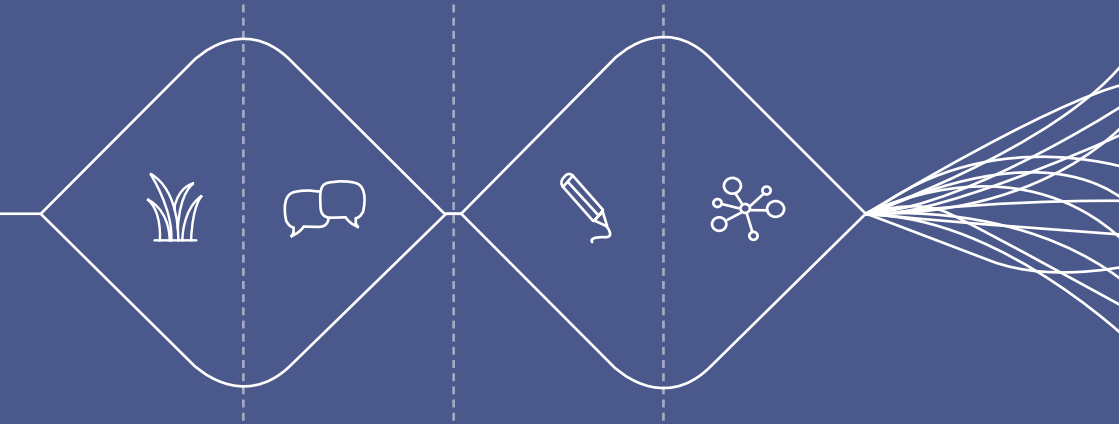


**paper
nations**

Paper Nations

Our research and impact



Research

About

Paper Nations is engaged in an ongoing research project to map the writing landscape. This research enables us to identify gaps in provision, enhance the writing ecology, and provide resources for people who would not otherwise have access to support.

Process

Our research takes place in communities, through a praxis of play, experience, design, and transmedia. The process is creative and emergent, often unfolding over several years, to allow time for collaboration and exploration. During the early stages of our research, we release unfinished drafts and pilot ideas to get feedback and refine outputs. We often repeat this process several times before publishing the final version.

Outputs

We produce workshops, guides, maps, online sourcebooks, and briefing papers. We collaborate with partners to co-produce campaigns, festivals and events.

Our two major outputs to date are:

Dare to Write?

Dare to Write? is a lifelong learning experience for writers, offering eight simple ways to explore writing. Created by Professor Bambo Soyinka, *Dare to Write?* aims to inspire everyone, from the emerging writer to the educator and published author. *Dare to Write?* provides help in the form of prompts, workshops, events calendars, maps, and peer support.

The Writer Development Cycle

The Writer Development Cycle (WDC) is a guide to how writers learn and develop their craft. Educators, editors, and publishing professionals can use the WDC to design their own creative writing services and programmes.

The WDC is based on the metaphor of a solar system and is rooted in evidence reflecting the experience and knowledge of over 700 authors, tutors and organisations. The approach is non-linear, non-prescriptive, and is adaptable to each writer's needs - because every creative life cycle is different.

Authored by Professor Bambo Soyinka and Lucy Sweetman, the WDC ensures that service providers use good practice principles to support writers.

Forthcoming outputs

Further outputs are on the way, including briefing papers exploring approaches to financing and administering creative writing projects and careers.

Findings

Through this research, we have discovered that confidence in writing flourishes when approaches to learning are:

Exploratory

Creative writing emerges from free expression and exploration of ideas. The use of a notebook combined with the regular practice of exploratory writing activities helps to build and sustain a writing habit. Notebook practice emphasises exploration as well as the value of recording observations of the world around you, and making time to write. The notebook can also be a private space where writers can take risks without the pressure of assessment.

Connected

Communities play a key role in helping to sustain writing practice. Many people write because it helps them connect to others and to the world around them. Although individual exploration is important, writers who feel connected to a community are more likely to sustain their practice. This feeling of connection can arise from the topic that the author is writing about or, equally, support and inspiration to write can come from other writers. Beyond the emotional value of communities, networks have an economic function: they enable writers to pool resources and, in doing so, help to reduce barriers to access, such as lack of time or money.

Impact

Independent evaluators LKMCo worked with Paper Nations to test our research findings and evaluate our impact.

The evaluation confirmed the importance of our emphasis on habit building, writing for pleasure and the role of networks and communities.

Four key impacts of our work noted by LKMCo were:

“Paper Nations boosted teachers’ and writers’ confidence and practice in teaching creative writing, encouraging classroom teachers to adopt a wider range of strategies as part of their regular lessons. Writers highlighted the benefits of having space and structure to generate ideas, reflect on one another’s writing, and engage in the process.”

Extract from LKMCo report.

“Involvement in Paper Nations encouraged young people to write. Young people reported writing more frequently by the end of their involvement, particularly those who were least engaged to begin with. Young people said they will do this at school and at home.”

Extract from LKMCo report.

“Paper Nations provided teachers and writers with important networks, helping mitigate cost and time barriers impeding creative writing. Networks (such as those supported through Paper Nations) help writers secure professional writing opportunities with schools and other partners, and in doing so make writing more financially sustainable.”

Extract from LKMCo report.

“Writing is about connecting with others. One of the most commonly cited reasons by writers for engaging in creative writing is the connection it creates with others. Writers felt that involvement in Paper Nations helped them forge new connections with peers and young people.”

Extract from LKMCo report.

As we move into our new *Writing for All* programme, we aim to build on and replicate these findings in the wider adult community and within professional settings.

Credits

Paper Nations' team is made up of writers, researchers, and educators based in TRACE at Bath Spa University's Research and Enterprise Office. The team is led Professor Bambo Soyinka. Professor Soyinka and Lucy Sweetman co-authored the key outputs. Past and present research assistants include Greg Bond, Lily Green, Emma Pauncefort and Joanna Nissel. The independent evaluation was carried out by LKMCo.

Thanks

The research and body of work emerging from the 2016-18 programme would not have been possible without the support of our key partners: Bath Festivals and NAWA. We would especially like to thank Hazel Plowman and Seraphima Kennedy. David Almond has been a consistent source of inspiration. Corsham Town Council has enabled us to pilot and test several of our concepts. Finally, we would like to thank the authors and educators that responded to our call for action, and the communities that took part in our projects.



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Talk to us

To get in touch with ideas, questions, or just to say hello, please email writers@papernations.org.

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