

THE MIGHTY CREATIVES BUSINESS PLAN

2024 – 2029

Social Justice for Young People through Arts, Culture and Creativity

A poem to enthusiasts

*Oh! pleasant exercise of hope and joy!
For mighty were the auxiliars which then stood
Upon our side, we who were strong in love!
Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!*

The French Revolution as It Appeared to Enthusiasts at Its Commencement

(William Wordsworth, poet.)

A letter to The Mighty Creatives

As a young person who in some ways would fall under the categories you work with, I want to thank you for this business plan. For me social justice for young people through creativity is exactly what is needed.... I cannot wait to be a part of this new stage in The Mighty Creatives.

(Hannah, TMC Youth Board)

A letter to the Youth Board and your Mighty Auxiliars.

William Wordsworth may well be a dead, white, male, European poet but in expressing being young as being *very heaven*, he reflects a Western zeitgeist which has promoted youthfulness as being the holy grail of our age since the turn of the French Revolution. Our contemporary consumer society holds the Youthful Ideal up to our mirrors and subtly weaves its expectations into our consciousness: what we should look like, what we should eat, where we should be and what we should do with our lives. To be young these days is not just very heaven but a demanding social expectation which we are actively encouraged or threatened to adhere to on a daily basis.

Whilst it may well have been blissful to be young back in the early days of the French Revolution, the reality for many of you facing the social, economic and cultural seismic shocks we have been witnessing in the UK recently has been anything but heavenly.

For those of you who were born since the turn of the millennium and who are the young people we work with (the so called 'Generations Z and Alpha'), your futures are perhaps bleaker than we would like to admit.

Although you may be uncomfortable with the labelled as being representative of Gen Anything, given your desire to want to be seen an individual who doesn't fit many, or any, of the stereotypes associated with that labelling, there's no getting away from the fact that as "digital natives" you're coming of age in the shadow of modern-day warfare, climate doom, pandemic lockdowns, and potential economic collapse. Some of you will be lucky enough to have the personal resources, class connections or cultural capital to weather those storms, but an increasing number of you are not so fortunate.

You may not have the access to the wealth and opportunity your peers enjoy; and your lives may not be perceived as visible, audible or as valuable as you are entitled to. You may be experiencing life at the very limits of what should expected in our civilised, civic society and in holding up another more challenging mirror to us, you show us how uncivilized, how uncivil our society is and actually how unheavenly it is to be young.

Whatever aspect of civic life you look at, the fact is that the lucky ones will survive and thrive in the challenges that they're facing. For those in the shadows, however, it's tough enough to survive and thriving is a luxury. This is not to say you are passive victims in life's battles: you survive and thrive because of your lived experiences which give you strengths and powers that you may not yet be fully aware of but which are essential in combating the impact that social injustice is having on you.

So, if there ever was a time for The Mighty Creatives to step up and rebalance those social justice inequalities with you, then that time is now and this letter, this plan, is for you.

Through arts, culture and your creativity, we can help unlock your personal strengths and powers and in doing so, help improve your health and wellbeing, your cognitive abilities, your social connectivity and your life chances in general. We want to work with you to enable you to step out of the shadows into the sunshine of a civic society in which your lives become witnessed, visible, audible and valuable; and enable you to equitably access the wealth and opportunity you are entitled to.

We hope our mission aligns to your wishes and dreams: but we cannot do this alone and we need you and we need you, and your voices, to be at the front and centre of our plans.

Much love,

Nick Owen, CEO and The Whole Mighty Creatives Team.

1. The Case for Support: the inequities of social justice

The disproportionality for young people in this country in terms of opportunities and life chances are far too vast. There are far too many young people falling through the gaps and we are getting to a stage where just listening to the voices of these young people is not enough.

(Hannah, TMC Youth Board)

Inequitable social justice haunts Zoomers as much as it did for previous generations. The lucky ones will be confident in their use of the Internet, portable digital technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI); their shadow peers are not necessarily digitally literate and may have found themselves on the wrong side of the Digital Education Divide, especially if they live in more rural or economically disadvantaged areas.

Zoomers tend to show a greater awareness and diagnosis of mental health conditions¹ and sleep deprivation is more frequently reported². They are also more likely to be diagnosed with intellectual disabilities and psychiatric disorders than older generations³.

Our beneficiaries have experienced more than their fair share of social deprivation and poverty in recent years: our Stakeholder Engagement Strategy in 2023 for example demonstrates that 44% of organisations we have worked with are in areas of the first to the third deciles of the index of multiple deprivation.⁴ Whilst the phrase 'Children in Need'⁵ is a useful shorthand, our beneficiaries come from a wider constituency than that term affords⁶. They experience significant disproportionate disadvantage, including heightened isolation, compromised mental health, lower attainment and lack of opportunities.

These social injustices have disproportionate effects on the social, emotional and educational outcomes of our beneficiaries, although they are complex and neither easily diagnosed nor predictable. Young people are individuals after all, and any intervention planned to support them must be bespoke, personalised and involve those young people themselves at the heart of their design, implementation and evaluation.

Personalised, young person centred interventions require a pedagogical approach which values 'youth voice' at its heart. TMC has had youth voice in its organisational DNA since it

¹ American Psychological Association (March 15, 2019). "[Mental health issues increased significantly in young adults over last decade](#)". *Science Daily*. Kansagra, Sujay (May 2020).

² "Sleep Disorders in Adolescents". *Pediatrics*. American Academy of Pediatrics. 145 (Supplement 2): S204–S209. doi:10.1542/peds.2019-2056I. PMID 32358212.

³ Maulik, Pallab K.; Mascarenhas, Maya N.; Mathers, Colin D.; Dua, Tarun; Saxena, Shekhar (2011). "Prevalence of intellectual disability: A meta-analysis of population-based studies". *Research in Developmental Disabilities*. 32 (2): 419–436.

⁴ 68% of organisations we work with are located in areas of the first to the fifth deciles of the index of multiple deprivation.

⁵ 1 in 7 young people aged between 5 and 16 experience one episode of need across the UK: with 30% more young people in care in 2020 than there were in 2015. (Berridge, D. et al. (2020, Apr 27). *Children in Need and Children in Care: Educational Attainment and Progress*, School for Policy Studies Bristol Poverty Institute, University of Bristol.)

⁶ See Appendix 1 for further description.

was established in 2009. Since developing our unique social pedagogical model driven by artistic, creative and cultural practice, this makes us leaders in this field across the UK and in a strong position to address and challenge the social injustices our beneficiaries face.

2. How arts, culture and creativity counter Social Injustice

Creativity has so much power. It truly can save lives and it has the capacity to change minds and fight injustices.

(Hannah, TMC Youth Board)

There is a wealth of evidence that demonstrates how culture⁷ can support young people in need by providing access to personal development, social connectivity, education, social mobility, community cohesion and employment.

Learning through arts and culture develops skills and behaviour that contributes to young people doing better in their education journeys⁸. Engagement with arts and culture at a young age also contributes to improved social connectivity and mobility: and in these pandemic-infused times, the health and well-being benefits of young people's participation in the arts and culture are well documented: those who take part in the arts are:

- 38% more likely to report good health.
- feel that engagement with the arts promotes a sense of personal wellbeing. Nearly half of young people surveyed (45%) say that the arts help them relax and reduce stress⁹
- Covid-19 has shown that creativity and cultural experiences are fundamental to the lives of young people and to the culture of schools and should be an essential part of the return to in-school education.¹⁰

TMC is uniquely placed to provide arts, cultural and creative experiences which counter social injustice due to our impressive track record¹¹ and expertise in:

- Co-creating artistic and cultural interventions with children and young people and other stakeholders that can be scaled up, demonstrate reach and result in significant and measurable impact.
- Investing in children and young people's creative skills, knowledge and practice
- Leading strategic partnerships, engaging stakeholders, designing and managing programmes of arts, cultural and creative activities.

⁷ When referencing creativity, we use Arts Council England's definition: 'Creativity' describes the process through which people apply their knowledge, skill and intuition to imagine, conceive, express or make something that wasn't there before. 'Culture' means all those areas of activity associated with the artforms and organisations: collections, combined arts, dance, libraries, literature, museums, music, theatre and the visual arts.

⁸ *Imagine Nation – The Case for Cultural Learning, Cultural Learning Alliance, 2017*

⁹ *The TALE (Tracking Arts Learning and Engagement) study: a three-year research programme which analysed 6,000 responses from young people aged 14–18 2018, produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company, Tate and the University of Nottingham*

¹⁰ *2nd Report, Durham Commission on Creativity and Education, Durham University, 2021*

¹¹ *For a more detailed outline of our achievements between 2018 and 2023 please see Appendix 2.*

3. Our Vision and Mission

It is crystal clear to many that the arts, creativity and cultural education have a fundamental role in supporting young people in countering the impact of social injustice. That need has become more demanding in recent years, and we now need to ensure that this is expressed at the heart of our vision:

Social Justice for young people through arts, culture and creativity

To achieve this vision, our mission has four strategic objectives (SO) and associated SMART outputs over the five years of this business plan as follows:

SO No.	Strategic Objectives
SO1	To transform the lives of our beneficiaries through one-to-one and group-based Creative Mentoring services.
SO2	To provide support, advice and opportunities to employers which assist our beneficiaries' employment prospects and enterprise opportunities through our Creative Futures programmes.
SO3	To inspire our beneficiaries to express themselves through the power of creativity and to work with other stakeholders to support best practice, youth-led approaches which foster meaningful cultures that place youth voice at the heart through our Youth Voice services.
SO4	To sustain and grow investment in our work from across the UK and internationally.

SMO No.	SMART Outputs
SMO1	Engage with 4,000 children and young people in need engaging across all our services and campaigns
SMO2	Sustain and grow our pool of Creative Mentors through targeted recruitment supporting 500 creative practitioners.
SMO3	National adoption and delivery of CM: the service will be delivered across all 9 regions across the country
SMO4	Recruit 50 Employers to the Mighty Employers employability services
SMO5	Deliver 300 CPD sessions including training and development opportunities, workshops and networking sessions for educators and creative practitioners to develop their child / youth-led creative practice.
SMO6	Support and grow the TMC Youth Board with YP drawn from 5 regions across the country.
SMO7	Support the Youth Board to deliver 3 youth-voice focused projects
SMO8	Diversify and sustain our income sources so no one funder is more that 50% on our overall income
SMO9	Maintain our reserves policy at six months running costs
SMO10	Build a £5m Endowment Fund to see us through 2030 onwards

4. Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change explains how we work strategically and collaboratively to deliver our strategic outcomes for our beneficiaries. It provides a summary of the changes that will occur and provides the context for our service development and delivery plans and is available in Appendix 3.

Our guiding principles and values are available in Appendix 4. Our values are inspired by the work of Munira Thobani and her work on the Thobani 6C Self Audit Tool©. We strive for these values to be evident in all aspects of our organisation: governance, leadership, programmes, income generation and operations and processes.

Our Youth Voice strategy is available in Appendix 5.

5. Impact and Data Strategy

Our impact strategy enables us to:

- Demonstrate our commitment to change our service users and stakeholders.
- Better engage with our funders and stakeholders by clearly showing how their investment in our activities and services is driving positive outcomes.
- Attract new sources of funding by demonstrating and evidencing our effectiveness and impact.
- Engage new and existing partners whose vision of impact align with our own.
- Strengthen our reputation as impactful, honest and effective through taking an evidence-based, transparent approach.

6. Marketing Strategy

Our marketing strategy responds directly to the objectives outlined in this business plan and to the insight gained through our 2023/2024 market research project. It details our approach to strategic positioning, using a range of models and frameworks, and how it aims to enable us to realise our vision.

A detailed Marketing Strategy is available upon request.

7. Income Strategy

Our income generation strategy aims to increase the unrestricted reserves the charity has secured in the period leading up to the end of the 23/24 financial year by 5% year on year. The strategy is built upon four strands of activity:

1. Institutional, Trust and Foundation Grant Funding
2. Individual Giving (Campaign and Major Donations)
3. Corporate Partnerships
4. Traded Services (Sales)

A five-year forecast is presented in Appendix 6.

8. Who's the team?

We have a skilled and knowledgeable Board of Trustees, Staff Team and Youth Board who have considerable expertise and lived experience in the fields of social justice, education, culture, youth engagement and co-production.

We are governed by a Board of Trustees, who are also the directors of the limited company.

Led by Prof. Christine White, Chair of Trustees, our trustees have extensive experience and expertise in the arts and cultural sector, education, local authorities and private sector. They bring a wide range of governance skills to bear: leadership, fundraising and financial control, marketing, pedagogy, innovation, cultural educational practice, artist development, collective impact modelling, heritage, theatre and product development.

Working with the Board of Trustees are the TMC Youth Board whose overall purpose is to support and develop The Mighty Creatives services, and to ensure that the diversity of children and young people's voices are at the heart of strategic and operational decisions of the charity. This is to make sure that The Mighty Creatives' work is reflective of the needs of the charity's beneficiaries. They are a small but engaged collaborative group, who provide an open, safe and respectful environment for thoughts and opinions to be shared. Collectively, they represent a diverse array of creative practitioners and individuals, and have a breadth of experience to bring to the work.

Trustees can serve from the age of sixteen. The Board is responsible for the scrutiny and examination of organisational performance. Trustees meet quarterly to monitor risk, agree strategic direction, approve budgets and finance reports and endorse new and review existing policies. The Board ensures The Mighty Creatives reporting obligations to the Charity Commission and Companies House are met.

Our policies and processes are reviewed in line with our policy matrix and signed off by the Board. We have a measured and thorough approach to safeguarding, ensuring all staff and Board receive training from NSPCC and regular briefings.

Safeguarding and EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) are standing items on our agenda and are overseen by a designated member of the Board, as is our assessment of risks.

The Mighty Creatives Operations and Finance sub-committee scrutinises the charity's approach to finance, staffing and operations. The committee meets separately, feeding into the main Board for sign off on a quarterly basis.

The Trustees delegate the authority of running the company to the Chief Executive, Dr. Nick Owen MBE. He leads the organisation with support of the Business Manager, Programme Manager and Partnership Development Manager. The full staff structure is shown in Appendix 7 and a current staff list is available on our website.

9. What's our ask?

I am excited to see how this business plan develops and to see the practical steps and tangible outcomes. I am honoured to be able to be a part of such an important movement alongside a charity who truly understand what it means to be in the shadows and want to work with this young people to help them too find the light.

(Hannah, TMC Youth Board)

We seek partners and stakeholders to help us step up and rebalance the inequities in social justice for our beneficiaries now.

By helping us provide creative solutions to the many social justice challenges young people face, you will contribute directly to improving their health and wellbeing; cognitive abilities, behaviour and educational attainment; social connectivity and life chances in general.

You'll help move them out of the shadows, into the sunshine of a civic society in which their lives are witnessed, become visible and audible and are perceived as valuable; and able to equitably access the wealth and opportunity they are entitled to.

What could be more blissful than that?

Appendix 1 Description of our beneficiaries

Our beneficiaries are:

- Children and young people registered in need by their Local Authorities
- Children and young people living below the poverty line, in areas of high deprivation and with high support needs who are not registered with the Local Authority
- Children and young people who:
 - Are care experienced (this includes Looked After Children, Care Leavers or Previously Looked After Children)
 - Are experiencing abuse or neglect (including those under a Child Protection Plan)
 - Have Special Educational Needs (SEN)
 - Have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
 - Have a disability or life restricting illness
 - Are experiencing poverty/low income
 - Are living as a young carer
 - Are seeking asylum
 - Are in refuge
 - Are in an Alternative Education Provision
 - Are on Free School Meals
 - Are receiving Pupil Premium
 - Have been excluded or at risk of exclusion.

Appendix 2: Track Record

As at the end OF 2022 / 2023, we have hit our KPIs (or achieved higher than their original target as follows:

Organisational KPIs	Target	Total to date	% delivered
Engage 50% of the region's schools (2220 in total)	1,110	1,206	109%
Meaningful engagement with 30% of cultural organisations in the region - including Freelancers	735	1,212	165%
Support 10 partnership that support Cultural Education.	10	9	90%
Oversee 20,000 creative qualifications awarded through the Arts Award programme	20,000	23,781	119%
Support the development and delivery of 200 creative projects (the projects that can be counted must have produced a creative output)	200	208	104%
Support 50 emerging artists	50	164	328%
Develop 50 creative enterprises	50	87	174%
Create 100 new jobs	100	545	545%
with 50% of participants moving from NEET to EET	50	530	1060%
Deliver 26,000 hours of mentoring and coaching for children and young people.	26,000	6,054	23%
Support 2 creative apprenticeships	2	2	100%
Develop and deliver 300 training, events, workshops and networking opportunities	300	850	283%
Provide support for 20 networks, focusing on early years, SEND, creative schools and children looked after	20	20	100%
Issue 200 bursaries and 150 project grants	350	535	153%
Deliver 6 conferences	6	6	100%
Develop 10 resources which offer access to a directory of assets, advice and support	10	11	110%
Engage 2000 CYP through direct delivery	2,000	2,402	120%
Achieve 80% match for Cultural Life Fund investments	£865,182	£1,418,918	164%
Reach 10,000 attendees through our largescale events and conferences	10,000	10,342	103%

Appendix 3: Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change explains how we work strategically and collaboratively to deliver our strategic outcomes for our beneficiaries.

Starting with the problem statement, *“Children and young people living in challenging circumstances experience significant social injustice, including heightened isolation, lack of stability, compromised mental health, lower attainment and lack of opportunities to experience the personal, social and economic benefits of the arts, culture and creativity”*.

Our desired long-term goal is to gain social justice for young people through creativity. This will result in children and young people feeling more confident and resilient; empowering them to influence decision making that effects their lives, speak out against injustice and build aspirations that will shape successful futures.

Resources	Mechanisms	Activities	SMART outputs: <i>what will arise as a result of delivering our outcomes.</i>	Organisational strategic Objectives
<p>Skilled People (trustees, staff and stakeholders) Established partnerships</p> <p>Effective CRM system and website</p> <p>Sustainable funding</p> <p>Knowledge of beneficiary and supporter markets</p> <p>Access to data</p> <p>Productive processes and clear systems for planning and evaluation</p>	<p>Creative Mentoring practice and methodology</p> <p>Youth Voice practice</p> <p>Development of skills and expertise to deliver</p> <p>Established systems and processes to Plan for Delivery</p> <p>Marketing Strategy</p> <p>Digital Strategy</p> <p>Youth Voice Strategy</p> <p>Environmental Strategy</p> <p>EDI Strategy</p> <p>Investment Strategy</p> <p>Targeted products and service offer</p> <p>Impact & Evaluation Strategy</p>	<p>Creative Mentoring 1:1 targeted service</p> <p>Youth Voice and leadership</p> <p>Creative Mentoring group work in schools</p> <p>Creative Mentoring group work in community spaces</p> <p>Employ Me Supporting care experienced CYP into work</p>	<p>SMO1: Engage with 10,000 children and young people in need engaging across all our services and campaigns</p> <p>SMO2: Sustain and grow our pool of Creative Mentors through targeted recruitment supporting 500 creative practitioners.</p> <p>SMO3: National adoption and delivery of CM: the service will be delivered across all 10 regions across the country</p> <p>SMO4: Recruit 200 Employers to the Mighty Employers employability services</p> <p>SMO5: Deliver 300 CPD sessions including training and development opportunities, workshops and networking sessions for educators and creative practitioners to develop their child / youth-led creative practice.</p> <p>SMO6: Support and grow the TMC Youth Board with YP drawn from all 10 regions across the country.</p> <p>SMO7: Support the Youth Board to deliver 5 youth-voice focused projects</p> <p>SMO8: Diversify and sustain our income sources so no one funder is more than 50% on our overall income</p> <p>SMO9: Maintain our reserves policy at six months running costs</p> <p>SMO10: Build a £10m Endowment Fund to see us through 2030 onwards</p>	<p>To transform the lives of our beneficiaries through one-to-one and group-based Creative Mentoring services.</p> <p>To provide support, advice and opportunities to employers which assist our beneficiaries' employment prospects and enterprise opportunities through our Mighty Employers Services.</p> <p>To inspire our beneficiaries to express themselves through the power of creativity and to work with other stakeholders to support best practice, youth-led approaches which foster meaningful cultures that place youth voice at the heart through our Youth Voice services.</p> <p>To sustain and grow investment in our work from across the UK and internationally.</p>

Appendix 4: Guiding Principles and Values

Our practice is driven by a personalised, person centre pedagogy which is fundamental to generating personal change.

We respond to need: we focus on nurturing and supporting the creativity of children in need and those working for them.

We listen and act: we embed children and young people's voices throughout our work from conception of programme to delivery and governance and we will advocate others to do the same.

We work collaboratively: partnership working is central to the work we develop to improve creative outcomes and cultural opportunities for children and young people.

We will champion Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: we stand in solidarity with all marginalised communities across the world and will use our voice to speak out against injustice.

Our values are inspired by the work of Munira Thobani and her work on the Thobani 6C Self Audit Tool©

1. **We seek Coherence in our work:** Social justice, equality and equity matters to us. We constantly review and refresh the narratives of why equality matters to us in our professional (and political) practices. We strive to have a coherent vision and set of values on equality and share this vision with your stakeholders. We set out our equality objectives to support us in delivering our purpose fairly and equitably.

2. **We seek to raise Consciousness** in our work: by increasing knowledge, understanding, awareness and empathy. We strive to improve our awareness of our privilege and possible complicity in maintaining discrimination and disadvantage.

3. **We are committed** to tackling inequality and disproportionality in all its forms.

4. **We strive to find the courage** to challenge the status-quo in perpetuating discrimination and inequality. We strive to act and influence the ways which can shift the balance of power and privilege in our work and build our courage by connecting and networking with the individuals, groups and organisations who are tackling discrimination, inequality and disproportionality.

5. **We seek Connectedness** with self-organised equality seeking groups and draw strength from being an ally by working in tackling discrimination that is direct, indirect and or inter-sectional.

6. **We prioritise Co-production** by developing leadership models which lead and empower others so that their contributions to achieve greater equitable outcomes for all our communities. We ensure there is accountability of everyone in the organisation to act consistently with achieving our organisational purpose and equity ambitions.

We strive for these values to be evident in all aspects of our organisation: governance, leadership, programmes, income generation and operations and processes.

Appendix 5: Youth Voice Strategy

Our Youth Voice Strategy aims to:

- Diversify, develop and support our young audiences, and be inclusive of a variety of ages, abilities, genders, sexualities, religions and backgrounds.
- Challenge discrimination against children and young people and champion their beliefs, opinions, thoughts, needs and abilities.
- Provide the opportunities and training to nurture and empower children and young people to realise their potential, become their own leaders and influence real change within their lives, The Mighty Creatives and the wider world.
- Ensure all staff are committed and have the skills to respect, listen and act upon the views of children and young people, where appropriate.
- Support and advocate to other organisations and partners to improve and embed Youth Voice within their organisations and the work they do.

In practice, all our work (strategic and operational) is supported by a diverse and dedicated Youth Board (18–25) each with their lived experience aligned to our work. They are encouraged to reflect on our past, examine the present, and help shape our future and will be an important part of our development in the future.

A full version of our Youth Voice strategy is available on request.

**Appendix 6:
Financial forecast, 2024 – 2029**

Income	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Estimated Funds brought forward	1,206,977	993,526	655,705	228,324	-
Raised Income (Confirmed)	657,413	243,035	-	-	-
Raised Income (Unconfirmed)	50,000	50,000	100,000	326,926	581,762
Investment Income	21,000	15,000	10,000	5,000	2,500
Total Income	1,935,390	1,301,561	765,705	560,250	584,262
Expenditure					
Programme Delivery (Confirmed)	487,006	170,255	-	-	-
Programme Delivery (Unconfirmed)	40,000	40,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
Operational Costs (Staffing & Overheads)	414,858	435,601	457,381	480,250	504,262
Total Expenditure	941,864	645,856	537,381	560,250	584,262
Balance					
	993,526	655,705	228,324	-	-

Appendix 7: Staff Structure

