

creative services

Using the arts to improve opportunities for young Londoners

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Youth Company, East London Dance; photograph by Nick Gurney

introduction

In 2005 the London office of Arts Council England published a strategy for children, young people and the arts. We consulted a wide range of professionals and young people to find out exactly what they needed, and how we could best work in partnership. As a result we are working across London on a range of projects designed to benefit children, families and the workforce that supports them.

This year we focused on Creative services, a programme designed to help us work more closely with local authority children's services, to find ways of using the arts and creativity to meet their priorities for young people.

This document is a companion to Creative services. As we researched existing partnerships we came across many examples of children's service providers, from hospitals to schools, using innovative, exciting and creative

approaches to achieve a range of outcomes for young people.

These case studies aim to highlight some of the models and show the measurable impact that has been achieved. The arts are a powerful tool for change: engaging, inspiring and encouraging children and young people to be involved in their communities, to have access to opportunities they may not have considered before and to learn new skills. We hope that readers will be motivated by these examples to extend their own practice, develop new partnerships and celebrate and share the excellent work that already exists across London.

For more information contact the organisations (details at the end of each article) or Elizabeth Crump on 020 7608 6110 or email: elizabeth.crump@artscouncil.org.uk

'The arts have an extraordinary power to deepen, broaden and transform the lives of children and young people. Our Creative services programme is not only a fantastic opportunity to extend the superb work that London's arts organisations are currently doing with children, young people and their families. It is also an opportunity to embed the arts and creativity in the everyday life of young Londoners.'

Sarah Weir, Executive Director
Arts Council England, London

The Centre for Creative Communities (CCC) is a nonprofit organisation committed to the building of sustainable creative communities – communities where creativity and learning have pivotal roles to play in personal, social, civic, cultural, and economic development.

CCC works in partnership with a wide range of organisations interested in promoting activities that put creativity at the heart of social change. Email us on info@creativecommunities.org.uk Visit our website www.creativecommunities.org.uk

Written by Antonio Molina Vazquez and Ann-Sophie Morrissette



Back on Track

Oval House

Oval House has a long history of developing and delivering arts projects that benefit some of the most excluded young people in south London.

One of those projects, Back on Track, is designed to support young people aged between 13 and 19. These children are often at risk of exclusion or other crises due to their anti-social or challenging behaviour.

The project aims to give young people effective lifelong tools to maximise their strengths and to break the cycle of deprivation, not only for themselves but also for their communities. It uses the arts – drama and performance in particular – to empower the young people, to develop their understanding and to encourage change. The programme was developed in consultation with the young people taking part in Oval House's Arts in Education programmes. These young people felt that their tendency to deal with conflict through aggression was the main barrier to their success in school or on work placements.

Delivered by experienced actors, writers and drama practitioners, Back on Track works primarily with schools, Pupil Referral Units, Youth Offending Teams and Learning Support Units. The programme is offered as 15 in-school sessions or ten out-of-school sessions.

During its first phase, between 2001 and 2003, it was funded by a grant from the Community Fund and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. The programme was taught at 13 education units and young people's agencies. It involved 231 young people, and enabled 82% of those in danger of being excluded to remain in education.

The current phase, in 2006–08, will provide a further six Back on Track courses, involving up to ten students per course. The small group sizes will ensure the programme can be tailored to the particular challenges faced by individual participants.

By equipping young people with increased self-esteem and transferable skills, the Back on Track programme allows them to make positive choices in their lives. It re-engages them in their learning; creates action plans for further education or employment; changes their leisure culture; introduces them to new cultural and arts activities, and encourages their involvement in the wider world.

The outcomes of the Back on Track programme so far include:

- reducing truancy and increasing attendance in schools
- increasing confidence and self-esteem among participants

- actively engaging young people in understanding their feelings, attitudes, and barriers to learning
- equipping young people with effective social and creative tools to help them participate in new social networks, which results in decreased social isolation and antisocial behaviour
- young people moving on to college or back into education
- increased use of the arts as a cross-curricular teaching tool and leisure activity

The programme also pays special attention to monitoring each young person in a creative and rigorous way. Progress is reviewed on a regular basis. Participants go through an initial interview, and undertake a baseline assessment to record their individual needs, interests, aspirations, hopes and fears. This enables project staff to begin to establish a relationship of trust with the young people.

An equally important aspect of this programme is the training that has been developed for Back on Track mentors and caseworkers. This unique professional development package has been used to train staff members for other, similar programmes. For example, during the project Oval House has trained more than 50 learning mentors from the Enfield and Hounslow Excellence in Cities programmes. Many non-arts workers see the artistic approach offered by Back on Track as a powerful and effective way to engage some of the most disaffected of their young clients.

A Grants for the arts award from the Arts Council will allow Oval House to find ways to extend the programme, and to establish Back on Track as a service that helps Lambeth deliver against their Children and young people's plan and Local Area Agreement.

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Youth Company

East London Dance

East London Dance is the dance development agency for east London, based at Stratford Circus in the London borough of Newham. It aims to develop access and to promote inclusion and innovation in dance across the east London boroughs.

Through consultation with young people East London Dance has developed an inspirational, accredited model of progression for young dancers. Participatory dance programmes take place in a number of youth and community settings, offering different opportunities for progression, from intensive performance-led holiday projects to involvement in a youth dance company. Students are encouraged to find the right route for their development and are given a number of options. It is this youth dance company for 16–24 year olds that is the focus of this case study.

In setting up the youth dance company, East London Dance aims to demonstrate the talent and creativity of young east Londoners, and to provide new routes to achievement and opportunities for accredited learning. All members of the project are currently working towards an Arts Council Arts Award, at either Bronze, Silver or Gold level. Auditions for the company are held annually and partners in both formal and informal education help to encourage young people from as wide a range of backgrounds as possible to apply.

The company meets twice a week and focuses on technique, choreography and performance. A number of dance pieces are created each year, and regular performances take place across London and beyond. A key focus is the link with professional practitioners and the dance industry. East London Dance achieves this through regular contact with choreographers and practitioners, visits to see professional work and links with partners across the sector – for instance the London Youth Dance Network, Youth Dance England, the Festival of Youth Arts, the Centres of Excellence (CAT scheme) at Laban and The Place, and the Royal Opera House.

One of the primary aims of this programme is to ensure that young people engage in dance activity and are given the opportunity to develop personally and socially. The programme delivers to the Every Child Matters agenda – being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and encouraging economic well being. The programme has diversity at its heart; through collaborative working and sharing, young people gain a greater understanding of themselves and others.

East London Dance is committed to consultation, and emphasises the importance of young people having a voice in all aspects of the youth dance company programme and delivery. There is a consultation framework in place, and a handbook to support and guide this process. Each year a company member is elected as a management representative.

This role includes supporting project management tasks and acting as a key link between company members and the core team at East London Dance.

In 2006 the company was selected by Youth Dance England to represent London at its national festival in Leeds. This provided company members with the opportunity to participate in a week-long programme of classes, workshops and performance. All company members fundraised to attend, demonstrating their increased confidence and entrepreneurial skills.

Over the last three years company members have gone on to either continued dance training (at Lewisham College, Bournemouth, Middlesex, University of East London and Brunel Universities) or other degrees in a broad range of subjects. There are also clear routes into employment across the arts, including work in the range of programmes run by East London Dance – such as ushering at events, supporting projects as apprentices and working backstage at performances.

There is also an opportunity to join the team of artists and teachers working for East London Dance on a regular basis, or to work with a range of other organisations in the arts sector. A tutorial system is in place to provide individual support and careers advice, and to encourage young people to maximise their potential.

Partnerships with other organisations are also central to the success of the project. For example East London Dance and NewVlc (Newham Sixth Form College) have jointly developed the Community Dance Practitioner course, which is level 3 accredited with the London Open College Network. The course aims to develop industry leaders with a knowledge and understanding of teaching dance in diverse communities. Youth company members have gone on to complete the course successfully, and are now working as dance practitioners in a range of settings. East London Dance is developing a further strand – Young Dance Makers – to nurture young choreographers and to provide them with performance showcases.

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Speak Out!

London borough of Lewisham

Early in 2006 the London borough of Lewisham began to structure their new Extended Services directorate. Like many boroughs they appointed new co-ordinators and embarked on a period of consultation with stakeholders to identify their needs, and to explore ways that they could start to work in partnership. These diverse stakeholders included the London office of Arts Council England, the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) and clusters of schools in Lewisham.

During this process, head teachers from six Lewisham primary schools expressed concerns about the increasing number of students with speech and language development needs. The students come from a range of cultural backgrounds and many of them speak English as a second language. They also spend a lot of time watching television and playing computer games. All these factors reduce interaction with their peers and impede communication development.

One extended services coordinator felt that the arts and a creative approach could be used to help address these concerns, and approached the Lewisham Education Arts Network to discuss a way forward.

The Network hosted a series of meetings and workshops for partners and stakeholders. The aim was to develop a strategy, as part of the extended schools framework, to deal with the issues surrounding speech and language development.

The result was *Speak Out!*, a project currently under development, that aims to run for two years. *Speak Out!* will partner 19 Lewisham primary schools with two theatre companies (Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre and London Bubble) and a speech therapist from Lewisham Speech and Language Therapy Unit.

The theatre professionals will deliver workshops with young people over three terms, working with teaching assistants (TAs) and the therapist to devise and embed creative approaches to fostering communication and language development in the children. The professional development of the TAs has been carefully structured and is a key strand of this project.

The lead arts organisations will work to train ten artists in working within a clinical speech and language development context.

The borough has devised a number of ways to measure the impact of this project, including commissioning a baseline assessment of the levels of achievement in speech and language in the young people, to be undertaken by the therapist. Lewisham Education Arts Network will consult with the participants and their families during the project, capturing anecdotal and observational data on the progress of the young people. They will also evaluate the project by collecting and analysing the results of the activities and workshops in schools.

The project is funded jointly by Lewisham Extended Services, the PCT and the Arts Council, with support in kind from a number of other organisations.

It has long been recognised that theatre techniques can help to develop effective communication. This project brings together health professionals and theatre practitioners to share skills and develop a model of working that can be transferred to a number of educational settings.

The project will benefit the artists and the speech therapist, as well as the schools and young people. The programme has been designed to ensure that skills are shared in a number of ways. The artists and the therapist will be looking to expand their own creative and scientific practice through their work together.

The partners aim to achieve the following by the end of the project in 2009:

- to raise the standard of speech and language development in all 19 primary schools in Lewisham

- to raise the chronological language age of all young participants at twice the current rate

- to develop a multi-agency creative approach to speech and language development

- to build the capacity of local artists arts organisations to deliver work that supports schools in addressing speech and language needs

- to develop a positive attitude to the arts in all 19 primary schools in Lewisham

- to support ten artists as they develop their own work around speech and language development

- to support 19 TAs in developing a creative approach and using arts techniques to address speech and language needs

It is expected that the TAs will act as champions in their schools, sharing the learning and embedding the model to ensure long-term sustainability.

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Breathing Space

Falling Wide

The *Breathing Space Children's Programme* involves a series of creative movement workshops designed by experienced artists for children living with life-changing illnesses. It is offered at hospices and hospital schools in partnership with specialist care organisations, and supports and augments existing services.

The programme is run by Falling Wide, an independent arts charity with a history of developing creative movement workshops in health settings and professional development training for dance-in-health practitioners.

Creativity and play are at the heart of the programme. The main aim is to offer children a creative and fun 'breathing space' to support their emotional wellbeing and encourage creative learning. The programme also aims to:

- help children to develop a creative and positive relationship with their bodies
- offer a creative response to the isolation and exclusion that children and families affected by illness can face, by creating a safe and supportive environment to share experiences
- offer free and subsidised participation for all children
- build long-term partnerships with existing children's services to deliver a wide reaching programme
- create an imaginative public resource that acts as a bridge between children's services and the community (including local schools, children's centres, etc)
- actively respond to needs of participants and partner organisations

In the first year of the three-year pilot, workshops are taking place in London, Nottingham and Oxford. London partners include Evelina School at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital, Snowfields Adolescent Psychiatric Unit (South London and Maudsley NHS Trust), Shooting Star Hospice and Moorfields Eye Hospital.

The partnership with Evelina School was established following a dance project, part-funded by Arts Council England, at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital during Architecture Week 2005. Evelina is now a lead partner in the Breathing Space Children's Programme. Falling Wide artists met with the school's head teacher to develop a way of incorporating the creative movement workshops into their curriculum. With 50 children moving through the school each month, the school and the artists are keen to bring continuity to the teaching and the children's learning.

Starting in spring 2007, a professional dance artist will run monthly workshops with children at Evelina. The artist will work with a range of age groups, and will aim to share practice and develop the creative capacity of the play workers in the school.

To celebrate the first year of the pilot, Evelina School students will take part in a performance at St Thomas' by the intergenerational dance company Crossover.

The partnerships formed in year one with Evelina and other health partners will continue into year two, with the possibility of workshops extending into home and wider community settings. Year two will also focus on the professional development of the team of artists leading the workshops. The team will meet regularly to share approaches. Year three aims to build long-term partnerships with existing children's services, to deliver the programme as a national initiative based at children's hospices and hospital schools and extending into the wider community.

The positive impact of the arts on health is publicly recognised by a growing national body of medical research. Dancers-in-health are becoming increasingly valuable as part of a multi-disciplinary approach to well-being. Joe Moran, Artistic Director of Falling Wide, hopes that the Breathing Space Children's Programme will develop a model of best practice for children living with life-changing illnesses taking part in the arts.

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Refugee Arts Programme Lambeth City Learning Centre

Lambeth City Learning Centre (CLC) is developing a *Refugee Arts Programme* using the framework of the Arts Award scheme.

The Arts Award is the first scheme to recognise the development of young artists and young arts leaders. Developed by Arts Council England in partnership with Trinity Guildhall, the awards can be achieved at bronze, silver or gold level, which are accredited at levels one, two and three on the National Qualifications Framework respectively. Lambeth CLC is a registered Arts Awards centre. There are trained professionals on site at the CLC who can support the young people that take part in the scheme.

The pilot *Refugee Arts Programme* is aimed at students newly arrived in Lambeth who do not have a place at school. Students are placed at the Lambeth Open Learning Centre for Vocational Studies. They receive part-time tuition in English language development and mathematics until a full-time school place becomes available. They also spend half a day each week at Lambeth CLC developing basic IT skills through an engaging digital media arts programme. Students work with a range of freelance artists, animators and filmmakers to gain skills in a number of disciplines, from image manipulation in Photoshop to animation and film editing.

There is a further practical element to the students' learning, which allows them to develop transferable skills. For example, students may curate an exhibition of the work produced, which would involve organising every aspect of the exhibition, from concept design to display. Students also have the opportunity to exhibit their work in professional spaces. These real life experiences, says Project Manager Julia Lawrence, teach an important set of skills, and are integral to the programme. They give students a sense of worth and ownership of their work.

Student support is a priority for staff at Lambeth's Children and Young People's Services (CYPS). They are aware that these students could remain outside the education system if programmes like this did not exist. The students are no less committed to the programme. One student who has been part of the programme since September 2006 has recently relocated to another borough. She is so dedicated to the project that she has made her own arrangements to travel a long distance each week to continue the course.

The aim by the end of the 2007 academic year is for ten students to gain Arts Awards – eight at bronze and two at silver level. Lambeth CLC is hoping to expand the number of participants in the next academic year and to look for additional partners. The centre and the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Team (EMAT) have already secured funding to add a business enterprise module to the programme. Students will have the opportunity to create and market their own music through MySpace, with help from musicians and tutors from the Gateway School of Recording.

The *Refugee Arts Programme* will continue to give students newly arrived in the borough the broadest range of experiences. It will allow them to transfer easily to mainstream schools or further education courses, and to take with them an impressive portfolio of skills, knowledge and expertise.

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Creative Schools

Arts Council England, London

The Creative Schools programme aims to maximise the impact of Creative Partnerships (CP) across the education sector. Funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) with matching funding from the participating local authorities, the programme focuses on outer London schools that have not yet engaged with Creative Partnerships.

The programme was first piloted in the form of the Cultural Entitlement Programme (CEP) in the London boroughs of Barnet, Havering and Bexley in 2005. The CEP was developed to encourage partnerships between cultural organisations, arts education professionals and secondary schools. The aim was to help schools to develop a Cultural Entitlement Strategy.

Following this successful pilot the expanded Creative Schools programme will involve at least 21 schools across six boroughs each year for the next two years. Croydon, Hounslow and Barking and Dagenham will join Barnet, Havering and Bexley in the programme.

In the first year of the programme each school will develop a Creative Learning Strategy. They will also pilot the use of the Creativity Self Evaluation Framework (C-SEF). This evaluation tool aims to help schools to analyse how they ensure that creativity is at the heart of everyday school life – from learning and teaching to school management.

Intended to supplement the standard Self Evaluation Form (SEF) used by all schools since 2005, the C-SEF is exciting as it has been developed in response to requests from schools that want to highlight the importance of their approach to creativity. The new C-SEF will provide information to heads, OFSTED, school advisers and school improvement teams on how schools are embedding creativity in their work.

Another key feature of the Creative Schools programme is its emphasis on nurturing key partnerships. Local authority representatives will work with a Creative Schools Adviser to help identify the individual needs of the school. The advisers all have a very strong background of working with local authorities and a very thorough knowledge of Creative Partnerships practice.

The Adviser works to create partnerships between schools and a range of arts professionals, to help the schools create their strategy. Arts organisations from across London, such as the Royal Court Theatre and the Eastside Educational Trust, are involved in the programme. They work with the schools to share their expertise and to identify needs which emerge from the School Improvement Plan.

Creative Schools Advisers also help schools to access a wide range of training and resources. They direct head teachers to sources of funding, initiatives and information, and they create partnerships between schools which have different strengths, to allow them to learn from one another.

The Creative Schools programme aims to ensure that young people are involved in the development of school strategy. Advisers work with the school and with arts partners to devise new ways for the voices of students to be heard by senior management.

After the first year of operation the initial funding for the Creative Schools programme will be replaced by funding from the local authority. The idea behind this model, according to Joanne Rosenthal, Creative Schools programme manager, is that the first year of activity will give schools the opportunity to explore ideas that they will take forward in their core work in year two.

The programme has already had a considerable impact on all partners. Schools across outer London are placing creativity at the heart of learning and teaching, and are being supported through this process by their School Improvement Teams.

More than 40 arts organisations are developing considerable expertise in working with schools at a strategic level, and a number of new youth consultation models are being developed.

The partners expect that the attainment levels of the students in the schools taking part in this programme will increase as a result. This important outcome, which is at the heart of the Creative Partnerships approach, is supported by a report from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). The report tracked 13,000 young people over three years, and found that 'young people known to have attended Creative Partnerships activities outperformed those in the same schools who had not.'¹

The above claim is also supported by the OFSTED report on Creative Partnerships, which found that standards achieved by pupils had improved during their involvement in the programme.²

¹ Eames, A et al *The longer term impact of Creative Partnerships on the attainment of young people. Final reportt* (NFER, 2006)

² *Creative Partnerships: Initiative and Impact* (OFSTED, September 2006)

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Nurseries Programme

Studio 3 Arts

Studio 3 Arts was commissioned by the Early Years directorate at the London borough of Barking and Dagenham to create permanent artworks for three local nurseries between March and June 2006.

Studio 3 Arts is an established community arts organisation, and a committed and active member of the borough's Voluntary Sector Strategic Partnership. It works to deliver priorities set by the borough's Local Area Agreement (LAA). The LAA commits the local community to 'changing children's life chances, improving health, strengthening communities and families and raising skills... to genuinely build and transform lives.'

The main aim of the *Nurseries Programme* was to create a visual artwork at each of the three nurseries which children and staff could enjoy on a permanent basis. The programme took place at the Abbey, Seagulls and Wellgate nurseries, with 118 children taking part.

The children and staff at each nursery actively engaged in creating the artworks over the course of six workshops. The professional artists then designed and created the final pieces, incorporating the artwork of the children. The pieces were unveiled at a final celebratory event for the children, staff and parents.

The project was structured to ensure the development of creativity and creative play in the children, and the positive engagement of the staff. Engaging the nursery workforce with learning new skills and approaches was crucial to ensuring the sustainability of future creative activity in each setting.

Each nursery focused on a particular animal theme. For example, the children and staff at Wellgate Nursery worked with a visual artist and a storyteller to create stories around a magical creature called 'Rabbipod.' This was a fantasy animal that combined elements of bunnies, ducks and ponies. Using collages and cut outs of different creatures, the 41 children made clay models of what they thought 'Rabbipod' might look like and developed stories around the fantasy creature.

The visual artist used the children's work to create aluminium casts that were brightly painted and incorporated into an installation on the fence of the nursery playground.

The children, their parents, the nursery staff and local authority representatives came together at the end of the project to see the artwork unveiled in the playground. A photo exhibition presented on the day documented the process and development of the piece. It was clear that the children felt a real ownership of the playground space and that the process of working with the artists left a strong impression. Many children were observed interacting with the final piece, recognising their own artworks, talking about their experiences of participating and retelling their stories of 'Rabbipod.'

By the end of the programme all three nurseries had very distinct artworks. While Wellgate and Abbey nurseries had interactive pieces in their outdoor playgrounds, Seagulls Nursery had a photographic reproduction of the children's work digitally printed on a wall in the entrance to their nursery.

A full evaluation with the artists, nursery managers and Early Years coordinator, as well as a 'soft' evaluation process with the children, highlighted the positive outcomes of the programme at each nursery. The findings of this evaluation will be used to disseminate the benefits of the project across the local authority and to encourage those working in other settings to adopt a similar approach.

Artistic Director of Studio 3, Lorna Plampin, notes that 'sustainability in terms of creative activity is vital.' Involving nursery staff from the start of the programme left a legacy not only in the physical artwork and the children's learning but also in staff development. Working with trained artists helped nursery staff to learn new ways to sustain the children's creativity. They used the artists' methods to great success during the programme in all three settings, and felt confident in incorporating these approaches in their everyday work with the children.

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Ways in Discover

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of arts opportunities available to very young children and their families. Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships and Sure Start, among other initiatives, have supported a range of arts programmes across London. However, a coherent training strategy for artists and early years practitioners was needed to help make this work sustainable.

In 2005 the Arts Council commissioned Discover, a creative space in East London that works with the early years sector, to conduct a review of the training needs of London-based early years practitioners and artists. The long-term aim of this three-year project is to develop new models of delivery which allow children in early years settings to benefit from a wide range of arts experiences.

The project consists of an initial research phase, which looked at existing arts-based training for early years practitioners and the impact of that training, and identified models being used nationally which could be piloted in London. The research also mapped the training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provision for artists working in early years settings. The findings have been published in a document called *Ways in to creative arts training in the early years (Ways In)*.

At the end of the review phase of the project, Discover developed an action research programme that will pilot three of the training models recommended in *Ways In* between 2006–08. In the early years sector, a single framework for care, learning and development for children from birth to five years is due to come into force in September 2008. The *Ways In* review and resulting action research programme aim to ensure that any new arts training models fit within this framework, and to help local authorities to deliver against their Every Child Matters targets.

The three training models being piloted are:

- Creativity tastes, a partnership between individual artists and Lambeth Education Action Zone. It will allow practitioners and children in early years settings to learn specific arts skills
- Arts educator involves six artists and six Newham Children's Centres working together to explore ideas and develop practice. The aim is to embed specific artform expertise within the children's centres
- Artists' training aims to give artists the skills, knowledge and confidence to work with young children and their families. Fifteen artists will participate in a four-month programme that includes seminars, practical workshops, a placement and mentoring scheme.

During this pilot period Discover will identify delivery partners and explore appropriate accreditation models. This will link into the recommendation made in the QCA's Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage that 'to give all children the best opportunity for effective creative development, practitioners should give particular attention to opportunities to work alongside artists and other creative adults.'

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IGNITE

artsdepot

artsdepot is an inclusive, multi-disciplinary arts organisation with a permanent venue in North Finchley, London. It is committed to providing a rich and innovative programme of professional, educational and community arts for everyone to enjoy.

artsdepot was conceived by the local community in 1996 at a conference called Barnet 2000, which asked the borough's residents what new and improved services they would like to see in Barnet in the new millennium. What emerged from Barnet 2000 was an overwhelming need for more professional arts facilities.

The London borough of Barnet took on the project, and artsdepot was opened in 2005. It is funded by the local authority, London Councils, Arts Council England and private trusts and foundations. artsdepot is responsible for delivering arts activities for Barnet, and works closely with the local authority to make sure its targets and priorities are being met. It works in a wide variety of community settings and across the performing and visual arts.

artsdepot shares a site with Barnet College and a number of voluntary organisations. All partners have worked together to create a space which is used regularly by different members of the community, from college students to young families.

The organisation sits within the Youth and Connexions Service for the London borough of Barnet. It works to deliver against the targets identified in the local authority's Children and young people's plan. The centre has worked with more than 4,500 young people through its education and outreach programme, and more than 7,500 through community arts initiatives. These initiatives are designed specifically to engage and inspire young people, and to have an impact on their cultural, academic and personal development.

IGNITE is one such initiative, using poetry to engage with vulnerable and at risk young people in Barnet. artsdepot and Apples & Snakes, a pioneering poetry agency, have designed the programme in consultation with Connexions North London, the Pavilion Study Centre (a pupil referral unit) and Barnet's Youth Offending Services (YOS). The programme offers ten vulnerable and at risk young people the opportunity to form a writing group with a number of professional poets, rappers, storytellers and writers.

The weekly two-hour sessions take place directly after school hours in artsdepot's education spaces. The dynamic and inspirational poets from Apples & Snakes run the sessions and encourage the young people to believe in their talents. artsdepot supports the artists throughout the project and acts as the vital referral link between the local government agencies and young people.

The successful pilot of the *IGNITE* project, which ran from September–December 2006, demonstrated the following benefits:

- it helps young people to develop their own pieces of work and to experience the creative process
- it encourages the use and manipulation of words to develop literacy and communication skills
- it helps boost their confidence and self esteem
- it provides the opportunity to share their work in public, on a professional platform at artsdepot, with a number of artists from Apples & Snakes
- it encourages support and communication between the young people

artsdepot applies vigorous monitoring systems to all of their projects. An experienced member of the education team is on hand at each session to discuss any issues that may arise during the project. A feedback session is held with the young people at the end of each ten-week term, where they can get advice on further activities, academic studies or vocational courses. The project manager keeps a diary of the weekly sessions and a video recording is made of the final performance.

In the future artsdepot will open up *IGNITE* to four secondary schools in Barnet. The schools are large comprehensives that draw pupils from a diverse range of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Artists from Apples & Snakes will carry out an assembly performance to engage pupils in the project. artsdepot hopes that this innovative recruitment process will build up a waiting list of young people wanting to take part in the programme.

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Nang! Magazine

Tower Hamlets Summer University

Nang! Magazine started in 2001 as part of Tower Hamlets Summer University's extended programme. Published quarterly since 2005, the magazine's core editorial team is made up of eight young people who work on the publication all year round. The team also includes up to fourteen additional young people during the summer, who take part through the university's summer journalism course.

Nang! – street slang for something that is 'cool' –has grown directly from the varied interests and abilities of the students taking part. The magazine is unique and accessible because the team of young journalists write about issues that matter most to them. The vibrant content reflects a range of topics, from food and health issues to reviews of the latest music and movies.

Working closely with a professional editor and designer, the team of budding journalists, most of them between 15 and 21, gain real life experience of a journalistic environment. They make editorial decisions, write articles, take photographs and contribute to the overall look of the magazine.

Students also gain an impressive range of transferable skills. The young people are encouraged to explore all of the different aspects involved in publishing, including marketing, fundraising and typesetting.

The project has allowed many young people to progress further in the media industry. Several young people have used their experiences to attract bursaries or sponsorship to continue their learning in this sector. Mildred, Features Editor for *Nang!* in 2003, is currently Assistant Editor at bfm magazine. She says her experience at *Nang!* was an extremely valuable stepping stone in her journalistic career.

Nang! aims to be aspirational as well as inspirational. Individuals and organisations are carefully chosen so that young people can learn more about their professional role models. Celebrities that have been featured in past issues include actors Ian McKellen and Eva Longoria, and politician George Galloway.

The publication currently has a circulation of 10,000 copies per issue, distributed across six London boroughs through school, libraries and colleges. The popularity of the magazine, and the positive outcomes for the young people involved, has encouraged the editorial team to make *Nang!* a self-supporting enterprise. The young people are currently developing a business plan and are exploring possible partnerships with Young Enterprise and the Youth Opportunities Fund.

Students currently receive certificates for working on *Nang!* and completing the summer journalism course. Tower Hamlets Summer University is exploring possible links with local journalism colleges to provide academic accreditation towards further study.

In 2006 *Nang!* received a Philip Lawrence Award, recognising it as a project that has made a significant contribution to the lives of young people.

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