

New Music Plus...



A longitudinal impact study of New Music Plus... London and North West regional pilots - executive summary

November 2011

"NMP... was blue sky thinking made real."

NMP...NW host organisation

"NMP... developed me, it developed the artists I worked with on the co-production, and it developed my host organisation. It raised the bar for us all."

NMP... London producer

"NMP was a really good integrated process of development. The sharing was brilliant and structure really thorough. We were supported and felt part of a family, which we hadn't expected."

NMP...NW host organisation



the :: hub

About New Music Plus...

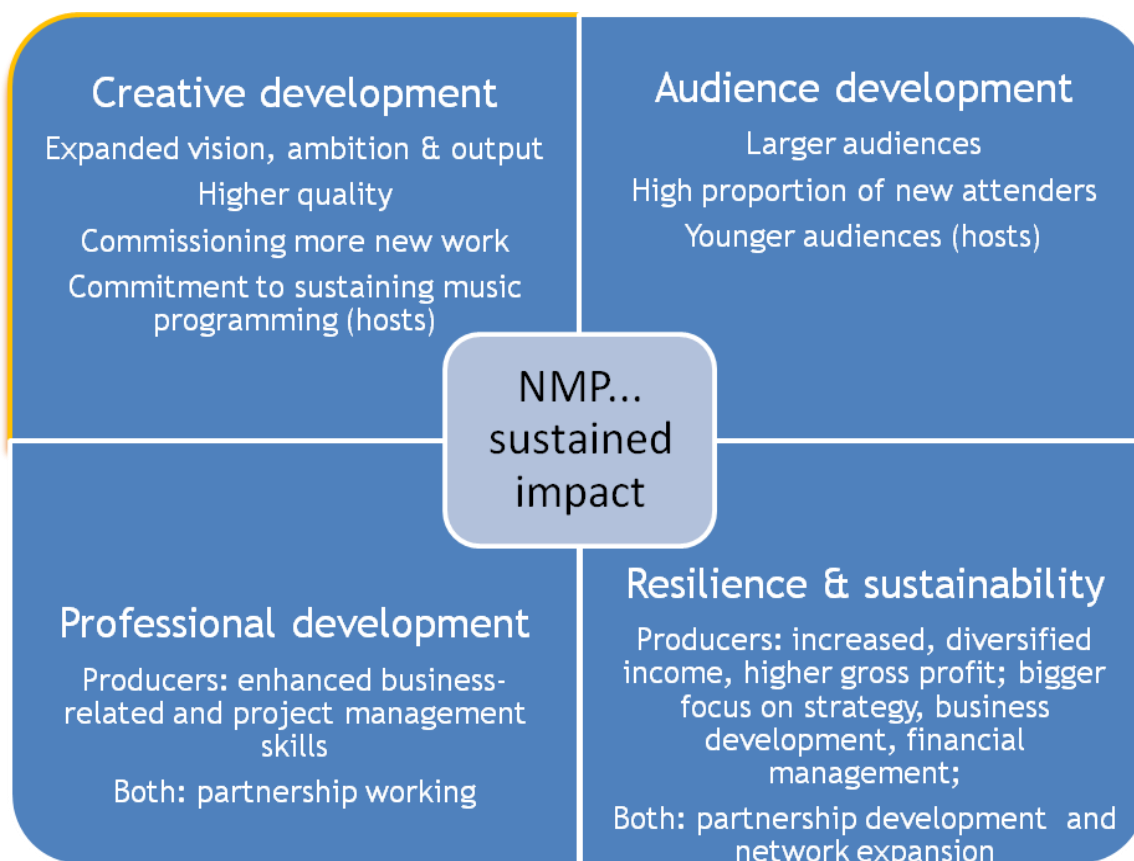
New Music Plus... is a professional development programme which was initiated in 2009 by the PRS for Music Foundation in collaboration with the hub. It aims to strengthen leadership skills and cross art-form learning amongst organisations and independent producers that want to develop their approach to programming and building new audiences for new music. Between 2009-2011, New Music Plus... supported two regional producer and host organisation cohorts, one in London (2009/10) and the other in North West England (2010/11).

About this research

This longitudinal impact study summarises the programme's sustained impact on producers and host organisations who took part in our regional pilots. It is based on 15 producer self completion surveys and semi-structured interviews with 8 producers and 11 host organisations.

Headline areas of impact are creative, audience and professional development, resilience and financial sustainability

Our research indicates unequivocally that NMP... has had a sustained impact on participating producers and host organisations alike. This impact is four-fold:



Impact on participating producers

NMP... has clarified producers' vision; they're doing more ambitious, higher quality work and commissioning more new music

“Through NMP... I was able to try new stuff. It made me aware of what I'm capable of, and it built trust in me amongst the South Bank Centre team... Before NMP, I didn't even go to the South Bank, let alone think about working with them. It just wasn't on my radar.”

NMP... London producer

- Three quarters of producers surveyed (11) have a clearer artistic vision and are producing larger, more ambitious projects, thanks to NMP...
- 9 say they are doing higher quality work, and 8 are commissioning more new work as a result of NMP...
- All but three are producing more projects and events than before NMP...

The NMP... network is powering much of this new work, and even for those who only completed NMP... earlier this year, it has created an important new income stream

- Three quarters (11) have developed projects with other network members since they finished NMP
- All but one have produced work with other people they met through NMP
- The proportion of business income that these projects represent for producers ranges from 10-80%

Partnerships forged through NMP... have had a clear creative and wider business impact on the producers

- All of the producers have been introduced to new potential collaborators through NMP... partnerships; in the current economic climate such relationships will be key to the producers' ongoing sustainability
- Over three quarters (12) said NMP... partnerships have enabled them to work in new artforms/spaces
- 10 producers said NMP... partnerships have brought new audiences to their work

Most producers report an increase in audience numbers and new attenders post NMP...

- Based mainly on box office and front of house data, two thirds (8) of producers reported new attender levels of over 40% across 2011
- Based on the same data sources, two thirds (10) of producers projected increased audience numbers for 2011, despite the recession
- Just three expect audience numbers to go down this year

NMP... has had an unequivocally positive impact on the producers' business practice, increasing their resilience in difficult economic times

“I'm better focused on my finances. I'm much more on it... It's all a bit more in focus in terms of what to say yes to. Before I wasn't too discerning... I question everything now. 'What's this going to do for me? Is it going to make any money? Will it develop me?'.”

NMP... London producer

- All 15 producers said their financial planning and management has improved because of NMP...

- 14 said the same of their project planning and budgeting
- 13 producers said their partnership working has improved
- 12 producers report an improvement in their fundraising activity
- Producers attribute this to an important change in attitude to planning engendered by NMP...

Producers have better partnership skills and are more discerning when forging partnerships

“Working with my host organisation was the first time I’d had to plan, budget things properly, justify my decisions... I wasn’t used to being answerable to someone else.”

NMP... London producer

- In terms of their approach to partnership, just under two thirds of producers (9) said that that NMP... has improved their partnership and project management skills
- It’s also means they better understand which partnerships to say yes to and which to walk away from and how organisations work

New connections forged through NMP...are key to its most widespread ongoing impact on the producers

- The two programme elements most commonly cited as ‘really important’ in terms of sustained impact on the producers were its mentoring support and the advice given by members of the project team
- 10 also cited as ‘really important’ the opportunities for collaboration offered by people they’ve met at various NMP... events
- Reinforcing the importance the NMP...network has to producers who typically work in isolation, all but one said network members are useful sounding boards and have brokered new partnerships for them
- 8 have collaborated on shared or reciprocal marketing

The vast majority of producers have seen increases in both income and gross profit margins since taking part in NMP...¹

- Examining income and gross profit across the two cohorts, the picture is very positive despite the recession; NMP... has clearly helped to recession proof the producers
- All but one of the producers points to an increase in income since completing NMP..., with the majority of income increases being around or above 50%
- Gross profit margins have also gone up for all but three of the producers²
- Looking in more detail at income comparisons, key analysis includes:
 - **Ticket income was up for all producers also active as promoters**, the smallest increase being £500-£1500 (+200%) and largest £12,000-£20,000 (+83%)
 - **Producer or artist fees charged on projects not their own have risen** across the board; the smallest increase was from nil-£900, the largest £1900-£11000
 - All five who reported applying for **Arts Council England** funding in the year after NMP... report **funding increases**, the largest from £5000-£24,000, and the smallest £69,990-£73,000
 - Of the three producers who applied for **ACE portfolio status** two were successful

¹ NMP... producers told us about the financial year they started NMP... and the year after they finished. For NMP...London producers we compared 2008/9 and 2010/11 actual, and for NMP...NW producers 2009/10 actuals and 2011/12 projections.

² Please see Appendix 1 for more detailed financial analyses for the two cohorts.

- Total trust and foundation grants rose to £19,500 after NMP... from £10,775 before NMP...

NMP...has had a major impact on the producers' financial sustainability

- Just over half (8) said NMP... has helped them 'weather the recession' by increasing their focus on income generation and securing new business, and better equipping them to do this
- The same number reported NMP... has enabled them to diversify their work and income streams, and /or given them the tools to plan more effectively
- Meanwhile half are more focused on monetising projects rather than always doing 'one offs'

Impact on participating host organisations

As a result of NMP... most organisations have retained their music programme - despite cuts to programming budgets

"The timing of NMP for us was great - we were entering a financially difficult period and NMP added strength and depth to our programming, when our previous reaction would have been to let go of music and focus on our core programme."

NMP...NW host organisation

- 10 out of 11 host organisations said that as a result of NMP... the proportion of music events within their programme has subsequently remained the same or increased
- Despite cuts to programme budgets of 10-40% across all host organisations, 6 reported that - as a direct result of NMP... - spending on music as a proportion of programme budget has increased, and 2 that it's about the same

Thanks to NMP... music events are more ambitious, better integrated into host organisation's programmes and feature more new work

"We have much more of an understanding of (music), so where we would have turned down proposals in the past through a lack of familiarity with (it)... and scepticism about audiences, we feel empowered and educated through NMP...It's enabled us to take more risks with programming decisions."

NMP...London host organisation

- All but one of the 8 organisations interviewed in depth felt their programme was more ambitious as a result of NMP...
- Three quarters (6) reported that music was much better integrated into their overall programme
- Half (4) report commissioning more new music because of involvement in NMP...
- Just under half said that as a result of NMP... their music programme was more diverse
- Impact has been most pronounced in non-music organisations

All host organisations plan more work with music producers and are better equipped to do it

- All 11 of those surveyed said they are more open to working with external producers, and will continue to do so
- Over three quarters (9) said they can better judge which partnership projects to say yes or no to

- Eight reported that NMP... means they better understand how to negotiate/manage partnerships
- Only four collaborate across departments on music events; others say this will take more time

NMP... has led to an increase in audience numbers - and new attenders - for organisations, and it's NMP... producers who have catalysed this

"Music audiences can be quite niche but producers understand this and know how to reach them. That we were able to tap into networks of local producers to reach new audiences made the whole network of NMP valuable to us."

NMP...NW host organisation

- Based on box office and front of house data, three quarters (6) of those we interviewed report bigger audiences for music events post-NMP...
- The same number reported that music events since NMP... had attracted new attenders; 4 said that new attenders account for over 50% of music event audiences; 2 more reported 10% and 25% increases
- Most attribute audience increases to their music programme's greater diversity, its better integration into the overall programme and NMP... producer audience networks

As a result of NMP... music is a bigger part of host organisations' strategic planning

"NMP gave us a whole year of thinking how music could be integrated into the whole of our programming. Now it's part of almost every public event and a key part of our future thinking - so forthcoming collections and exhibitions will have music as a key curatorial element. It's also informing our family and schools programmes."

NMP...NW host organisation

- Three quarter of host organisations interviewed (6) said that as a result of NMP... music is a bigger part of their programming strategy than before, and that NMP... has expanded their creative horizons
- Just under half (5) said music is a bigger part of their audience development strategy
- All organisations planning to take music forward (10) said their NMP...partnerships are a key part of how they plan to do this, in light of budget cuts and the need to minimise organisational risk

NMP... has increased in-house producer ambition, understanding and the quality of their work

"It forced our producer to do things he had to struggle to make time for. But they were ultimately so beneficial to our programme."

NMP... NW host organisation

- All but two said that their in-house producer... is more ambitious for their programme and that they now produce higher quality work, as a result of understanding gained via NMP...
- Just under three quarters of those surveyed (8) fed back that their producer has clarified their vision as a result of NMP... and diversified the work they want to do and artists they want to work with
- Two thirds (7) reported NMP... meant their co-producers are better able to work in partnership
- Just under half (5) said that, thanks to NMP..., their producer is more audience-focused
- All were clear that their producer's NMP... experience is producing real results for their organisation