

‘Placing Culture at the Heart of the Games’ Achievements and challenges within the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad

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Introduction

Putting ‘culture at the heart of the Games’ was one of the central promises of the cultural chapter within London 2012’s Olympic Candidature Files and remained a distinct aspiration of the Games official Cultural Programme, including the four-year Cultural Olympiad and its culmination as a 12-week London 2012 Festival in 2012. In London, ‘placing culture at the heart’ signified placing *the arts and creative industries* at the centre of the Games hosting process and thus, throughout this chapter, the reference to ‘culture’ is meant in that sense.

While many other host cities have aspired to achieve a synergy between culture, sport and education, success in this area has eluded most Games editions (Garcia, 2012a). Ongoing challenges with branding and marketing regulations, budget limitations, and the publicity priorities of core Games stakeholders, all frustrate achievement in this aspect of the hosting process, making culture – understood as arts and creative practices - one of the most difficult things to get right within an Olympic and Paralympic programme. This chapter explores London’s claim to have fulfilled this vision, while also indicating the challenges the host city’s stakeholders faced to make it a reality. The Chapter focuses on three main questions:

- 1) How was the aspiration to place culture at the heart of the games defined?
- 2) How was it delivered?
- 3) Did the UK cultural sector value the existence of a Games cultural programme?

The findings presented in this chapter are informed by over a decade of research into the cultural policy dimensions of the Olympic Movement (see Garcia, 2008; 2011; 2012a; 2012b; 2014) as well as the first nation-wide evaluation of an Olympic cultural programme commissioned by an Olympic Organising Committee for the Games: the two-year *London 2012 Cultural Olympiad Evaluation* (Garcia, 2013a). Findings derive from the analysis of official documentation produced by the London 2012 Culture Team; final summaries and recommendations presented by the London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) as part of its Olympic Transfer of Knowledge programme (LOCOG, 2012a; 2012b) and the London 2012 de-brief to the International Olympic Committee and future Games hosts (IOC, 2012a). Finally, they build on the analysis of key stakeholder interviews; public and audience surveys produced for LOCOG; a survey of all Cultural Olympiad projects conducted by the Institute of Cultural Capital and DHA; and 16 case studies (Garcia, 2013b).

1. Definition: Original vision and core values

Opinions vary over which is the most effective approach to position arts activity more centrally within the Games hosting process. The London 2012 Cultural Olympiad (CO) explored multiple angles simultaneously by developing a four-year lead-up programme using an ‘open source’ approach to programming which involved many grassroots organisations beyond the arts world, and culminating the Olympiad with a twelve-week London 2012 Festival focused on artistic excellence and ‘world-class’ acts (LOCOG, 2012a). The first was aimed at empowering communities, broadening the opportunities for direct involvement and a sense of shared ownership over the programme; the second focused on creating distinct messages attractive to arts peers, the national and international media and audiences beyond immediate communities of interest.

In order to facilitate a thematic coherence between a broad CO involving multiple-ownership of programming, and a single curated London 2012 Festival, the LOCOG Culture team committed to a series of core narrative angles or values. These evolved from the London 2012 Candidature File culture chapter (London 2012, 2004), into the original CO vision (LOCOG, 2007) and the final main objectives of the London 2012 Festival (LOCOG, 2012a). These narrative angles emphasised:

- Engaging young people, as artists, producers and audiences;
- Raising the profile of Deaf and disabled artists and providing more opportunities to showcase their work;
- Inspiring and involving the widest and most inclusive range of UK communities, reaching every region in the UK;
- Showcasing the UK as world leading hub of creativity and the creative industries, helping to develop cultural tourism;
- Celebrating London and the whole of the UK welcoming the world – its unique internationalism, cultural diversity, sharing and understanding
- Creating opportunities for large scale and active participation.

According to the LOCOG communications team, the emphasis on inclusion and diversity made these angles, not just valuable cultural objectives, but also important assets for the London 2012 communication strategy at large. As a result, the CO featured prominently within two of LOCOG’s main communication strands: the ‘engage audiences’ and ‘create atmosphere’ strands (LOCOG, 2011; personal comm., 3 Sep 2012).

The fact that CO activity could play a dual role (as both a cultural and communication asset) has been rare in previous Games editions and explains its traditional isolation from mainstream Games narratives (see Garcia, 2012a). In the case of London, although the CO received low levels of coverage and some negative press in 2009 and 2010, by the end of 2012 and early 2013, references to the CO and London 2012 Festival were common within the national UK media, as well as within public statements and reporting by Games (as opposed to specifically arts) stakeholders such as VisitBritain, the British Council and the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport. References to the CO were also widely profiled within the final London 2012 debrief to the IOC and future Games hosts in Rio de Janeiro (IOC, 2012a) and infiltrated the final narrative of other Games programmes. This was done via the usage of CO imagery as evidence of Games engagement and atmosphere, thus overcoming the traditional perception that culture only operates within its own niche and is disconnected from other Games dimensions.

Analysis of London 2012 website pages as well as their end-of-project documents¹ shows that images from iconic London 2012 Festival events were used across LOCOG team debrief presentations beyond those specific to the Culture team. These included:

- *Communication and Engagement debrief*, which referred to CO audience numbers as exemplary of Games engagement and noted how the CO was a key asset within LOCOG's 'Join In' programme, included the Games dedicated mobile app (IOC 2012b)
- *Spectator Experience debrief*, which included reference about London 2012 Festival activity taking place within the Mayor of London programme (IOC 2012c)
- *Brand and Look of the Games debrief*, which referred to the CO and *Inspire* programme as key contributors to 'Telling the Story' of the Games and encouraging people to 'Join the Journey'; as well as exemplifying the 'One Logo' approach (IOC 2012d) (see next section: Delivery.)

Despite these achievements, some important narrative challenges remained. Representatives from the IOC and International Paralympic Committee (IPC) as well as early CO stakeholders noted the difficulty of sustaining an emphasis on issues 'unique to the Olympic and Paralympic Movements' (personal comm., 8 August 2012). For the IOC and IPC, while 'engagement and atmosphere' are clear priorities of the Olympic cultural programme, and while the programme is also expected to be a platform to 'showcase the culture of the host nation', this should be complemented by an exploration of specific Olympic and Paralympic values and heritage (personal comm., 8 Aug 2012; 9 Sep 2012).

The analysis of points of view on these issues across the IOC, IPC and UK-based cultural stakeholders suggests that there are wide variations in how the notion of Games related 'values' are interpreted resulting, at times, in opposing agendas regarding what is felt to be the right value to pursue. This is evident when looking into the articulation of the main CO themes, particularly those presented as inspired by the Olympic and Paralympic Games, as discussed below.

Reflecting Olympic and Paralympic-inspired themes

The original London 2012 cultural vision emphasised Olympic and Paralympic values and themes. There were proposals to construct a '*Friend-ship*' which would travel from the Beijing 2008 Games to London. Also, there was, a plan for a *World Cultural Fair* bringing representatives from every nation competing at the Olympics, an international Torch Relay visiting the nations of Nobel Peace Prize laureates in acknowledgement of Olympic Truce aspirations, and a commitment to placing young people at the programme's centre (Garcia, 2012b: pp. 201-203). The spirit of these aspirations influenced final programming priorities, which was visible in the large-scale international approach of a number of flagship projects, the exploration of 'peace' as an inspiration for artistic expression, and the clear dominance of projects dedicated to young people. However, while at the bid stage these angles were clearly framed by narratives specific to the Olympic Movement and partly inspired by its founder, Pierre de Coubertin, by the time of their delivery, most of that original context and explicit linkages had been lost.

CO delivery partners were asked to indicate whether their organisation's experience with their projects led to greater involvement in pursuing values as defined in the CO programme's original vision. 409 projects out of 551 (74%) addressed this question and ticked against multiple options. The response split is presented below.

Table 1: Delivery partners response: Involvement in pursuing CO values

Cultural Olympiad values	Projects Count	%
Achieving International Understanding	177	43%
Bringing Together Culture and Sport	118	29%
Breaking Boundaries Between Ability and Disability	101	25%
Raising Awareness of Health and Wellbeing	99	24%
Using Culture and Sport to Advance Peace	55	15%
Raising Awareness of Environmental Sustainability	60	13%
None	81	20%

Source: ICC/DHA 2012 Survey (Garcia, 2013b) (N= 409)

Based on the survey results, it is apparent that the values of internationalism or ‘international understanding’ dominated the highest number of projects (43%), with many projects involving artists from every competing nation or all continents, and a significant proportion emphasising their links with past or future Games hosts. Amongst the first, at least four flagship projects involved artists from all 204 competing nations.ⁱⁱ Many more projects committed to bringing artists from all continents, such as the *World Shakespeare Festival* (which included *Globe to Globe*, dedicated to presenting the 37 plays by Shakespeare in 37 different languages, by production companies from 35 different nations.ⁱⁱⁱ Regarding the links with past or upcoming Olympic host nations, Brazil was one of the countries bringing the largest contingent of artists,^{iv} while China, a country which brought 70 artists. The relationships with these two host nations also stands out in terms of confirmed international exports: both China and Brazil agreed to take over a range of 2012 CO activity, which represents a notable Games legacy in terms of cultural exchange.

The second highest scoring of CO values was ‘*Bringing together Culture and Sport*’ (29% of respondents). This link was emphasised by a significant number of regional programmes funded by the newly created Legacy Trust UK fund (see Garcia 2012c), and resulted in 143 new partnerships between art and sports organisations. Several UK regions did in fact dedicate their full programme to exploring this connection, as evidenced by *imove* in Yorkshire, *Moving Together* in the West Midlands and *Relays* in the South West. During Games time, one of the most high profile projects that brought together culture and sport were the *Art in the Park* public art programme at the Olympic Park, including Anish Kapoor’s *Orbit* towering over the main stadium. Other projects included an artwork on the road coinciding with the Olympic cycling road race by artist Richard Long, and foil blankets conceived by artist Jeremy Deller being handed out to marathon runners.

Similar levels of response emerged for ‘*Raising awareness of health and wellbeing*’ and ‘*Breaking the boundaries between ability and disability*’ (25% of respondents). This resulted in the creation of the *Unlimited* programme, involving 29 new commissions by Deaf and disabled artists which were developed throughout the Olympiad period across the UK and culminated in London during the Paralympic Games.^v

Further, the number of projects indicating that their work had used ‘*culture and sport to advance peace*’ (55) was also significant, especially since this is not a common focus for arts programming in the UK and can be seen as clearly responding to the Games. High profile examples included the multi-region visual and sound (poetry) installation *Peace*

Camp, two pop-music concerts under the banner of the *Peace One Day* organisation in Derry-Londonderry and London and the performance by conductor Daniel Barenboim and his West-East Divan Orchestra of Israeli and Arab musicians. Interestingly, the peace narrative was also taken up by major cultural stakeholders delivering work beyond the remit of the CO. This was the case for the Edinburgh International Festival, which referred to the Olympic Truce principle explicitly within the introduction to its 2012 programme.

Despite these achievements, which, both in the case of the art and disability and peace inspired projects, were widely noticed within the UK and international arts worlds, their immediate impact on the Olympic and Paralympic Movement was limited, as evidenced in the level of involvement and awareness about them by members of the Olympic and Paralympic Families.^{vi} The most likely explanation for this is that the themes were mainly used to highlight the contribution that the arts world can make to either topic, without necessarily engaging in full with the specific history and institutions championed by the IOC and the IPC, such as the Olympic Truce Foundation in the case of the peace agenda.

In terms of opportunity for the explicit exploration of specific Olympic and Paralympic values and heritage, the number of projects highlighting this is small and but there are a few notable examples of innovative practice. These range from a direct (and unprecedented) collaboration with the Olympic Museum in Lausanne to showcase iconic Olympic artifacts (*The Olympic Journey*); to lectures on the origins of Olympism or the Paralympics (*De Coubertin Lecture, Mandeville Legacy*); a visual reflection on the preparations towards the London 2012 Games (photographic exhibition *BT Road to 2012*); the production of the official Olympic and Paralympic posters by iconic British artists,^{vii} and four London 2012 Festival *Film Commissions*, all by renowned British film directors and inspired by Olympic and Paralympic values or themes. It is worth noting, however, that a number of projects with significant vested interest in these values did not feature as part of the London 2012 Festival nor the wider CO, either because they did not reach the required quality threshold or due to conflict with official Games sponsor interests. The latter affected a lecture conceived as an exploration of Pierre de Coubertin ideals, which had to be re-framed as a lecture on wider education issues. This was because the lecture took place at a venue, the Southbank Centre in London, whose long-term sponsor is MasterCard, which conflicted with the interests of Visa as the IOC global sponsor.

2. Delivery: Branding and team placement within Games operations

Branding approach: One Logo Family

A distinct achievement of the London 2012 communications approach that was highlighted in all documentation handed over to the IOC as part of the final debrief and Transfer of Knowledge programme was the commitment to create and maintain a 'One Logo Family' across all channels (LOCOG 2012b). This was the first time in a Games edition that the CO visual identity was exclusively a variation on the main Games logo rather than a different pictogram. The concept of culture at the heart of the Games was therefore reinforced through integrated and highly visible branding.

Figure 1: Cultural Olympiad visual identity



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The most significant distinction within two of these CO marks was the elimination of the ‘Olympic rings’: the *Inspire* programme and the London 2012 Festival. This design represents an Olympic branding innovation and was led from its inception by the Culture team. The proposal to create versions of the London 2012 logo without the rings started with the conception of the *Inspire Mark* back in 2007. Since then, the *Inspire Mark* had been highlighted by IOC representatives as a key innovation and a step forward to provide an anchorage for locally owned initiatives, providing a more inclusive Games-related mark while avoiding ambush marketing. As one LOCOG source put it,

‘[*Inspire* was a] mechanism for all sorts of people to share the limelight or the ‘magic dust’. Expectations seem to have been high that we would only work with the usual suspects [in the arts world] [but *Inspire* is admirable] for its democracy. [The result has been the possibility] to populate the Cultural Olympiad with projects [...] from the sorts of organisation that aren’t (or weren’t) even officially constituted but wanted to do something for the Games and be treated with equal respect and enthusiasm alongside what they saw as well-resourced organisations already on the radar of the funding bodies and media.’ (personal comm., Jan 2012)

The ‘no rings’ but ‘one logo’ approach had two main positive effects in terms of bringing culture at the heart of the Games. First, it made it easier for a wide diversity of culture stakeholders, including businesses, to find ways of creating an association with the Games that did not conflict with the commercial interests of IOC global sponsors. Second, it provided a milestone towards uniting Olympic and Paralympic messages, as the CO made no differentiation between the two Games and presented a single programme rather than two separate ones.^{viii}

Despite these achievements, the brand’s application encountered some challenges, which explain the difficulty securing public awareness about the CO in the early stages. These were ongoing barriers to the proposed brand licensing implementation and limited brand visibility. The first issue is best exemplified by the *Inspire Mark*, which was created early in the programme and required a testing period. In the early stages it was unclear whether access to this mark granted permission to include explicit CO references within the promotional literature. Once the London 2012 Festival mark was created, the value of the *Inspire Mark* was put into question within some circles – particularly, well-established cultural organisations. This explains the mixed reactions of delivery partners when asked about the benefits of their association with the CO and Festival. As a result, some organisations who were granted the licence decided not to use it (eg. Edinburgh Festival Fringe). This resulted in a distancing of their project from the Games narrative.

Regarding, brand visibility issues, the CO was composed of a plethora of strands and event umbrellas, some of which gained greater visibility and buy-in from contributing partners and sector peers than others. These range from early flagship proposals such as the *World Shakespeare Festival* to regional programme brands and sub-brands such as *We Play* in the North West, composed in turn of sub-programming strands with a strong identity (eg. *Abandon Normal Devices*, *Lakes Alive*, *Blaze*). Audiences and the media tended to recognise these specific umbrellas rather than the wider CO association.

Team positioning within LOCOG: Move into the Brand and Marketing division

Beyond the branding approach, another key decision from a positioning point of view was the transfer of the Culture team from its original location within the Culture, Ceremonies and Education division into LOCOG's Brand and Marketing division. LOCOG representatives indicate that such transfer accelerated some of the brand related developments just mentioned as well as facilitating other positioning achievements. The latter could be described as key infiltrations within mainstream Games operations, which assisted ensuring visibility and linkage across LOCOG teams. They included:

- Full integration of the CO within the *Look of the Games* programme, which involved a coherent approach to dressing the host city during Games time, including a 'pink ribbon' in a widely recognisable London 2012 colour pattern for London 2012 Festival venues.
- Location of the CO press officer within the main LOCOG press and media team, enabling daily briefings on culture to the rest of the Games Communication and Engagement division, and leading to some presence within the London 2012 Main Press Centre (eg. press briefing on the *Unlimited* programme to IOC and IPC accredited Games journalists)^{ix}
- Pervasive presence of references to the CO and Festival within Brand and Marketing presentations to the Olympic and Paralympic Families in the build-up to the Games as well as within the final Debrief.

On the flip side, some of the interviewed stakeholders felt that the relationship of the CO with other cultural programmes weakened over time. This is reflected, in varying degrees, across the Live Sites programme, the Torch Relay, the Ceremonies programme and the Volunteering programme, none of which achieved the kind of relationship proposed within the bid documents (see London 2012, 2005). Further, the relationship between the CO and the Education programme, *Get Set*, was practically inexistent (See Garcia 2012b).

3. Stakeholder impact: Relevance to artists and delivery partners

A final area worth interrogating is how valuable it was for artists and delivery partners to be presenting their work in the context of the Games. A traditional challenge to make culture central to the Games experience has been the perception that the cultural sector cannot benefit from this association as they must fight for resources against sport stakeholders and the media attention moves away from their work. Challenging such pre-conceptions, British Council representatives indicate that the Olympic connection and sport in general provided a space for many organisations to come together who would have not otherwise and this grew the ambition and outcome of a wide range of initiatives. In their view, the 'Olympic Games provided a safe environment to deal with some issues that would have been difficult to touch on otherwise' (personal comm., Jun 2012).

Key benefits

When asked what were the main benefits of being part of the CO, delivery partners highlighted in particular, the opportunity to raise their national profile as well as being part of a ‘bigger national celebration’ and attracting different participants or audiences (ICC/DHA Project Survey). The figure below shows the percentage of responses against all projects who responded to this question (446 out of 551).

Table 2: Main benefits of being part of the Cultural Olympiad

Cultural Olympiad benefits	%
Gained greater national profile	67.0%
We feel part of a bigger national celebration	65.7%
Attracted different participants/audiences	59.4%
Increased the ambition/scope of our project	50.7%
Worked with partners we would not normally work with	49.6%
Attracted participants/audiences new to the arts	40.0%
Engaged more local participants/audiences	39.7%
Gained greater international profile	32.0%
Explored different areas/Established new synergies	23.3%
More UK visitors from outside our area	18.0%
More international visitors	12.3%
Other	8.5%
None	3.6%

Source: ICC / DHA Project Survey 2012 (Garcia, 2013b)

(N= 446 projects)

Those projects indicating that they saw no actual benefit being part of the CO were asked to explain why. The main issues raised were that they were not allowed to credit the CO at the time of the project (in some cases, despite having an *Inspire Mark*). In others, this is because they felt they would have achieved the same profile or presence without the association.

‘Our project was already on a large scale and would have been delivered in the same way without being part of the Cultural Olympiad. We are not aware of having gained particular new audiences or recognition as a direct result of involvement with the Cultural Olympiad, to which the project was added quite late in the day.’ (ICC/ DHA Project Survey 2012)

An important aspect emphasised by delivery partners was that that without the CO their project would not have existed, that is, the CO ‘created the opportunity’ for their project to

happen in the first place (ICC/DHA Project Survey). A range of projects also emphasised how being part of the CO added to their sense of ‘pride’ and ‘confidence’ (civic pride for their community, pride as artists having a ‘life-changing experience’); how being endorsed by the CO ‘enhanced their marketing profile’ and contributed to increasing international media attention (particularly for projects showcasing the work of Deaf and disabled artists, for which the CO connection brought a ‘new context’ or ‘new platform’); how it provided access to highly specialised teams which in turn raised the quality thresholds for producers and artists (in particular, for work in an international setting)^x; and how it encouraged different kinds of partnership and collaborations, largely thanks to the added confidence that having ‘early Cultural Olympiad endorsement’ - and thus being part of a broad national celebration - brought to otherwise reluctant local or regional stakeholders. Many projects highlighted the value of being part of a broader umbrella programme to profile aspects of programming that may otherwise have operated in isolation. As an example, this was noted with regards to the Deaf and disability angle as promoted by the *Unlimited* programme and *Accentuate* in the South East; the international angle brought by the *World Shakespeare Festival* and the young people emphasis brought by dedicated regional or national programmes such as *NE-Generation* or *somewhereto* .

This returns focus to the importance of having chosen a series of core values or narrative angles as key anchors to the CO and to have developed them with a degree of consistency from the Bid stage onwards, as described in Section 1 (Definitions). Although it is unclear from survey results whether the Games connection was consistently seen as an added point of distinction or value,^{xi} the emphasis on Olympic or Paralympic Games inspired themes such as young people, internationalism and breaking the perceived barriers of disability is noted as an important step forward to revitalise work in these areas, bring new kinds of artists to the limelight, create new types of collaborations and attract different kinds of audiences.

Challenges

As part of the broader *Cultural Olympiad Evaluation* exercise, in order to gain some closer qualitative insight into the experiences of artists, participants and event organisers, research was conducted on a series of case studies across projects with a particular emphasis on young people’s engagement (11 case studies), profiling of artists with disabilities (9 case studies) and tourism promotion (3 case studies, of which 2 are also exemplars of digital innovation) (Garcia, 2013b: p.13). While the range of benefits highlighted by delivery partners broadly coincide with the point noted above, they also noted ongoing challenges that limited the value of being part of the CO and being associated with the Games. These were mainly related to management and branding issues.

From a management point of view, as has been discussed extensively about previous Games editions (see Garcia, 2012a), there were some complex challenges for cultural organisations and artists to operate within the CO. Project managers of youth-oriented projects did not find it easy to think and plan strategically because of the complex funding and partnership arrangements set up to deliver their projects, and the ongoing restructuring and funding cuts happening in many partner organisations. The need to report different information to multiple funders, and the negotiations around how partners should be credited and acknowledged given the strict (and changing) branding requirements associated with the CO, were felt to be time-consuming and stressful. In the context of *Unlimited*, artists valued the support they had received from LOCOG and related agencies to develop and manage their commissions, but some felt that more could have been done

to broker opportunities to show their work. While some found the reporting requirements to be an unnecessary burden, others felt that they helped them to keep on track. Many of the artists acknowledged the support and encouragement received from the main funder, Arts Council England, who championed and facilitated their projects from the start of their application process through to their completion. But they found it difficult to respond to opportunities because of LOCOG 'wanting to retain control', particularly over the timing of previews, which can be seen as an unavoidable consequence of creating a joint programme and wanting to ensure appropriate timing coordination with the hosting of the Paralympic Games.

Also in common with previous Games editions, despite the many advancements made with the approach to branding by London 2012, artists and producers across many projects still reported a series of difficulties in meeting LOCOG's branding requirements, particularly in the early stages. The process of getting approval for marketing material was complex and time consuming and in some cases created problems when artists or organisations missed venues' print deadlines. In the case of *Unlimited*, there was no central website which brought together information about the commissions, and some artists felt that the programme had become lost in the wider CO and might have benefited from additional strategic support.

The final point raised by many delivery partners, beyond the case study interviewees, relates to the difficulty in either fully understanding or explaining to others what the CO was about. This was particularly noted for projects that did not become part of the London 2012 Festival, which provided greater focus and national media visibility in 2012. For instance, one project notes how, despite success achieving their own core objectives (e.g. supporting creative innovation) they had some difficulty regarding the establishment of this project within the wider regional CO programme, and with the visibility of the Olympiad more generally:

'One key concern highlighted by many stakeholders relates to the lack of understanding of the Cultural Olympiad amongst stakeholders outside of the programme, the audiences and communities it serves to benefit, and also the media. This is not isolated to the East Midlands and is felt amongst stakeholder to be very much a national issue and therefore the responsibility of LOCOG to address'.
(Focus, 2010)

In the case of projects focused on young people, many case study interviewees did not report the CO being a significant motivating factor for participants after the initial connection had been made, and described the positive and negative aspects of being associated with the CO as finely balanced.

'The Cultural Olympiad was a benefit because it was timed. It was a hook for the young people to be part of something big. But you had to start by explaining to young people what the Cultural Olympiad was – they [LOCOG] needed to be a bit more savvy about branding it. It was hard for young people to understand why if they were such an important part of the Cultural Olympiad, they couldn't get involved in other things such as the Torch Relay, difficult to manage their expectations'. (Personal comm., Dec 2012)

It is worth noting, however, that these challenges were consistently raised as a frustration in the early years, and that most issues had been improved on or addressed by the end of

the Olympiad. The expectation from many was that, given the emphasis on evaluation and knowledge transfer, the lessons learnt in London should be passed on to future hosts more easily than has been previously the case so that positive templates, such as a more flexible approach to branding via the *Inspire Mark*, can be implemented earlier in the hosting process.

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Overall, as with any Games experience, there was scope to do more, but what comes across most clearly around the 2012 CO is that the achievements were shared by the sector, not just enjoyed by the organisers, with individual regions and nations breeding their own successes. Further, the London 2012 Festival brought a distinct aspirational focus to an otherwise dispersed programme and fulfilled a crucial Games-time objective to bring the nation together in a common endeavour. Yet the broader CO allowed this common cultural endeavour to be marked by the diversity of curatorial visions, varied ideals, and even controversial ideas about the role culture should play within the Olympic programme. As an agitator and aggregator for an aspirational series of programmes, the London 2012 culture team can claim to have placed culture at the heart of the Games in one important respect: by engaging in discussion and considering angles that touched (even if, at times, failed to fully deliver) on the interests of all Games stakeholders.

Conclusions: Immediate legacies for the Olympic and Paralympic Movements

By 2014, the first London 2012 Cultural Olympiad legacies are apparent and range from benefits for future Games hosts to benefits for cultural stakeholders across the UK's nations and regions. The CO's operational and programming framework has informed the planning and delivery of Olympic and Paralympic cultural programmes in Sochi 2014 and Rio 2016. In particular, the CO's extensive collaborations with artists from Rio and Brazil have foregrounded important cultural dimensions of the Rio 2016 programme, while London 2012 Festival partners built bridges with other UK-based major-events' cultural programmes, such as Derry/Londonderry 2013 UK City of Culture and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. This concluding section focuses on a reflection about the strongest cultural legacies for future Games hosts, as this is the area that has been most consistently overlooked in previous Games editions.

The London 2012 CO tested and delivered a range of innovative practices which serve as a template for future Games. Key aspects of this were a more flexible branding framework for cultural partners and comprehensive nation-wide funding and delivery mechanisms. On the first point, the creation of the *Inspire Mark* enabled a wide range of organisations to associate with London 2012 without creating conflict with the interests of the Games commercial partners, and this expanded considerably the opportunities for inclusion of diverse activities, particularly at grassroots level.

Olympic Movement stakeholders have also highlighted the added-value of key programming decisions that had no precedent in previous Games. In particular, the *Unlimited* programme acted as a multi-year cultural bridge between the Olympic and Paralympic Games. This programme culminated during the Paralympic Games in London, but had been promoted as a CO Major Project since 2008 and took place in diverse parts of the UK in the years preceding 2012. Informants at the International Olympic Committee indicate that they would support a similar approach in future Games, thus encouraging a joint cultural programme rather than a division between Olympic and Paralympic cultural

activities. This London 2012 legacy is already materialising in the lead up to Rio 2016, and it is one of the key learning points highlighted by Rio de Janeiro's cultural authorities.

Finally, the approach to partnership and, in particular, the explicit emphasis on handover activity, resulting in significant collaborations with the hosts of future one-off UK events as well as future Olympic and Paralympic Games hosts, can be seen as the source of additional legacies for both Movements and as evidence that the CO can influence the framing of other major events. For the Olympic and Paralympic Movements, to observe such extensive collaboration across Games hosts is another indication of the significant ways in which the cultural programme can promote international understanding and this is an additional Games legacy.

The evidence presented in this paper and the extensive range of dedicated evaluations, from the broad CO framework to countless national and regional projects across the UK, is proof of the dedication to fully document this experience so as to extract key lessons and facilitate knowledge transfer. This is the first time that the official Games Cultural Programme is examined in such detail. This exercise has provided previously unavailable insights into how a CO can make a difference, not only to the Games, but also to the host city and nation's approach to delivering and experiencing culture and the arts. These pages provide evidence of the scale and breath of London 2012's cultural achievements as well as the reasons for ongoing challenges and should be seen a useful point of reference for major cultural programming within large sporting events for years to come.

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ⁱ Documents accessed via the Olympic Games Knowledge Management (OGKM) extranet with kind permission from the International Olympic Committee.

ⁱⁱ The most notable attempts were *BT River of Music*, a weekend of free contemporary music acts involving 202 nations, and *Poetry Parnassus*, a gathering of poets representing 204 nations. Other projects emphasised the connections between the UK and the 204 Olympic Nations. These included *The World in London*, which represented almost every Olympic nation via photographs of London-based people from around the world, or *Discovering Places: Walk the World*, which explored how ‘these countries and their people have shaped our [natural] surroundings’ (ICC/DHA Project Survey).

ⁱⁱⁱ In the aftermath of its world renowned Festival, Edinburgh also used the Games as a springboard to launch the first *International Culture Summit*, asking culture ministers from across the world coinciding in London for the Games to travel up to Edinburgh on the day after the Olympic Closing Ceremony

^{iv} The ICC/DHA Project Survey indicates there have been 270 artists from Brazil, the sixth largest overseas contingent after Germany, Venezuela, the US, France and Ireland.

^v A full report on London 2012 projects dedicated to showcase the work of Deaf and disabled artists across the Olympic and Paralympic periods is available as a Case Study at: <http://www.beatrizgarcia.net/?portfolio=london-2012-cultural-olympiad-2>

^{vi} This has been noted in a number of stakeholder interviews with representatives of both the IOC and the IPC. In the case of the IPC, while the contribution of Deaf and disabled artists to the Paralympic Opening Ceremony was extensively praised and the Ceremony was viewed as the best in Paralympic history, understanding of the merit of *Unlimited* to advance the Paralympic cause was less forthcoming. Views on this differ between IOC and IPC representatives: while the IOC refers to *Unlimited* as one of the most distinctive aspects of Cultural Olympiad programming, and praise the fact that it developed across both Games thus providing a valuable bridge, IPC representatives claim not to have been sufficiently involved and did not see it as directly relevant to their immediate stakeholders. This speaks to the need to keep advancing this valuable but complex area of Games cultural programming and finding more bridges and a common language, not just across both Games, but between the arts world and representatives of both Movements..

^{vii} This practice is not considered innovative from the IOC point of view, as it has been explored in other Games editions, such as Los Angeles 1984. From the London 2012 team point of view, however, the involvement of leading contemporary British artists brings back a tradition that had not been maintained in any of the Games recent editions and is an example of positioning avant-garde arts practice at the heart of the Games.

^{viii} The *Unlimited* programme was the main umbrella under which the Cultural Olympiad presented work by Deaf and disabled artists and its finale was presented in London during the Paralympic Games. However, build up activity had developed throughout the preceding years and took place in other parts of the UK and other Cultural Olympiad strands also made an emphasis on showcasing the work of disabled artists since 2009, in particular, the LTUK funded *Accentuate* programme in the South East. This can be seen as evidence that activity inspired by the Paralympics was fully integrated within the main Cultural Olympiad narrative rather than being a separate programme only relevant in the context of the Paralympic Games.

^{ix} Despite these achievements, the presence of the Cultural Olympiad within mainstream Games media environments was limited. Observations throughout the Games period show that information about the Cultural Olympiad had a very low presence within the Main Press Centre, International Broadcasting Centre and the media centre dedicated to non-accredited journalists (London Media Centre). As was the case in previous Games editions, the most effective asset for the Cultural Olympiad to engage the media was to establish its own dedicated Festival Press Centre. But while the latter ensured a good flow of communications with the press culture critics (and clearly resulted in significant volume of coverage) it was not necessarily conducive to positioning the programme as central to the Games.

^x Some groups noted the value of having ‘specialist support from the London 2012 Festival team when the Visas for all the [project] artists were refused [entry] and direct contact was made between LOCOG and [the relevant] Consulate Office’ (ICC/DHA Project Survey)

^{xi} For example, one delivery partner noted: ‘The outcomes and benefits highlighted [...] are considered to be a result of the inclusive and accessible nature of the making of [the project] rather than solely related to affiliation with the Cultural Olympiad’ (ICC/DHA Project Survey)