

Beacon Case Study

Theme Name:	Culture & Sport for Hard to Reach Groups
Authority Name:	Borough of Telford & Wrekin
<p>Overview of Authority</p> <p>This unitary authority is working to transform its communities using culture and sport allied to powerful and meaningful partnerships that are making a real difference. Innovative use of resources and joined up cultural services working have demonstrated real benefits for hard to reach groups particularly the young, those excluded from education and disabled people.</p> <p>Our approach and critical success factors, which are at the heart of our organisation, include close community working, strategic engagement with hard to reach groups, continuous improvement, developing people for excellence and above all a 'can do' culture.</p> <p>The Borough of Telford and Wrekin would like to highlight the work of arts development with hard to reach groups in this case study. The team has worked specifically with adults with disabilities, young people with learning disabilities and vulnerable children and young people. Its work has a major impact within physical and social regeneration, education and helping to create sustainable communities.</p> <p>The challenge with this work has been ensuring high quality artists with specific abilities to work with each of the specialist areas of required expertise. Throughout the process all the different groups have been consulted and involved with all aspects of the work, which has resulted in high achievement and commitment throughout each of the projects.</p>	
<p>What has been achieved?</p> <p>Arty Party</p> <p>The arts and disability project – called “Arty Party” - has been developed over eight years and been funded for the past two years by The Arts Council of England. This work has enabled a group of 80 adults with learning disabilities to come together socially on a regular basis. Out of the group there is now a nucleus of visual artists, performers and potential film makers. The group has a national reputation for the originality of their work, the fact that there is no restriction due to the severity of their disability and that the members are, to a very large degree the decision makers. In the third year of ACE funding the group looks forward to a residency at the Yorkshire sculpture park, the further development of the visual arts group and the performing arts group becoming resident company at the Hadley Learning Community.</p> <p>The evaluation of the project was carried out by external consultants over a</p>	

period of nine months, meeting with many of the participants, partners and artists involved in order to provide an objective analysis of the work to date and to support the future direction of the project.

The Arts Team 4 Children & Young People

The Arts Team 4 Children & Young People delivers creative workshops for young people, with a focus on those at risk of social exclusion. Project activities are held in community venues across Telford, in priority wards, or with specific groups of young people identified for a variety of reasons. We empower the young people involved by consulting with them about activities they would like to engage with and encouraging them to be positive about their own contribution and abilities. An Arts Team specifically for children and young people within a local authority is unique within the West Midlands and the work has been selected as an example of best practice in the Arts Council's recent publication "Engaging Young People."

The Children's Arts Team was set up in response to extensive consultation by the Children's Fund with five – 13 year old children who live in the Borough and who are from a variety of cultural, ethnic and social backgrounds. The consultation process identified the demand from children for arts activities and in response to this the Arts Development Team sought partners to create opportunities for this to happen. We also seek to engage parents in family learning when it is appropriate to do so. The young people's team develops and delivers projects across all art forms contracting appropriate artists as required. They actively support voluntary groups from priority wards, the BME community, and young people at risk. As a means of community capacity building we also support adults from within these communities who have an interest in working creatively with children.

In its initial two years the team has run over twenty projects, providing over 4,000 hours of activity to some of the most needy sections of our community. We seek to deliver quality projects that will have a lasting impact rather than initiate activities that attract large numbers for no real purpose. We have, however, worked with over 800 children and young people who are from priority wards or who are recognised as having limited opportunities.

Listed below are a few examples of achievements to date:

- working in the priority ward of Hadley, which has the highest BME population in Telford. "The way we see it" project engaged 350 local people of all ages in producing a digital snapshot celebrating the cultural diversity of this community. This work was used by IDeA in its publication "*cultural connections*" as an example of best practice within the 'creating safer and stronger communities' section
- within the Priority ward of Malinslee, which is one of the 10 per cent most deprived wards in England with 61 per cent of children living in poverty; "Heaven is a plate on Earth" was one of 120 projects chosen nationally by Creative Partnerships for schools to research the impact of extending the national curriculum through creativity. 64 Key Stage 2 pupils engaged in all aspects of creating, designing and operating a

restaurant run by children for 160 adults

- Secondary schools inclusion unit facilitating a positive experience that would help disaffected pupils integrate into mainstream school activities. The Arts Team offered 20 young people a 20 week project. When confidence levels began to rise, individuals began to work on a collaborative piece. This project had an 85 per cent attendance rate, a tangible measure of its success
- RISQ project. Over ten weeks working with young people in the care of the authority who have in common the fact that their parents have drug dependency. This project supported the participants to experiment, feel safe and cooperate with each other through visual arts activities
- Architects of Air is a 1,200m² sculpture and Salamander tandem; both have an international reputation. The Arts team commissioned them to engage with disadvantaged groups, with priority given to people with learning disabilities; over 200 people actively took part in workshops with 2,500 general visits to the exhibition

We are presently working on a Sexual Health initiative with the RISQ team (PCT)

Service Delivery Tips

Vision: clear, shared and simple. Plan with the participants and share good practice with the partners.

Leadership: work with artists sharing the vision. Ensure the skills are appropriate to the needs of the participants and that there is empathy with the group. No one has the right way, but together a team will develop to ensure commitment, enjoyment and success.

Partnerships: develop real partners, who are involved, part of the project, and share the overall vision. 'Learn off partners', 'deliver with partners', 'identify hard to reach groups through partners'.

Consultation: practical consultation relevant to the age group and ability of the participants. This is not a paper exercise. The consultation should be acted upon and reviewed by the group.

What not to do:

- pay lip service to consultation, it has to be meaningful
- have an unshared vision
- lead from the front without involving all the interested parties
- have lists of partners who have no long term investment in the work

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