

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT SO FAR

Presentation delivered to organisations and education providers about the learnings from Coastal Catalyst as the project comes to an end of its initial funding period, delivered in June 2026.

Powered by Coastal Catalyst

Talent is Everywhere. Opportunity Isn't.

Young people across Sussex are creative and ambitious

What differs is access to:

- Networks
- Awareness
- Confidence
- Opportunity

Opportunity often follows relationships, not talent

The Barriers Are Real

Only **16% working-class** representation'

2x advantage if you're from a privileged background

Participation gaps up to **25 percentage points**

74% say access is harder for working-class young people

Unpaid internships still common (**67%**)

The system advantages those who already have access

Why Coastal Catalyst Exists

A partnership between **Future Creators** (Brighton Dome / Brighton Festival) and **Talent Accelerator** (De La Warr Pavilion)

Working across 6 coastal communities

- Bexhill
- Eastbourne
- Newhaven
- East Brighton
- Littlehampton
- Bognor Regis

The aim is to create fairer pathways into creative careers



Two Years of Testing a Different Approach



230+ organisations



1,725 workplace experiences



10,000+ young people reached



500+ earning digital badges

But the most valuable output is what we've learned

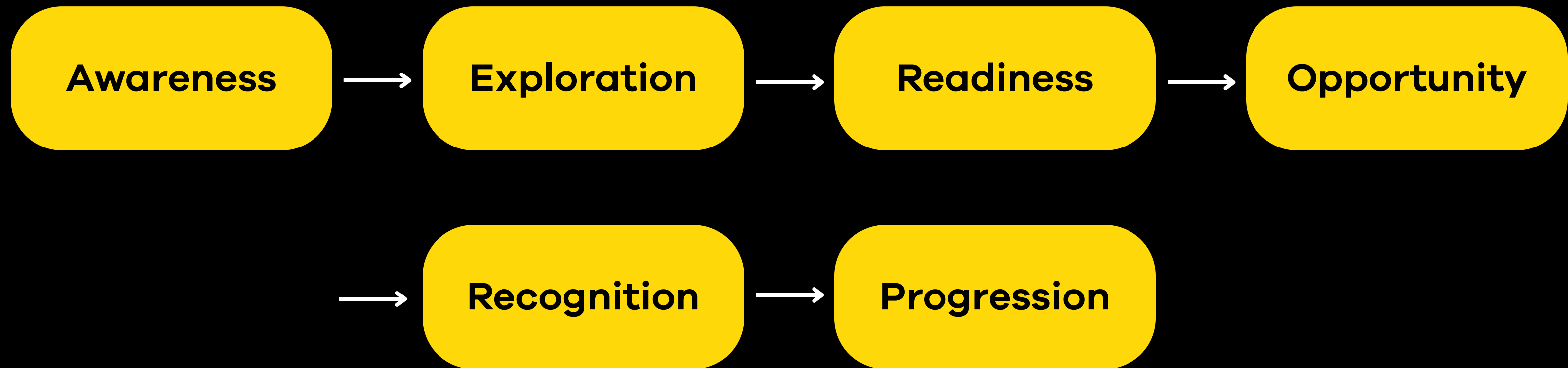
What We're Really Building



A creative ecosystem that works for all young people.

Not just the well-connected.

The Young Person Journey



Opportunity alone is **not enough**. Young people need **support to engage, reflect and progress**.

Making Opportunity Visible: Dabbble

Dabbble opens up access to creative work experiences

Young people can:

- Discover opportunities
- Apply for “worktasters”
- Build networks and confidence

It turns hidden opportunities into open, accessible pathways

DABBBLE®



Recognition Matters: More Than Just Doing

Young people gain skills everywhere

But too often:

- They don't recognise them
- They can't articulate them
- Employers don't see them

If skills aren't visible, they can't support progression

Digital Badges & My Skills Backpack

Digital Badges

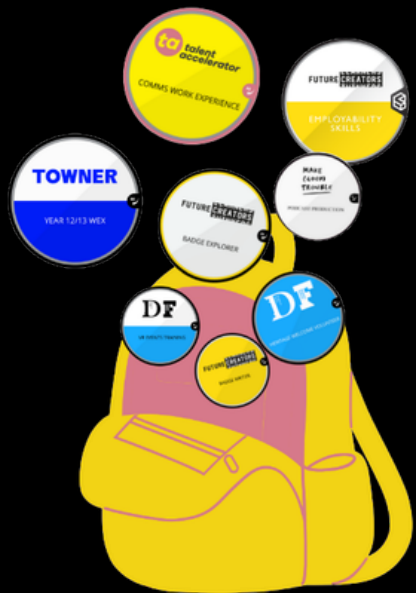
- Recognise real skills from real experiences
- Linked to workplace activities
- Build confidence and motivation

My Skills Backpack

A personal record of skills and experiences

Helps young people:

- Reflect on what they've learned
- Evidence their abilities
- Tell their story to employers



Moves young people from participation → progression

Why This Is Critical

Without recognition:

- Experiences stay isolated
- Confidence doesn't build
- Progression stalls

With badges + Skills Backpack:

- Skills become visible and transferable
- Young people can communicate value
- Employers can recognise potential

This is what turns opportunity into outcome



What Makes the System Work

Collaboration is infrastructure

Access shouldn't depend on **networks**

Preparation matters

Employers need **support**

Skills must be visible

Young people shape the system

The Role of Educators

You are the bridge between:

- Education
- Employers
- Opportunity platforms like Dabbble

You help young people:

- Access opportunities
- Prepare for them
- Recognise and evidence what they gain

Call to Action

Promote **Dabbble**

Prepare young people for experiences

Champion **digital badging** & My Skills Backpack

Build **reflection** into activity

Share **insight** and **open doors**

Final Thoughts

We don't just need more opportunities. **We need a system where:**

- Opportunities are visible
- Young people are prepared
- Skills are recognised and portable
- We all work together

That's how progression becomes possible for all

- You're not just creating opportunities
- You're removing systemic barriers

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