

Big Event 2019 Final Report



c. Wesley Storey

Big Event 2019 (Arts Award Festival) – 28 – 31 October 2019

Grant awarded: **£4,000**

Project Managers: Lucy Graham, Louise Flocks

A partnership project with Liverpool Learning Partnership, Unity Theatre, 20 Stories High, Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival, Epstein Youth Theatre & Barnardo's Young Carers.

Participants

Total number of participants: **34**

Total number of participants engaging in Arts Award Bronze: **28**

Ages: **13-19** (n.b original offer was 13-21, but no one over the age of 19 attended)

Females: **20**

Males: **14**

Number of participants new to all partner organisations: **24**

Demographics

Participants who are a person of colour: **41%**

Refugees: **18%**

Young Carers: **9%**

Living with a disability or learning difficulty: **15%**

Participants who live in areas of multiple deprivation*: **68%**

*<https://liverpool.gov.uk/media/10001/1-imd-2015-executive-summary.pdf>

Schedule

Monday 28 October - Unity Theatre	
9:45am	Breakfast
10am	Introduction session with Keith Saha
1pm	Lunch
2pm	Movement workshop with Movema World Dance
4-5pm	Arts Award portfolio time with Laura Orchard
Tuesday 29 October - Unity Theatre	
9:45am	Breakfast
10am	INSPIRE : hear from four local artists about their work and be inspired! Create moodboards of your inspirations Artists: Holly Langley, Saphena Aziz, Ash Nugent & Abi Horsfield. Moodboards led by Louise & Lucy
1pm	Lunch
2pm	Real-Eyes show , followed by a discussion – Show by Kitchen Sink Live *
4-5pm	Arts Award portfolio time with Laura Orchard
Wednesday 30 October - Tate Liverpool & British Music Experience	
9:45am	Breakfast (Unity, if you want to come and walk down with us)
10am	Set off from Unity to Tate Liverpool
10:30am	Meet at Tate Liverpool if not walking with us - see Keith Haring exhibition & participate in visual art workshop – With Deborah Riding, workshop with Karen Green and 2 young Tate Collective Members facilitating the visit of the exhibition
1pm	Lunch (Tate Liverpool)
2pm	Visit to British Music Experience & workshop
4-5pm	Arts Award portfolio time with Laura Orchard
Thursday 31 October - Unity Theatre	
9:45am	Breakfast
10am	Arts Award portfolio time (finishing off posters)*
11am	Singing workshop with Perrilena Alleyne-Hughes
1pm	Lunch - pizza!
2pm	Get together, celebrate and evaluate
2:30pm	Open mic and jam event hosted by Kitchen Sink Live
4pm	Finish

n.b * denotes that the schedule was slightly edited during the week to better suit the needs of the week.

Other Activities

Throughout the week, local artists Holly Langley & Gill Smith captured the activities and responses through their Visual Minutes (see pictures below). Participants were encouraged throughout the week to reflect on the activities with Holly & Gill to add them to the wall.

Photographer Wesley Storey was present throughout the week to capture images (see below)

Feedback

Participants

ABSOLUTELY love this mad family <3 I'm so grateful to be apart of this amazing group. My confidence has grew and I can be ME! Big thank you to @20storieshigh and @kitchensinklive for actually believing in me and giving me the courage to actually write/share real issues.

Participant

I had a great time in the autumn half term with @20storieshigh I made new friends and spent quality time with the ones I already have.

Participant

...so glad I took part. Wasn't sure at first 'cos I was new to the group but when I got into it and got to know people. Doing so many different activities was good as well so everyone was challenged and had their time to shine.

Participant

Me and Pat are so thankful to you all at 20 Stories for what you offer her, what you have all done to support her and how she has come into her own because of you all, so grateful x

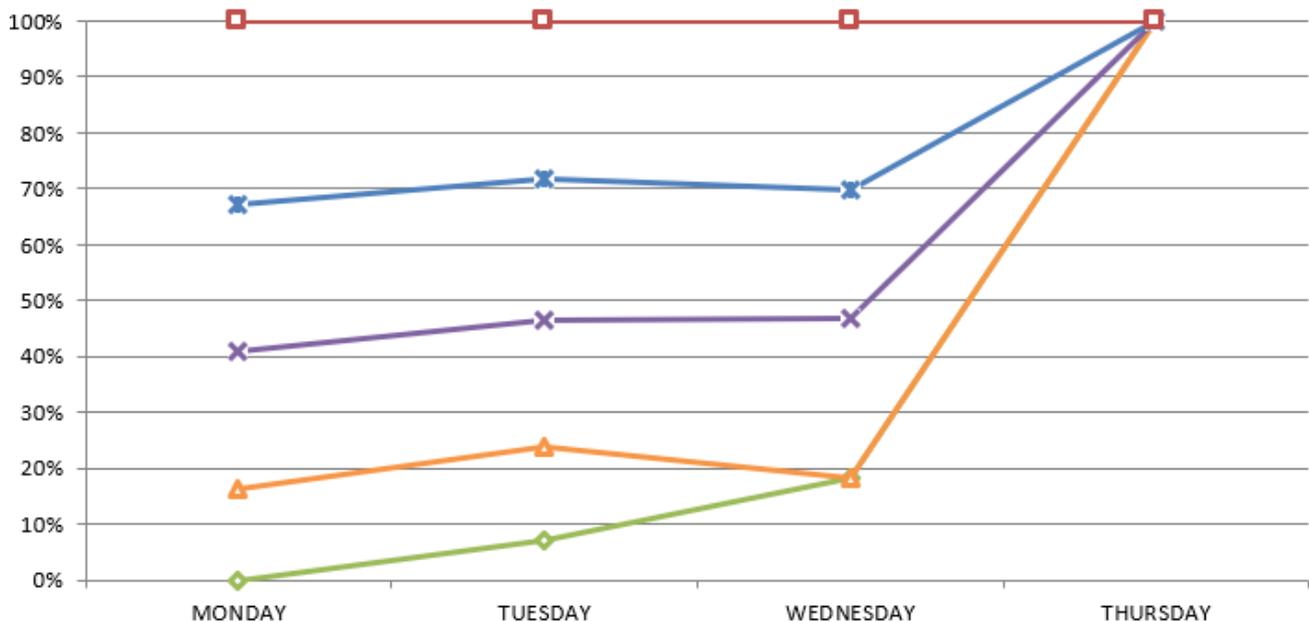
Parent of participant

Seven of our young Arabs (including newly arrived Syrian young people) took part this week The Big Event 2019 and they had a wonderful experience. Your team, Unity Theatre and 20 Stories High, worked wonders and made our young people, some who speak mainly Arabic, feel welcome and valued. I attended the end of week celebration yesterday and it was such a joy to see so many young people celebrating the Arts. Big well done to all involved.

Anne Thwaite, Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival

Please see full feedback on the week from participants in appendix.

At the end of the week, all participants were asked to reflect on the activities through a 'mood map' the below graph shows the average outcomes of those maps using some sample data. *N.b see appendix for samples of individual responses*



Session Leaders

Ashleigh Nugent (INSPIRE Artist, Rise Up CIC): The Big Event was incredibly inspirational. The young people were engaged, positive and very responsive. They asked pertinent questions and seemed to be having a great time. It was also very inspiring watching the other speakers and hearing the young people's responses. It was an honour to be involved.

Abi Horsfield (INSPIRE Artist, Collective Encounters): It was an honour to be part of the programme, they young people were interested, attentive and asked really poignant questions, it was great to see people getting on together and wanting create and learn. It is a great week long programme, that I hope will run and run.

Holly Langley (INSPIRE Artist & Visual Minutes Creator, Visual Artist): I really enjoyed the event and I could see that all of the participants did too. Such a creative mix of talents all in one space. I have no doubt that a lot of those individuals will go far. Some just need a push in terms of confidence and others needed their horizons broadened a little to know that a career in the arts is possible. They were full of life with inquisitive minds which is good and healthy to see. It's liberating to see such young talent from all cultures enjoying themselves. The schedule that they had for the week was jam packed with quality work and you could see by their faces and their interactions with others how much they were having fun and it rubbed off on to all around them. Well done to the organisers and the leaders of the sessions.



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The team

Louise Flocks, Project Manager:

Building on the Arts Award Festival last year, this year's Big Event was a great success and benefitted all hugely with a diverse range of activity, as well as robust pastoral support, made possible by the additional financial support we received this year. The take up for places is very encouraging and it seems obvious that the continuation of holiday provision is important for young people, especially in the sphere of city-wide arts and culture. Additionally, the take up for Arts Award Bronze was similarly encouraging, especially in the light of dwindling support for creative arts in formal education. For me personally, the most enjoyable aspect was the diversity of interests and culture reflected by all the participants; it was inspiring to me to see the young people mix, instigate games and activity between them and celebrate each other's talents and creative passions.

Lucy Graham, Project Manager:

Overall this festival was really positive. To engage with so many new young people for 20 Stories High is fantastic – I hadn't quite realised how high the figure was for newcomers. We as an organisation constantly receive feedback that our groups want something to do during half term, so it was brilliant to see some of our core members engaging with other local young people and groups to find new ways to collaborate and work together. Having clearly defined roles for this week really helped us to all work effectively as a staff team, in particular allowing myself and Lou to take a step back from delivery in most of the time, so we could look more broadly at the impact.

Laura Campbell, Participation Support Worker:

It was fantastic to be involved in such an inspiring week of workshops, activities, visits to local cultural organisations culminating in incredible performances by a diverse group of young people from across Merseyside and beyond.

Each time I am involved in the Big Event I am inspired by collaborative nature of the work and the fun and enjoyment that everyone has by being part of the event

As someone who believes in the power of collaboration, sharing ideas and skills and building relationships, these events enable young people to realise a collaborative creativity enriching their skills and ability to connect. Each day we provided breakfast and lunch which enabled everyone to eat and socialise together in the newly created Unity bar which provided space for everyone to relax, chat and make friendships. The Inspire session delivered by 4 artists from different art forms - was an inspirational highlight which the young people responded to enthusiastically and were given an insight into different creative journeys - which included the challenges and achievements, experienced by so many creative artists and practitioners.

Donna Coleman, Participation Support Worker:

I found The Big Event a really exciting, special week for all young people involved as well as myself, watching their confidence build over the days was absolute lovely to see and how involved the individual groups became friends with each other and seeing them support each other, even after just knowing each other a day or so. The young people really threw themselves in, in each workshop and loved being part of it. Some young people's comments were so great to hear "This is the best half term ever"! I can wait to do it again next year". Another young person said "This has been boss. I was quite nervous to come and wasn't sure I was going to, I'm so glad that I did though it's been the best and I've made some really good mates too".

I also felt that going out to the Tate and British Music experience was great, the young people thoroughly enjoyed this and helped them to really bond, I also thought this was a great way to break up the week, I also feel that a four day week for this event was the right amount of time.

Learning & Reflection

Previous Learning

From our initial application to the Trust, the main points that we aimed to address this year from previous learning were:

- Recruit a young, emerging artist to support the Lead Artist/Artistic Director and develop his/her skills and experience
- Run the festival over five rather than four days, with shorter days and more breaks
- Invite schools as well as arts organisations to invite young people to take part
- Increased pastoral support
- Buying in the catering to save staff time buying lunches each day
- More clearly defined roles for staff
- An extra Arts Award Adviser
- Someone to document the process and produce a learning resource for other organisations

Within the planning of this year's festival, the following challenges and opportunities appeared:

- Project Managers changed throughout the process (Guy Christiansen left 20 Stories High) and so this brought some new perspectives on the week.
- On reflection of the week, project managers Louise & Lucy felt that there would be more scope in offering the participants a range of art forms and activities, as opposed to having one lead and one supporting artist – it was felt the level of expertise offered in each art form could be greater by employing individual artists who are specialist in their areas.
- Schools were invited to planning meetings, and were very keen in the beginning, however the level of commitment required from teachers could not be met – i.e planning meetings during summer holidays and volunteering their Half Term week to help staff the festival.
- Budget issues (an unsuccessful bid to Awards for All) meant we were unable to hire an external catering company, however buying in ingredients in advance of the week helped to address staff working through lunch times.
- With concerns of sign-ups in the lead up to the week, we did not feel it would be appropriate to hire two arts award advisors, as there would be a great risk in the numbers who would take up the offer. Instead, Laura Orchard's contact was split into two sections: delivery of sessions during the week, and due to a large take up of Arts Award during the week, we are now able to contract Laura to assess these portfolios.
- Having Holly & Gill to create the visual minutes throughout the week really helped us to achieve a shareable resource of participant feedback.

Benefits and Achievements

- Providing a half-term provision for young people currently engaging in youth theatres
- Providing Unity Theatre & 20 Stories High with the financial resource to run a half term activity
- Providing the opportunity for all organisations to engage with new young people (waiting lists)
- Having Pastoral Support Workers dedicated to the role took weight off the Project Managers
- Employing lead artists to alleviate the pressure of delivery on the Project Managers
- Signposting young people to further opportunities across the sector
- Visiting other arts & cultural organisations throughout the week enhanced our participants' relationship with the sector
- Engaging in a meaningful delivery with participants
- Opportunity for young people across Merseyside to share their cultures, communities, stories & art forms
- Having robust organisations at the helm of the project allowed for some costs to be In Kind support
- Sharing best practice as organisations supporting young people
- Strengthening the network (MYTDF) and the joined-up approach to Youth Provision in Merseyside
- Successfully achieving 28 Arts Award Bronze qualifications
- Employing local artists
- Inspiring young people with genuine local practitioners & artists – feeling a part of the arts community
- Removing lead artist allowed us to employ a diverse range of artists
- Having in-kind tickets from Tate Liverpool allowed us to book an extra visit (British Music Experience)
- Having an in-kind performance (of which 20 Stories High & Unity Theatre were co-producers of) allowed for projects to crossover and make planning and delivery more effective

- Making Arts Award Bronze optional was a good move – possibly had more take up, but also allowed for 6 participants to engage and not take up the award (that all had previously achieved)
- Provide opportunities for young ‘emerging’ artists to lead sessions and gain experience in delivery
- Facilitating a Prince’s Trust placement for one young person throughout the week.



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Learning/considerations to take forward

- Engagement with Barnardo’s Young Carers: After the festival, Lucy Graham spoke with a Manager at Barnardo’s. Meeting is being arranged to discuss further barriers those young people might have had in accessing our festival. There were three participants who engage with Barnardo’s, but all three of these young people also already engage with 20 Stories High.
- Difficulty to manage sign ups/spaces. Not wanting to give out spaces that aren’t there but knowing that there would be people who didn’t turn up on the day! Look for a better commitment process next time.
- The want from participants to engage with more ‘drama’ and drama-based activity – and balancing that with wanting to offer a broad range of experiences
- Arts Award Bronze – do we continue to deliver this festival with Bronze? Will we find it hard to engage with young people who have not yet done the award?
- Should we look to create a festival that works towards Silver? This would need more than 4-5 days, and would mean participant numbers would need to decrease, to give participants a meaningful exploration of Silver.
- Lots of MYTDF partners were unavailable/ had clashes with their programme – is this festival the right thing for the partnership?

20 Stories High, Unity Theatre & Liverpool Learning Partnership would like to thank The Sister Gwen Appleton Trust for making this event possible.



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