

Diverse Futures: Incubator

1st September 2016

Diverse City



eMc arts + digital



Supported by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Thanks to Funky Llama Plymouth Theatre Royal,
Extraordinary Bodies Young Artists and Open Theatre Company.

THE DIVERSE FUTURES INCUBATOR

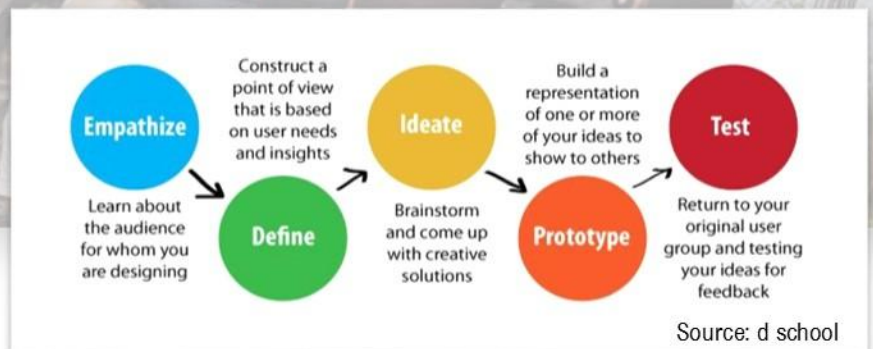
Emma McFarland, Diverse Futures Lead, Digital Innovation Consultant & Producer.

USER RESEARCH & KEY FINDINGS

Diverse Futures is a Diverse City initiative designed to help talented Deaf and disabled young people age 18-30 and emerging Deaf and disabled artists develop their pathways and careers in the performing arts. The Diverse Futures Incubator used a human centred design process to find out more about target user groups, identify their needs and pain points and design and test proposition prototypes with users.

THE PROCESS

The Diverse Futures team used an agile approach working in three design sprints to research user needs, synthesise findings, create and prototype solution and test these with users. d.school's design thinking approach (right) guided our process embracing principles of iterative development, 'show don't tell', centrality of user needs, non-linear processes and divergent and convergent thinking. The aim was to get to a point where we can be more certain of the overall functionality of any potentiality solution. It is important to understand this is not the end of the research process. The development process will follow the same lean, iterative, user focussed approach to ensure a solution which meets user needs and is loved by users.



USER RESEARCH AND TESTING

Research began with a 1-day Diverse City event 'Immerse for Diversity' in Feb 2016. This built empathy with users and used coaching techniques alongside provocations and workshops to explore user needs, pains, gains and potential solutions around progression in the performing arts. We then worked in 3 design sprints to ideate, prototype and intensively test the design

propositions with target users—via face to face group testing sessions and individual face to face testing and contextual interviews supplemented by an on-line survey. Organisations and individuals who participated are detailed below:



Extraordinary Bodies Young Artists; Funky Llama; Open Theatre Company; Unlimited; Candoco, Pavilion Dance South West; Activate; Take Art; National Star College; Worcester University; Victoria Education Centre.



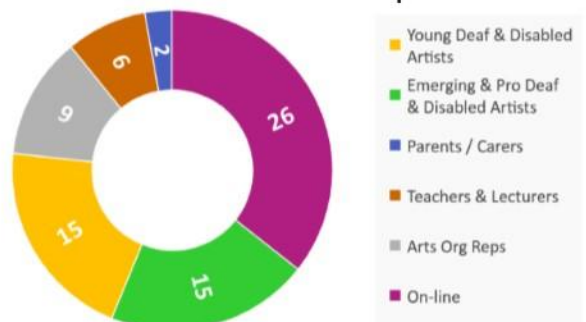
Kimberley Harvey, Disabled Dance Artist; Richard Hayhow, Theatre Director & Disability Specialist; Ali Puttock & Philippa Young, Parents / Carers; Belinda Ellicott & Annie Cheer, Special School Teachers; Jamie Beddard, Disabled Actor; Laura Hetherington, Learning Consultant; Becky Andrews; Disabled Artist; David Ellington, Deaf Artist; Siphon Eric Dube, Artist working with disabled emerging artists.



Representatives from Music Alive, Sign Dance Company, Taking Flight Theatre, South Glos Council, Foot in Hand, Shape Arts, Solar Bear, GDance, North East Inclusive Dance Network, Vital Xposure, Bristol Disability Equality Forum, Activate Performing Arts and 13 individual artists, producers and practitioners.

Priority 'solutions' identified via the research process are outlined overleaf alongside the user pain points they seek to address. These are potential solutions only. Prototyping and testing 'real life' lean versions with users and iterating based on feedback is essential. Note that for many users, our research suggests face to face interaction is an essential precursor to any on-line interaction.

Research Participants Breakdown



Research Participants **73**

Research 'Attendances' **100**

- ◆ Feelings of powerlessness & frustration, feeling 'done to' by 'mainstream' sector
- ◆ Few opps for individual / collective voice to be heard
- ◆ Lack of high profile advocates
- ◆ Worries Creative Case for Diversity will lead to equivalent of 'greenwashing' in arts orgs
- ◆ Lack of understanding of needs of different groups



“The movement needs to be comical, irreverent, a bit naughty, sarcastic and say things others won't say. Otherwise it just becomes yet another 'voice' amongst all the other voices which already exist....as a disabled person, my life is very planned, the thought of a movement like this makes me feel very excited.... It's the opposite of everything else in the dance sector.”
Kimberley Harvey, Dance Artist, Candoco Dance Co

A campaign for change. Provocative, confronting stereotypes and challenging perceptions. Offers artists a direct voice to highlight issues which matter to them. The 'glue' which binds the Diverse Futures 'ecosystem' together. Offers a 'call to action' from regional events and supports off-line and on-line communities. Not a membership org.

ACCESSIBLE FUNDING 'POT'	ON-LINE SEARCH OF OPPORTUNITIES	REGIONAL CREATIVE LABS	CONNECT & NETWORK
Easy to access funding to support small scale artistic collaborations, travel & exchanges. £1-2k with mix of simple application methods inc video. Emphasis on enabling as many artists as possible to complete their own applications with minimal 3rd party support.	Easy to use on-line semantic search of current & ongoing training, professional development and job opportunities. Detailed info inc transport, accessible hotels, venue access, etc, —all in one place.	Bringing talented Deaf & disabled artists together, and those interested in working with them, to develop aesthetic, practice and nurture new collaborations and projects. Cross artform. Disability-led regional events based around empathy, sharing and practice.	Continue conversations and connect with new people in safe and trusted space. Off-line essential before on-line contact. Opportunity to profile yourself and your work for companies / collaborators. Coaches for emerging disabled artists.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lack of access to existing opps due to lack of funds for travel, accom, PA's. ◆ Few opps for artistic collaboration ◆ Few opps to work as equals with non-disabled artists—feeling 'done to' ◆ Lack of direct access to funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lack of knowledge of arts sector and progression routes ◆ Few opps for artistic collaboration ◆ Lack of info on opps which exist ◆ Low aspirations or unrealistic expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lack of training & progression routes ◆ Lack of opps to work with non-disabled artists ◆ Isolation & lack of peer support ◆ Few opps for cross artform working and development of practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lack of mentors, coaches or guides ◆ Lack of confidence ◆ Isolation and lack of pro networks ◆ Lack of visibility ◆ Few opps to share knowledge and information

“It gives you confidence, it's a counter-balance, reverses the usual power dynamic where disabled artists are 'done to'.”

“The funding pot might allow you to say [and do] things that eg ACE won't let you....it needs to celebrate experimentation.” Emerging Artists, Funky Llama

“This idea is smart as hell...being able to do my own video application...my last experience of funding was a total nightmare.” Emerging Artist, Open Theatre Company

“It's annoying, when I search for events they always seem to have already happened.....It's not easy making arrangements to go to these things, I need to organise it, arts organisations seem to publicise things more after they've happened.” Member, Extraordinary Bodies Young Artists

“Opportunities are everything...without them and the information on them, the rest has less impact and meaning.” Special School Teacher, Victoria Education Centre

“It's a chance to show what you can do and to collaborate with new artists....these could be an alternative form of training.” Emerging Artist, Funky Llama

“Focussing on practice in creative labs is a great idea. It's how people can connect & build relationships — through their work, not talking which excludes many. Needs great facilitators who can work across art-forms & develop non-verbal practice.” Richard Hayhow, Open Theatre Company

“I don't pick up social cues easily so I need to know who to trust.” “We need crisis control....we need to have that support to help and guide us.....emotional as well as artistic support” Emerging Artists, Funky Llama

“If people are going to make it as an artist, we are not going to be holding their hands all the way. Encourage people to take the lead themselves....it could also help people diversify how they think about their future.” Jamie Beddard, Disabled Actor

DIVERSE FUTURES INCUBATOR PAINS RANKING

DEAF & DISABLED DEVELOPING TALENT (AGE 18-30)

Strong

- Lack of geographical accessibility to opportunities which exist
- Lack of logistical support - funding, transport, carers, accommodation - to engage with opportunities
- Lack of training and progression routes to develop into emerging artists
- Unsupportive parents / carers / teachers
- Lack of information on opportunities and progression routes which exist

Medium

- Few role models and few opps to be role models
- Lack of understanding in mainstream of 'how to treat me'
- Lack of opps for mentoring and connections with peers outside individual groups
- Lack of opps to extend networks beyond existing group
- No or low aspirations or unrealistic expectations
- Lack of confidence

Weaker

- Venues too expensive and inaccessible for sharing work
- No opps to be seen - especially in the 'mainstream'

DIVERSE FUTURES INCUBATOR PAINS RANKING

EMERGING DEAF & DISABLED ARTISTS

Strong

- Lack of financial and logistical access to opportunities which exist
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of opportunities to work as equals or lead collaborators with non-disabled artists – feeling of being ‘done to’
- Isolation and lack of collective peer support
- Few opportunities ‘to say the unsayable’ and for individual or collective voices to be meaningfully heard
- Lack of direct access to funding opportunities
- Lack of understanding of needs of those with different types of disability eg learning, autism, physical, sensory.
- Few opps for cross artform artistic collaboration and development of practice

Medium

- Lack of information about opportunities including commercial / film / creative industries
- Expectations of ‘norms of behaviour’ in mainstream arts sector - the ‘tyranny of normal’
- Lack of coaching support
- Lack of visibility of Deaf and disabled artists in the sector and mainstream inc media
- Perceptions of disability and inclusive arts in the mainstream – worthy, poor quality, sympathy vote, ‘nice’
- Lack of artistic, producing and fundraising support in many areas – it’s a regional lottery
- Few opps for training and professional development
- Lack of high profile advocates

Weaker

- Low aspirations or unrealistic expectations
- Few opportunities to mentor others

SOME GAINS

Luck – the biggest one at the moment

High quality local opportunities which are accessible

Support with logistics (travel and accommodation)

Informed and well-networked teachers

Access to finance

Supportive parents/carers

Personality – confident, outgoing, refusal to conform to low expectations

Access to advice and guidance / support

Access to role models

Talent

Excellent, highly talented and strongly networked local artistic leader