportunities for participants from both countries to develop professionally through their involvement in the activities.

Ways to participate included co-production, entering competitions and attending workshops, conferences and seminars. These activities were intended to maximise opportunities for shared learning and networking and go beyond the 'showcasing' model of featuring arts in a new international context.

3.1 New skills, knowledge and perspectives

3.1.1 Approaches to the Cultural and Creative Industries

Across the programme, participants agreed that they had acquired new knowledge through their attendance (92%).⁶ In many cases, this knowledge was gained through hearing about or witnessing the approaches and experiences of different practitioners, organisations and policy makers.

Interviews with attendees showed that the Creative and Cultural Industries Youth forum contributed to a broader step-change in the approaches to the creative and cultural industries in Georgia. Creators and cultural entrepreneurs discussed coming to understand themselves as part of a broader collective rather than isolated practitioners and freelancers. According to interviewees, changes in understandings of the culture sector had been catalysed by the UK/Georgia season and the country's relationship with the UK.

“ The workshops today will help to move away from the Soviet mindset and transform information and knowledge to a Georgian audience. The cornerstone of change is altering perceptions and the forum and the British Council will help this.

Speaker, CCIs Youth Forum

“ The creative industries initiative is really young here. Some people are involved but they don't know they are presented as

⁶ See Figure 6

being in the 'creative industry'. As Creative Georgia, if we talk about [the CCIs] we always show statistics from the UK and if the British Embassy said that it's important, it really helps in advocating this topic.

Creative Georgia representative and CCIs Youth Forum Participant

“ The Forum raises awareness about the benefits of culture. It's very positive. People are now thinking about themselves as part of the Creative Economy.

CCIs Youth Forum Participant

Among Georgian participants, it was felt that there were also valuable lessons to be learned for Georgia from the trajectory of the UK culture sector. The Creative and Cultural Industries Youth forum in particular was a source of inspiration to individual cultural entrepreneurs and the sector as a whole. 100% of attendees at the event said they had learned something new as a result of attending.

“ The information I learned was enormously valuable. Much of it was previously unknown to me.

CCIs Youth Forum Participant

“ I always learn something new from these events. it helps me to develop my ideas.

Music producer and CCIs Youth Forum Participant

3.1.2 Skills and confidence of participants

78% of participants felt that they had gained skills and confidence through the season activities. There was, however, some variation in responses to this indicator across the programme. Two of the events with the most involved and sustained participation (Studio Wayne McGregor / Tbilisi International Festival

co-production and Tbilisi Youth Orchestra's performance of Anna Meredith's Varmints) also had the largest proportion of participants who agreed with the statement 'I have developed skills and confidence as a result of taking part today'.⁷

While knowledge acquisition outcomes were largely similar across events irrespective of the level of engagement⁸ ('dosage'), skills and confidence building outcomes were more apparent following higher dosage activities. This is a logical finding, but also worth noting that if skills development is a key intended outcome then an appropriate amount of time must be scheduled for this to take place.

3.2 Networks and collaboration

Networks and collaboration have often been identified by participants as the most beneficial aspect of British Council showcasing, seasons and festival work. For the UK-Georgia season 75% of participants indicated that they had increased their professional network through their involvement in the season.

Responses also varied considerably between activities, reflecting the varying (implicit or explicit) opportunities for networking at each event. As with skills development, in general lower dosage events (e.g. lectures) had a lesser impact on relationship building outcomes.⁹ Higher dosage activities which facilitated more sustained contact with new connections, such as the CCIs Youth forum and the Studio Wayne McGregor co-production, had greater impact on the professional networks of participants.

“ I've just overheard several people from the UK talking with creatives from here, connecting and asking questions like 'where do you sell them', 'where's your gallery' etc...

Youth Board Member and CCIs Youth Forum participant

⁹ This was not true for all activities – 88% of Tbilisi Youth Orchestra felt they had developed skills and confidence yet just 13% reported having expanded their professional network. The orchestra, who performed the work of UK artist Anna Meredith, had been established prior to the season.

⁷ See Figure 7

⁸ See Figure 7

3.2.1 Inward networking

Participants also acknowledged the value of 'inward' (i.e. within Georgia) networking activity through the season, both at an individual and sectoral level.

For individual participants, activities were seen as an opportunity to advance their careers. From a sector perspective, several interviewees expressed the view that existing networks within creative and cultural industries in Georgia were generally underdeveloped, making the opportunities for collaboration afforded by the season especially valuable.

“ There is a lack of appreciation for collaboration across the Creative and Cultural Industries in Georgia.

Youth Board Member

“ I've heard many new things today and met lots of new people. It will help us to develop personally and professionally.

Student and Unlimited Forum participant

“ The networking has been useful – I didn't know everyone in the workshop, only three people. I heard about new projects in Georgia

CCIs Youth Forum participant

3.3 Youth development

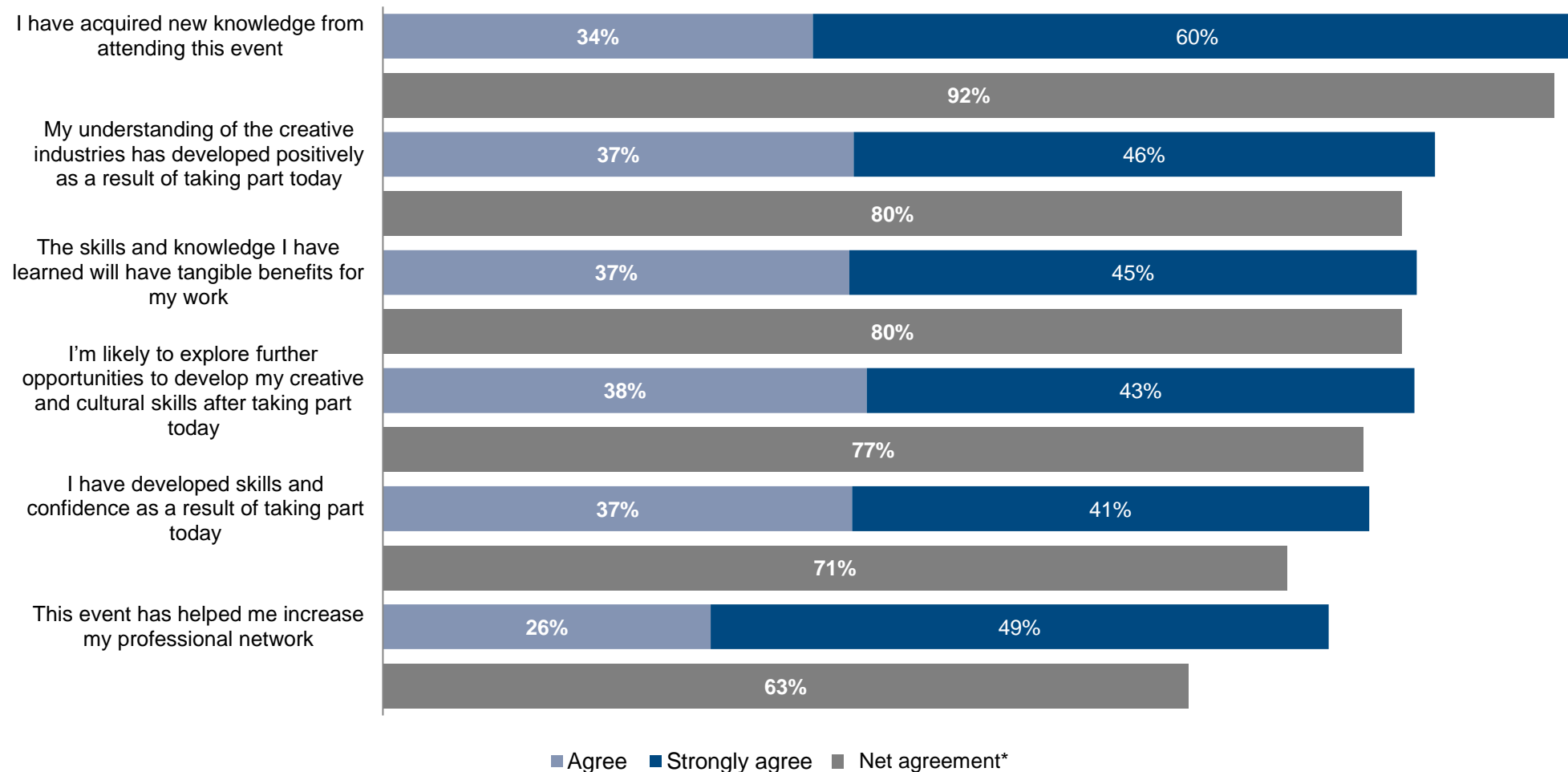
The UK/Georgia season sought to give more young people, especially girls, access to programme activities improving their ability to take up opportunities, building their confidence in pursuing career pathways in cultural and creative industries and increasing their employment prospects.

The high proportion of young women participating in the season (over half of all participants were female and aged between 16-35) means that the professional development outcomes for participants in Figure 6 can also be broadly understood as having impacted on youth development in Georgia.

Survey responses show that the programme succeeded in delivering this key aim of the season:

- 83% of participants felt that their understanding of the creative industries developed positively as a result of taking part;
- 82% agreed that the skills and knowledge they had learned would have tangible benefits for their work, and;
- 82% were likely to explore further opportunities to develop their creative and cultural skills as a result of taking part.

Figure 6 Professional development outcomes for all participants



Source: BOP Consulting, 2019, (in order) n = 133, n = 101, n = 154, n = 101, n = 138, n = 100, n = 136

Figure 7 Professional development outcomes by event

Statement	Net Agreement							
	CCI Youth Forum	Crafting Futures	Dr Vesta Sarkosh-Curtis, British Museum: Lecture	Jamz Supernova Workshop	Nabihah Iqbal's Workshop	Neil Brand Workshop	Studio Wayne McGregor / Tbilisi International Festival co-production	Tbilisi Youth Orchestra – Anna Meredith's Varmints
My understanding of the creative industries has developed positively as a result of taking part today	80%	78%	29%	83%	63%	90%	100%	63%
I have developed skills and confidence as a result of taking part today	78%	65%	41%	83%	81%	41%	95%	88%
I have acquired new knowledge from attending this event	100%	89%	95%	100%	76%	83%	95%	100%
This event has helped me increase my professional network	78%	67%	59%	75%	60%	-18%	95%	13%
I'm likely to explore further opportunities to develop my creative and cultural skills after taking part today	81%	72%	No data	83%	No data	83%	75%	25%

Source: BOP Consulting, 2019, (in order) n = 54, n = 18, n = 17, n = 12, n = 16, n = 29, n = 20, n = 8

*Net agreement is calculated by subtracting the percentage of 'disagree or strongly disagree' responses from the percentage of 'agree' or strongly agree' responses. It gives an indication of how polarised the views are.

Case study – Youth Board

The UK/Georgia 2019 Youth Board was an initiative to engage Georgian young people – one of season's target beneficiary groups – in the design of the season programme. Following a competitive recruitment process which took place in advance of the season, ten aspiring young cultural leaders from different disciplines and industries were selected to sit on the Board.

The members were previously unknown to each other, highlighting the need for closer collaboration across the creative industries and initiatives like the youth board. Members also felt that the voice of young people was generally absent in policymaking in Georgia, meaning significant generational differences in approaches to cultural policy and the needs of the cultural sector were going unrecognised.

“ It is important to understand how young people think. They do not currently have a voice in policymaking.

Youth Board member

The Youth Board initiative ensured that the events and activities of the season engaged its target demographic and responded to the demands and needs of young audiences.

It had the additional impact of creating ambassadors for both the season and the cultural and creative industries more broadly. The Board enabled its members to understand themselves as advocates for the development of the creative sector in Georgia, the impact of which may outlast the season.

“ The Youth Board gets young people to engage in forming this season but also creates a useful platform for raising awareness [among] younger audiences

Youth Board member



4. Cultural professionals developed their networks and practice

Key figures:

- 2 major conferences focused on skills development and knowledge exchange: The Unlimited Forum and the Creative and Cultural Industries Youth Forum.
- 39 participating organisations (UK and Georgia)
- Over 70 artists and cultural professionals engaged (UK and Georgia)

Key findings:

- Participating cultural professionals reported challenging themselves to experiment with new methods and practices
- The season was identified as a catalyst for cross-institutional dialogue
- Follow up initiatives are already being planned

4.1 New methods and practices

Cultural professionals involved in delivering season activities were able to develop new methods and practices through their involvement.

For the Tbilisi International Theatre Festival, the Studio Wayne McGregor performance was the first festival activity to have been co-produced; the first time it has included an outdoor activity and the first-time non-professionals had been involved. Reflecting on the experience, the Festival felt that their trust in their partner had given them confidence to expand their programme and engage audiences in new ways. They expressed their aim to build on the experience and continue to innovate in next year's programme.

“ Theatre and the arts is about leaving your comfort zone.
Cultural professional from Georgia

The Georgian National Museum used their partnership with the British Museum and the King David the Builder exhibition as a professional development opportunity for staff. The digital exhibition which accompanied the physical display was new ground for the museum, who took the chance to expand the digital skills and capacity of those involved.

4.2 Behaviour change

4.2.1 Artistic practice

A number of partners involved in the season have described significant changes in their practice as a result of taking part:

- As a result of their partnership with Candoco, Marjanishvili Theatre are working towards making the theatre more accessible and the arts in general more accessible
- Following the success of the DePict! competition at the Tbilisi International Film Festival, Bristol's Encounters Festival are now looking at replicating the competition in other countries as a new model for their international work
- Tbilisi International Film Festival are also hoping to make the short film competition a permanent feature of future festivals
- Tbilisi Youth Orchestra had a very positive experience incorporating electronic elements into the performance, which particularly resonated with the young musicians, and will continue to explore new forms of orchestral music in future

4.3 International networking

Participants from both countries recognised the inherent value of working with international partners and making international connections, highlighting the additional opportunities this creates.

“ Friendship and communication with British professionals is really important for us. It is very important to make connections.

Cultural professional from Georgia

“ The value is about international profile and international co-production: getting international talent to work in the UK and UK talent to work internationally. A more joined up network.

Cultural professional from the UK

“ The most important thing in the Creative Industries is internationalisation. Georgia is a really small country and you can't achieve great success in just running your business here, so international contacts and connections are really crucial.

Policymaker from Georgia

4.3.1 Stakeholder dialogue and coordination

Through the season activities, policymakers in Georgia have been working to expand definitions of culture to move beyond cultural heritage towards a more holistic understanding of the cultural and creative industries.

At a policy level, the UK/Georgia season was identified as a catalyst for cross-institutional dialogue, bringing together different stakeholder groups both domestically and internationally and establishing structures for further collaboration.

“ The Forum is a good format for dialogue, bringing together different branches of power

Policymaker from Georgia

“ Creative Spark has offered bridges between institutions and long-term cooperation, creating mechanisms that will continue to function. The CCIs Youth Forum plays a crucial role in striving for a more coordinated response.

Policymaker from Georgia

4.3.2 Follow up initiatives

Interviewees have indicated that some of the partnerships and networks established will continue beyond the season:

- Studio Wayne McGregor are hoping to offer a residency for Georgian choreographers in London
- Tbilisi International Theatre Festival are in conversations with Studio Wayne McGregor about programming them for next year's festival
- The Georgian Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport expressed a desire to work more closely with the British Council Georgia following the season
- Tbilisi International Film Festival are planning to continue their partnership with Encounters Film Festival next year and extend their partnership to include Bristol Film Festival
- Encounters Film Festival have reported increased submissions from Georgian filmmakers following the season
- Following their curtain-raiser performance at Tbilisi International Theatre Festival, The Argonauts (a piece featuring performers from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine commissioned as part of the Unlimited/Making the Right Moves disability arts programme) has been programmed at LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre)

4.4 Outcomes for UK stakeholders

The season activities took place in Georgia with no reciprocal programme in the UK. As such, the impact for UK stakeholders was less pronounced than for their Georgian counterparts. Cultural professionals from the UK highlighted the following benefits following their participation in the season:

- Increased awareness of and exposure to things outside of the 'national bubble' as a source of inspiration
- Important learnings which can be applied to future international work, such as strategies for engaging local artists
- How to approach a new partnership in order to understand local needs and translate models and ways of working into new contexts

“ We are looking at duplicating the DePict! model in other countries. It has given us a nice framework, nice model for other international work.

Cultural professional from the UK

5. The programme contributed to the mainstreaming of disability led art in Georgia

Another key focus of the UK/Georgia season 2019 was increasing awareness across Georgia of the role arts can play in social development achieved through exposure to British disability led art and performers.

Key figures:

- 4 activities and events featuring disability led art and performers
- 1 major conference focused on disability led art: The Unlimited Forum
- 5,880 people at disability led events and performances
- 6 organisations (British and Georgian) participated in the delivery of disability inclusive activities

Key findings:

- The season, in particular the Unlimited forum, helped to raise the profile of disability led arts in Georgia
- Understanding of disability inclusive art among audiences was increased
- Practitioners who took part said they are more likely to explore disability inclusive practice in the future
- Previous disability arts initiatives from the British Council bolstered the impact of the season activities

5.1 Audiences and participants

The demographic make-up of audiences at disability inclusive events broadly corresponded with that of the wider season audience. As with the season as a whole, these events attracted a predominantly female audience (73%). Audience ages were generally similar, with disability led events attended by a marginally older audience.

In terms of participants, the age distribution for disability inclusive events was more equally spread across all age groups, with a lower concentration of young people than the programme as a whole. 26% of participants at disability inclusive events were aged between 16 and 35 years old, compared to 67% of total season participants. However, continuing the trend across the rest of the season, 76% of participants were female.¹⁰

5.2 Mainstreaming disability led art

In development terms, 'mainstreaming' refers to the process of bringing issues that have not received the consideration they deserve into the everyday consciousness of society. It is often used as a tool for focus on and inclusion of marginalised groups or practices.¹¹

In many societies, including in Georgia, people with disabilities experience widespread exclusion. A 2018 report from Georgian NGO IDFI showed that just 4.8% of the country's people with disabilities were contracted employees – seven times fewer than the EU average.¹²

5.2.1 Audience responses

The UK/Georgia season programme contributed to the mainstreaming of disability inclusive arts among Georgian audiences. 88% of audiences of disability led performances reported a positive development in their understanding of disability inclusive art, while 91% said they were more likely to

¹⁰ For a more detailed demographic breakdown, see Appendix Figures 15 and 16.

¹¹ <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/documents/mainstreaming/positionpaper.pdf>

¹² https://idfi.ge/en/data_analysis%20on_persons_with_disabilities_living_in_georgia

explore disability inclusive arts and culture in future following their attendance at season events.

The UK/Georgia season activities happened in the context of prior disability inclusivity work the British Council has conducted in Georgia and the wider region since 2012 as part of the Unlimited programme.¹³ This work likely accounts for some of the 75% of audiences who reported having had previous experience of or exposure to disability inclusive arts.

Strong consensus around the disability arts mainstreaming indicators suggest that previous British Council engagement bolstered, rather than diminished the impact of the season, 'priming' audiences to further engage with disability inclusive performance.

5.2.2 Participant responses

Practitioners and cultural professionals who took part in the season's disability inclusive events reported significant developments in their understanding of disability inclusive practice (95% agreed of which 75% strongly agreed).

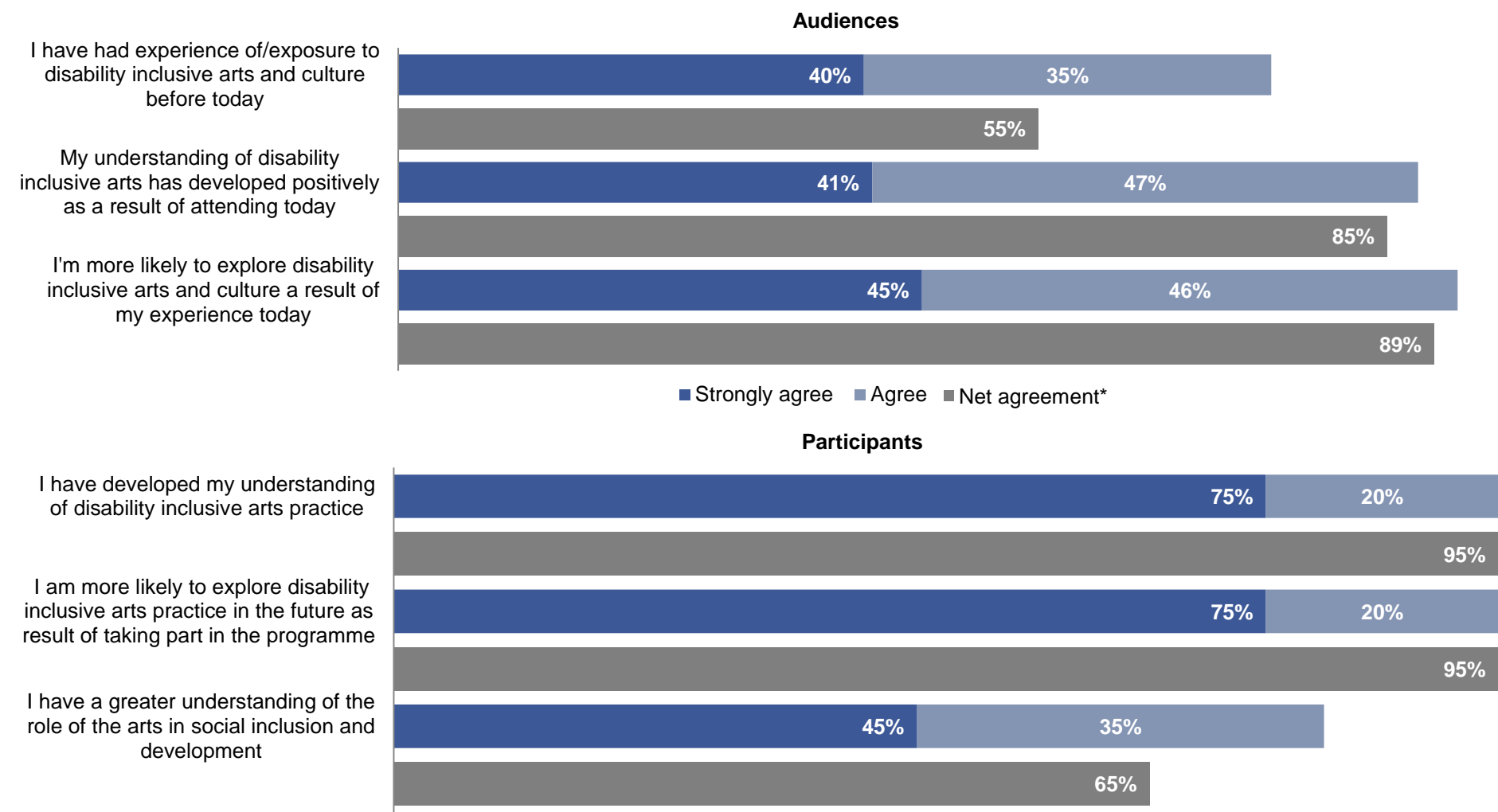
95% of participants were more likely to explore inclusive arts practice in future following their participation. While the independent evaluation of the Unlimited programme highlighted a number of barriers still facing disabled artists and performers in Georgia,¹⁴ this is a highly encouraging figure in terms of the overall legacy of the season.

A further 75% of participants felt that they had developed their understanding of the role of the arts in social development. This slightly lower level of agreement may be due to the specific focus of the sessions on disability-led practice and disability focused content.

¹³ For more details, see: Unlimited – Making the Right Moves External Evaluation of British Council's Disability Arts programme in Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan & Georgia, 2016-2019, Final Report- Juliet Schofield, 2019

¹⁴ Unlimited – Making the Right Moves External Evaluation of British Council's Disability Arts programme in Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan & Georgia, 2016-2019, Final Report- Juliet Schofield, 2019

Figure 8 Outcomes for mainstreaming disability led arts



Source: BOP Consulting 2019, (in order), n = 113, n= 114, n= 114, n= 20, n =20, n = 20

*Net agreement is calculated by subtracting the percentage of 'disagree or strongly disagree' responses from the percentage of 'agree' or strongly agree' responses. It gives an indication of how polarised the views are.

Case study – The Unlimited Forum

The Unlimited Forum on disability arts was a major one-day conference that took place inside Georgian parliament. It was attended by 150 stakeholders from the UK, Georgia and the Caucasus, including artists, policymakers, sector representatives, campaigners and practitioners.

It was the first time an event with this focus had been held in Georgia's parliament building, which had recently undergone accessibility works informed by British Council disability inclusion work. The forum was an opportunity to showcase the newly accessible building as an example to other cultural institutions.

It also helped to place disability arts on the policy agenda. According to Georgian policymakers, the joint format and the UK/Georgia season banner played a key role in advocating for the importance of the issue.

“ Having events such as this in Georgia's law-making institution is very important. The Forum has raised the profile of disability arts.

Policymaker from Georgia

“ Without the support of international governments it is difficult to achieve change

Policymaker from Georgia

The positive reception to the event is underlined by the Georgian parliament's plans to hold another, similar event in the future.

However, despite acknowledging that advocacy and political commitment is a step in the right direction, Georgian cultural managers pointed out that these must be accompanied by funding in order to achieve real change.

The name of the forum came from the Unlimited programme, which has supported the development of inclusive performing arts in the region. The forum

was a unique opportunity to convene stakeholders from Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan as well as the UK and Georgia, and share insights and best practice from the most recent cycle of the programme (2017-2019).

One practitioner commented that regional examples of disability inclusive arts practice felt more 'achievable' in comparison to the UK, which has more developed infrastructure to support disabled artists. She also speculated that regional exchange could provide an additional impetus for the Georgian government to continue to advance policy in this area.

In general, however, forum attendees from Georgia understood the UK as a world-leader in disability inclusive arts and regarded the event as a valuable learning opportunity.

“ It has been a chance to ask questions of people already working in the capacity of disability advocacy

Student from Georgia

“ Cooperation, sharing experience and best practice is vital for the sustainability of disability arts in Georgia. I have made lots of notes from today. I may steal some ideas...

Policymaker from Georgia

There was also a recognition of the need for continued support from the British Council. Several stakeholders expressed the hope that event represented a long-term commitment to disability inclusive programming rather than the conclusion of the UK's work in this area.

“ I hope the relationship continues. We still have a lot to learn.

Policymaker from Georgia

“ This forum underlines important cooperation with the British Council. It is important because we are learning from one another.

Policymaker from Georgia



6. The season increased understanding of and positive perceptions towards UK arts and culture

Key findings:

- Existing positive perceptions of the UK helped to attract audiences to take part in the season programme
- The season contributed to an understanding of UK arts and culture as innovative and 'risk-taking'
- The UK culture sector is regarded as advanced in Georgia and cultural professionals took the season as an opportunity to learn from the UK

There is a growing body of research being conducted on the relationship between cultural relations engagements and perceptions, influence and attraction towards the UK. On behalf of the British Council, in 2019 a research project was conducted by BOP Consulting to explore the causal chain between showcasing work and broader soft power impacts (see Appendix, Figure 18). The report hypothesised that positive perceptions of the UK as a cultural producer could lead to a desire to further engage with UK culture, tourism and trade.¹⁵

Applied to the UK/Georgia season, the programme aimed to develop a greater understanding of the UK culture sector as diverse, inclusive and innovative among Georgian audiences/participants and especially among Georgian young people. Over the long term, it is hoped that this will contribute to increased and

stronger networks and opportunities for collaboration between the UK and Georgian culture sectors.

6.1 Public audiences

Georgian audiences were already broadly familiar with cultural outputs from the UK prior to the season, with 75% saying that they were familiar with a wide range of UK arts and culture.

Levels of engagement and attendance at the programmed events suggest that among those who were familiar with UK culture, perceptions were generally positive. For example, Tbilisi International Film Festival describes their highest ever youth audiences which they attributed to interest in the British section of the festival programme.

“ It was amazing how much interest British culture has in Georgia – we weren't expecting so many people but we had 100+ at the workshop and nearly all events sold out

Cultural professional from Georgia

“ We don't always get high attendance from the younger generations – we always spend a lot of energy trying to get them to come along. This time it worked thanks the UK season and the British Council

Cultural professional from Georgia

For most audiences, the season activities either built on existing positive perceptions or acted as a positive introduction to UK culture: 78% agreed they were more likely to explore UK arts and culture following their experience. A further 93% agreed the UK produces innovative arts and culture

¹⁵ British Council, Global Cultural Networks: The Value and Impact of British Council International Showcasing, BOP Consulting, April 2019

“ The British Council are seen to always offer some innovative components that are new and risky

Cultural professional from Georgia

While one of the aims of the season was to showcase ‘the best Britain has to offer’, the British Council recognise that it is mutuality and reciprocity that differentiate cultural relations activity from propaganda.¹⁶

There is a broad consensus (78% agreement) among stakeholders from prior British Council showcasing work that the programmes create a safe space for complex and contested intercultural values to be explored.¹⁷ There was an even stronger recognition among audiences of the UK/Georgia season that the programme created an opportunity for cultural dialogue: 94% agreed that the events and activities provided a space for different cultures to exchange ideas.

“ I'm pleased that Georgian cultural heritage is preserved at one of the biggest museums [The British Museum] in the world

King David the Builder's Coin exhibition visitor

This is a significant finding as it shows that audiences understood the season as a two-way exchange rather than a unilateral engagement, contributing to mutual trust and favourable foundations for future relations.

“ Impressive, I've never heard about this coin before. Thanks both to the British and Georgian Museums

King David the Builder's Coin exhibition visitor

6.2 Cultural professionals

Positive perceptions of the UK from young Georgian cultural professionals was a particular aim of the season, with the objective to increase engagement and foster future collaboration between the two countries in the future.

Familiarity with UK arts and culture was greater among cultural professionals and participants than public audiences, with 93% aware of a wide range of culture from the UK. Nonetheless, 74% of professionals agreed that they had developed their understanding of the UK through their participation. A breakdown of this figure by event (see Figure 9) shows that outcome varied depending on how explicit the link between the UK and the event was. For example, the lecture on ancient coins by a British Museum curator had a much weaker impact on understandings of the UK than the CCIs Youth forum, which included workshops on the UK creative economy.

Interviews with cultural professionals who attending the forum suggests that they developed an understanding of the UK culture sector as an ‘advanced’ model from which the culture sector in Georgia could learn from.

“ Learning from the British approach was very good. Maybe it will help us to take a critical approach to CCIs development

CCIs Youth Forum Participant

“ The UK is like one of the most advanced countries in this regard. You have all of the statistics, you can show that [the CCIs] help other sectors

Policymaker from Georgia

These testimonies were supported by the 88% of participants who agreed that the arts and culture in the UK is diverse, inclusive and innovative.

6.3 Disability led art in the UK

The Arts Council England Creative Case for Diversity refers to the opportunities for artistic innovation that come from ensuring that all social groups are included in the production and consumption of cultural outputs.¹⁸ In Georgia, exposure to UK culture and initiatives which are inclusive of people with disabilities has

¹⁶ <https://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/sites/uscpublicdiplomacy.org/files/legacy/pdfs/Mutualit-Rose.pdf>

¹⁷ 78% agreement: British Council, Global Cultural Networks: The Value and Impact of British Council International Showcasing, BOP Consulting, April 2019

¹⁸ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/diversity/creative-case-diversity>

contributed an understanding of UK culture as innovative. In the same way that diversity enhances artistic outcomes, feedback from participants suggests that it can also enhance perceptions of UK culture. This finding should not distract from the primary objective of the disability-inclusive programme, which was to advocate for the social inclusion of Georgians with disabilities, and sensitivity should be applied to avoid instrumentalising and objectifying disability.

“ The culture sector in the UK is much more developed than Georgia in terms of disability access and inclusivity.

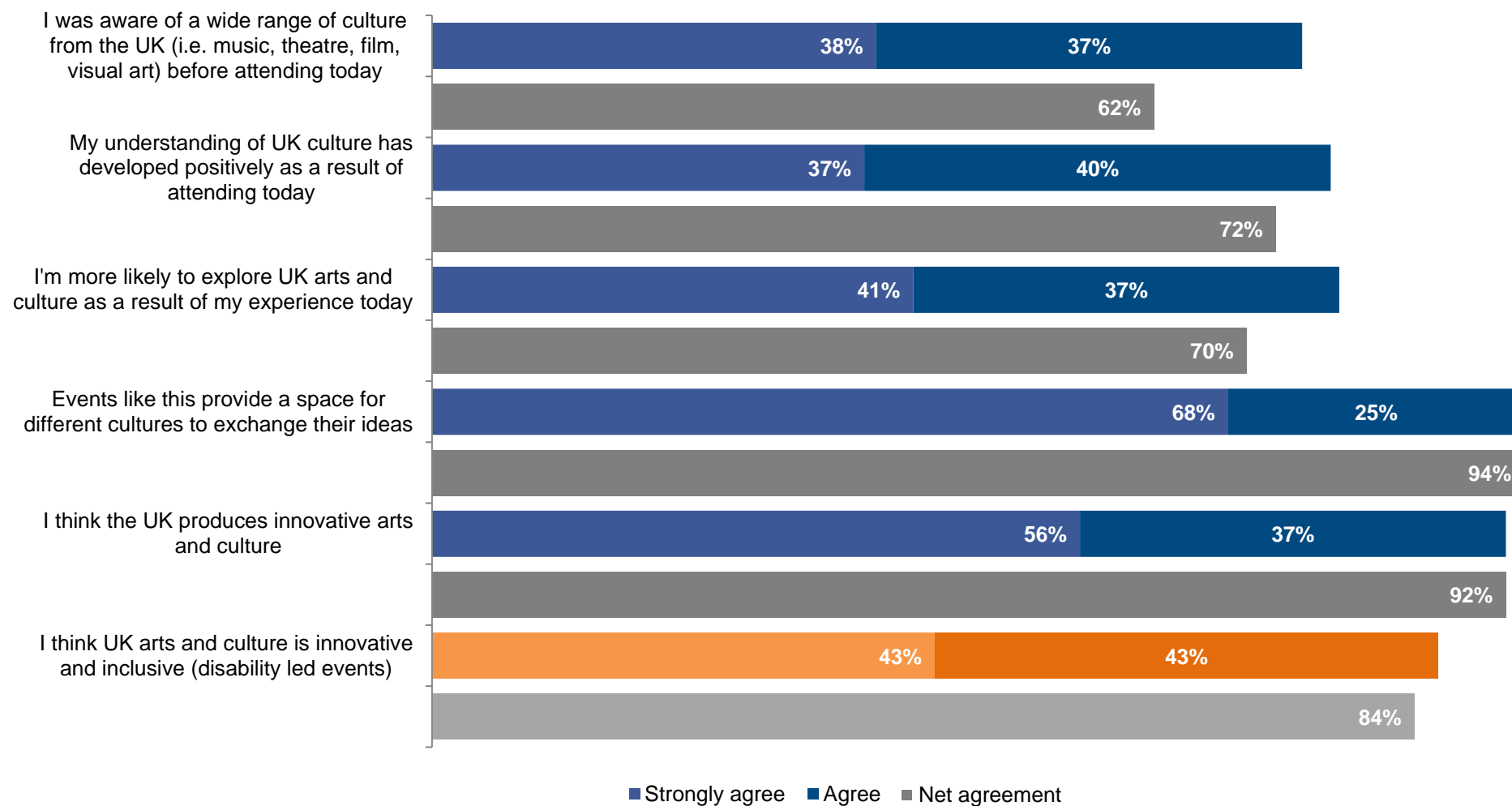
Polycymaker from Georgia

Figure 9 Perceptions and understandings of the UK by event

Statement	Net Agreement							
	CCI Youth Forum	Crafting Futures	Dr Vesta Sarkosh-Curtis, British Museum: Lecture	Jamz Supernova Workshop	Nabihah Iqbal's Workshop	Neil Brand Workshop	Studio Wayne McGregor / Tbilisi International Festival co-production	Tbilisi Youth Orchestra – Anna Meredith's Varmints
I was aware of a wide range of culture from the UK (i.e. music, theatre, film, visual art) before attending today	44%	88%	94%	75%	94%	79%	85%	75%
My understanding of UK culture has developed positively as a result of taking part today	74%	72%	39%	58%	67%	55%	75%	13%
I think UK arts and culture is diverse, inclusive and innovative	89%	67%	94%	100%	100%	86%	100%	75%

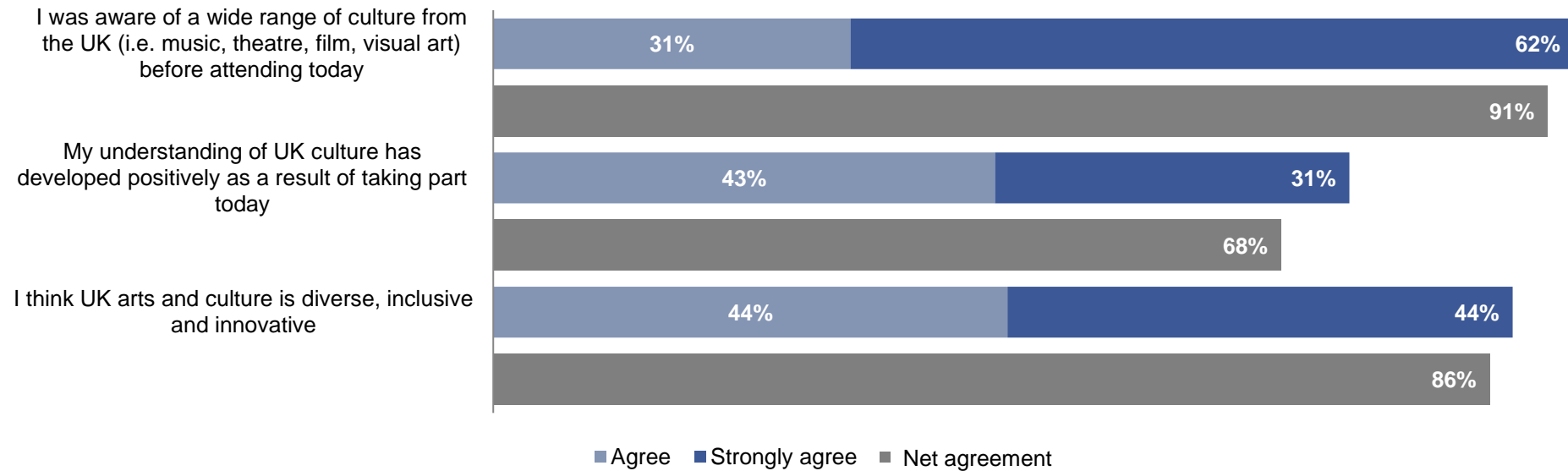
Source: BOP Consulting, 2019, (in order) n = 54, n = 18, n = 17, n = 12, n = 16, n = 29, n = 20, n = 8

Figure 10 Perceptions and understanding of UK arts and culture among audiences



Source: BOP Consulting 2019, (in order) n= 63, n= 170, n= 63, n = 63, n = 62, n= 109

Figure 11 Perceptions and understandings of UK culture among participants and cultural professionals



Source: BOP Consulting 2019, (n order) n= 133, n= 134, n= 133

Case study – King David the Builder's Coin

The King David the Builder Coin exhibition lasted the duration of the UK/Georgia season 2019 and was central to the programme. The flagship exhibition was a partnership between the Georgian National Museum, who hosted the coin, and the British Museum, which loaned the historic artefact.

The exhibition was both the first time the coin had been displayed in Georgia and the first time it had left the United Kingdom for over 150 years. It was accompanied by an online exhibition which included a 3D rendering of the coin alongside information about King David and his reign, engaging audiences outside of Tbilisi who couldn't view the coin in person.

The coin was an opportunity for two of the major cultural institutions from the UK and Georgia to find a meaningful connection and collaborate on a project which had shared significance.

“ One activity that was a big focus was the coin and the partnership with British Museum and Georgia National Museum. It was a great success for visibility of the season, but also enhanced cooperation between these institutions in a way that just did not exist previously.

Diplomatic stakeholder from Georgia

The exhibition was well received by audiences in Georgia, 94% of whom learned something new through attending and 89% of whom felt the event was of a high-quality.¹⁹

“ It was both impressive and informative

Audience reaction

“ I enjoyed the exhibition a lot

Audience reaction

Audiences also understood the exhibition as a cultural exchange: 97% agreed that events such as this provide a space for different cultures to share their ideas,²⁰ with some comments noting the UK and Georgia's shared interest in the coin.

“ It's very good that Great Britain is so interested in Georgian cultural heritage.

Audience reaction

“ Impressive, I've never heard about this coin before. Thanks to both to the British and Georgian Museums

Audience reaction

However, some visitors felt that the exhibition did not go far enough and that the coin should be permanently returned to Georgia. Sentiments like this represented a small proportion of the feedback, accounting for less than 2% of the comments.

“ The coin should be given back to Georgia.

Audience reaction

Overall, the exhibition and the historical significance of the coin helped to generate a buzz around the season and build a shared narrative as a basis for the rest of the programme.

“ The British Museum's smallest loan last year was also one that had the biggest impact for them. And became a really useful centre point for the season overall.

Diplomatic stakeholder from the UK

¹⁹ Source: BOP Consulting 2019, n = 619

²⁰ Source: BOP Consulting 2019, n = 619



King David the Builder exhibition closing: Courtesy of the British Council

7. UK-Georgia relations were strengthened as a result of the season

Key findings:

- Mutual design of the programme helped to secure buy-in from Georgian stakeholders
- Strategic alignment with Georgian government priorities added to local relevance of the programme
- Relations were advanced at both national and city level

7.1 Mutuality and stakeholder engagement

Georgian stakeholders were consulted throughout the process, not just at the season's inception, which helped them to feel invested in the success of the season. This is exemplified by the Youth Board, who contributed their own ideas and helped to steer the programme based on the needs and requirements of young Georgians.

A collaborative approach was enabled by existing friendly and dynamic relations with government and sector stakeholders held by both the British Council and the British Embassy in Georgia.

“ The aim on the UK side was to showcase the UK but also to ensure engagement. The process was very mutual and involved many stakeholders, and the activities were designed in a way that made it possible to engage broad representatives from Georgia. Not about delivering a message to the foreign public but engaging in mutual conversations. Georgians responded

very positively.

Diplomatic stakeholder from Georgia

Georgia's commitment to the UK-Georgia relationship is reflected in the government's plans to host a Georgia/UK season in the UK in 2021.

Although it cannot be directly attributed to the season, the British Embassy also noted that the season created a conducive environment for the conclusion of the new UK/Georgia Strategic Partnership Agreement in November 2019 (during the season): the first of its kind signed by the British Government in Eastern Europe.

7.2 Strategic alignment

The aims of the UK/Georgia season were well-aligned with the Georgian government's strategic priorities.

The 'Culture Strategy 2025' sets out the following objectives:

Improved access to culture and cultural diversity:

- all members of society, including youth and people with disabilities and minorities are actively engaged in cultural life
- the principles of gender equality are taken into account during the planning and implementation of cultural policy

Creative industries development:

- to support job creation and economic growth through the development of Georgian CCIs and to encourage the establishment of clusters and networks of creative industries in Georgia and internationally

Internationalisation of culture:

- to strengthen the collaboration between Georgia and other countries in the frameworks of bilateral/multilateral agreements and/or joint programmes

- The season's efforts to engage in a politically meaningful way created the conditions for a deeper engagement and dialogue between the UK and Georgia.

“ On a political level we wanted to demonstrate that UK commitment to Georgia goes beyond a political commitment to democratic development and strategic geo-politics.

Diplomatic stakeholder from the UK

“ Showcasing is part of it, awareness raising another, and *engagement at the institutional level* – you have to have all aspects for a season to be a success.

Diplomatic stakeholder from Georgia

This was particularly apparent at the Unlimited Forum, which took place inside the Georgian parliament. Cultural policymakers highlighted the importance of a close relationship with the UK to help guide the direction of policy and understood the UK's investment in the season as an indication of long-term commitment.

“ Support from the British Council and the UK is extremely valuable

Policymaker from Georgia

“ The Forum shows the UK's ongoing commitment to Georgia

Policymaker from Georgia

“ Bristol and Tbilisi are twinned. We have always intended to have a legacy relationship between the two countries

Cultural professional from the UK

7.3 City-to-city relations

In 2018, Bristol and Tbilisi celebrated 30 years of their twinning relationship. According to both Bristol-based film festival Encounters and Tbilisi International Film Festival, the programme helped to reignite interest in this partnership and create connections and momentum that will last beyond the season.

8. Key findings and lessons

Overall the evaluation findings for the UK-Georgia Season show strong emerging impact. This is especially the case for increased awareness of and improved perceptions of UK culture among both general audiences and more closely involved cultural professionals and cultural stakeholders. The season clearly contributed to the skills, knowledge and networks of those taking part, and has significantly shifted understanding relating to disabled-led and inclusive arts practice. Further work will be required to track and explore whether the relationships catalysed by the season go on to achieve further impact over the months and years ahead.

Extrapolating the influence of the season on longer-term impacts relating to inclusive economic growth, stability and prosperity is challenging and risky. However, the hypothesis driving the theory of change that improved connections and knowledge between the UK and other countries can have a positive reciprocal impact on understanding, trust, and in some cases trade, continues to be explored across the British Council portfolio.

The UK-Georgia Season deserves to be considered a best-practice example of how strong partnerships and planning, mutual and respectful development between organisations and stakeholders across nations, and a clear Theory of Change enables focused delivery and strong emerging outcomes to be achieved. While further research is required to properly explore whether the season affects the intended long-term impacts, the findings of this evaluation indicates confidence in a positive onwards trajectory.

Key lessons:

Prior British Council programmes in Georgia meant the season could ‘hit the ground running’. A number of Georgian policymakers and cultural professionals had existing positive perceptions of/ good relationships with the British Council, gained through previous experience of programmes such as the Unlimited programme of Creative Spark. This contributed to a mutual understanding around the aims of the season from stakeholders from both

countries and meant that the British Council and British Embassy could easily secure buy-in from Georgian partners.

The additionality of the season came from a programme that was bespoke rather than ‘tried-and-tested’. Recognition of the specificities of the Georgian context differentiated the season from regional British Council programmes and strengthened bilateral relations between participants from the UK and Georgia.

There is emerging evidence that the season contributed positively to wider UK-Georgia relations, reflected by the Georgian government’s plans to host a Georgia/UK season in the UK in 2021. The British Embassy also noted that the season created a conducive environment for the conclusion of the new UK/Georgia Strategic Partnership Agreement in November 2019 (during the season), the first of its kind signed by the British Government in Eastern Europe.

Higher dosage activities generally had more impact, but the programme’s balance of light-touch public-facing events and more involved sector-facing events helped to guarantee both reach and impact.

Facilitation of inward networking and cross-sector dialogue contributed to perceptions of the British Council as a trusted partner. While this element of the programme was valuable in relation to creative industries capacity building, it also meant the season was received by Georgian stakeholders as ‘not just a showcase’.

Aims and objectives that were clearly articulated before the start of the season kept the programme coherent and targeted. An established Theory of Change focused the planning process and kept impact on track.

The short timeline increased impact – but put pressure on the delivery team. The three-month timeline helped the season to maintain momentum and audience focus but meant the small delivery in team in Georgia was stretched. Staff capacity should be considered alongside timelines of future seasons.

Marketing for the programme should be considered right from the start. The success of the season’s marketing approach, which reached millions, highlights the impact a well-considered strategy can have. Conversations

around marketing could have been built in even earlier in the planning stage, to capitalise on this reach and opportunity.

The partnership between the British Council and the Embassy added clear material and strategic value. The British Council and British Embassy have closely related priorities but different ways of working. It was important to step up communication and invest additional time in the relationship before, during and after the season to ensure effective working and to successfully deliver a joint programme.

8.1 Seasons in small countries

Georgia's regions are accessible from the capital, which broadened the reach of the season. While the majority of the British Council programme took place in Tbilisi, the Embassy programme hosted events, such as pop-up Embassies, in eight different towns and cities outside of Tbilisi, which was received well by Georgian partners.

“ The activities outside the capital were very successful and this visibility was very important – it can't just be a Tbilisi festival.

Diplomatic stakeholder from Georgia

Smaller countries may have less pulling power with the 'big players' from the UK, however the experience in Georgia was that local relevance and understanding of the local context mattered more than the profile of the partners.

Government infrastructure in Georgia meant that policymakers were more accessible. The British Council and British Embassy were able to engage government stakeholders throughout the season, amplifying the impact and influence.

Smaller countries might have opportunities to connect more meaningfully with nations and regions in the UK. Several Georgian partners noted the

disparities in size between the UK and Georgia and the cultural sectors in both countries. The experience of UK nations and regions rather than the UK as a whole may resonate more in smaller countries.

8.2 Emerging benchmarks in British Council Seasons and festivals activities

The seasons and festivals work of the British Council is a key strand of the Arts Strategy and seeks to enable strong and meaningful connections between cultural professionals and publics across the world. BOP Consulting's 2019 report on the value of British Council showcasing activity (including Seasons and Festivals)²¹ showed how participating in showcasing activity can have strong longer-term impacts in professional development and in fostering lasting relationships between the UK and participating countries (as well as multilaterally).

The emerging outcomes from the UK-Georgia season are strongly aligned with those reported from a number of countries in the 2019 report (including Brazil, Nigeria, Mexico, Qatar and others). It is recommended that Georgia is included in any future version of this research seeking to explore longer-term impacts, and consequently that a strong contact management system is established to follow-up with those involved in the 2019 season in both the UK and Georgia.

The table below gives an indication of how the findings in Georgia compare to those in the 2019 global survey (although the latter sample were responding 1-3 years after project activities ended and likely represent a sample of organisations who have remained 'closer' to the British Council in participating countries).

One final finding worth noting is that 73% of the global sample indicated that they have continued to work with the British Council since taking part in the showcasing activity. This may be a useful benchmark for future planning within the Georgia Season team.

²¹ https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/190501_bc_showcasing_report_final.pdf

Figure 12 UK-Georgia Outcomes alongside ‘global benchmarks’ (% agree or strongly agree)

Indicator	Global benchmark²²	UK-Georgia Season
Extended professional networks	83%	75%
Activities provided a safe space for intercultural exchange	78%	94%
Improved understanding of cultural sector in another country	91%	74%

Source: BOP Consulting (2020)

²² From the 2019 research

Appendix

Figure 13 UK/Georgia season 2019 programme

Activity:	When:	Where:	British Council or Embassy led?
Georgia-Scotland rugby 'soft launch event	31 August	Tbilisi	Embassy programme
Partnership with the Economic Policy Research Centre	9 September - 10 September	Tbilisi	British Council programme
Season launch party	13 September	Stamba Hotel	Embassy programme
Pop up embassy Tbilisi	14 September	Tbilisi	Embassy programme
Nabihah Iqbal performance and workshops	14 September	Mzesumzira Club	British Council programme
King David the Builder's Coin Exhibition	15 September - 15 December	Georgian National Museum	British Council programme
Lecture from Dr Vesta Sarkosh-Curtis' Curator of the Middle Eastern Coins, British Museum	16 September	Georgian National Museum	British Council programme
PlayUK in Batumi	16 September - 22 September	Batumi	British Council programme
111: a dance duet performance	23 September	Kote Marjanishvili State Drama Theatre	British Council programme
Disability Arts Forum	24 September	Parliament of Georgia	British Council programme
Candoco performance: <i>Face In</i> and <i>Let's Talk About Dis</i>	25 September	Kote Marjanishvili State Drama Theatre	British Council programme
<i>The Argonauts</i>	25 September	Kote Marjanishvili State Drama Theatre	British Council programme
Creative Enterprise Programme by Nesta	30 September - 4 October	Fabrika	British Council programme
GGF conference reception	3 October		Embassy programme

Pop up embassy Nasakirali	4 October	Nasakirali	Embassy programme
Pop up embassy Batumi	5 October	Batumi	Embassy programme
Studio Wayne McGregor and TBS International present O2	5 October	Orbeliani Square, Tbilisi	British Council programme
Pop up embassy Tbilisi City Festival	5 October	Tbilisi	Embassy programme
Creative and Cultural Industries Youth Forum	15 October - 16 October	Rooms Hotel Tbilisi	British Council programme
Pop up embassy Telavi	11 October	Telavi	Embassy programme
GREEN IS GREAT British Garden Opening	19 October		Embassy programme
Heritage Ceremony Award	30 October		Embassy programme
Screening of NI Peace Film with Democracy Frontline Club	4 December		Embassy programme
Crafting Futures programme launch	7-8 November	Fabrika	British Council programme
Start Up Grind	9 November - 11 November	Shota Rustaveli State Drama Theatre	Embassy programme
Wardrop Exhibit	11 November		Embassy programme
Pop up embassy Zugdidi	14 November	Zugdidi	Embassy programme
Downtown Abbey Film Premiere	21 November	Amirani Cinema	Embassy programme
Ambassador for a Day competition tour of the Embassy	26 November	Tbilisi	Embassy programme
Anna Meredith's <i>Varmints</i> with Tbilisi Youth Orchestra	27 November	Kote Marjanishvili State Drama Theatre	British Council programme
St Andrews Day Whisky Tasting	29 November		Embassy programme
UK Georgia Business Forum	3 December	Rooms Hotel Tbilisi	Embassy programme
DePict Awarding Ceremony	4 December	Amirani Cinema	British Council programme

Pop Up Embassy in Akhaltsikhe	6 December	Akhaltsikhe	Embassy programme
PlayUK in Tbilisi	1-8 December	Amirani Cinema	British Council programme
Pop up embassy Kutaisi	10 December	Kutaisi	Embassy programme
Women in Peace and Security (WPS) Panel and Reception	11 December		Embassy programme
Women Peace and Security Film Festival	12 December		Embassy programme
DJ Jamz Supernova's workshop	13 December	Khidi/G2	British Council programme
After hours with King David's Coin	13 December	Georgian National Museum, Tbilisi	Embassy programme
In Conversation with Aka Morchiladze about Britain and London	13 December		Embassy programme
TED x Tbilisi	14 December		Embassy programme
Season closing event	14 December	Stamba hotel, Tbilisi	Embassy programme
DJ Jamz Supernova's DJ set	15 December	Khidi/G2	British Council programme
The Selector Radio	Ongoing	Green Wave, Tempo RadioLab	British Council programme
International Publishing Fellowship	July 2019 - March 2020	-	British Council programme
Museum Without Walls	July 2019 - March 2020	-	British Council programme

Figure 14 UK-Georgia season reach

Metric	2018 British Council Baseline	UK-Georgia season Target	British Council UK-Georgia season programme	% of target reached	% increase from 2018 to UK-Georgia season
Face-to-face audiences	19,000	66,000	108,000	130%	452%
Total digital audiences	45,000	258,000	1,500,000	581%	3233%
Radio and television audiences	234,000	500,000 - 750,000	1,200,000	192%	413%

Source: British Council, 2018 - 2019

Figure 15 Audience age distribution

Age Group	All audiences	Audiences for disability led events
16-25	38%	27%
25-34	26%	24%
35-44	18%	30%
45-54	10%	9%
55-64	5%	7%
65+	2%	3%

Source: BOP Consulting, 2019, n = 739, n= 68

Figure 16 Participant age distribution

Age Group	All participants	Participants at disability-led events	Participants at youth focused events
16-25	2%	8%	23%
25-34	26%	18%	58%
35-44	43%	37%	11%
45-54	17%	27%	6%
55-64	8%	6%	2%
65+	0%	4%	0%

Source: BOP Consulting, 2019, n = 243, n = 49, n = 65

Figure 17 Target stakeholder list and actual figures (in parentheses)

7 new institutional relationships (8)	20 Georgian arts leaders (20)	10 Government leaders (11)	50 UK artists & creatives (34)	10 UK arts organisations (11)	30 Georgian arts organisations (28)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> British Museum - Georgian National Museum Studio Wayne McGregor- Tbilisi International Theatre festival Encounters Film Festival - Tbilisi International Film Festival Anna Meredith - Tbilisi Youth Orchestra 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> David Lordkipanidze Sophia Khuntsaria Mirian Khukhuneishvili Gaga Chekhieidze Nino Anjaparidze Lado Gachechiladze Eka Mazmishvili Vakhtang Khimshiashvili Lasha Jojua Zviad Eliziani Tiki Bagashvili 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Justin McKenzie Smith, HMA Alex Cole, DHMA Mikheil Batiashvili Levan Kharatishvili Ketevan Kandelaki, MFA Giorgi Volski Vice Speaker, Parliament of Georgia Rati Ionatamishvili Deputy Chair, Human Rights and Civil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joel Brown Eve Musto Adham Smith Nabihah Iqbal Jamz Supernova Anna Meredith Sara Pepper, Director of Creative Economy, Cardiff University, UK Rachel Moshi, Anna Meredith's producer Jasmin Wilson, Studio Wayne McGregor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studio Wayne McGregor Candoco Eve Mutso Duet DePict! British Museum Anna Meredith Nesta BFI Royal College of Art Plymouth College of Art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marjanishvili Theatre Tbilisi International Festival Georgian National Film Centre Georgian National Museum Tbilisi Youth Orchestra Radio Tempo Radio Green Wave KhidiClub Mzesumzira Club

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Candoco - Tbilisi Inclusive Dance Company — Nesta - Creative Georgia — Georgian Arts and Culture Centre and Plymouth College of Art (Crafting Futures programme) — Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and Arts Council England (Disability Arts Forum) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Elene Toidze — Ketevan Zazanashvili — Irma Zveriasvili — Gvantsa Jobava — Teona Burkiashvili — Tamar Shavgulidze — Zviad Mchedlishvili — Gulgun Mamadova — Baya Kvitsiani 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration Committee, Parliament of Georgia — Nodar Razmadze, Head of Strategic Development, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport — Shorena Tsitsagi, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport — Zaza Mechiauri, Georgian Parliament — Givi Mikanadze, Head of the Administration of the Parliament of Georgia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Rich Warren, Encounters Film Festival — Candoco x 10 — Heather Stewart, BFI — Abid Hussein — Neil Brand — Amerah Saleh, Young Giant — Christine James, Blick Shared Studios — Nadia Beard, The Calvert Journal — Steve Lee, Service Design and Innovation Consultant — Dr. Vesta Curtis, British Museum — Maryam d'Abo — Jason Osborn, Former Chairman and active member of the British-Georgian Society — Matias Shortcook, Dean of Pre-Degree, Plymouth College of Art — Kim Bagely, Plymouth College of Art — Eleanor Dare, Royal College of Art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Encounters Film Festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Goergian Arts Culture Centre — Creative Georgia — Batumi International Art House Film Festival — Tbilisi International Film Festival — Tbilisi Inclusive Dance Company — Gaikula Art Villa — Museum of Theatre, Film, Music and Dance — National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia — Tbilisi State Academy of Arts, Design Faculty — Georgian Crafts Museum — Funduki — Enamel House — MoreisLove — Metro Georgia — "Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film University of Georgia " — Wheelchair Dance Sport Federation
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— Tom Simmons, Royal
College of Art

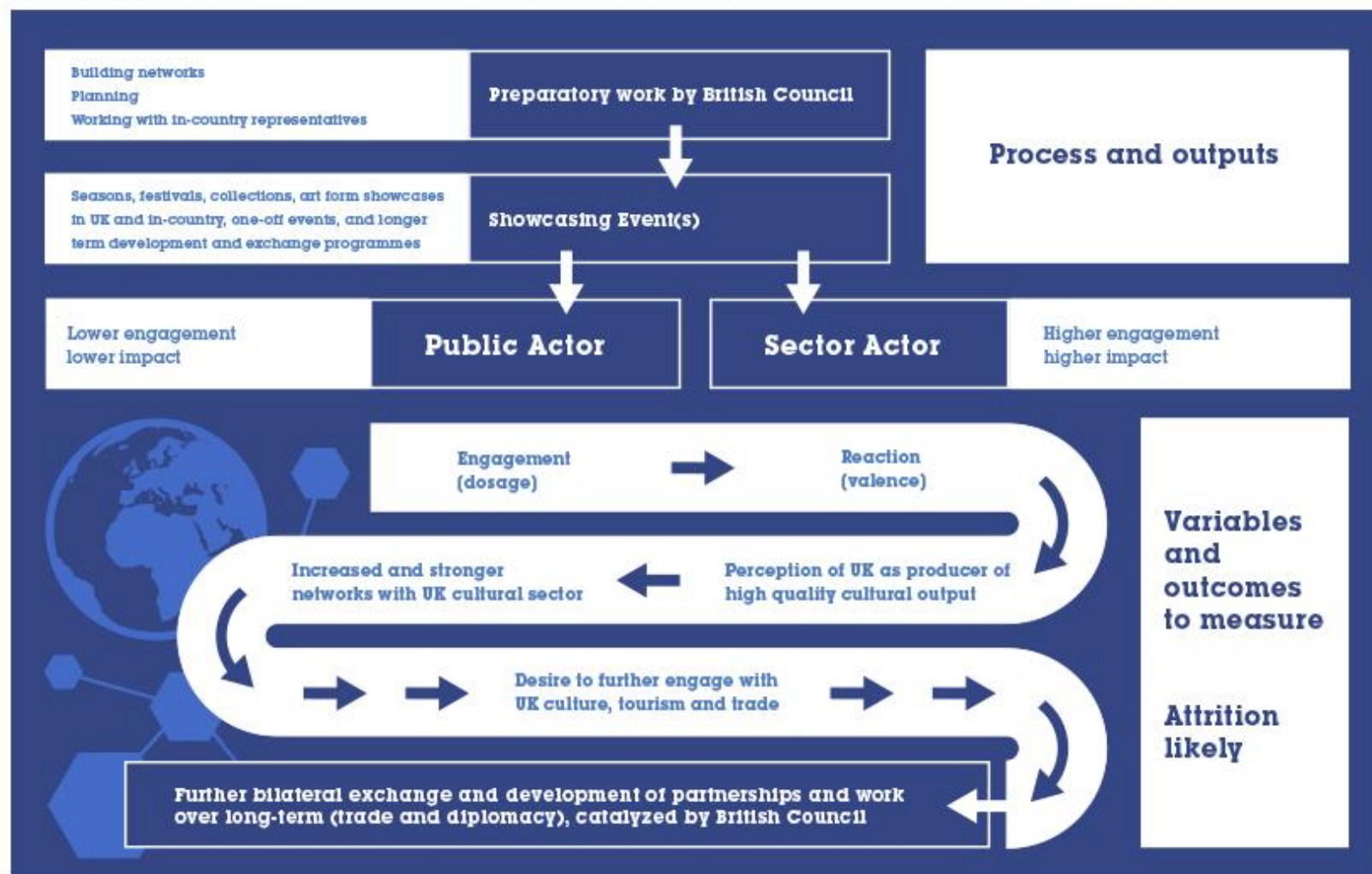
— Azdaki's Garden'
— Akhmeteli Theatre
— Sounds of Georgia
Festival

Figure 18 Causal chain of showcasing work

Casual Chain of Showcasing Work & Soft Power Impacts



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