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Uncharted An Lanntair

Case Study

About

Uncharted is a programme of diverse activity delivered by An Lanntair, an inclusive and inspiring multi-arts venue in the Outer Hebrides.

Aims

Run by a programme lead and seven tutors who are professional local artists, the aim is to inspire people to create art that is connected to place and time, and provide dedicated arts activities in remote locations across the islands.

Activities

Uncharted has four strands: Art Labs, the School Run project, the Channel, and art commissions for bus shelters.

Running in Stornoway, Tarbert, Ness, Bragar and Uig, five community centres have been equipped as Art Labs. Each is unique in its artistic direction, enabling young people to experiment with different materials, equipment and art forms.

Engaging four rural primary schools across Lewis and Harris, the School Run Project enabled children to work with local artists to creatively record and map their journeys to and from school. The project spanned film, audio, drawing, photography, and creative writing and poetry in both Gaelic and English.

Developed by An Lanntair and young people from Nicholson High School, the Channel is a website for Uncharted participants to interact, write about their experiences and showcase their work.

Art Lab participants commissioned two artists to produce pieces which will transform bus shelters in Lewis, alongside further artwork created by young people themselves.

Impact on young people

An ambitious youth-led arts programme, Uncharted has engaged around 300 young people aged 5 to 25 in over 160 hours of free arts activity in areas which previously had no provision.

Participants lead the activities, recruit artists, design the website and choose which art forms to explore. As such, they've developed transferable skills such as decision making, creative thinking and problem solving. Art Labs have boosted the aspirations of young people, encouraging them to consider alternative options for their creative futures. Local artists also benefit from the programme with stable employment and new teaching opportunities.

Successes

Uncharted has delivered a programme of quality arts activities in remote areas, and provided young people with dedicated arts spaces in their local communities. These participants have been given the valuable opportunity to collaborate with skilled professionals and to take part in a continuous nurturing programme.

What's next?

Young people are creating artworks to be installed in local bus shelters, showcasing pieces at local community exhibitions, making a documentary about the bus shelter commissions, and creating a publication highlighting their work. It is hoped that these activities will also increase awareness of the programme within the community.

Challenges and lessons learned

The programme lead is hoping to involve more tutors in collecting information on progression and achievement. Artists also feel that there is a need to generate greater awareness surrounding the benefits of arts activities for young people and their communities.





Inside/Outside and Unlock Digital Hot Chocolate Trust

Case Study

About

Funded through TTS.Digital, Hot Chocolate led a programme of digital activities working closely with artists from Biome Collective, a digital arts collective, and a range of local partners.

Hot Chocolate Trust is a youth work organisation which provides a safe space for young people aged 12 to 21 to come together in Dundee city centre. This community of young people often face a wide range of challenges such as low educational attainment, bullying, unemployment, homelessness, mental health issues, risk taking behaviour and discrimination.

Aims

The main aims of the programme were to give young people new creative opportunities, and to enable them to unlock the potential of digital art. By involving young people from the outset, Hot Chocolate ensured that the entire programme was planned and delivered by, and for, those involved.

Activities

Activities comprised a design studio, taster and intensive sessions, Tumblr challenge, events, open sessions and one-to-one activity.

Through Design Studio, young people were introduced to techniques including screen printing, lino printing, photography and drawing, giving them the tools to contribute to the design of Hot Chocolate's annual report.

In partnership with Biome Collective and Dundee Contemporary Arts, monthly taster sessions in digital media, screen printing and interactive technology were made available, followed by intensive sessions in which participants could focus on their specific interests in creating individual projects.

Working with the One World Centre which promotes global justice and equality, young people hosted an exhibition of paper lanterns created using LED candles and digital photography. As well as showcasing their creativity, participants also explored their feelings by inscribing the lanterns with their thoughts about global issues and their own personal journeys.

In addition, Hot Chocolate's open sessions offer young people the chance to create projects in the space any way they choose and they've also been using online platform Tumblr to consider issues pertinent to them, such as LGBT history month.

Impact on young people

Young people have played a key role in planning the programme and leading the activity. Through TTS. Digital funding, participants have had the opportunity to use technology they were unable to access at school or college. Having had little access to digital art before, young people were enthusiastic about learning new techniques and skills. And, as a result of taking part in these new and more challenging activities, their confidence and self-esteem increased.

Young people have formed new friendships out of the programme, having found shared interests they were unable to explore at school. And, beyond nurturing skills in arts and technology, the programme has provided a valuable platform for young people to highlight issues important to them.

Successes

By using the format of taster sessions, Hot Chocolate was able to successfully pilot new partnerships with digital artists. Open communication and real collaboration were key successes of the programme, and contributed to the continuation of genuinely youth-led activity.

Challenges

One unexpected challenge resulted from the assumption that all young people would have a certain level of technical literacy and access to digital resources such as the internet and a laptop. As Hot Chocolate attracts young people that are likely to have fewer resources, the programme approach was revised to ensure everyone could take part equally.

What's next?

Hot Chocolate has been invited to work with Dundee City Council on an interactive project as part of the regeneration of the waterfront. Young people will create an arts project that interacts with the city and its residents, with the potential to include digital techniques such as geocaching and augmented reality.

Hot Chocolate is keen to continue experimental and exploratory digital activity.



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iGNITE Moray Youth Arts Hub

Case Study

About

iGNITE is the Moray Youth Arts Hub, managed by Findhorn Bay Arts. The Hub offers a diverse range of workshops and events, and promotes Moray as a place of outstanding arts and culture.

Activities

By May 2016, iGNITE had engaged over 2,700 young people aged 0 to 24 in arts activities, and over 400 children aged 0 to 4 through targeted work with parent and child groups. Taster sessions were followed by 75 intensive workshops chosen by young people themselves, plus a broader programme of events, ambassador roles and access.

iGNITE has supported young people to participate in local events such as Culture Day (led by Findhorn Bay Arts), Belladrum Tartan Heart festival, Lossiemouth Wall of Rock festival, and Elgin Food and Drink festival.

Young people were involved in organising and promoting

events, and assisted artists in delivering workshops. These events gave young people the opportunity to be recognised for their impressive work.

Through the Ambassador Programme, young people promote and increase youth participation in arts. 20 young people aged 16 to 25 have volunteered as Arts Ambassadors and helped shape the future of iGNITE. Two Ambassadors have gained Saltire Awards for their work during Culture Day 2015, while another 12 have received training in marketing, social media and review writing.

The Hub also supports young people to access arts in different parts of the country, covering the cost of travel, tickets and accommodation through the Go and See programme. iGNITE also encourages wider networking by highlighting the range of other arts activities available to young people in their local area.

Impact on young people

The Hub has had a positive impact on young people in a variety of ways. For some, the Hub has encouraged progression to further education in the arts, while others have increased their skills and gained experience through learning, performing or promoting. One young person has gained a place on a BBC training programme while another has noted that her increased confidence helped her in getting her first job. iGNITE also shows young people the wider arts sector, highlighting the range of career options that are available to creative young people.

In addition, the Hub has helped young people become more involved in their community and enabled them to meet new people. Participants are now aware of the local opportunities available to them and open to trying new and different activities. Young people feel

that Moray has a highly creative community, one that they would like to see nurtured and promoted so that more young people can see the different opportunities available to them through the arts.

Successes

The successes of iGNITE are many and varied. The Hub has provided arts activity to rural communities, supported local artists, empowered young people to participate in and take charge of arts activity, and engaged a range of young people from toddlers to young adults. The Hub has also been recognised as an Investing in Children Service, promoting the Rights of Children and Young People.

Challenges and lessons learned

The main challenge iGNITE faced was developing the arts in an area with no provision. But through networking with a range of partners, the Hub successfully delivered a range of arts activities to young people of all ages in Moray. The geography of the area also presented a challenge. iGNITE's approach to this was twofold - the Hub offered activities in different locations so young people could find workshops and events close to home, and the Hub also offered to cover the travel costs of those in more remote areas.

What's next?

iGNITE hopes to continue increasing the sustainability of the arts in Moray by raising awareness and supporting artists with funding opportunities.



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National Youth Orchestras of Scotland

Case Study

About

Through targeted funding from Time to Shine, National Youth Orchestras of Scotland (NYOS) created a programme of regional and international development.

Aims

The aim is to improve the reach and accessibility of NYOS, and to develop the reputation of Scottish youth arts at an international level.

Activities

Regional activity comprised residencies, ensemble start-ups and Route NYOS. These were developed as free-to-attend pilot projects targeted in areas that have no youth arts hub or have low NYOS membership.

Led by senior musicians in the role of associate tutors, regional residencies were geared towards young people

that play music but might not have heard of NYOS or considered joining in such activities.

Ensemble start-ups were run by NYOS staff, enabling schools and communities to set up their own bespoke ensemble which they can continue to develop, while Route NYOS introduced communities to NYOS via workshops featuring introductory level ensembles and information sessions.

Senior NYOS players (those aged 20-25) have been heavily involved in the regional programme, with nine players trained and employed as associate tutors. These senior members help deliver programmes to young people in the community, and receive training from experienced and skilled professional music educators.

Internationally, the project enabled NYOS to tour in China and to host the European Federation of National Youth Orchestras 2015.

Impact on young people

The project has helped the young NYOS musicians to improve their skills and professionalism, and has increased their confidence in playing, performing and teaching. Several associate musicians have since gone on to offer private tuition or taken up volunteering opportunities to further develop their teaching skills.

In addition, young people taking part in the regional programmes felt that learning to play in an ensemble helped them develop valuable skills, such as musicianship, stamina and teamwork. The programme enabled participants to grow as young musicians but also to develop skills they can use across their learning and throughout their lives.

Successes

A significant success of the programme has been the sense of community that emerges from ensemble playing. By being able to be part of this community of musicians from an early age, young people are able to reduce feelings of isolation and share their passion with their peers.

Challenges

The project experienced difficulties at recruitment stage. NYOS had anticipated forming strong partnerships with each of the regional youth arts hubs, but few demonstrated interest in becoming involved. Instead, NYOS set up the programme using its own wide network of existing contacts.

What's next?

The next part of the programme is an exciting jazz/orchestral cross-genre regional residency in Edinburgh in October 2016. Such regional residencies with associate tutors have been a particularly successful aspect of NYOS Time to Shine activity and NYOS is keen to continue this work.



TIMET 
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**#artcore
Edinburgh
Youth Arts Hub**

Case Study

About

#artcore is Edinburgh's Youth Arts Hub and is managed by Out of the Blue, an arts and education trust. Based in the Drill Hall, Out of the Blue is a collective of over 100 artists across 60 studios running small businesses around Leith and Edinburgh. Since its inception 20 years ago, the trust has grown to become a significant cultural and social enterprise in the city.

Aims

#artcore aims to empower young artists, encourage innovation, and support partner organisations and freelance artists to be responsive to the interests and needs of young people. The ethos of the programme focuses on nurturing and developing talent, treating young people as artists. #artcore believes that in order to flourish, young people need support and a platform to develop and showcase their work. As such, the Hub

provides practical support, such as technical advice and the space to create, as well as opportunities for young people to share their work at public events.

Activities

There are four main strands to the activities on offer and so far over 1,100 young people have engaged with the programme. The strands comprise training and apprenticeships, the print studio, the Creative Programme, and events. #artcore supports up to 12 short-term traineeships and four paid Creative Apprenticeships who work within a wider team to manage the programme.

Young people are also offered training and work through Out of the Blueprint, a print studio. This social enterprise provides services for artists, young people and the community to create Risograph prints at discounted prices.

#artcore's creative programme offers a series of workshops for young people aged 13 to 25 encompassing a wide range of art forms including printing, comics, writing, animation, circus skills, music recording, theatre and digital art (involving IT skills, coding and electronics).

The Hub's events provide a platform for young people to present their talent while also offering learning opportunities for the apprentices. Freshfest, for example, was a drop-in event run by the creative apprentices to provide young people with the opportunity to showcase, perform and sell their artwork. #artcore also coordinated the Edinburgh Youth Music Festival which has grown from a one-day event to a month-long programme of gigs, workshops and advice sessions working with ten local partners.

Impact on young people

#artcore has helped apprentices to develop their skills in arts, communication and practical work, and boosted their confidence. Young people have learned a significant amount about the requirements of working in the creative sector, such as event management, exhibition display and finance. This experience in the creative sector is important to young people, and each of them valued the apprenticeships being paid positions.

The activities of #artcore have enabled young people to discover more about their potential future careers options, find out how to pursue these, and develop their portfolios. For one trainee, the experience of #artcore enabled him to gain a place on a college course, while others were able to use their new experience as a way into further arts opportunities such as paid work or volunteering at major events.

Young people now feel part of the wider community at Out of the Blue. They value having their work appreciated by their peers and professionals, which in turn increases their confidence and encourages them to pursue their passions.

Successes

#artcore has been especially successful in placing young people at the forefront of activity by providing them with a platform and actively valuing their talent. Added to this, the apprentices noted that the programme strikes an important balance between giving young people a significant degree of creative freedom while being tailored to their specific interests and needs.

Challenges and lessons learned

Some of the young apprentices highlighted difficulties in liaising with wider arts organisations, and felt that too much expectation was placed on them while they were still in the process of training.

What's next?

Out of the Blue is keen that the print studio and some of the more established workshops will continue wherever possible.





Scottish Youth Theatre

Case Study

About

Through Time to Shine funding for regional development activity, Scottish Youth Theatre (SYT) set up four programmes across Scottish Borders, Orkney, Dumfries and Galloway, and Shetland.

Aims

This case study looks at the activity in Shetland, a programme designed to engage young people in theatre as a starting point for new theatrical pursuits.

Activities

Following workshops and consultation with young people, and with support from Shetland Arts and Shetlands Islands Council, SYT devised and delivered a five-day programme of activity built around musical theatre, composition, design and performance.

In creating the production, younger participants (aged 8 to 11) devised the story and themes, while older participants (aged 12 to 16) worked on music and design. Their week long programme culminated in a performance in the Garrison Theatre.

Training and support

Two local young people, aged 16 and 25, were employed as workshop assistants by SYT. Through these paid roles, participants gained valuable skills in theatre and youth work. An additional volunteering role helped another young person observe the work of freelance tutors and discover more about theatre. These three training positions contributed to each young person gaining accreditation through Saltire and Youth Achievement Awards.

Impact on young people

Young people gave their feedback through informal discussions, mood boards, written evaluation forms and video interviews. They described their enjoyment in doing something new and different, especially as they had experienced few theatre opportunities in Shetland. They also spoke highly of their tutors, who they felt were kind, friendly and encouraging, and had increased their awareness of the opportunities available to them in future.

All those involved believe that the programme helped young people gain confidence and develop new skills. By experiencing rehearsing, working to deadlines and maintaining concentration over long days, young people gained a valuable insight into theatre and performance work which in turn spurred their enthusiasm to take part in further theatrical activity.

Successes

Thanks to the programme, young people are now more aware of the arts opportunities available to them in Shetland and beyond. New relationships have flourished between young people across the island who have come together through the programme. Each of them has increased their knowledge of theatre and developed new skills, and together they created and delivered an inspiring local performance.

What's next?

It is hoped that the physical resources left in Shetland will inspire future theatre productions and arts activity in the area.

Challenges

SYT cited a number of lessons learnt in delivering the project, namely the importance of clarity surrounding the content of the project, shorter delivery slots to ensure effective concentration, and allowing more time to support assistants and volunteers in their training.



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Creative Internships Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)

Case Study

About

Since 2013, SCVO has been running the Arts and Creative Industries Graduate Internship programme, also known as the Creative Internship programme. The programme works with employers in the creative industries to create paid internship programmes for young people aged 18 to 30. SCVO received Time to Shine funding to support employment opportunities in the arts.

Aims

The aim of the programme was to provide opportunities for young people in their first years after graduating.

Activities

The programme offered three-month paid internships to 38 graduates and was open to unemployed recent arts graduates aged 18 to 30. Over 400 people applied and applications were passed directly to employers who recruited the applicants. Placements were offered at the living wage with some employers raising this further.

The majority of employers were small businesses, and a mix of third sector organisations, private businesses and sole traders, working in a range of different areas, including visual arts, performing arts, community arts, digital arts, design and technology, and arts management. A range of positions were on offer, including assistants, trainees, co-ordinators, curators and producers.

Impact on young people

Interns appreciated the training and support they received, learned new skills, and found an opportunity to use their existing skills in a professional environment. Several worked with the organisation beyond their internship while others moved into employment, freelance work and further education.

Young people felt welcomed by their host organisations, and relished being given responsibility and having their contributions appreciated. They also cited having a paid employment opportunity as an important aspect of the programme, particularly as some had never before had paid work in the arts.

As a result of the Creative Internship Programme, young people felt more confident, more employable and more positive about their future career prospects.

Successes

Young people believe the key successes of the internship programme were that they learned new skills, gained valuable experience in the arts, and were offered the chance of paid employment. Being supported by experienced staff contributed to their sense of well-being, and all of those interviewed said they would recommend the programme. Interns could combine their professional work experience together with their experiences as young artists, an opportunity that many felt they couldn't have acquired elsewhere.

Challenges

One of the challenges for SCVO in delivering the programme was the high demand from employers and young people, and matching this with the budget available to provide internship places. This demonstrated the need for this type of opportunity for young people and the arts sector.

What's next?

After three years of delivery, the Creative Internship programme has now closed as it was unable to secure further funding.





Sensatronic Lab Sense Scotland

Case Study

About

Sensatronic Labs are digital music making workshops for young people with communication support needs. Funded through TTS.Digital and delivered by Sense Scotland, these tailored workshops are provided by freelance professional digital artists with a range of expertise.

Activities

The primary activity of Sensatronic Labs is music making workshops. These sessions, open to established community groups and individuals, have a flexible approach so that participants can engage with the instruments of their choice in the way they feel most comfortable. Young people work on the process of creating an instrument and making sounds, rather than an end result, and are encouraged to try new ways of making music and

exploring sound, light and touch in a creative way.

As a core part of the project, Sensatronic Lab has been designing and developing new and accessible instruments tailored to individual needs and interests. All instruments have a digital element, allowing the user to control the sound they create, and many instruments also incorporate multi-sensory elements so the experience integrates sound, light and touch.

The team at Sensatronic Lab have used a combination of hi-tech materials and technology, together with accessible materials with particular sensory textures, such as marbles, water and textured plastics. This punk DIY approach reflects an emerging field in digital arts and marks a shift from the way technology has been used before in terms of accessible equipment.

Impact on young people

Staff, group workers and parents have seen an increase in confidence amongst participants, particularly in making choices and developing individual styles and techniques. By learning new ways to communicate, young people have improved their social skills and, by working in groups, they've learnt vital teamwork skills like listening to others, sharing and compromising.

Sessions have boosted participants' confidence in performing music, and have helped some young people with cerebral palsy to increase their range of movement. A number of participants have shown physical abilities that have been exposed through their experience in creating sound and music.

The project has also provided training and support. One music tutor is blind and extremely passionate about music, and was supported

to facilitate workshops. He believes this opportunity gave him the chance to teach, learn, make contacts and improve equality, as well as increase his confidence and become more independent.

Successes

The programme has been successful in a number of ways. Sensatronic Labs have made a real contribution to youth empowerment, giving young people choice and control over the way they want to make music. It has also created an environment that is equally accessible to all people and which constantly adapts to the individual needs of participants. Through creativity and innovation, the programme has used technology to give young people the creative freedom to explore sound, light and touch in the ways they wish.

Challenges

While there were initial challenges in setting up the programme, particularly when experimenting with new technology, these issues have been overcome and the team are positive about the future of the project and the ways it might develop.

The instruments designed by Sensatronic Lab will remain at Sense Scotland and the team is developing a series of tutorials about them. With these resources, and through partnership working, the project staff hope young people can continue to have a platform to develop and share their talents.

What's next?

The project manager believes this programme will have a direct influence on how Sense Scotland offers music provision in future. The flexible approach and cross artform style of Sensatronic Labs is more innovative than some of the current sessions delivered by the organisation. It is hoped that over time young people will continue to feel a greater sense of independence, control and expression, which will empower them to be more aspirational.





Research on barriers to access Birds of Paradise

Case Study

About

Through Time to Shine funding, Birds of Paradise commissioned research to explore the reasons why disabled and D/deaf young people were not accessing the arts, what the barriers were and what could be done to help. Birds of Paradise is a Glasgow-based theatre company working with disabled and D/deaf artists.

Aims

Using the arts as a platform can be extremely powerful and Birds of Paradise is keen that the next generation of disabled and D/deaf young people have the chance to explore, create and achieve in the arts.

Activities

Birds of Paradise commissioned a young and experienced researcher to undertake the project. An online survey, together with information on the research, was sent to young people, to all of the Youth Arts Hubs, and to young people's organisations across Scotland. 20 young people were involved in the research through an online survey or an in-depth interview with BSL interpretation provided when required. Most participants were 18 to 25 and lived in the central belt of Scotland.

Research found that many of the participants had engaged in arts activity before and had been involved in performing arts, visual arts, music and film, and accessed this activity through schools, communities, workshops and formal arts training at college or university.

However, research also found that young disabled and D/deaf people face numerous barriers to accessing arts provision, many of which were interconnected, and identified these as:

- Finding suitable arts provision – young people did not know where or how to look for arts activities
- Availability of information – lack of information relating to the accessibility of venues and facilities
- Lack of provision for access and support – physical access barriers such as lack of support staff
- Travel, transport and location – difficulty getting to and from activities, as well as inadequate and expensive transport costs
- Attitudes and awareness of arts providers – a lack of understanding by arts providers about the capacity of disabled young people.

Recommendations

To add value to the research and to provide a useful resource, the researcher produced recommendations for arts organisations.

Offering guidance on how to improve provision, the five key recommendations to address barriers to access were identified as:

- Provision specifically for disabled and D/deaf young people
- Centralised information about arts opportunities
- Access provision from the 'Front Door to Stage Door'
- Connections built with disabled and D/deaf communities across Scotland
- Education and awareness for arts providers.

Successes

The research was undertaken by a young disabled person and one of the key successes of the project was their ability to gain the confidence of participants through a genuine interest in the research.

The research findings and recommendations represent a useful and practical learning resource that is not limited to the youth arts sector, but can be used by anyone working in the arts or for disabled and D/deaf young people.

What's next?

The full research report will be launched at a public event later in 2016, along with a creative response for disabled and D/deaf young people. Birds of Paradise will collate the findings and recommendations into a summary for organisations, making it available in accessible formats, and will then examine the findings and consider the next steps.

Challenges

All of the Youth Arts Hubs were contacted to seek their help distributing the online survey and to raise awareness of the research to potential participants. Very few Hubs responded and, out of those who did, some reported that they did not record or maintain information about disability or additional support needs.



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Argyll Youth Arts Hub

Case Study

About

Argyll Youth Arts Hub was established to address the lack of connections between artists and organisations across Argyll and Bute. Led by Comar, a multi-arts organisation based on Mull, the Hub had worked with 1,960 young people by June 2016.

Aims

The Hubs main aims are to develop a network of artists and organisations that can provide arts opportunities for young people, and to empower young people to lead in participating, planning and delivering arts activity.

Activities

Argyll Youth Arts Hub has worked with its youth advisory panel, partner organisations and artists to bring new arts programmes to the regions of Argyll and Bute. Delivered through workshops, events and residential weekends, and informed by young people's interests, activity has been extensive and eclectic including painting, sculpture, filmmaking, photography, stone carving, weaving, theatre and digital art.

In response to requests by young people, the Hub also arranged a portfolio preparation weekend which included mentoring by a professional artist to enable participants in developing a portfolio of work for education or employment. An additional residential weekend offered young people the chance to explore multiple artforms and attracted 40 young artists and performers.

The Hub has supported training opportunities and employed young people as Young Promoters and Channel Managers who lead and deliver events for other young people in the region. To date, 13 young people aged 15 to 22 have been employed in this role and produced an impressive range of work including live performances, festivals, heritage events and creative challenges. The Hub also supported the funding of a Creative Apprenticeship role at Comar.

Impact on young people

The Creative Apprentice and Young Promoters are positive about the Hub and its Time to Shine activities. Young people feel they've learned about working with large organisations and also independently as freelancers, and gained valuable experience in managing administrative aspects of arts projects.

Young people are now more confident in talking to their peers and with adults, and they feel this increased self-assurance has opened up more opportunities. They now have the confidence to apply to college, enter arts competitions and take up volunteering posts.

Activities at the Hub have given young people the opportunity to develop their creativity, discover artforms, make a tangible contribution to working in the arts, and develop skills for life.

Successes

Argyll Youth Arts Hub has been particularly successful in empowering young people. Participants have appreciated the level of autonomy and responsibility they've been given, and believe a positive step has been taken by allowing them to take charge of activities.

What's next?

The way people and organisations in the region have become connected will be a lasting legacy of the programme, as will the ethos of placing young people at the centre of arts activities.

Challenges

Promoters and Channel Managers have faced difficulties when trying to engage young people in arts activity though felt this was a valuable learning experience which gave them an insight into arts projects from the perspective of a deliver.





What's Your Story? Scottish Book Trust

Case Study

About

Through Time to Shine art form development funding, Scottish Book Trust created What's Your Story, a young writer development programme. Scottish Book Trust is a national charity dedicated to changing lives through reading and writing.

Aims

Through What's Your Story, Scottish Book Trust aimed to raise awareness of creative writing and illustration, and offer pathways for young writers to share their work and improve their practice.

Activities

Several components made up the programme: StoryCon, an online platform and writers network, and a mentoring programme.

Planned by participants themselves, StoryCon was a young writers' conference which drew in 154 young people aged 13 to 19. Ahead of the day, the young planners attended workshops and training in creative networking, conference planning and online resources. The conference itself included talks, workshops and presentations by 15 guest speakers. This unique day covered all aspects of writing including zine-making, blogging, podcasting, Gaelic prose, fanfiction, and writing for TV and film.

Young writers were also supported online via the creation of an online magazine by ten writers who had taken part in the mentoring programme.

A platform for young people across Scotland, the website offers writers the opportunity to submit work for professional feedback.

Through the mentoring programme, which included a three-day residential, young writers were paired with established professionals who helped them develop their own work.

Impact on young people

What's Your Story has created valuable experiences for young people, nurturing their talent and supporting their development. Those involved have highlighted the benefits of being able to explore different aspects of writing, including illustration and non-fiction genres. Many young people are now keen to pursue a career in the arts having found the programme a useful and inspiring experience.

Through the mentoring programme, young people developed and improved their writing skills, and also boosted their confidence, self-esteem and social skills. The programme has also supported them to use writing as a creative outlet to explore personal experiences, interests and passions.

Attendees at the young writers' conference found it a great way to meet those with shared interests. In addition, they valued the opportunity

of hearing from industry professionals, and came to see that writing can take many formats which can be pursued as a career. They also learned new techniques and styles of writing, and felt inspired and motivated to develop more of their own work.

Successes

Young people have benefited from What's Your Story in a variety of ways with key successes including having their work acknowledged, meeting other young writers, and improving their writing and personal skills.

Challenges

Through the mentoring programme, young people and mentors came from regions across Scotland and communicated primarily through their online messaging application. Aside from their initial meeting at the residential, they had no

other opportunity to work face-to-face and this lack of personal contact meant relationships took longer to develop.

What's next?

The Scottish Book Trust is actively pursuing funding opportunities in order to sustain the programme as far as possible, with hopes of running another literary event for young people in the future.

