An Ecosystem:

What we need for effective collaboration in Scotland

Gillian Hunt

About Reform Scotland

Reform Scotland, a charity registered in Scotland, is a public policy institute which works to promote increased economic prosperity, opportunity for all, and more effective public services. Reform Scotland is independent of political parties and any other organisations. It is funded by donations from private individuals, charitable trusts and corporate organisations. Its Director is Chris Deerin and Alison Payne is the Research Director. Both work closely with the Trustee Board, chaired by Lord McConnell, which meets regularly to review the research and policy programme.

Gillian Hunt

Gillian Hunt is an educational consultant collaborating with third sector organisations, businesses and national organisations to support young people towards successful futures. Her work has involved discussion, research and networking with organisations and individuals across Scotland. She is known for her skills and expertise in interacting with others, exchanging information and connecting people and organisations.

Gillian has been an educator for more than 30 years and initially as a primary teacher, holding several leadership roles in schools before moving into the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) as Leadership and Management Development Officer. Gillian was the first Academic Co-ordinator of the Chartered Teacher Programme at the University of Edinburgh, and held that role for two years before returning to the Council as Learning and Development Manager. Gillian served as a panel member on the Edinburgh Children's Panel for five years and led the Scottish Professional Learning Network from 2014 to 2016.

Gillian is the chair of the board of Scran Academy and a board trustee of the Children's Parliament. She was one of the leading committee members of Scottish Educational Leadership Management and Administration Society (SELMAS) for more than 10 years.

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Foreword

This is an important paper by Gillian Hunt, and Reform Scotland is delighted to host it. During our work, we have regularly come across inspiring and effective education programmes in the third sector and elsewhere that would seem to have much to teach the wider education system, but that have been lost or ignored due to systemic bias or inertia. Through her conversations and investigations, Gillian identifies these and others reasons behind why Scotland fails to make the most of some of the nation's most exciting educational innovations. She also sets out examples of where the state, the third sector and the private sector have worked together to positive effect.

No one has a monopoly on wisdom, and our education system is hardly in such splendid condition that we can afford to turn a blind eye to good and improving ideas, wherever they come from. Instead, those involved in the state sector should always have open, curious minds, and seek to build trusting relationships with innovators and diverse partners, wherever they are working. They should also be willing to experiment and make - and learn from - mistakes.

We hope that this paper will be read by those in positions of authority across the education world and that it will provide food for thought. We all share an interest in getting the best out of every young Scottish person - and that is best achieved by all sides working positively together.

Chris Deerin
Director
Reform Scotland

Executive Summary

Purpose

The paper examines examples of co-operation between the third sector and government, national and local. It suggests what lessons can be learned from these experiences, and recommends ways of working that will make partnerships more effective.

The problem

Scottish Government seeks to ensure that every child and young person can succeed, regardless of their background. It aims to raise attainment, promote the highest standards of literacy and numeracy and close the gap between disadvantaged and more affluent learners. This cannot be achieved using only the resources available within the education system. We need to listen to, learn from, and collaborate with the third and private sectors. But first, we must overcome a reluctance to do so.

Analysing the problem

Why should there be this hesitation? Why is there still such a divide between the public and other sectors, even when all want the same thing - success for our young people? There are many individuals and organisations keen to offer their help. Why is it often rejected or ignored?

This paper is the outcome of more than 30 conversations, both with those inside and outside the system. (The full list can be found in the Acknowledgements section of the paper.) This survey, although not comprehensive, is probably uniquely extensive.

The conversations revealed many effective collaborations, leading to impressive outcomes, but there were other cases where partnerships failed and good ideas were lost. Everyone was asked about the factors which help or hinder collaborations. No single barrier to collaboration emerged. Lack of knowledge about services and support available outside the system; aversion to risk; a concern with yesterday's problems instead of today's; an unwillingness to give up power; and an inability to learn from small scale projects all played their part. Above all the fragmented nature of policy-making; a tendency to see the system as more important than the individual; an undue interest in outputs than outcomes; an inability to see the big picture; fear of making the wrong decision; and competition for funding were deeply damaging. Unintended consequences feature throughout.

Decisions are made on inadequate evidence, and often proposals about potential collaborations are not even debated. The third (and private) sector are seen as outside the system. The public sector too often fails to recognise value added by the others.

Effective collaborations exhibited a number of common factors. Strong champions and trusting relationships are indispensable. Good partnerships involve knowing what it is you want to change, bringing in others to help, and being willing to learn from mistakes. Taking ownership, accepting accountability and showing persistence are essential.

The successful operation and expansion of partnerships between public authorities and charitable voluntary organisations depends, above all, on the willingness of both sides to

approach any relationship as one of equals ,with a shared objective in mind. However, two specific recommendations are made which would certainly accelerate consideration by both sectors of the potential scope for such partnerships, as well as encourage the sharing of good practice.

Main recommendations to address the problem

1. The Scottish Government commission a national voluntary organisation to map all third sector organisations currently partnering with local and national authorities. This map or hub of information would be available to all sectors, and to parents and other users, signposting services.

2. Government departments, local authorities, schools and other relevant state sector participants be required to nominate an existing senior member of their staffs to be accountable for recording and promoting appropriate third sector relationships.

Additional recommendations

3. Adapt current funding models to allow for longer term planning, simplify local authority procurement, ensure that funding follows the individual and make more use of social impact investment.

4. Ensure that learning from others and consideration of how that learning could be applied by providing opportunities to share practice across sectors such as shadowing, mentoring, coaching, learning rounds and shared conferences.

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Sharing means you get more - the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Leading with moral purpose and an unshakeable determination to make a difference are crucial.

Full detail of the recommendations can be found on pages 23 to 25 of the paper.

1. Background

We are seeking both excellence and equity in our education system, interested in developing the whole child/young person and removing the barriers that some face. Experience tells us that schools can do much but they cannot achieve excellence and equity on their own. There are many committed and talented innovators operating around the edges of our education system who want to help but are often ignored and opportunities are lost. What do we have do differently to utilise these opportunities?

The problem we face, is that those innovators do not get the opportunity to influence and there has been reluctance to listen to voices outside the inner circle of Scottish Government, its quangos and teacher unions.

The paper presents, from national and international guidance, what we want for our children and young people, and examines selected examples of actual and attempted co-operation between the third sector, and local and national government. Section 3 examines what prevents us from achieving desired outcomes and in section 4 a number of highly effective collaborations are explored and reasons for their success suggested. Lessons learned to improve relationships and efficacy and scope of collaboration and partnerships are identified and recommendations are presented.

More than 30 conversations took place with individuals from a range of organisations in preparation of this paper. However, the views presented in this paper are those of the author. A full list can be found in the Acknowledgements on page 27.

The proverb attributed to African cultures: it takes a village to raise a child, has resonance here, as it will take all of us to do this. Having real collaboration across Scotland would bring a huge resource as we all have the same desire: to make sure that all of our children and young people get the very best from their education and move on to successful futures.

2. What we want in Scotland

National perspectives

In 2015 Nicola Sturgeon told education leaders that education would be her priority in office. "*Let me be clear, I want to be judged on this. If you are not, as First Minister, prepared to put your neck on the line on the education of our young people then what are you prepared to. It really matters.*" Does anyone now believe that the First Minister's number one priority is education? It is probably fair to say that the situation was bad before SNP's election in 2007 and would be in the future even if political control were to change, unless the nature of the relationship between the state and the education system, and with the third and private sectors, were to be seriously re-examined.

In 2021 the Scottish Government commissioned Professor Ken Muir to provide independent advice on aspects of education reform in Scotland. Holding a national discussion was a key recommendation of the resulting report. Shirley-Anne Sommerville, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills said, "*we want to bring the widest possible range of voices and views into the room…this is a discussion for everyone.*" Ms Sommerville said that we have much to celebrate in Scottish education, that we have much to be proud of but that we must never stop in our efforts to improve the system.

It is clearly time to do something different. In 1872, when the state stepped in, there was an extensive network of charitable schools already operating in Scotland. The churches were the biggest funder but not the only one. Instead of the state supplementing the resources being provided charitably: it simply took over. What might have happened if they had not taken over? Is it possible that Scotland would have got an equally well-funded but more varied and more locally-responsive system had it pursued a different course.

Looking at the plethora of recent documentation it is clear that all seek the best for our children and young people, but there is little in the documentation on how changes and improvements will be achieved, no examples of current innovation from which to learn and nothing on what success might look like. Although output is included, outcomes, in the main, are missing.

['Putting Learners at the Centre: Towards a Future Vision for Scottish Education](#)', by Professor Ken Muir (March 2022) is the most recent report to be referred to. In the foreword he said that he had been encouraged to be bold and radical. "*it (the report) offers what I believe to be a clear, pragmatic way forward for Scottish education that builds on its current successes, provides real opportunities for all learners, better supports teachers and practitioners and re-establishes Scotland s world-leading education credentials*". Professor Muir suggested that his recommendations provided," *initial steps in creating a more coherent landscape that inspires public trust in our education and examination syste*m". Crucially he stated that his recommendations provoked questions for all who have a stake in education. These statements advocated for learning from practice and ensuring that all have a part to play in the discussion about the future of education.

Professor Muir's consultation included engagement with 5,493 children and young people who were asked about: their vision for education; their views on curriculum and assessment, technologies and inspection; and how involved they felt in relation to decision-making. An

additional report, '[Education Reform: Consulting with children and young people](#)' was produced. It is of interest that in the 12 to 18 age group only 51.1% agreed or strongly agreed that their education meets their needs as a learner and a little more than half agreed that education will help them realise their goals. Fewer than half agreed that vocational/professional subjects and academic subjects are seen as equally important. Only 33% agreed that they were having the best possible education.

The International Council of Education Advisors was established in 2016 to provide advice to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister on education policies and practices. Their most recent [report](#) was published in December 2020. Recommendations included: a commitment to system change that is driven by collaborative professional relationships; having an asset-based view of students, families and communities and refrains from scapegoating marginalised youth. It was suggested that we, "*redesign Scottish education as a universally designed system for all contingencies and disruptions...that becomes increasingly inclusive, responsive, agile and collaborative, with changes in government resource allocations that reflect this shift.*"

The education system in Scotland probably sets most store in the reports that Scottish Government commissions from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In June 2021 the OECD published '[Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future](#)'. It stated that, "*A central characteristic of CfE is its attempt to offer and promote diversified pathways to fit what learners want and need to study. In this collaboration between schools and their partners were especially highlighted as key factors of success.*" However, OECD met with only two schools to come to this conclusion. Surely for this assertion to be made there should be a wider evidence base, particularly as this is what we aspire to. The report also stated that, "*A customised curriculum can be delivered in a combination of the school setting, a college and/or a community setting*" but examples are not provided. Working examples of this type of approach will be described later in the paper and their blockers and enablers explored.

'**Improving outcomes for young people through school education**' was published by Audit Scotland in March 2021, one year after the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Included in the six key messages of this [report](#), were that the pandemic had reinforced the importance of school education and other sectors working together to tackle issues which affect young people's life chances, such as child poverty and health and wellbeing.

In December 2021 **Achieving Excellence and Equity: 2022 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan** was published by the Scottish Government. This [plan](#) highlighted the need for effective collaboration and for clear roles and responsibilities to deliver on six drivers and five priorities. It stated, "*We are working with our partners to develop an empowered and collaborative system.*" This is an admirable and appropriate aim to have, however, it did not state who the partners would be, nor how collaboration would be achieved.

We seem very able to describe the same problem over and over again, without actually fixing it.

In addition to national perspectives

Several organisations such as the Goodison Group in Scotland and Scotland's Futures Forum, Reform Scotland and 'The Edinburgh Open Education Conference', organised by HMC Headmasters' & Headmistresses' Conference, have examined such issues, held events for varied and diverse audiences and sought to put forward ideas, suggestions and solutions.

The Goodison Group in Scotland and Scotland's Futures Forum have been exploring what education and schooling could look like in 2030, and beyond. The first project report '**Schooling, Education and Learning 2030 and Beyond**' was published in March 2020, with a further report in March 2021. The 2020 report stated, "*some participants described the current education system as linear, inflexible, beige and boring, held back by structures and funding constraints, conversely, models of possible futures were described as less hierarchical and more collaborative, adaptive, free-flowing, supportive or colourful. These models were also described as having more scope for greater cross-fertilisation and bringing in those who had been previously disengaged.*" The report includes a scenario of what education might look like in 2030 and beyond.

In the 2021 report, was a call for deep listening and an openness to ideas and another national debate or conversation was mooted. Both reports fed into Professor Ken Muir's consultation.

In January 2021 Reform Scotland's Commission on School Reform hosted an online conference entitled 'Engaging the Disengaged - Alternative Approaches to Education'. The event explored the issue of disengagement from school, and some of the imaginative and successful initiatives making a difference to this cohort of young people. Third sector organisations featured were collaborating with others, including the business sector. A number of conclusions were presented, and many resonate with the recommendations in this paper:

- provide pathways for young people that lead to successful futures and no longer accept that we set young people on pathways leading to almost inevitable failure
- have diversity within the senior phase of secondary schooling to meet the needs of all of our young people and this diversity can only be delivered through collaboration and partnership
- learn from the successful initiatives, the demonstrable pockets of good practice
- one education system which includes public sector organisations alongside private and third sector organisations, community initiatives, further and higher education establishments, business and industry
- have an equitable, not equal, system of education with a funding model that provides each learner the level of financial support they require, thus the funding follows the student
- to take a children's rights approach and a system which is empowering, recognising that while it takes a village to raise a child, the entire learning village of Scotland must unite in its responsibility for the success of future generations

It was also stated that mainstream schools cannot meet the needs of all of our young people. The reflections and recommendations from this conference are interesting in that they said something specific and were at odds with the status quo.

It is helpful to look beyond our own sectors, and indeed borders, when learning from others' perspectives.

The Times Education Commission was set up in June 2021 to examine Britain's (it did primarily focus on England and Wales) whole education system and "*consider its future in light of the Covid-19 crisis, declining social mobility, new technology and the changing nature of work*". There are many areas of interest and commonality for Scotland, particularly in light of the National Discussion. The Commission found that two-thirds of parents think education does not prepare children for work or life and Sir Charlie Mayfield, former Chair of John Lewis, said, "*We've ended up with a situation where the world of education and the world of work are almost more separate than they have ever been.*" This report contrasts sharply with the complacency of Scotland's official reports.

The HMC Headmasters' & Headmistresses' Conference (a professional association of heads of independent schools) held its annual conference in October 2022, entitled 'Enlightenment achieved'. The third day of the conference was a one-day event for both the independent and state sectors entitled 'The Edinburgh Open Education Conference',   It played host to a number of eminent speakers, including Sir Geoffrey Palmer, Aharshini David, Sarah Brown and Avis Glaze, all hosted by local education representatives. Amanda Hatton, Executive Director of Education and Children's Services, City of Edinburgh Council spoke about educating the whole child, and about partnership - "*none of us have the solution ourselves*" and said that there were, "*opportunities for us to work differently together.*" A significant piece of learning taken from the event was that the independent school sector seem more able, and have more appetite, for collaboration and forming partnerships.

In conversation with Avis Glaze, following up on the keynote address she gave that day and in relation to this paper, she said, "It's always important to adopt an inside-out approach - one that provides insights into who you really are - your values, beliefs, understandings and insights - and always with a willingness to accept criticism and feedback as a prerequisite for leadership success."

Looking further afield Pathways to Education is a Canadian initiative seeking to address the issue of the number of young people not graduating from high school. They seek to break the cycle of poverty through education. It is recognised that dropping out affects everyone in Canada, that it limits young people's potential and costs billions of dollars in lost income tax, social assistance and health care. Their mission is to provide resources and a network of support for young people living in low income communities to enable them to graduate from high school, thus building a foundation for a successful future. The program itself provides a tailored student plan, tutoring, mentoring, financial support and planning for life after high school. The impact of the program is clear: return on investment is quite staggering - every dollar invested on the program delivers a social return of $24.

Most relevant to this paper are the stated beliefs: the strength and potential of young people and communities that stand behind them; the power of their partners; the ability to learn from others and then apply that learning; striving for impact; and the goal that every young person graduates high school. In most of the rhetoric above there is little or nothing about learning from others and applying that learning; nor about impact or articulating what would constitute success. Pathways to Education's measure of success is simple - that all young people graduate from high school.

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And a parent's perspective

"Our daughter is still stuck at home with anxieties and the school building and people being her main barrier - we slowly pass time until she turns 16 in April and can unregister from school at end of May 2023."

Sophie* is in S4 and should be attending her secondary school in Glasgow, but she's not. Following Covid lockdowns and home schooling Sophie returned to school as an S2 student in August 2020. From that time Sophie developed a tic disorder, waves of anxiety and a lack of concentration. She felt unable to go into school, fell behind in her studies and lost friendships. Her attendance was poor in S2 and non-existent in S3. Her mother, Lynne* felt that her school was the barrier and that the only option was for Sophie to move schools, before falling back on home schooling, which Lynne felt was not the best thing for Sophie. What Sophie needed, and wanted, was to be in school, interacting, meeting people and especially making friends.

Towards the end of S3 Sophie was assessed for autism at Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services CAMHS and received her diagnosis just after she moved to her new school to start S4 in August 2022. Sophie is still unable to attend school and Lynne, alone, is exploring every avenue, every council-run service and third sector organisation she can find out about in order to provide an education for her child. She is not getting the help she needs to do this.

Lynne said, "*I just wish that for all kids not engaging in local schools that they were transferred over to a centralised hub and someone managed them all - rather than still being enrolled at school and each school neglecting all these kids individually and all parents reaching out and getting nowhere - maybe if there was a hub for advice that that place would be full of knowledge, the right resources, and the most up to date with what's available.*"

*not real names

3. What prevents this

Local authorities: the pressures and challenges

The challenges to partnership working seem to occur within our statutory bodies: Scottish Government; local authorities, and organisations such as Education Scotland.

It would be prudent to draw attention to the four principles outlined in the Christie Report (2011) as these still have relevance today:

• Reforms must aim to empower individuals and communities
• Public service providers must be required to work much more closely in partnership, to integrate service provision
• Expenditure must be prioritised in order to prevent negative outcomes
• Our whole system of public services - public, third and private sectors - must become more efficient by reducing duplication and sharing services wherever possible

Local government executives face significant pressures and it must be tempting for them to start with a negative response to any radical proposal? Obviously the relative severity of cuts in local authority funding plays a part, leading to unavoidable focus on firefighting rather than long term strategic decision-making. Mainstream funding has continued to fall, often to pay for Scottish Government ideas which have been poorly researched so unable to have the expected impact.

Politicians have to face the electorate so frequently, which means they are much more interested in their executives producing short term wins rather than radical long term solutions. Added to this, the media is constantly pointing out local government mistakes such as potholes, poor exam results and so on.

Local authorities are insufficiently resourced to be able to consider the root causes of problems and any far sighted (but not immediately productive) action being taken to address these.

Notwithstanding the points made above, the issue of innovation, ambition, creativity and decision-making in local and national government remains. The Scottish Government devolve the education function, and associated funding, to local authorities, therefore the power to decide how that operates lies solely in the hands of local authorities. When local authorities are approached and something different is proposed they are the ones to decide if it happens and Scottish Government do not, indeed will not, step in to support or challenge. Local authorities have the power to make or break innovation.

A number of innovations and the challenges they faced when trying to innovate and collaborate are explored below. (More detail can be found in Appendix 2)

Innovations to support young people disengaged from school
The junior college model was devised in response to the number of young people leaving school at 16 and not moving into jobs, apprenticeships or further or higher education. This cohort start to disengage around the age of puberty/transfer to secondary and by S2 are often on reduced timetables or not attending school at all. It is clear that school is failing

these young people and the consequences of this are unemployment, increased use of the benefits system, poorer health, the loss to society and most importantly, personal disaster to the young person. It is worthy of note that there are many other examples of organisations working around the edges of schools, catching those young people as they slip through the cracks: Scran Academy, Future Skills College, Spartans Alternative School, Working Rite to name a few. (Examples of collaborating third sector organisations can be found in Appendix 1)

The first and only working example of a junior college was Newlands Junior College (NJC), set up in 2014 to serve the Southside of Glasgow and founded by Jim McColl, in partnership with elected members in Glasgow City Council (GCC). The college was funded by the private sector, GCC and Scottish Government. Although NJC operated successfully for five years and mainstreaming was intended, in 2019 GCC decided they would no longer contribute funding nor nominate students to NJC. As a result the college closed.

In 2016 the NJC charity approached City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) to discuss the possibility of setting up a junior college with them. Although there was in initial interest and the possibility of funding of around £750,000 CEC decided to continue with their own projects, within schools. This decision made by officers below the level of director, chief executive and elected members.

In 2017 East Lothian Council (ELC) officers visited Newlands Junior College and following that began discussions with the NJC charity about a potential junior college in East Lothian. Partnership work with ELC went on for almost four years, with a possible site identified and a number of council reports prepared. However, none were never taken to full council to be discussed and ELC officers proposed taking learning from the junior college model but keeping young people in their own schools, within bases, sending them to college in the afternoons.

Church Hill Theatre initiative
In 2020 four charitable organisations in Edinburgh: George Watson's College; The Pleasance Theatre Trust; Scran Academy; and a university approached the City of Edinburgh Council with a proposal to take over the running of the Church Hill Theatre. Although the theatre was relatively successful it was not fully utilised and the four organisations believed they could ensure this. The partners put considerable resource into drawing up a comprehensive business plan, presented and discussed with council officers, and a number of elected members. Although interested in the proposal they could not see that allocating funding differently could make the project work; that control did not have to sit with the council to run the theatre effectively; and that they could get much more by bringing in others who had greater expertise. By late 2022, however, Council officers had at last begun to draw up leasing proposals which might eventually enable a more creative and inclusive approach to be taken.

The Pleasance Theatre Trust (PTT)
The PTT created a new initiative in 2022 to recruit volunteers for the Pleasance during the Fringe. Aimed at young people aged 16+ and targeted towards those from areas of social and economic deprivation, young people were recruited from the 8 Edinburgh schools with the highest Free Meal Equivalent (FME), and from a number of youth charities.

The PTT appreciates that not all children can attend a Fringe show due to their financial circumstances so created the Primary Schools Initiative in 2019 and secured funding to bus more than 450 primary school children, and accompanying adults to see a Pleasance show. This initiative was repeated in 2022, for around 700 primary school children and accompanying adults.

Although both initiatives were well attended, the PTT had to make significant efforts to get the information to schools and teachers. At first there was, at best, ambivalence to the offer of these opportunities. The benefits to both groups are clear so why the reluctance to get involved?

Unintended consequences
Government and local authority policies put in place to improve services often have unintended negative consequences. An example of unintended consequences arising from a recent Scottish Government mandate in relation to music tuition in schools, seen through the lens of the Scottish Schools Pipes and Drums Trust (SSPDT) is described below.

SSPDT helps to extend and sustain piping and drumming in Scotland's state schools, with a focus on remote and disadvantaged areas. Last year they supported 2,900 pupils in 300 schools. The Trust partners councils, schools, and voluntary organisations to sustain or develop pipe band programmes in schools, and runs a free instrument lending library.

The Scottish Government mandate that councils must not charge for instrumental tuition in schools, being implementation by some councils, is having unintended consequences; learning opportunities are being taken away from pupils in places, with an adverse impact on attainment, achievement and wellbeing - exactly the opposite of what was intended by the new policy.

Even with a short term injection of cash from central government to support the policy, local authorities (LA) in Scotland have limited budgets for instrumental tuition in schools; overall they can only employ small numbers of salaried tutors to visit thousands of schools. In some council areas, as few as 4% of pupils can learn an instrument in schools, and mostly, pupils are offered only a small selection of instruments to choose from. Often, there is only a single tutor to teach a particular instrument in an entire LA, sometimes part-time, and of course, it is impossible to reach all schools. In reality, this leaves a huge gap between young people's interest in learning and opportunity. Now, in some areas, voluntary and charitable organisations that have been helping to fill the gap on a non-profit basis, are being forced out of the school day, or are not able to introduce a new service to meet demand with the backing of teachers and parents, if they charge a small fee to help cover costs with free places available too. The net result for young people is that opportunities to learn an instrument, and to play music with others in bands and groups, along with attainment, achievement and wellbeing, are being lost. Their alternative is private tuition after school, which is much more expensive, and less accessible because it depends on parents or carers being able to transport the child; or to keep costs down, pupils have a poor learning experience in large unwieldy groups of mixed abilities in the school lunch hour or after school.

In some rare cases, councils are taking a more flexible approach and indeed, welcoming contributions from the third sector and voluntary organisations, even if a small fee must be charged to sustain a service, but they are few.

National policy that focuses more on outcomes than tactics would help councils to adapt to real-life complexities on the ground, and prioritise the wellbeing of young people.

An outcomes based policy framework would enable a much more innovative and diverse music ecology, responding to local, regional and national opportunities and circumstances, and encouraging creative partnerships.

This sample policy framework, for example, embeds accessibility, quality and affordability in its aims, as well as encouraging innovation and ambition.

All pupils must have the opportunity to:

- learn an instrument of their choice
- experience high quality tuition
- experience accessible group music making and performance opportunities
- access sustained pathways to the highest level of achievement if they wish/are capable.

This example above holds true for other areas such as the arts, sport and outdoor education.

Unintended consequences occur in sport when it too requires to be free for all in school, and not provided by volunteers. Teachers no longer have the capacity to provide this out of school, therefore free sport is not on offer. Sport and Physical Education (PE) in schools has reduced significantly and has been further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic as schools are providing more time for literacy and numeracy with the entitlement of two hours of PE per week reduced or even lost.

Unintended consequences of government policy can also be seen in the health and social care sector. The move to funding the individual instead of funding groups has led to challenges in the ability to make improvements to services.

Schools require to use funds like the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF), billed as additional funding, to fund core activity due to reduced funding and the presumption of mainstreaming in local authorities: another unintended consequence. Much of the PEF is used for staffing to ameliorate for the impact of previous cuts, meaning that schools do not have PEF available for things like outdoor education. Additionally third sector organisations such as Outward Bound (providing outdoor education) find themselves in serious completion for grant funding, which has also reduced.

The term unintended consequences is really a misnomer as the consequences should have been anticipated if appropriate consultation and research had taken place when the policies were conceived. Arguably they were unintended consequences but not unknown. Had they been researched, then conceivably the policies would not have been implemented as the consequences, and indeed damage, were unacceptable.

Why barriers occur

There is no single reason for the barriers, or blockages, to collaboration between the third sector and statutory bodies. The first point to highlight is that these statutory bodies may be, in the main, unaware that there are barriers. A number of factors can be gleaned from the examples outlined above, and from the conversations undertaken, and organised into three levels but it should be noted that the points are interrelated.

National level
- Scotland is a country which is averse to risk and our system values conformity.
- Globally (and in Scotland) education is slow to change, risk averse and technologically primitive. After a short period of innovation during Covid, schools are falling back into old ways. Any industry as incapable of necessary adaptation as education, but exposed to competition, would have collapsed long ago.
- A stranglehold on policy development by a coalition of government, the educational establishment and the teacher trade unions. This coalition effectively dominates all quangos, consultative bodies etc. and excludes other voices.
- Continually trying to solve yesterday's problems and not today's, or tomorrow's problems.
- There is a claim that the state guarantees equity, the state is good at is uniformity, not equity.
- Those driving education are not educators.

System level
- Inability to learn from external models and consider how this learning might be applied.
- Need for anything novel to be replicable, scaled up, franchised.
- Fragmented nature of policy - for example there are 10 directorates in Scottish Government with links to education and they do not communicate or collaborate effectively, if at all.
- Gap between policy and practice.
- Belief that elements of a model may be "cherry picked" and will achieve the same results.
- System itself more important than the individual
- Interest in output over outcome.
- Drive for statistics to provide a good picture.

Local level
- Transformation of local authorities from educational leaders into implementors of government policy, contrary to the intentions of legislation (e.g. the 1980 Act).
- Inability to see the holistic picture and value - how spend in one area could save in another, challenges of budget silos and inability to find a way to allow funding to follow the individual.
- Fear of making the wrong decision: it matters that you always "get it right".
- Gate-keepers - those at mid-level with power to veto or approve, who may be seeking career-progression so what they decide/agree to, must contribute to that.
- Unwillingness to give up power.
- Local authorities (and Scottish Government) don't like outside interference - schools can differ.
- Workload is a massive issue as there are fewer officers, with wider remits and less time to discuss, plan and fully research options.
- Those in the third sector are in competition for funding.

It is interesting to note that a former local authority CEO said that, "*In 25 years in senior management in the public sector, I never got into trouble as a result of saying No. All my avoidable problems were consequences of saying Yes.*"

Unintended consequences, as noted above, feature at all levels. Decisions are made and edicts pronounced, all done without adequate research into the possible consequences leading to those decisions and edicts actually making the situation worse. At all levels, the third (and private) sector are seen as outside the system. The system itself, the public sector is paternalistic and does not recognise or appreciate the value added but the third and private sectors. This leads to those sectors striving to "get in", rather than being a partner or collaborator alongside.

4. What works and where it works

Enablers are harder to identify. There is a fear of making the wrong decision, fear of being creative and the need for everything to be sanctioned from above. Parents could have more influence but they tend to be too easily satisfied or lack organisation or belief that they have a voice or opinion to share. Given the emphasis on young people's voice, it may be that they are the group with most potential. Their views were certainly sought and clearly stated in Professor Muir's consultation but are they really listened to?

Third sector organisations which demonstrably showcase good practice, based on experience and evidence of solutions, are those from whom we can learn. They are often supported by the private sector, and are able to engage, support and connect positively with young people, bolstering mainstream provision, and in many cases become the primary provider of education. Organisations such as Scran Academy and Spartans Alternative School in Edinburgh, Future Skills College in Dundee and CentreStage in Kilmarnock exist out with the system, support young people, reigniting an interest in learning, making them feel welcome, valued and that, "*This is the place for them*". These third sector organisations are critical delivery partners alongside local authorities, with support from Head Teachers, often delivering much more than core national qualifications and often the ones co-ordinating the education of those young people.

Interestingly, there are enablers within many of the examples outlined in Section 3: the outward-looking officers in East Lothian Council (ELC) who sought examples of good practice to learn from. This included, initially, several elected members. However, it would seem that those with an initial thirst to learn from and then create something new and innovative, lost courage and retreated to the known; cherry-picking elements of the successful example and expecting the same results with a pared down, shallow copy.

In the Church Hill Theatre example the enablers were the charities who responded so quickly, enthusiastically and creatively when initially approached by George Watsons College to discuss the possibility. The four charities involved immediately put their own resources into holding discussions, preparing plans and proposals and considering what they brought to the project. They came up with a proposal to get alongside the Council to make even better and fuller use of a Council resource, and offered up their vast expertise and experience to do so. When faced with questions and challenges by the Council they came up with alternative solutions to take the project forward, but were blocked each time: by the Council. Only persistence and relentless lobbying kept the project alive at all.

The Pleasance Theatre Trust (PTT) 16+ and Primary Schools projects were utilised and successful with key enablers amongst those within schools and other organisations. One secondary head teacher immediately said yes and delegated responsibility to the member of his team with the knowledge, contacts and determination to make it happen: the school librarian. She immediately met with senior students she thought would be interested, and even contacted recent school leavers. She knew the students, took responsibility for the initiative and saw it to fruition. Other examples of this were individuals from third sector organisations: one had no-one suitable in their own organisation so put PTT in touch with other organisations who did. Another got the information from a colleague and asked if she could put the suggestion to a group of young people she was about to start working with. This was a brave move as she had yet to even meet those young people.

So, what works and where is it working?   Noted below are organisations where enabling practice is found and where effective collaboration is leading to impressive outcomes.

CentreStage
Established in 2006, CentreStage in Kilmarnock use the arts to bring people of all ages and backgrounds together and operates with an ethos that anyone, regardless of age, background or experience can gain life-changing social benefits through active participation in the arts. CentreStage has a number of partners including East Ayrshire Council, The Hunter Foundation, the STV Children's Appeal, the Robertson Trust and Scottish Government.

The organisation has grown considerably, moving from their main site in James Little Street, and bringing all of their other locations under one roof at the former Kilmarnock Academy building in 2021, achieved after completing Scotland's largest Community Led Asset Transfer. This new site not only houses all of CentreStage's projects and teams but also other third and public sector organisations who have become part of the CentreStage Neighbourhood. These organisations share values and have a desire to work in partnership with each other to serve their community.

The Eric Liddell Community
"*The Eric Liddell Community is an Edinburgh based care charity and community hub committed to our vision to live in a community where no one feels lonely or isolated.*"   The charity is named after inspiring sporting legend and missionary Eric Liddell, probably best known for winning the gold medal for the 400 yards at the Paris Olympics in 1924, and featured in the film 'Chariots of Fire'.

The Eric Liddell 100 project aims to recognise and celebrate his life. Chief Executive, John MacMillan has garnered the support of "*sporting heroes, educational masterminds, cultural icons and corporate professionals who are joining together to orchestrate a major programme of activities to honour the legacy of one of the world s best known sporting icons.*"

John has made this happen using, in his words, a "*quietly, quietly, softly, softly*" approach. He felt that he needed to bring people in who could help, those who worked flexibly and wanted to work in partnership. He was clear that Eric Liddell belonged to everyone, saying to them, "*he s one of yours*" and that he wanted and needed their support. Key to these partnerships was keeping people updated and making sure that potential partners knew that all he wanted from them was their time, guidance not necessarily financial assistance. He also knew that there were tipping points, when influential or highly respected individuals came on board. Finally, he allowed a long lead into the project. When asked what the enabling factor was, his response was, "*developing personal relationships*".

Swire Chinese Language Centre
The Swire Chinese Language Centre was established in 2016, supported by the Swire Chinese Language Foundation. The Centre is a collaborative venture between three Edinburgh schools - George Watson's College, James Gillespie's High School and Boroughmuir High School.

This project happens in spite of the local authority, as the partnership was initiated on a school basis, and the schools informed the local authority when the funds had been secured. Those funds were then distributed through George Watson's College, as there was no mechanism for state schools to receive funding, and there seemed no way to change the system to allow it.

The project has gone from strength to strength and now involves, six associate secondaries: Castlebrae Community High School; Tynecastle High School; Knox Academy; North Berwick High School; Queensferry Community High School; and Liberton High School and five associate primary schools: Bruntsfield; Buckstone; South Morningside; James Gillespie's; and Preston Street. This year 2400 pupils have regular, timetabled Chinese language learning lessons through Swire and provision is entirely free for schools to access. Some 30% of all SQA presentations for Chinese now come from Swire centre schools. The Project has also enabled work to take place to understand the structural weaknesses in the supply of the teaching workforce for Chinese language and to put some remediation in place where it has been possible to do that without the cooperation of the Scottish Government.

Trust, relationships and creating an exciting vision were key to the success of this project. Interestingly the local authority, Scottish Government and other statutory bodies were not required to make this a success, and perhaps even more interesting is the fact that the local authority, in the main, ignores it. This is a successful prototype that could be franchised across Scotland.

The Outward Bound Trust
The stated vision of The Outward Bound Trust (OB) is, "*to inspire young people to defy their limitations so they become strong, resilient and curious, ready for the challenges of life*." OB partner with schools, colleges, employers and youth groups and over 80% of attendees receive funding to attend courses. They seek to empower all young people to succeed; for themselves, their communities and society.

The access point to OB for the majority of young people is schools and that's where the relationship lies. Martin Davidson, the Director - Scotland & Innovation of OB says that key strategic relationships for them are due to a very supportive council Director, for example a now ended 15-year partnership with North Lanarkshire Council and a current 6 year and ongoing partnership with Dundee City Council. Several third sector organisations were involved and he says that it felt like an equal partnership. Financial cutbacks were the only reason that the North Lanarkshire relationship ended.

Dunoon Grammar School
Head Teacher, David Mitchell, says that when he joined the school in 2013 it was performing well academically but that school leavers moved out of Dunoon for jobs. He started to work with local businesses and other employers in the hope of encouraging young people to stay in Dunoon. The school works with the community on the Dunoon Project and recently won the title of T4 Education World's Best School for community collaboration, and received a $50,000 prize. It stated that Dunoon best fit the brief to make, "*the school a true learning institution that benefits all members of the community*". What makes the school just that, David says are: the school being at the heart of the community; working with employers to discover the skills required and shaping the curriculum accordingly; a Junior Advisory Board (S1-S3) who drive the curriculum and the Dunoon Project; the School Improvement Plan

reflects the local context; and getting the community into the school. Probably most importantly David feels able to be creative, to test things out and to make mistakes. And in that he has the support of the school staff, his community and Argyll and Bute Council.

Funding is a key aspect in terms of enabling, as funders look for charities to become self-sufficient after the initial funding period. This can be unrealistic as the need continues and a new funder is then required. When third sector organisations received a share of the £20 million educational recovery fund (following Covid) it meant that many projects were then not reliant on local authorities deciding which to fund. It may be time to provide more direct funding to the third sector, as local authorities may then be more confident in utilising them. More use could be made of social impact investing: a partnership across public, third and private sectors. The public sector or outcome partner has a desired outcome which the third sector or delivery partner delivers and this is funded by the private sector or investment partner. The investment partner receives payment from the outcome partner when the outcomes have been achieved.

Enablers: common factors

A number of common factors became apparent though the conversations with those from conversations with organisations and individuals (see Acknowledgements on page 21) and from recent presentations at conferences, symposiums and seminars.

Individuals and relationships are key - from the relationship of the Liberton High School librarian with students present and past; to the forging of relationships with elected members, staff in local authorities and government; finding those who want to make something happen and working with others to do so. Having an individual champion is also helpful.

Knowing what it is you want to change, what the problem is - how you are going to do it, what success will look like and being focused on outcomes.

Bringing in others to help - for example in the Netherlands services such as health, education and police are brought together under one roof. Closer to home healthy living centres and a school in Glasgow where families can get benefits advice in the school. Key is harnessing the power of others to help.

Learning from others and applying that learning - seeking information and advice from others, considering how learning could be applied in context and taking action.

Don't shy away from the fact that we have a complex system - doing multiple things at the same time.

Funding - where this was secured, and for a longer term, allowed organisations to concentrate on what they were trying to achieve.

Ownership and accountability - if people own it, they will fight for it.

Trust, and permission to make mistakes - and learning from mistakes.

Sharing means you get more - the age-old quote, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" is seen repeated across the examples above: the Swire project, CentreStage and many others.

Persistence - this was evident from every single individual and organisation who contributed thoughts and experience to this paper.

No excuse should trump the need to make a difference

Lead with values and moral purpose, and intensity to get things done quickly

If we know what the barriers or blockages are, and the reasons for them, and can glean from the examples of enablers what makes them work, we can make recommendations about what needs to happen to remove the blockages and facilitate the enablers.

Recommendations

1. **The Scottish Government commission a national voluntary organisation to map all third sector organisations currently partnering with local and national authorities. This map or hub of information would be available to all sectors, and to parents and other users, signposting services.**

   - List all current joint public sector/third party initiatives, with a brief description provided of their scope and funding arrangements.
   - Each initiative to be categorised by relevant geographical area, government authority and participating third sector party, as well as being classified under pre-determined theme(s) viz. topic (e.g. music education), targeted audience (e.g youth), impact (e.g reduced inequalities — perhaps aligned with UN SDGs).
   - Would be publicly available with links to where further information on organisations and initiatives themselves can be found. Particularly useful to parents and carers.
   - The main benefit - both public and third sector participants to identify whom they might contact to hear about their experiences of working alongside specific organisations with whom they are contemplating a partnership.
   - Enable MPs, councillors and others prompt national and local officials where they might find third sector partners to assist in achieving their objectives. Third sector organisations will be able to see where gaps in provision exist, and avoid duplicating services already provided.
   - There would be an element of healthy competition over the extent to which public bodies use third sector organisations, and which third sector organisations are most successful in partnering government organisations, might also result.
   - Provide significant benefit to potential individual donors too. These might, for example, be looking to support a specific activity throughout Scotland, or a particular area where they grew up/ school they attended.
   - It is conceivable that a private donor (or donors) would be prepared to pay some, or even all, of the relevant costs for a pilot scheme.
   - To begin with at least, the focus of the mapping unit would be to create and maintain a map of existing public and third sector arrangements.
   - Once a basic mapping unit has been proved to be useful, consideration to be given by the Scottish Government to applying additional resources to promote partnerships. For example the mapping unit might produce a quarterly newsletter, highlighting new initiatives and publicising particularly successful partnerships. The unit could also be tasked with organising an annual conference, bringing together participants from the two sectors.
   - The cost of creating and maintaining a basic map of all existing public/third sector arrangements would be relatively small — less than £100k a year once the original data had been collected.
   - The success would require public authorities (and possibly third sector organisations too) having a statutory obligation to notify the mapping unit of their existing partnerships and update this information quarterly. Preparing and updating this information should be a relatively easy task and demand minimal resources.
   - The use of an existing third sector organisation, rather than a government body, to provide a 'home' for the mapping unit is likely to be more cost effective. The organisation, to be selected by the Scottish Government in conjunction with a

representative of the third sector, would be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the unit's work, for which it would receive a fee.

- Development of social prescribing model used in NHS - schools identify pupil needs and "prescribe" service from the map. This could be an alternative education provision for part of the school week or a full time alternative, music tuition, sport, a therapeutic or health referral. This model relies on funding following the individual.
- After a period the list might be extended to organisations seeking collaboration with the public sector.

2. **Government departments, local authorities, schools and other relevant state sector participants be required to nominate an existing senior member of their staffs to be accountable for recording and promoting appropriate third sector relationships.**

- The proposal being made does NOT envisage the establishment of any additional national or local authority posts.
- In some government departments, local authorities and schools, a particular staff member is already designated to coordinate partnerships with third sector organisations. It is simply proposed that such a responsibility be formalised where it already exists and created where it does not, so that third sector organisations know whom to contact in the first instance when inquiring about a partnership.
- The nominated person is required to be a senior member of the government department, local authority or school's senior management team. However the importance, which the relevant department, authority or school attributes to this role, will be entirely up to the organisation itself.
- At the very least, it is hoped that the designated person's success in promoting partnerships will be reviewed annually by their line manager and that it will be taken into account when seeking career progression.
- Ideally, the nominated person will find time to champion partnerships in their organisation and beyond. For example, a local authority's designated person might arrange a quarterly meeting with some of the designated school persons in his/her area and exchange ideas on where third sector organisations are (or might be) especially useful.
- The only statutory obligation on a designated person would be to ensure the relevant list of partnership arrangements is created, updated quarterly and forwarded on time to the mapping unit.

3. **Adapt current funding models to allow for longer term planning, simplify local authority procurement, ensure that funding follows the individual and make more use of social impact investment.**
   - Funding of non-statutory organisations should change - enabling longer term planning and less competition for the same funds. The map and register would assist with this.
   - Funding should follow the individual - this would enable services to be easily accessed.
   - Make funds available specifically intended to support innovation and experiment.
   - Simplify and amend procurement arrangements at local authority level to facilitate ease of payment to third sector organisations.

- Social impact investment is a partnership across public, private and third sectors. The public sector partner seeks an outcome, the private sector provides the capital and the third sector partner designs and delivers the service. The public sector repays the capital where outcomes are achieved. This should be utilised more extensively.
- There is a power in match funding with successful working examples such as Robertson Trust and Scottish Government. These require to have a common purpose and engagement required when writing manifestos.

4. **Ensure that learning from others and consideration of how that learning could be applied by providing opportunities to share practice across sectors such as shadowing, mentoring, coaching, learning rounds and shared conferences.**
   - Produce prototypes - then adapt, not adopt.
   - Create prototypes, allow time for those to be learned from and, if proved to be successful/impactful, share learning using the above practices and collaborate with others to develop and implement.

Conclusion

This paper examined examples of actual and attempted co-operation between the third sector and local and national government, presented lessons learned from these experiences and recommended ways of working that would make collaboration and partnership more effective.

The successful operation and expansion of partnerships between public authorities and voluntary organisations depends, above all, on the willingness of both sides to approach any relationship as one of equals with a shared objective in mind.

Four recommendations were made to improve collaboration and practice.

Main recommendations to address the problem

1. The Scottish Government commission a national voluntary organisation to map all third sector organisations currently partnering with local and national authorities. This map or hub of information would be available to all sectors, and to parents and other users, signposting services.

2. Government departments, local authorities, schools and other relevant state sector participants be required to nominate an existing senior member of their staffs to be accountable for recording and promoting appropriate third sector relationships.

Additional recommendations

3. Adapt current funding models to allow for longer term planning, simplify local authority procurement, ensure that funding follows the individual and make more use of social impact investment.

4. Ensure that learning from others and consideration of how that learning could be applied by providing opportunities to share practice across sectors such as shadowing, mentoring, coaching, learning rounds and shared conferences.

If we adopt the recommendations above the outcome will be the creation of, not a new system but an ecosystem. That being a community living and interacting with one other in a specific environment, each part integral, connected by necessity. There would be parity of esteem and easy access to everything within it. The benefits of an ecosystem are clear: opportunities to share resources and expertise; quick and efficient signposting and easy access to support; avoidance of duplication and creative collaborations such as multigenerational work, employment and enterprise opportunities and so on. This ecosystem would sit alongside statutory bodies, who would be aware of all in the ecosystem, able to access their services and work in partnership with them. This would change how individuals and communities are served, making the best use of the public, third and private sectors.

Sharing means you get more - the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Leading with moral purpose and an unshakeable determination to make a difference are crucial. Adopting the recommendations will mean that no-one sits outside the system, that we are all part of it. This ensures that we become a neighbourhood, a village, an ecosystem raising our children and young people.

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Special thanks to all those listed below for conversations or presentations which stimulated and challenged thinking, and prompted further questions and connection with others. All were hugely helpful.

It should be noted that the views within the paper are those of the author.

Appendix 1 - Examples of collaborating third sector organisations

[Action for Children](#)
"We provide intensive support to young people who are involved in offending behaviour, have substance misuse issues, display high risk behaviour, are accommodated, have housing/homelessness issues, or are otherwise vulnerable. We provide a wide range of support services that are tailored to the individual needs of our young people to assist them make positive changes in their lives."

[Barnardos](#)
"We support children, young people and their families in our specialised community-based services across Scotland. We believe in children and we believe every child and young person has a right to thrive. Our policy calls reflect our priority influencing areas set within our overarching strategic aims of Stronger Families, Safer Childhoods and Positive Futures. Read our manifesto here - [Barnardo's Scotland's vision for the next Scottish Government](#)"

[CentreStage](#)
"Established in 2006, CentreStage use the arts to bring people of all ages and backgrounds together. Whether you are looking to find yourself by joining one of our wide range of classes and activities, perform on stage, watch a show stopping live performance or indulge in delicious food and drinks at our Café Bar, CentreStage has something for everyone."

[Children's Parliament](#)
"Our dream is that children grow up in a world of love, happiness and understanding. Our mission is to inspire greater awareness and understanding of the power of children's human rights and to support implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) across Scotland."

[Citadel](#)
"The Citadel Youth Centre offers local children & young people aged 6-18yrs a varied programme of play, activities and educational opportunities designed to encourage, develop & reinforce their skills and self image in a safe and supportive environment. The centre prioritises work with children and young people experiencing difficulties and/or coming from a background of disadvantage."

[Columba 1400](#)
"We help young people and the adults around them to be the change they want to see in the world. We walk shoulder to shoulder with them as they explore who they are and what's important to them – their core values. We believe this unlocks a strength that can never be shut down."

[Cyrenians](#)
"At Cyrenians we tackle the causes and consequences of homelessness. We understand that there are many routes into homelessness, and that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to supporting people towards more positive and stable futures. That's why all our work is values-led and relationships-based."

[Eric Liddell Community](#)
"Our mission is to bring people together in their local communities to enhance health and well-being and have a positive impact on their lives. We do this through three strategic programmes: our programme of support for people living with dementia, including our flagship Day Care service; our wellbeing programme for unpaid carers, and through our Community Hub programme, including our community café, ran by our fully trained chef and a team of dedicated volunteers, and providing office spaces for social enterprises and other local charities."

Future Skills College (no website available)
Future Skills College (FSC) is a full-time, one year, pre-apprenticeship pathway designed for students entering S5 and S6 in all Dundee City and five Angus Council secondary schools.

[Light Up Learning](#)
"Light Up Learning (LUL) is a registered Scottish charity providing one-to-one mentoring for high school students in Edinburgh and the Lothians. We are dedicated to igniting a love of learning in young people and transforming the nature of education in Scotland. We put our mentees in charge of their own learning and help them build the resources, skills, and contacts they need to achieve their potential."

[MCR Pathways](#)
"Our aim is to help young people unlock their potential, no matter their circumstances. Working together with our inspiring mentor community and partners, we can help young people to realise their skills and progress onto a positive destination. Our vision is for all young people to experience equality of education outcomes, career opportunities and life chances."

[Observatory for Sport](#)
"The OSS exists to inform, connect and challenge. Working with a wide network of Scottish and global partners and researchers, we engage everyone with an interest in sport, physical activity and health and wellbeing to identify knowledge gaps, and find, commission and communicate relevant research and evidence in order to inform solutions. We connect key stakeholders from local to national levels and use credible scientific evidence to address problems and shape sustainability in the provision of sport and physical activity. Key to that is using lived experiences of everyone from children to older people to challenge approaches that have led to declines in participation and contributed to poor health, as we turn the tide and enable more people to be active and Scotland to reap the benefits."

[Outward Bound](#)
"We are an educational charity that helps young people to defy limitations through learning and adventures in the wild. We challenge young people to never give up, to change their perspective and to learn the most important lesson: to believe in themselves."

[Scottish Schools Pipes and Drums](#)
"We aim to advance the arts, heritage, culture and community development by encouraging young people in Scotland to take up the chanter, pipes and drums; and by supporting the development of school pipe bands. In doing so, we support young people to broaden their education, in particular their musical and social skills."

[Scran Academy](#)
"Scran Academy is a catering social enterprise on a mission to see every young person, regardless of background or barrier, realise their full potential in learning, work and life. Too many young people in our most challenged communities never realise their talents or aspirations due to the effects of social inequality and poverty."

[Spartans Alternative School](#)
"By reinvesting profits from our social enterprise along with your donations and grant funding we deliver innovative programmes in education. Some of them in partnership with others, some of them off-site and others at The Academy. The delivery style and teaching philosophy behind our education programmes is under-pinned by our 'building a bridge of trust' model, when working with the young people we support."

Stewart Ivory Foundation (no website available)
"Stewart Ivory Financial Education Trust (Sifet) was set up in 2003 as part of the Stewart Ivory Foundation, and its programme every year reaches more than 18,500 students across every local authority in Scotland." (The Scotsman, 3 October 2021)

[Workingrite](#)
"WorkingRite is the practical pathway to a job or apprenticeship. Lasting between 18 & 24 weeks (or longer if that's what it takes), our trainees learn on the job, alongside a mentor chosen from the workforce of that business to pass on what they know."

Appendix 2 – Examples of blocked innovations

1. Glasgow City Council

Newlands Junior College (NJC) was set up in 2014 to serve the southside of Glasgow, founded by Jim McColl, in partnership agreement with elected members in Glasgow City Council (GCC). Implementation was difficult due to reluctance on the part of Council officers in the Education Department. The college had been envisioned to sit within the local authority but as this had not been possible it was set up as an independent school, and a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), overseen by a Board of Trustees.

The founder and a small number of other donors funded the refurbishment of a floor of derelict building into the junior college. The annual education costs were around £900,000 and it was envisaged that this be split three ways between the private sector, GCC and the Scottish Government (SG). After some negotiation GCC agreed to pay £100,000 a year (for five years), while SG contributed £500,000 towards start up costs and later contributed a further £700,000. It was envisaged the college operate for five years to prove the concept, then become part of mainstream education, operated by GCC.

The annual education costs covered the education of 60 students and included vocational studies at Glasgow College, transport, breakfast and lunch, all of which were important elements of the college. The pupils were well nourished, and this had a notable effect on many of them. A holistic approach to the individual was important. The Junior College has probably been one of the most successful models demonstrated to date, to deal with young people who are not effectively supported by the current education system.

Nomination of young people by Glasgow schools, under Education Department leadership, was challenging but over time became more positive. By the end of the project almost all young people came from GCC schools. Council representatives were invited to join the Board of Trustees but this offer was never taken up. When the college had been running successfully for more than four years, the NJC charity believed that it would have a long-term, sustained future within GCC. They sought to work with GCC representatives to plan for the transition which they believed GCC were also working towards. Discussions did not go far as GCC decided that instead of mainstreaming and setting up further junior colleges, as had been discussed, they would no longer contribute funding nor nominate students to NJC. They planned to learn from the junior college model but not take it over or replicate it elsewhere, instead returning students to their original schools. NJC colleagues were clear that this would not work, that it was the unique junior college model that was making the difference and they were clear that cherry picking aspects would not deliver the same positive results. Due to the above factors NJC was forced to close in April 2019. The full NJC story is told in the 2021 book, 'A for Achievement, A for Attitude, A for Attendance (The life-changing endeavour of Newlands Junior College - A Glasgow success story)' by Kenny Kemp.

2. City of Edinburgh Council

The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) was approached in 2016 to discuss the possibility of setting up a junior college in Edinburgh, in collaboration with the NJC charity. In October

2017 a senior official from CEC visited NJC and was impressed by the college. At the time the NJC charity, supported by Scottish Business in the Community, was in the process of applying to the People's Postcode Lottery (PPL) Dream Fund for £500,000 to set up the next college (proposed in Edinburgh) and the application had reached the final five, from 224 applications. In addition to this potential funding an Edinburgh business person had offered to underwrite the project, up to £250,000. It was at this time with a potential £750,000 to create a junior college in Edinburgh that CEC decided not to go any further with discussions, stating that they would continue with their own projects, already ongoing within their schools. This decision was made by officers below the level of director, chief executive and elected member.

3. East Lothian Council

In 2017 discussions began between East Lothian Council (ELC) and the NJC charity. ELC recognised the need to provide alternative support for young people who were not getting the most from their education and were very keen to learn from initiatives across Scotland, including from the junior college model. ELC officers visited NJC that year and following that the two organisations began working together to see if a junior college could be created in East Lothian.

Work with ELC went on for over three years, with a possible site in ELC identified and a number of council reports drafted by officers and NJC colleagues. When the City of Edinburgh Council decided that they did not wish to collaborate with NJC, a representative from the NJC charity secured agreement with the Edinburgh underwriter to commit financially to ELC instead. Over time the offer changed from underwriting to a committed annual donation of £50,000, the offer to support start up costs and to secure other funders. When NJC closed in 2019 the charity's trustees, with approval from John Swinney, donated all of NJC's resources (IT, educational resources, furniture etc.) to ELC for their proposed junior college.

After almost four years and several reports written by officers and NJC colleagues, which were never presented to full Council for discussion or decision, ELC decided on their own proposal. Although this took forward some learning from NJC, ELC made the decision to keep young people in their own schools, within bases, sending them to Edinburgh College in the afternoons. This proposal was not highly innovative, indeed many local authorities have similar opportunities on offer, and was fundamentally different to the junior college model: that of being a separate entity with a distinctive "college ethos". This separate entity was key - NJC students felt that they had left school and moved on to a more adult learning environment. A crucial - indeed, absolutely indispensable - success factor at NJC was the nature of the relationship between learners and teachers. Young people were in daily contact with a small group of dedicated staff whom they came to trust and who gave them the self-confidence and resilience they had previously lacked. NJC was highly successful in re-motivating disenchanted youngsters and this would not have been possible if those you people remained in a base in their own school. All these elements were required to replicate the success of the junior college. As this was not to be the case, it was with regret that the NJC charity and the Edinburgh business decided to withdraw.

4. Church Hill Theatre initiative

In 2020 four charitable organisations in Edinburgh: George Watson's College; The Pleasance Theatre Trust; Scran Academy; and a university approached the City of Edinburgh Council with a proposal to take over the running of the Church Hill Theatre. Although the theatre was relatively successful it was not fully utilised and the four organisations believed that they could ensure this and that the theatre could become an amazing resource for the city, particularly for its children, young people and families. The partners put considerable resource into drawing up a comprehensive business plan which they presented and discussed with council officers, and with a number of elected members.

The four partners believed that they possessed the capacity, expertise and experience to assist the Church Hill Theatre to become: fully utilised by professional and community groups bringing programmes to schools; an exciting, welcoming and inclusive venue for education in theatre with a focus on working with children and young people from diverse backgrounds across the city; and an innovative social enterprise providing opportunities for social engagement, employment skills development and entrepreneurism.

Council officers and elected members were interested in the proposal but could not see that allocating funding differently could make the project work; that control did not have to sit with the council in order to run the theatre effectively; and that as the council did not have all the expertise they could get much more by bringing in others who did. This proposal was not presented to full council for consideration. Only persistence and relentless lobbying kept the project alive at all.

5. The Pleasance Theatre Trust

The Pleasance Theatre Trust (PTT) seeks to actively engage Edinburgh children and young people in the Festival Fringe, rather than it being just a thing that happens in their city - allowing them to enjoy some of its benefits and resources, rather than feel removed and alienated from it.

In 2022 a new initiative aimed at young people aged 16+ was developed, targeted towards those from areas of social and economic deprivation, who may have few opportunities for positive and inspiring cultural and creative activities. Many recent reports have highlighted the challenges faced by young people living in the most deprived areas, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Young people were recruited from the 8 Edinburgh schools with the highest Free Meal Equivalent (FME) and from a number of youth charities across the city, to become volunteers at the Pleasance. The young people would help run arts and crafts activities for younger children and become part of the Pleasance Team. They would be issued with a uniform (t-shirt and hoodie), a staff pass, which allowed them to see any show at the Pleasance and a daily £15 food voucher to have their meals at the Pleasance.

The PTT appreciates that not all children can attend a Fringe show due to their financial circumstances so created the Primary Schools Initiative in 2019. That year they secured funding to bus more than 450 primary school children, and accompanying adults to see a

Pleasance show during the Fringe and participate in an activity in the arts and crafts tent. This initiative was repeated in 2022, this time for around 700 primary school children and accompanying adults.

Although both initiatives were well attended, significant efforts had to be made by the PTT to get the information to schools and teachers. At first there was, at best, ambivalence to the offer of these opportunities. This was somewhat surprising as all places on the Primary Schools Initiative were fully funded with transport organised and funded by the PTT, and the benefit for the 16+ participants was clear: an offer of work experience; the chance to be part of a team; the opportunity to see as many shows as they wished: all great for their CV and future employment.