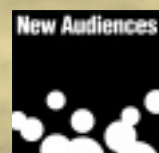


North West Arts Board

The Arts and Disabled People:
A New Audiences Programme



Further copies of this report are available from North West Arts Board; it can be provided in a larger print format, on disk, or can be accessed via North West Arts Board's website at:

www.arts.org.uk/nwab

North West Arts Board The Arts and Disabled People: A New Audiences Programme

North West Arts Board (NWAB) has prepared this report to mark the conclusion of the second year of the New Audiences Programme.

The report is intended to:

- Summarise the NWAB Regional Challenge programme for 1999/2000
- Provide outline descriptions of the 15 projects undertaken during 1999/2000
- Assess the significance of the programme to the region
- Disseminate the results of the programme.

Section One outlines NWAB's approach to the programme and assesses its success in relation to the New Audiences Programme. This section may be of particular interest to funders, other grant making bodies and development agencies.

Section Two draws out the common factors from the action research projects. It looks at the different ways people tackled the action research and identifies some of the success factors. The lessons learned in engaging disabled people in the arts as members of an audience or as participants are highlighted. It represents a useful guide to those wishing to undertake audience development projects.

Section Three looks in detail at the individual projects. It outlines their aims and objectives and how they were met, the strengths and weaknesses of each approach and the outcomes. Each of the projects provides valuable insights in breaking down the barriers that prevent disabled people from engaging with the arts.

Acknowledgements

North West Arts Board would like to thank all those involved in the New Audiences Programme for their contributions to its success. This document is also a celebration of the contribution disabled people make to the arts in the North West.

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Background to Year Two of the New Audiences Programme

The New Audiences Programme, announced by the Arts Council of England (ACE) in April 1998, has the objective of 'Bringing new audiences to the arts and new art to audiences'. A challenge fund of £5million treasury funding from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), to be co-ordinated by the Arts Council of England in partnership with the ten Regional Arts Boards (RABs), was made available to a range of projects, testing the effectiveness of audience development strategies.

In the first year, 1998/99, ACE devolved funding to the RABs against a series of project bids. One of the aims of the regional element of the New Audiences Programme was to enable each English RAB to target the funding according to the needs of their region – a Regional Challenge. North West Arts Board used their allocation to further the Board's development priorities of Disability, Cultural Diversity and Young People.

Based on initial successful findings from Year One, DCMS and ACE extended the programme for a further three years. NWAB followed their initial decision to use their allocation for the three years to further the Board's development priorities.

When ACE launched Year Two of the programme, 1999/2000, there were some shifts of emphasis, for example a greater recognition of the role of education in developing lifelong appreciation of, and participation in, the arts. There was, however, no less commitment to the underlying principles established in Year One. New Audiences remains a programme based on:

- 'Action research' projects of high quality
- Increasing our common understanding of the ways people can increase their engagement with the arts.

ACE also articulated to RABs the following underlying principles in devising their Regional Challenge programme:

- It should contain an element of either social or educational regeneration
- It should attract a reasonable level of partnership funding
- It should be flexible, where appropriate building on existing activity, and not precluding new activity where demonstrable need could be shown
- Funds should remain flexible and be awarded on a one-off or time-limited basis (they must not be on-going revenue or used to replace core funds)

- Funds should be used to cover activity taking place in 1999/2000
- Individual elements of the programme must be deliverable and able to be evaluated
- RABs must supply ACE with data about their programmes as part of the overall evaluation of the New Audiences Programme.

For Year Two, implemented from May 1999, ACE allocated £100,000 to NWAB for the New Audiences Regional Challenge programme. This programme was to address communities and areas traditionally underserved in arts provision and also issues of either social and/or educational regeneration. This programme was informed by:

- Feedback from the NWAB Regional Challenge Year One
- Feedback from the national ACE New Audiences Programme in Year One
- Feedback from other RAB Regional Challenge programmes in Year One
- The NWAB Regional Challenge Steering Group
- The ACE Guidance Notes for New Audiences Programme Year Two.

The focus of NWAB Regional Challenge for Year Two was to be exclusively on the Arts and Disabled People, the only RAB to take this approach.

A Steering Group of Board Members, NWAB Officers and Advisers led by Jane Beardsworth, the Participation & New Audiences Officer, has been responsible for the NWAB Regional Challenge programme. (Appendix 1).

The objective of the programme was to support schemes which will increase understanding of the way disabled people engage with the arts as observers and participants.

The Application Process

During June 1999 NWAB:

- Developed an open-access scheme
- Prepared scheme guidelines
- Notified local authorities, Annually Funded Organisations, key project clients and disabled people's groups of the existence of the scheme and asked for notifications of interest
- Promoted the opportunity through the regional press
- Planned a seminar
- Invited consultation from prospective applicants.

Section One

The scheme guidelines were made available to all interested parties in June 1999, ahead of the availability (in July) of the application form.

The NWAB application form, which was available in large print format and on audiotape, described the scheme as follows:

This is a fund to support 'action research' that increases our understanding of the ways that disabled people can increase their engagement with the arts. Initiatives funded through the programme will test the effectiveness of a particular idea or approach that aims to increase the numbers of disabled people who have access to the arts as members of an audience or as participants.

Applications were invited from: disabled people's organisations, disabled people's arts organisations, other arts organisations, local authorities and other development agencies in the North West Arts Board region.

The term "disabled people" includes people with physical/sensory impairments, hidden impairments such as epilepsy, learning difficulties and survivors of the mental health system.

Applicants were advised of the following parameters for applications:

- Awards will be made from £1,000 to £20,000
- Normally projects will show at least 50% matching funding
- In-kind support may be used for some of the matching funding
- Applications may be made for work in any artform
- The practical aspect of the project should be completed by April 2000
- Applications should demonstrate the active involvement of disabled people in the planning and management of the project
- There should be evidence of significant experience of arts project management.

Clarification of the following points was provided:

- There is an emphasis on 'action research' which broadly means the testing in practice of an idea or an assumption or some initial research
- Projects supported will increase understanding of the way disabled people engage with the arts as observers and participants. The aim of this programme is to investigate and try out new ways of ensuring that disabled people have access to the arts
- The word 'audience' is used in its broadest sense. The range of awards will demonstrate a balance between attendance at and participation in activities.

Applicants were advised their application should:

- Show active partnerships
- Clearly target a specific audience
- Show a clear monitoring, documentation and evaluation process with clear objectives and measurable outcomes
- Provide a detailed description of the process of 'testing'
- Show plans for dissemination of the results to other organisations.

The programme was publicised widely in arts publications, on the NWAB website and by press coverage. A seminar, run by Jane Beardsworth, was held at the Manchester House office of NWAB on 29th July 1999, when over sixty representatives of regional organisations attended. One-to-one surgeries were arranged for some organisations and information was provided in Braille.

The deadline for receipt of completed applications was 16th August 1999.

Response to NWAB's Regional Challenge

NWAB received 36 project applications which were carefully examined by the Steering Group to select the ones that most closely met the NWAB programme criteria. Decision-making criteria and considerations were included in the application form. These included:

- Geographical spread, that is, the location of the activity/project
- Balance of awards between:
 - experienced and developing organisations
 - attendance at, and participation in, arts activities
- Impact of the project relative to the amount awarded
- Support from other funding partners
- Clarity and effectiveness of the application
- For applications made by Annually Funded Organisations, the content of the funding agreement will be taken into consideration
- NWAB is aiming to award at least 50% of the budget to projects that are being led by disabled people.

The Steering Group made 15 awards with a total commitment of £93,900. (Appendix 2). Applicants were notified of the result of their application during the week commencing 23rd August 1999.

Successful projects fell into two main strands of work:

Creation of work by disabled people, where project holders include:

- 3D
- The Blackie
- Burnley Youth Theatre
- Cartwheel Community Arts
- Drake Music Project
- Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council
- M6 Theatre Company
- Stalking Histories.

Improving access to services, where project holders include:

- Arts About Manchester
- Chester City Council
- FACT
- Full Circle Arts
- Harris Art Gallery
- North West Film Archive
- TEAM.

Each of the projects has been summarised in this report. It is not possible to reproduce the level of detail provided by project holders so it should be noted that:

- The summaries provide the outline of the project and its outcomes
- Full project reports are available from North West Arts Board.

How NWAB met the Regional Challenge

Social or educational regeneration

NWAB's programme for 1999/2000 investigated new ways of engaging disabled people in the arts. Projects funded either engaged disabled people as participants in creative work or improved access to services for disabled people.

A reasonable level of partnership funding

NWAB had initially hoped to use the Treasury funding to lever at least an equivalent amount of funding from other sources. At the time of its national announcement however, it had to be developed and delivered in eleven months. It was therefore considered unrealistic to start looking for sponsorship or for an agency to partner NWAB in the Programme, as this would have limited the amount of time available for action research.

However, based on regional knowledge, it was deemed realistic to set matching funding targets for projects in order to meet the principle of 'reasonable partnership funding'.

The allocation of £93,414 of Treasury money to the fifteen Year Two Regional Challenge projects in the NWAB region has been matched by a total of £108,923 additional funding.

The additional funding is made up of cash funding of £63,860 which breaks down as:

- Money from the project holder £21,571
- Money from Local Authorities £ 8,640
- Money from other partners £33,649

In addition to funding in cash, many projects received in-kind support. Although some in-kind support is difficult to identify for the purposes of a project budget, the project holders have clearly identified a minimum in-kind support amounting to £45,063.

Flexibility in addressing existing and new activities

NWAB had already identified a need to focus on disabled people in selecting this area as one of its corporate development priorities. To build on existing activity and address areas of need, applicants were asked to demonstrate how their action research project was related to the work they were already engaged in.

Activity to take place in 1999/2000, to be deliverable and able to be evaluated

All the projects supported by NWAB were one-off, time-limited and had a positive legacy. All projects were substantially completed in 1999/2000. All the funded projects were delivered and all were evaluated.

Supplying data about the Regional Challenge

This report and individual copies of the Project Reports are now in the public domain.

NWAB's Objectives and Achievements:

- **To support action research that increases our understanding of the ways that disabled people can engage with the arts**

The fifteen projects delivered, documented and evaluated a range of new approaches to the Arts and Disabled People.

- **Projects led by disabled people**

Four of the awards went directly to disabled people's organisations. All the other awards were made to organisations who demonstrated active partnerships with disabled people's organisations.

- **Projects should foster active partnerships**

All the projects supported demonstrated partnerships with disabled people. Disabled people and disabled people's organisations were involved in the planning of all the projects. They played an active role in leading the action research, assisting project holders to identify potential focus group members, in publicising activities, in sharing information and in assisting with arrangements for transport, access and signing/audio-description.

Local authorities led two projects and were partners in a further four projects directly. Indirect support from local authorities has not been identified for the purposes of this project report.

- **To achieve matching funding of at least 50% of the total project cost**

10 of the 15 projects matched the NWAB funding with over 50% match funding (including in-kind). Overall the NWAB funding has been matched by £108,923 which exceeds the target.

- **To make project awards ranging from £1,000 to £20,000**

NWAB's Steering Group achieved a spread of funding to different sized projects and organisations as follows:

£1,000	1 project
From £1,001 to £2,500	3 projects
From £2,501 to £5,000	5 projects
From £5,001 to £7,500	1 project
From £7,501 to £10,000	2 projects
From £10,001 to £12,500	1 project
From £12,501 to £15,000	2 projects

- **The projects should represent a range of artforms**

A range of artforms	5 projects
Performing Arts	4 projects
Visual Arts & Media	3 projects
Organisational development	3 projects

The five projects covering a range of artforms were successful in providing excellent choice and opportunity within the scope of their projects.

- **The projects should be substantially finished by April 2000**

All initial project plans indicated that this objective was realistic. In practice however, several project holders experienced delays during implementation which are explained in their project reports. All project holders were able to provide at least an interim report during summer 2000.

- **The projects should be monitored and evaluated**

NWAB stated two aims in the monitoring and evaluation of the projects:

- To measure the impact of the programme on new audiences
- To identify good practice in developing audiences and to disseminate findings to arts practitioners.

In view of the onus placed upon project holders to monitor and evaluate their own projects, NWAB held a seminar, with support from Phil Cave of ACE, to inform them of their responsibilities and engage their involvement. As a result of the seminar and the consultations arising from it, a draft evaluation pack was developed for further consultation. Formal 'Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines' were issued in May 2000.

The production and launching of this document is a way of making public the impact of each NWAB project to its respective audience, and of summarising the impact of the project to the region.

Approach to the action research programme

It is intended that, when taken together, projects funded through the New Audiences Programme should make a significant difference to our understanding of the ways people can increase their engagement with the arts.

In Year Two the programme continues with a commitment to making progress through action research. Cohen and Manion ¹ describe action research as:

"...essentially an on-the-spot procedure to deal with a concrete problem located in an immediate situation. This means that the step-by-step process is constantly monitored (ideally, that is) over varying periods of time and by a variety of mechanisms (questionnaires, diaries, interviews and case studies, for example) so that the ensuing feedback may be translated into modifications, adjustments, directional changes, redefinitions, as necessary, so as to bring about lasting benefits to the ongoing process itself."

Experienced action research practitioners and advocates suggest the action research process is cyclical, having a number of components:

- A commitment to improvement
- A special kind of research question – "How may I/we improve..."
- The role of I/we at the heart of the action research
- The kind of action involved
- Systematic monitoring
- Descriptions of the action
- Explanation of the action
- Representation of the action research
- Validation of claims
- Making public the research.

¹ Cohen and Manion *In: McNiff, J., Lomax, P., Whitehead, J. You and your action research project*. Routledge, 1996, pp 16-27.

Bell ² points out that "... an important feature of action research is that the task is not finished when the project ends. The participants continue to review, evaluate and improve practice."

NWAB has not assumed the project leaders/project deliverers to be experts in the conduct of an action research project. The guidelines for running and evaluating the project were designed to point towards the components and to inform conduct of the process.

In accepting an award, each project holder agreed to submit a Project Report at completion. The Report was to include:

- A statement of the assumption being tested
- The aim(s) and objective(s), measures of success and/or target(s) of the project
- The methodology and evaluation planned, together with illustrative documentation
- Explanation of the process plan and how implementation was achieved
- The outcomes – including both expected and unexpected
- The lessons learned during the project
- Details of how the work has/will be disseminated.

In prescribing these components, NWAB has guided project holders towards a report which follows the model advocated by experienced exponents of action research. NWAB, in association with ACE, also engaged project holders in the development of the monitoring and evaluation guidelines. Although NWAB did not specifically ask project holders to identify how their project arose and where it will lead in the future, the structure of the report should make it possible for the reader to see how well each Regional Challenge project is integrated into the work of the organisation.

² Bell *In: McNiff, J., Lomax, P., Whitehead, J. You and your action research project.* Routledge, 1996, p 6.

Findings from the Project Reports

Taking each of the component headings, the fifteen reports have been examined to draw out salient points. This section draws attention to key lessons arising from the projects completed in the region and comments upon the action research process.

Statement of the assumption being tested

Although arts organisations are generally more familiar with making a case for an artistic project than for an action research project, it was very encouraging to see so many organisations challenging a course of action and crystallising it in a statement of assumption.

Some projects set themselves the task of examining a problem with very tight parameters and others attempted a wider brief. At this stage we cannot draw any firm conclusions about the relative merits of each approach although the size of the project sometimes had time implications as will be noted from the comments in succeeding sections.

In all cases the assumptions being tested arose from the work of the organisation. It appears that the more closely the project has arisen from a key problem area, the more meaningful the action research has been. There is already evidence that the findings of work arising from these problems has been more easily integrated into the working practices of the organisation.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

All projects had clearly stated aims. Project objectives usually had both quantitative and qualitative objectives. Quantitative objectives included:

- Numbers added to a database
- Numbers of people engaged in the research as focus group members or completing questionnaires
- Numbers attracted to events (audience)
- Numbers attending workshops and exhibitions.

The assistance of the specialist disability organisations in building these numbers is acknowledged in Project Reports. In a few cases the project holder reported some disappointment that statutory bodies (which had been expected to hold useful information) did not have easily accessible data about people with disabilities.

Qualitative information was less easily targeted and measured at the outset of the project. Most Project Reports include a wealth of experiential material as ‘findings’.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

Methodologies varied according to the project. There was extensive use of questionnaires (often in a range of accessible formats and with assistance in completing them) and of focus groups.

Most Project Reports provide a comprehensive set of documentation which could be useful to other organisations.

Several projects were constructed as a two-phase process. This provided a natural mid-point evaluation. In the true spirit of action research, Phase 2 was modified in the light of the findings from Phase 1. For some projects the modifications were driven more by a lack of time than by the true needs of the project, but it did not prevent them from incorporating lessons from Phase 1 into Phase 2.

Many project holders had difficulty in delivering an appropriate Project Report by the deadline date. Co-ordinators of ‘substantially completed’ projects were cautious about submitting an interim report in case their later findings substantially influenced their final evaluation. However, in the spirit of action research projects, the reader and the observer should recognise that these projects are but one point of arrival and departure in a much longer journey. The projects can therefore all be said to be at an interim point and the Project Reports reflect the ongoing impressions and aspirations of the people involved.

Condensing projects into an Executive Summary of between 200 and 400 words caused some difficulties, and in a few Project Reports the requirement for both an overview and a detailed level of documentation material were difficult to reconcile. It was surprising that a few Project Reports omitted to enclose completed evaluation pro-formas outlining the:

- Types of audience
- Audience numbers
- Additional activity.

This was clearly an oversight as, when reminded, project holders provided relevant details. Some of the budget summaries were also overlooked, and the layout guidelines were not always followed accurately.

In many projects the differences between the way the project had been conceived (the methodology planned) and the actual implementation became blurred. This blurring perhaps masked some of the potential lessons for other organisations wishing to conduct similar projects and hoping to learn from the pioneering projects in the Regional Challenge. As arts organisations gain more experience of conducting action research projects, we believe that they will find it easier to summarise their work and present the material under the appropriate headings. There is a marked tendency for project holders to want to deliver outcomes which at least equal, and desirably exceed, the targets they set for themselves. There appears to be a concern on the part of project holders that they will be applauded for exceeding their targets and might be penalised for not achieving target outcomes. Such perceptions mean that some Project Reports are not so much an evaluation as a celebration of the project. Action research projects should be judged less on exceeding targets and more on:

- Driving forward the body of knowledge about the work
- Recognising why targets were relevant
- Recognising whether unmet targets are relevant and how they might be met in future
- Passing on practical advice, problems and pitfalls to other organisations.

Given a little time and encouragement to gain confidence in adopting the principles of action research, we believe that project holders will make even more significant contributions to our understanding of the way audiences engage with art at a range of levels across a lifetime and across artforms.

The process plan and implementation

There was a very tight time frame for completion of the project. Project holders were notified of their success in August 1999 and the project was to be substantially completed by April 2000, with the Project Report completed by July 2000. In all cases the project holders had submitted a realistic project plan which could meet the time frame, but several projects had difficulties keeping to the schedule. In particular many project holders highlighted the amount of time they effectively 'lost' during the extended Christmas 1999 to New Year 2000 holiday break.

Co-ordination of the projects became the responsibility of either:

- A key member of staff, or
- A specialist working for the project holder on a short contract.

The projects show that sub-contractor recruitment can cause project delays. Inevitably too, there is a need for sub-contractors to be fully briefed and to gain an understanding of the importance of the project to all parties involved in it. Where a member of staff co-ordinated the project the implementation started promptly.

Many of the projects involved a high degree of specialist knowledge and expertise. In view of the nature of the work it can prove difficult to replace specialists at short notice. Several projects were delayed owing to the absence or illness of a key specialist member of the team. Where projects are working to such a tight time schedule as most of the Regional Challenge projects were, there is no time contingency to prevent an over-run.

The majority of projects contracted specialist help during the project, for example:

- Workshop leaders
- Facilitators
- Audio-describers and sign language interpreters
- Artists
- Consultants and researchers with specialist skills in, for example questionnaire design.

In all cases the project holder was thus able to benefit from a high level of expertise in a very tightly controlled, cost effective way.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

Four of the projects aimed at improving access to services and included some disability equality training for their staff and/or volunteers as part of the project. This training becomes integrated into the customer care values of the organisation, thereby increasing the legacy and the overall value of the Regional Challenge project to the on-going work of the organisation. Three of the projects aimed at the creation of work by disabled people were critical of the attitudes of carers of disabled people. The project holders perceived carers as making decisions on behalf of disabled people and/or as limiting the choices of disabled people. These criticisms might indicate a need for wider implementation of disability equality training or more detailed briefings for the carers of disabled people or a need for better practice of training already received.

The majority of projects got most of the outcomes they expected. In broad terms these involved giving additional resources and concentrated attention on providing better/extra facilities for disabled people. What most project holders aiming to provide access to services did not expect was the extent of the resources and attention they would need to provide. Key outcomes in this respect were that disabled people engaging with the arts or a particular venue for the first time need:

- Plenty of time to plan and organise their visits to arts events
- Considerable re-assurance about the physical facilities of the venue
- Considerable re-assurance about their reception at and involvement in the event.

Some projects seeking to improve access to services uncovered difficulties that project holders had not foreseen, for example structural difficulties within buildings. There is evidence in their reports that they are taking the opportunity to integrate solutions into their future plans. This thus provides a lasting physical legacy to the achievements of the projects.

Projects aimed at the creation of work by disabled people reveal that the target groups make significant contributions towards the management of their own organisation, towards their own personal development and towards an enriched quality of life for the society in which they live. Despite such encouraging outcomes there is still evidence from some project holders of stereotyping of disabled people (including amongst the media). There is also a perception amongst some carers and institutions that the arts will not be able to deliver benefits to disabled people nor will disabled people be able to produce significant artistic products. There is still a need for advocacy to combat attitudes which are restricting arts opportunities for disabled people.

Lessons learned

In reporting back the outcomes and lessons learned from projects supported by Treasury funds there is a tendency to justify the award by stating the successful outcomes and neglecting or overlooking the less successful outcomes. Project Reports in this round are to be congratulated in their endeavours to report a critique of their work. In the spirit of action research it is as important to pass on to other organisations the pitfalls to be avoided as well as the courses of action to be encouraged.

Dissemination

In the individual project summaries the dissemination details show only the special and innovative dissemination methods employed by the project holder. All Project Reports will be available through the project holder organisation and through NWAB. Project findings will be disseminated through NWAB's publications (of which this is the most comprehensive), via NWAB's website and through seminars, discussion and documentation provided by NWAB and the project holder.

Of particular note are the dissemination efforts of 3D which is providing dissemination on videotape (an attempt at a readily accessible format), of Full Circle Arts in providing a guide to developing accessible websites, and several projects whose attendance at national and international conferences has already distributed findings to a wider and more diverse audience.



Photograph: M6 Theatre Company [photo: Ian Tilton].

Conclusions of North West Arts Board

Long term planning

Notification of indicative funding for three years has allowed NWAB to include the New Audiences Programmes in its Three Year Plan. This has been a useful aid to development planning and to our anticipation of moving towards the realisation of our current development priorities.

Body of knowledge/legacy

Some significant developments have been made in practical techniques:

- Video communication (3D, Drake and Stalking Histories)
- Internet technologies (where Full Circle's publication seems set to become a seminal text).

The value of the training and experiential learning of staff involved in the projects is beyond financial calculation and leaves a wealth of knowledge across the region from which new audiences may continue to be developed.

Advocacy

The region has some highly accomplished individuals, organisations and agencies raising the awareness of the potential, the achievements and the needs of disabled and disadvantaged people. The Regional Challenge projects have generated new partnerships and nurtured existing partnerships between arts organisations and agencies to exchange useful information. It should be remembered, however, that information is subject to the Data Protection Act and soon loses currency. We note that several projects achieved their target of creating a database of additional organisational contacts, but that in so doing they have only duplicated the contents of a partner organisation's database. The real test in the future will be to see how well the data is used and kept up-to-date for future projects.

Each of the project holders kept records of participation during their project. We note the meticulous way many of them were able to prevent double-counting of participants who attended more than one of their activities. However it is clear that a few individuals are such strong advocates of improved provision for disabled people that they have participated in more than one project and thus have been double-counted in the round as a whole.

Value for money

The NWAB region has achieved an investment of £202,337 through direct and indirect (in-kind) funding through the Regional Challenge programme. Project holders have levered £108,923 partnership funding. They have made the funding make a real difference to the provision of facilities for disabled people and to the body of knowledge available in the arts sector in England.

New Audiences Regional Challenge individual project summaries:

Creation of work by disabled people, where project holders include:

- 3D – Performing Arts
- The Blackie – Participatory Arts
- Cartwheel Community Arts – Participatory Arts
- Burnley Youth Theatre – Theatre
- M6 Theatre Company – Theatre
- Stalking Histories – Theatre
- Drake Music Project – Music
- Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council – Dance

Improving access to services, where project holders include:

- Arts About Manchester – Venues
- Harris Museum and Art Gallery – Venues
- TEAM & NWDAF – Venues
- Chester City Council – Disability Arts fora
- FACT – New Media
- Full Circle Arts – Websites
- North West Film Archive – Film

3D Performing Arts Company (3D)

Statement of the assumption being tested

By presenting and organising itself through an arts-based approach, a performing arts company run by and for people with learning difficulties may make itself more relevant to the people it represents.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

- To create fully accessible ways of organising a company for performers with learning difficulties. This would enable opportunities for participation in all aspects of running the company and for developing 3D into a user-led organisation.
- To explore alternative forms of communication to conventional reading and writing skills.
- To assist funding and service providers to develop alternative formats for funding applications and materials.
- To develop training techniques and support materials necessary for the growth and development of 3D.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

- A working group representing members of the 3D partnership organisations was formed. An independent consultant with specialist skills in disability awareness training and facilitation of self-advocacy groups was employed on contract to advise and support the group.
- Recent research was investigated before an arts-based programme of activity was planned and implemented.
- The consultant also documented the project (using text and illustration), assessed the findings and prepared a project report. This project report made recommendations for the future development of 3D.
- A second independent facilitator, on contract, evaluated the project to bring together the 'voices' of participants in the project. Three evaluation sessions were held: with unpaid workers, with paid workers and one joint session.

The process plan and implementation

- September 1999. The 3D working group, working alongside a team of six experienced arts and support workers, produced a plan of activities.
- October – December 1999. The action research project was launched with a four-day residential. Weekly full day sessions, combining drama, dance, music, visual arts and video work, developed the ideas to create a paper-based Development Plan and Constitution for the company. This incorporated video images, digital photographs and original designs. Individual contributions of personalised material were added.

- 10th February 2000. A video of the Development Plan and Constitution was launched at an event at Lancashire County Cricket Club. A live presentation was also made to the audience.
- 7th – 8th April 2000. A workers residential was held, to define a 3D methodology. This methodology highlights good practice and offers guidance to other organisations undertaking similar work.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

- A paper-based report on organisational issues was produced, using text and illustration, and taking 3D as a model. A video of the Development Plan and Constitution was produced. The video plan and the paper plan are not just translations of each other but individually developed elements which need to be considered together. For example the images within the text are not just representations of written text but tell a story in their own right.
- Using an arts-based approach 3D was able to consider appropriate structures for the development of 3D as a user-led organisation and has produced materials for use by other organisations.
- 3D has devised a physical and visual way of representing each group within the organisational structure.
- 3D has developed ways of increasing the levels of participation and consultation amongst the members with learning disabilities.

3D believes this action based project has confirmed that an art-led approach works, but must be given time for experimentation and development.

The illness of the key consultant caused some delays, involved other workers completing tasks for which they had not been scheduled, and the training programme for group members was not completed in the allocated timescale.

Lessons learned

The barriers to people with learning difficulties participating in the running of the company were identified in more detail, allowing them to be addressed more effectively. Further details are noted in the video and paper reports. Issues over which 3D had no control sometimes adversely affected the development process. The main concern being transportation. All members of the team have benefited from personal development which has had an effect on their approach to roles and responsibilities.

Dissemination

- The video was shown at a formal launch (10/2/200) and has since been shown to other groups including North Trafford College, Lancaster College, North West Arts Board, and Elizabeth Fitzroy Homes.
- The paper-based report (illustrated text) includes findings of the action-based research using 3D as a case study model.
- The British Journal of Learning Disabilities has shown interest in reproducing the full report in its publication.
- 3D will present the video and run a participatory workshop at the conference of the British Institute of Learning Disabilities at Blackpool on 14th September 2000.
- The expertise of the 3D team is being used to inform publicity materials. Consultation with team members has informed a North West Arts Board seminar and a GMCDP leaflet.
- The work will be featured on the 3D website (under development).



Photograph: 3D Performing Arts Company [photo: Nigel Hillier].

Great Georges Community Cultural Project (The Blackie)

Project Title: Choicescapes and Chancescapes

Statement of the assumption being tested

That by using both the general structures of arts-based games and specifically designed arts-based games the creative and co-operative interests and needs of disabled people can be developed and enhanced.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

- The aim was to design and deliver arts-based games structures and specific games appropriate to the needs and interests of people with disabilities.
- A target of 14 workshops, seven in-house and seven outreach, was set. Workshops were to engage people with disabilities in participative, creative and co-operative arts-based games.
- A further target was to increase the number of people with disabilities who get involved with The Blackie's cultural programme. For example to involve wheelchair users in games activity on an outdoor accessible podium during the "Festival of Games".

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

- The workshop format was devised by artists at The Blackie. Games based on choice and games based on chance were each to lead to the communal creation of a piece of art. Painting, photography and fairground-style games were used as the basis for development.
- Participants, staff and carers completed post-workshop questionnaires.
- Regular evaluation meetings were held by artists and staff involved in leading workshop sessions.
- The workshops were documented through photography. The photographic portfolio was used for assessment and evaluation.

The process plan and implementation

Full day workshops were planned and resourced by artists at The Blackie. Each workshop led to the creation of two forests – one created by choice and one created by chance.

- For the "choice forest" participants had a number of personal choices to make: the stencil for their tree, the colour and position of their tree and their own pose by their tree for their photograph.
- For the "chance forest" the participants played a fairground-style game (throwing a light object at a target) so that the four determinants of the picture were made by chance rather than choice. The possibilities were:
 - Four tree shapes
 - Eight tree colours
 - An unlimited number of positions of trees on the canvas
 - Three poses of the individual by their tree (singing, dancing or playing a musical instrument).

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

- 100 participants from five different organisations for disabled people took part in five day-long workshops.
- The structure of the games made it possible for participants to be involved in both individual and communal activities.
- The activities within the games (both playful and skilful) contributed to a balance of fun and concentration. Activities included:
 - Throwing a light object at a target
 - Being photographed in interesting poses
 - Carefully painting a tree using a stencil
 - Choosing one out of three options following a fairground-style game
 - Talking with workshop leaders about forests, trees, music, dance, singing and other subjects
 - Taking decisions and having decisions determined by chance
 - A carefully planned structure of arts activities, based on and presented as games, can develop and enhance the creative and co-operative needs of people with disabilities.

Lessons learned

- Preparing the game(s) is a great deal more time consuming than playing the game(s).
- Run the game(s) with a team of artists who will be involved in delivering the programme before venturing to play the game(s) with participants.
- Ensure participants have one-to-one attention during the games by recruiting volunteers to assist the artist workshop leader.

Dissemination

- Schools and institutions involved in the project will exhibit the completed works for visitors.
 - The Blackie Gallery displays albums depicting the photographic record of the workshops.
 - The project will be reported in Blackie publications and it is planned to use the material on the Blackie website (due to be launched in 2001).
 - Future planned workshops will refer to the project.
-

Cartwheel Community Arts

Project Title: Positive Steps

Statement of the assumption being tested

Provision of culturally sensitive arts workshops can overcome barriers to participation and increase the numbers of Asian disabled people benefiting from involvement in the arts. This assumption to be tested by working with local Asian disability organisations, using familiar accessible venues and employing bilingual artists as workshop leaders.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

Aim: to involve Asian disabled people in the arts through participation in arts-based activities.

Objectives:

- Provide opportunities for participation in arts-based activities
- Provide access to arts activities for those without previous experience
- Provide a platform for Asian disabled people to voice opinions and concerns
- Develop links between disabled people's organisations.

Targets:

- To involve 50 disabled people in 20 arts workshops, and encourage an audience of 150 mainstream and disabled people to access an Open Day for World Mental Health Day and/or a month-long Exhibition of artwork.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

- A Steering Group was formed for the project. This Group outlined and monitored the plan and the Project Manager implemented the detailed plan.
- Participants completed a post-workshop questionnaire and participated in an evaluation discussion.
- Artists fed back their comments to the Steering Group. The workshop sessions were documented through photography. The Steering Group evaluated comments between workshops and implemented improvements.

The process plan and implementation

The Steering Group consisted of representatives from the four partner groups working with Cartwheel. The Project Manager worked with the partner groups to schedule the series of two-hour workshops in the four artforms chosen: creative writing, painting, photography and banner design. Cartwheel engaged three bilingual artists to work in the chosen artforms. Workshops took place from September to November 1999.

- 7th October 1999. Open Day at Nelson Civic Hall to celebrate World Mental Health Day. Cartwheel contributed an open access creative writing workshop based on mental health issues and a puppetry performance based on a Pakistani folk tale.
- January 2000. A month-long Exhibition at Pendle Community Health Shop documented the workshops. Here, both artwork produced and photographs of work in progress were on show.
- Partner groups produced publicity leaflets in community languages, targeted distribution and made word-of-mouth recommendations.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

- The project delivered 20 workshops to 62 disabled people, and the Open Day and Exhibition drew a total audience of 257 mainstream and disabled people.
- Open access workshops attracted 80% of participants without previous experience of participation in arts activities.
- The evaluation sessions, Open Day and Exhibition provided platforms for the community to express their opinions and concerns.
- The four partner groups are now working together with Cartwheel on a further arts project that aims to develop the links established during this project and build on the impact the project has had on the participants.

The project has affirmed that participation in arts-based projects is increased by involving local disability groups in the planning, promotion and delivery, and by using familiar and accessible venues.

Unexpected outcomes noted

- The workshops attracted participants who were not already members of the partner groups. Participants were eager to take away from the workshop a finished piece of artwork.
- Using bilingual artists was not as vital as had been assumed as participants claimed ease in communicating in English.
- Post-workshop questionnaires revealed artform preferences different from those provided in this project. Key preferences were drama and puppetry (each getting 40% choice).

Lessons learned

Participants wanted to be challenged in the artforms and activities provided. Main barriers to accessing arts activities were reported to be:

- Transport to venues
- Lack of information about activities/events
- Support not always available, as support workers are often volunteers

- Support workers rarely have any training in creative activities
- Groups would need funding, resources/materials and advice/support to be able to run their own arts activities.

Recommendations to other organisations running this kind of project

- Form a Steering Group of members of local organisations and community activists with knowledge of local community and cultural issues and venues.
- Existing groups in familiar accessible venues already serve a community likely to be interested in attending arts events. These groups are best placed to assist in designing and distributing publicity materials.
- When planning workshop activities take into account that people with differing impairments will have very different needs, making it difficult to conduct the workshop as a single group.
- Artists involved in such a project need specific training and/or proven experience in working with disabled people.

Dissemination

The project has been discussed locally with Pendle Borough Council, Burnley Social Services and CVS Burnley. The Project Report will be distributed to Asian disability organisations in the North West and to Greater Manchester local authority arts officers.



Photograph: Cartwheel Community Arts [photo: Cartwheel Community Arts].

Burnley Youth Theatre (BYT)

Statement of the assumption being tested

To test the existence of barriers between young disabled people and the arts.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

Aim: to increase future participation of young disabled people in BYT-led activities. The project will:

- Test the general assumption that parents and careworkers contribute to barriers between young people and participation in the arts
- Encourage young people to explore and enjoy the arts and develop their individual creativity
- Establish a local network of agencies/individuals interested in engaging young disabled people in the arts
- Meet the expectations of young people, their parents and careworkers
- Involve young people in the Project Steering Group
- Provide equal access to BYT activities for young disabled people.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

- Phase 1 – Identify groups of young disabled people, establish a Project Steering Group, and identify accessible venues for the activities. Set up taster workshops in a range of artforms, led by artists skilled at working with disabled people. Evaluation by post-workshop questionnaires.
- Phase 2 – A series of eight weekly workshops, arising from findings of Phase 1 and probably featuring radio drama, programmed into BYT's core activities. Evaluation by post-workshop questionnaires.
Culmination of the project to be a two-day event to disseminate findings, show work and open up new dialogues.

The process plan and implementation

The advertisement for a freelance Project Co-ordinator failed to attract a suitable candidate. A contract for Phase 1 was issued to a researcher who was recommended to BYT.

Phase 1 was planned by Christmas 1999, but the taster sessions were not started until February 2000. It was clear that the original concept for Phase 2 would have to be changed as it was scheduled to finish at, or soon after, the end of March.

- 26th January & 14th February 2000. First and second meetings of the Project Steering Group (11 people) were held.

The Phase 1 researcher resigned to take up full-time employment. A BYT Director (also an experienced arts manager) volunteered to evaluate Phase 1.

The evaluation indicated that:

- Participants needed more time than had been anticipated to absorb the workshop lessons
- The effort and time needed to bring pupils together from across the area on a regular basis had been underestimated
- Awareness of the participatory arts amongst those teaching, caring and supporting young disabled people had been underestimated.

Phase 2 became an extension of Phase 1. A series of three further workshops, over a 2-3 week period, was offered to five venues which had participated in Phase 1. Venues could choose the same/different artist/art form as in Phase 1 or a mix of same/different artist and artforms. Interviews with teachers and group leaders and participants provided feedback and artists submitted an evaluation of their sessions.

- 3rd April 2000. Seven drama leaders from BYT attended a disability equality training session conducted by Jigsaw DATA staff.
- 5th April & 24th May 2000. Further meetings of the Project Steering Group.
- 12th April 2000. A music workshop session for nine adults (teachers/group leaders) was held to provide them with techniques to continue bringing music into their work with young people. This had been requested in the Phase 2 feedback.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

Failure to recruit a Project Co-ordinator led to difficulties in completing the original project concept and involved BYT staff in completing Phase 2 and the final evaluation.

Phase 1 delivered 15 workshops (in music, drama and mask-making) at nine different venues in the three participating boroughs. Five venues were schools: these workshops included two schools for pupils with learning difficulties, two for pupils with physical disabilities and one for pupils with autism. Sessions were attended by 175 young people and 42 carers of whom seven were volunteers. Phase 1 evaluations showed that the original concept for Phase 2 was not feasible so it was re-organised.

Phase 2 delivered a further 15 workshops. Two schools opted for the same artist, one for a mixture of music and drama, one changed from music to drama, and the Saturday venue changed from drama to music. Sessions were attended by 222 young people and 57 staff/carers of whom three were volunteers. A total of five different artists were used in the project, three of whom were disabled.

The original plan for Phase 2, to combine young disabled people in a project with existing BYT participants, was not achieved. However one disabled young person has joined BYT and the project has provided a number of opportunities for groups of young disabled people to give public performances of their work.

Lessons learned

The Christmas/New Year period is a particularly difficult time to set up a project. Organising transport for young disabled people outside core school hours is difficult. Parental support for young disabled people has to be balanced against their other work, family and social pressures.

There is no network or groups supporting young disabled people outside the special schools.

Dissemination

The report was to be distributed to: members of the Project Steering Group, funders, venues, project artists, arts officers in East Lancashire, National Association of Youth Theatres, Youth & Community Services officers in participating boroughs, and partners in proposed future phases of the project.



Photograph: Burnley Youth Theatre [photo: Burnley Youth Theatre].

M6 Theatre Company

Statement of the assumption being tested

A piece of theatre created for 6-8 year olds which examines deaf issues and presents positive role models of deaf people, can also have significant educational and personal benefits for older audiences for whom these issues have personal relevance.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

Aim:

To support an additional 14 performances of *Sssh!* by Pete Lawson and tour these to new target audience, including:

- Deaf children older than 8 within hearing impaired units of mainstream schools, special schools and schools for deaf children
- Families of deaf children
- Groups of further education deaf students
- Community Centres with existing deaf users and Deaf Clubs.

Note: The production of *Sssh!* as a main project also had a number of wider aims than those listed above.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

- The company networked with disability agencies, RNID, Deaf Clubs and special education services, and forged links with local and regional Sensory Impairment Teams for contacts within the education sector. Offers of 14 additional performances were made, and all were taken up.
- Audiences were targeted and appropriate marketing networks and distribution channels used.
- An independent consultant with specialist knowledge in disability arts evaluated the additional 14 performances, and compiled a report.

The process plan and implementation

The plan and implementation was integrated into the tour planning and marketing procedures usually undertaken by M6. Planning and implementation of the additional 14 performances involved the extra research, relationship building and evaluation mentioned under other section headings.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

- The additional funding available as a result of the New Audiences award helped subsidise performances that would otherwise not have been seen as the predicted audience numbers would not have justified the visit.
- Theatre created for younger audiences can engage, entertain and have deep significance to an audience of older people, particularly those for whom the issues have personal relevance.

Section Three

- M6 has made a commitment to have at least one performance of each future production signed and to employ deaf actors for future productions. Neil Fox has already returned to M6 for *The Cat with Three Names*.
- M6 has improved its marketing and knowledge of deaf theatre users and deaf networks and will actively seek to make contact with them for future productions.
- Drama students and arts practitioners saw performances. Neil Fox gained subsequent employment by a Young People's Theatre Company in the North East as a direct result of the quality of his acting performance.

Lessons learned

- Deaf audiences do not necessarily want to experience theatre in a place apart from a hearing audience.
- Audiences of deaf children and their families preferred and chose to attend a performance in an arts/public venue rather than at the Deaf Club.
- Mainstream schools with hearing impaired units would not have booked a performance for their small group had it not been offered at a highly subsidised rate. The unit cost would have been considered too high.
- Deaf people often use different contact networks to hearing theatregoers.
- The usual method of contacting organisers, teachers and tour bookers (telephone) and the reliance on verbal feedback from teachers might be limiting the opportunities and communication network for M6 Theatre Company's work.

Dissemination

There is a commitment by M6 that its future work will continue this piece of action research and thus be a method of active dissemination.

Awareness raised as a result of the project (to families, arts practitioners and drama students) will be disseminated by word-of-mouth and will have a longer-term impact in the wider community.

Stalking Histories

Project Title: Stalking Histories – Animated

Statement of the assumption being tested

By marketing the excellence of Stalking Histories performance work rather than marketing a piece of disability art, we can increase our audience numbers. The project was part of a new marketing strategy.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

To attract a larger audience to the work *Mendel*. The piece to be developed by integrating visual material generated during 1997/98, by developing the interactive nature of the exhibition/performance and re-designing the set for increased flexibility in different venues.

Targets included:

- Deliver 18/20 performances* in the North West
- Deliver 10 workshops* in the North West
- Increase the average audience from 25 to 40
- To interview 50 audience members including disabled artists.

* Performances and workshops to take place in galleries, theatres and non-theatre venues.

The project contributed to a marketing strategy based on 'the positive circle'. By this is meant that promoting disability arts as interesting, high quality, innovative and accessible, results in increased resources for the work and high expectations which in turn produce more interest from audiences (including mainstream), more opportunities for work and higher quality products.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

- Make artistic changes to the production of *Mendel* to develop the skills and ideas of the artists.
- Focus the marketing on the innovative nature of the work rather than using the disability label.
- Improve the awareness of marketing staff within the venues.
- Videotape interviews with audience members to assess their responses to the marketing.
- Produce a video report to present the findings of the project.
- Compare audience figures with figures from previous tours.

The process plan and implementation

Development of promotional material presenting the work as cutting edge theatre and dropping the disability label.

Book a two-stage tour of the North West:

- Part 1 in October 1999. Performances and workshops as part of Manchester Art Festival (MART)
- Part 2 in March/April 2000. Performances and workshops were scheduled to take place in a wide range of venues including a visual arts gallery.

Between Parts 1 and 2 the company held a development weekend to review progress, and alter plans in the light of their experience of Part 1. April – July 2000. Production of the Video Report.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

Four disabled artists worked on the project and developed their existing skills. Two artists learned new skills in video making and animation. CCTV filmed the audience and projected images onto the set during the performance. At different times the audience was exposed as voyeurs, enrolled as jury and witnessed an execution. These techniques heightened the emotional involvement of the audience.

- 11 performances and eight workshops were booked.
- Two performances and three workshops were cancelled by venues due to lack of pre-sales or problems at the venue.
- During Part 1 audience average decreased to 15 for performances.
- During Part 2 audience average increased slightly to 29 for performances.
- Workshop attendance was 14-20 per workshop for those that ran.
- 42 audience members at the Royal Exchange Studio, including several disabled artists, took part in video interviews.
- Local authorities provided great support and an unexpected source of funding.
- Despite the new marketing strategy and new promotional material, local press frequently took a disability angle on the show, for example "disabled one-man show" was reviewed in a local newspaper.
- Seven venues which were unable to accommodate the tour at short notice have expressed an interest in receiving future work.

Lessons learned

The short time from announcement of New Audiences funding to delivery of the project seriously affected the success of booking venues as many venues were booking six months in advance.

Venues new to performance work needed far more marketing support than was available on this occasion. Misunderstandings about the nature of the work occurred during MART, and some venues were not geared up to market the work. We should ensure that venues really want to take the work for its own sake rather than to fulfil a perceived funding requirement

to host work by disabled people. Some venues made promises they were unable to keep. Some venues still have poor physical access. Such venues present a hostile image to disabled people. Some venues were unfamiliar to disabled audiences and the lack of familiarity might have inhibited attendance.

Local and regional disability arts groups fulfilled their marketing promises and showed great awareness of the efforts required to generate an audience.

Making a video report is highly media-friendly and accessible method of making our findings available.

Dissemination

The Video Report will be distributed (charging for post and packing only) to enquirers and target organisations: disability press, television, supporting organisations, partners and funders.

It is hoped to incorporate some of the report onto Full Circle Arts website. Awareness of the Video Report will be raised through notification in specialist publications (*Mailout* and *Times Educational Supplement*).



Photograph: Stalking Histories – *Mendel* [photo: Felicity Shillingford].

Drake Music Project

Project Title: The Action Music Video Project

Statement of the assumption being tested

That video-based publicity materials (disabled people playing, composing and performing music using Drake technology) will overcome the attitudinal barriers that printed publicity materials have failed to overcome.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

Aim:

To create a short video to market a series of new music workshops to disabled people living in and around Stockport. The video to involve:

- Disabled individuals currently participating in projects
- Talented Drake-trained musicians as an inspiration to others
- The innovative Drake technology
- To work collaboratively with Community Arts North West (CAN) and Stockport Arts Team.

Targets:

- To reach 30 new organisations through dissemination of the video
- To encourage at least 20 disabled people to attend Soundscene (a Regional Arts Lottery Programme) at Romiley Forum.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

The original plan:

- October 1999. Brief the video team and identify at least 30 Stockport based organisations for disabled people as targets for the video
- November 1999. Video Director to meet disabled musicians. Shoot film of workshops/interviews
- December 1999. Shoot film of workshops and performances. Logging and editing of video
- January 2000. Dissemination of video, equal opportunities monitoring forms and questionnaires to target organisations
- February 2000. Follow-up of video showings
- March 2000. Analysis and production of project report.

The process plan and implementation

- 1st November 1999. Drake's Regional Project Co-ordinator (RPC) met CAN's Video and Film Officer and the project Video Director to plan the schedule.
- December 1999. Film was taken at Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts (21/12/99) and at weekly workshops in Salford and Trafford.
- Drake's RPC met an Arts Officer at Stockport to identify appropriate groups in the Stockport area to be shown the video.

The finished video was not available until mid-July 2000 owing to delays in filming and editing the material. The project over-ran the schedule.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

The aims of the project were met although the project over-ran the schedule and adversely affected achievement of targets. Of the 15 organisations identified to take the video, four were able to view it in July. This was because some organisations do not meet in the summer months.

Questionnaires and Equal Opportunity Monitoring Forms were distributed to organisations with the video. These were not completed at the time owing to staffing and time pressures. They were later completed and returned to Drake but there are issues about the amount of time spent by support staff assisting individuals to fully understand the questions and express their views. 37 individuals completed the questionnaire: 43% had had some previous contact with Drake, 57% had not. 95% of respondents thought the video a better method of promoting Drake's work than by written material. The remaining 5% wanted written material and/or a presentation with the video. The success of the video was attributed to the opportunity to see and hear other disabled people participating in music making.

Information on joining the Soundscene project was provided to organisations, which took the video. Over 20 disabled people expressed a wish to attend Soundscene and 18 of them took part in the activities week 21st-25th July 2000.

A huge number of 'gatekeepers' in disabled organisations make decisions on behalf of disabled individuals. Some organisations, which did not take the video, offered excuses, which appeared to be 'gatekeeping'.

Filming and video requirements were not specified in sufficient detail to the video production team. Consequently the video production over-ran and the content does not fully match our expectations. However, the delay meant that a Drake concert filmed at The Lowry could be included, thus illustrating the high standard of musicianship achieved by Drake participants.

CAN and Drake developed an excellent working relationship. The video is being re-shot to include more footage of specialist music technology and wider representation of the people currently involved in workshops.

Lessons learned

Drake needs to develop video as a means of marketing its work. Through this project Drake has gained skills in planning a video and communicating with a partner organisation. The commissioning organisation should have a member present at each film session and should view footage regularly throughout the filming.

Methods of by-passing 'gatekeepers' need to be developed to ensure that disabled people do not have the right to choose taken from them. There was misunderstanding of the need for equal opportunities monitoring. Plenty of time should be allowed to visit disabled organisations and brief support workers. Feedback methods should include focus groups and one-to-one sessions either as well as questionnaires, or as alternatives to questionnaires, to avoid disabled individuals' responses being influenced by support workers.

Dissemination

The project results have been disseminated to Stockport Arts Team. The re-shot video will be disseminated (with research findings) to local and national disability organisations, local authorities and arts organisations. (See list in the full Drake report).



Photograph: Drake Music Project [photo: Rachel Joseph].

Ellesmere Port And Neston Borough Council

Project Title: New Moves

Statement of the assumption being tested

New approaches by carers, dance teachers, theatres and venues may increase the ways that disabled people engage with dance performance as both participants and audiences.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

- To enable disabled people to access professional performance products at mainstream theatres, and introduce the work of professional disabled dance artists through meetings with them.
- To introduce dance to a wider number of disabled people.
- To give participants exposure to a wide variety of different dance forms.
- To raise the profile of professional disability dance.
- To provide a focus for current practice.
- To research the training needs of staff and to test training programmes.
- To educate and inform theatres of the needs of disabled people.
- To provide placements for local students.
- To research site-specific performance needs for disabled people and produce a site-specific performance.
- To research the viability of a disability arts forum for the Borough.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

The project developed an existing weekly programme organised by the dance development officer and conducted by a team of dance teachers.

It:

- Encouraged/enabled regular disabled participants to visit theatres and see professional dance
- Introduced professional disabled dance artists to the regular participants of the classes
- Enabled different disabled dance groups to work together towards a performance
- Provided a training session for day centre staff and council volunteers.

Consultations were conducted by discussion/interview to permit participants with restricted written communication skills to express themselves more honestly and clearly. Notes were made by the dance development officer and by volunteers. Some participants supplemented their verbal input by drawing pictures. There was a photographic record of the project. Consultation with the artists, venues and theatres took place through post-activity discussion and formally in writing.

The process plan and implementation

- November 1999. Participating groups were briefed about the project and received marketing documents from artists and companies from which to select visits.
Theatres were consulted about their facilities for disabled people. Results of the theatre consultation and resolutions to individual barriers to attendance informed the participants' choices. Tickets and transport were booked.
- December 1999. Coronation & Mulberry Centres participated in workshops with David O'Toole and Ludus Dance Company. Participants attended a performance by Ludus.
Blue Planet Aquarium at Ellesmere Port was confirmed as the venue for the site-specific performance.
A Christmas Dance afternoon was held. Groups met each other and met staff involved in the project.
- January 2000. Staff and volunteer training session led by Jan Halloran.
- March 2000. MacIntyre Care hosted a workshop by Imlata Dance Company and attended a performance at the Civic Hall, Ellesmere Port. Neston Day Centre, Mulberry Centre, Coronation Centre and IndepenDance spent a half-day visiting the Aquarium, collecting stimuli and ideas to choreograph their piece. Groups experienced the venue and met the staff.
- February – March 2000. IndepenDance led 18 development workshops culminating in an evening site-specific performance on 30th March 2000.
- December 1999 – March 2000. 105 people attended three theatre visits.
- April 2000. Evaluation of project.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

- Three theatre visits offered a wide range of dance styles and types of venue. Participants were keen to attend performances and committed to overcoming barriers to attendance.
- Theatres were cautious in participating in surveys, discussions and visits, seemingly thinking they were a forerunner to criticism.
- Meetings between professional disabled dancers and project participants were highly successful. Professionals were regarded as positive role models. Participants found working with professionals an exciting experience.
- The Christmas Dance afternoon and training sessions were more valuable than had been planned. Bringing people together informally gave them an opportunity to share experiences and look to the future.
- The choice of Blue Planet Aquarium for the site-specific performance was very good. The venue is fully accessible for disabled people, employs disabled people, and the staff are highly trained in working with disabled people. The venue also provided participants with free

entrance for visits. The non-traditional nature of the venue had a positive effect; participants enjoyed the experience and a vast audience (many not having previously attended a dance performance) found it more accessible than a theatre. Participants and staff gained new performance and choreographic skills from working on the site-specific performance.

- Staff valued the opportunity for training and networking. Students valued the experience of working on the project alongside the dance development officer.
- There is enthusiasm from local disabled people for a Disability Arts Forum, however committed partners must be found in order for a Forum to have a sound structure and organisation by which to achieve its aims.

Lessons learned

The strong emphasis on consultation with participants empowered them in the project and increased their commitment to its success.

Liaison with theatres proved to be the most challenging component of the project. Practical issues identified by participants as barriers to their theatre visits were addressed in detail by the project staff. Transport was the major issue. Other problems identified were:

- Difficulties over ticket costs
- Lack of wheelchair spaces in theatres
- Day centres taking groups to theatres outside normal working hours.

Negotiation with the venue to ensure sufficient rehearsal time is key as participants may find transferring their performance to the venue challenging. Participants also need sufficient visits to be stimulated and to feel comfortable in the environment. They also need clean, comfortable and private changing space, and places to eat and drink.

Regular training for day centre staff is essential, however this needs to be delivered at low cost and provision needs to be made for staff to be covered whilst at the training.

Dissemination

The photographic record of the New Moves project was used to supply press releases and visual displays in the day centres. At local and regional meetings information about the project was distributed to Community Dance Arts Forum (CoDA), Dance Northwest Artists, Cheshire Dance Workshop and the Social Services team. Advice and guidance was given to other organisations wishing to set up or develop similar projects.

Arts About Manchester

Project Title: Beyond Barriers

Statement of the assumption being tested

That by adopting a collaborative and strategic marketing role, Arts About Manchester would enable its members to communicate with larger numbers of disabled people and encourage them to visit arts events independently.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

Aims:

- To test the barriers to attendance by disabled people, focusing on attitudinal, cultural and marketing issues
- To identify best practice for marketing to disabled people working through the marketing mix
- To develop networks and partnerships with disabled-led agencies and groups with direct and informed communication with individuals
- To provide Arts About Manchester and its members with information to help increase attendance and participation by disabled people in future
- To inform the plans of strategic partners in the arts and cultural sector.

Objective and target:

- The action based research also had objectives linked to Full Circle Arts @2000 project and the Arts Council of England's Beyond Barriers initiative
- The project targeted involvement of 50 individuals with a range of physical and learning disabilities who were not regular arts attendees, residing across the geographical region.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

- Selection of a group of 50 individuals with a range of physical and learning disabilities who were not regular arts attendees.
- Preparation of appropriate communication materials.
- Collaboration with arts organisations to source free tickets and access for participants.
- Briefing sessions for Box Office staff at participating venues.
- Participants completed pre-project questionnaires to benchmark their expectations of attending arts events.
- Participants were sent information about a range of arts events from which they could choose to attend.
- Participants completed a visit diary (in appropriate format) and a post-experience questionnaire.
- Participants were invited to a focus group meeting.

The process plan and implementation

- Two freelance consultants were contracted to assist in conducting the project.
- Arts About Manchester members offered free tickets and access to events to take place between November 1999 and March 2000. They provided publicity material in a variety of formats and their Box Office staffs were briefed.
- Full Circle Arts identified 14 project partners which were approached and briefed and who recommended participants for the project.
- Full Circle Arts and project partners advised in the development of an invitation letter to participants, the pre-visit questionnaire, and the visit diary.
- Participants opted in to the project and were sent pre-visit questionnaires, event publicity materials and a visit diary. They were briefed with the right information to be able to contact the box offices and book tickets independently. After participants had made a visit, they completed the visit diary, a post-visit questionnaire and some took part in a post-visit focus group meeting.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

50 individuals were recruited to the project. 15 actually attended an event and recorded their full experiences. Most of the 35 non-attending participants also gave valuable feedback regarding their reasons and problems.

The effort involved in encouraging and supporting bookings and visits was incredibly high, labour intensive, and often to no avail. Continual contact with all participants has provided information about the factors affecting such a low take-up of events offered.

There is no such thing as a ‘disabled market’ – all market segments (young, old, black, white, theatre, music etc) will include some disabled people. It is harder for disabled people to access information about arts events and the effort required in pre-visit planning often militates against booking/visits, especially if the outcome/product is not sold as being sufficiently rewarding.

The disabled-led agencies and networks could provide a cost effective communication channel but it will take time to establish meaningful partnerships.

The lack of regular engagement with arts activity in the past is a major cultural and social barrier.

This project has not provided sufficient information regarding the role of disability arts in audience development. More research is needed to explore the relationships between issue-based work, mainstream representation and attendance.

Lessons learned

Feedback indicates a number of difficulties for participants. For example, participants indicated that they needed more time to plan their visits and a lack of confidence in booking and attending at an unknown venue or event.

The project spanned the Christmas period, thereby limiting the choice of type of event offered to participants. The events on offer might not have been sufficiently appealing to convert casual interest into action, nor to overcome the real efforts necessary to make the visit happen. Many participants said they would have preferred to make visits in spring/summer when nights are lighter and weather warmer. Prospective attendees wanted detailed information about car parking availability, particularly because of the poor weather conditions.

The project emphasised attending independently rather than as part of an organised social group.

Dissemination

The full report (including recommendations) will be sent to Arts About Manchester members and the 14 partners involved in the project.

Harris Museum & Art Gallery

Project Title: Harris Action Research Project (HARP)

Statement of the assumption being tested

By involving visually impaired adults in Gallery visits we can integrate their recommendations for improvement to enhance access for visually impaired visitors to future exhibitions.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

- Integrate the action research into the existing programme of enhancing access for people with visual impairments.
- Further build the existing partnerships with organisations for visually impaired members.
- Use the results of the action research to influence the planning of future exhibitions.
- Train staff in disability awareness and ensure they implement the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act in their working practice.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

The action research comprised two phases:

Phase 1 The formation of consultation groups of visually impaired people to make visits to the Harris Gallery exhibitions. Responses, evaluation and recommendations regarding the physical access and the exhibits were recorded on tape and in note form.

Six key areas of accessibility were evaluated:

- Hands-on for exhibitions
- Interpretation of exhibits
- Nature of temporary exhibitions – such as the movement/display of exhibits
- Customer care
- Marketing the service
- Physical barriers at the Harris.

Phase 2 The implementation of recommendations from Phase 1.

The process plan and implementation

- November 1999. Visits by members of Galloways Society for the Blind (GSftB) and Action for Blind People (AfBP) to the *Disaster* and *Portraits* exhibitions. The groups were given descriptive and contextual information about the exhibits by members of staff. Later the visitors were asked to evaluate their experience and encouraged to make recommendations for improvements for future visitors to these exhibitions.

- 12th January 2000. An action timetable was put in place for Phase 2.
- 24th & 28th January 2000. Meetings were held to arrange audiotape recordings and Minolta guides.
- March 2000. Children's poems were recorded for playback in the *Write Fantastic* exhibition.
- 9th March 2000. Six Minolta relief guides were produced for the *Expressionism in Germany* exhibition.
- April 2000. Meeting with specialist consultant to discuss arrangements for forthcoming *Give and Take* exhibition. Planned activity for the *Give and Take* exhibition (May 2000) had to be cancelled owing to staff illness at GSftB. A group of visually impaired students visited the Gallery to choose exhibits for *Visitor's Choice* exhibition.
- June 2000. Tour of the Harris for a group from GSftB.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

Findings from Phase 1 include the following points, many of which were addressed in Phase 2.

- Hands on – Hands on and touch tours are invaluable to visually impaired people.
- Interpretation – Exhibition planning is aided by the involvement of visually impaired people. Interpretation for visually impaired people can be improved through: tours by volunteer guides, high quality (professionally produced) audio tours, large print labels, handouts and notices, visual enhancement aids, and awareness of acoustic issues by tour guides and staff.
- Temporary exhibitions – Access considerations highlighted by visually impaired people should be taken into account when planning exhibitions.
- Customer care – Staff need to regard 'Access for all' as a core value. Everyone should be treated as an individual and asked what their requirements are. Staff need to be trained to give directions and provide advice appropriately. Preston Borough Council is providing DDA training for all staff during the autumn of 2000. All staff of the Harris participated in Blind Awareness Training run by AfBP in October 1999.
- Marketing – Publicity materials must be targeted to relevant organisations. From September 2000 the Harris will promote the new audio guides with accompanying Minolta guides and visual aids via Lancashire Eye and local newspapers. Press releases will routinely include details of services for visually impaired groups.
- Physical barriers – Participants noted improvements needed to the glass doors, lighting, marking of steps, ramps and street access points. The action research confirmed the need for, and provided detailed input to, a programme of improvements to be carried out during 2000/2001.

Lessons learned

- Access is an ongoing process. Input from visually impaired people should be evaluated, thoroughly documented and recommendations acted upon.
- A consistent approach and a welcoming attitude can build bridges with visually impaired people. Ask people's opinions rather than trying to assume them.
- Have clear aims and a realistic timetable for projects.
- Build relationships with appropriate partners, share expertise and promote services. Take into account the working commitments of the partnership organisations. Promote your achievements to relevant people and organisations.

Dissemination

Details of the action research project have been sent to Re:source (The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries) as input to their research on people with visual impairment.

The Harris will be included in a Good Gallery Guide (featuring good access provision in 100 galleries) being produced by The Art House of Halifax and funded by the Arts Council of England.

TEAM & NWDAF

Statement of the assumption being tested

That the availability of a comprehensive database (produced as a conventional paper-based directory and on-line) of accessible arts venues in the region will increase performances by disabled artists and attendances by disabled audiences.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

- To raise awareness to venues of the need to publicise access facilities.
- To increase the quality of information about disabled facilities at venues.
- To improve access to information about disabled facilities at venues.
- To provide information to disabled artists, thereby encouraging more performances and ultimately more participation/involvement of disabled and mainstream audiences.
- To increase understanding of the way disabled people gain information about arts venues and to provide opportunities for them to feedback their experiences.
- To monitor website hits.
- To monitor attendances by disabled visitors across the region.
- To provide information for North West Disability Arts Forum's three-year Cabaret Circuit Project.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

- TEAM designed a questionnaire about access and disabled facilities (for disabled artists and audiences) to be distributed to venues.
- TEAM compiled a list of venues to which the questionnaire would be circulated.
- North West Disability Arts Forum (NWDAF) designed a database to hold the data obtained from the completed questionnaires. Target response 100 venues.

The process plan and implementation

- November 1999 – Database designed and questionnaires distributed to the list of venues.
- March 2000 – Response rate of less than 50% was reviewed. A telephone follow-up commenced but there were time constraints. Venues, which had not returned the questionnaire, were sent a follow-up letter.
- April/May 2000 – Response increased to 66% i.e. 81 of the target 100.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

Outcomes: A comprehensive directory of 81 arts venues in the region, showing their disability access provision and facilities. The directory is available on a database from NWDAF which can be printed a paper copy or which can be accessed via the Full Circle Arts website (due 2001). The timescale for the project slipped so it was not possible to assess the impact of the database on attendance.

Lessons learned

- Many venues were particularly slow in responding to the questionnaire.
- Further details will be added to the database as they become available.
- Lessons learned about the hit rates on the website will only become available after the site has been operational for several weeks.

Dissemination

- The paper-based version will be distributed to venues, which provided a completed questionnaire.
- The web-based version will be available via Full Circle Arts web pages.
- We will increase awareness of the existence of the database through: NWDAF newsletter, disability press, disability organisations, TEAM, Arts About Manchester, other audience development agencies, arts press, Tourist Boards, tourist press, local authorities and the local press.

Chester City Council

Statement of the assumption being tested

If a tailor-made, locally agreed and locally delivered arts service for disabled people by disabled people is provided, there will be an increase in participation, delivery, creativity, audience numbers and arts product by disabled artists in Chester. The service concept developed was that of a Disabled Artists Collective.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

- To develop new models for research, development and delivery of the arts for disabled people.
- To establish what role a future Disabled Artists Collective could play in Chester/Cheshire.
- To recommend how a future service provider would network/ collaborate/partner the delivery of an active arts service across the region.
- To recommend how such a service would be funded and supported.
- To establish a forum where disabled artists can meet regularly to work, train, gain advice and discuss issues.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

- A consultant conducted the action research to a brief provided by the project co-ordinator.
- A phenomenological approach (based on an individual's personal experience) was taken to interviews.
- The interview 'prompt' was a wish list for the development of disability arts in Chester/Cheshire.
- Interviews and contacts were documented and a database was compiled.
- The database was used to invite people to an event by and for disabled artists and their supporters (disabled and mainstream). The level of support for a Disabled Artists Collective was gauged during the event by a petition-like form.
- The project was evaluated in report form by both the consultant and the project co-ordinator.

The process plan and implementation

- During planning and delivery of the 2nd Chester Disability Arts Festival (August 1999), its steering group recognised the need to research and address the concerns raised by disabled people. The notion of the Disabled Artists Collective was established.
- Early December 1999. A consultant (a disabled person) was employed on contract to interview disabled people and arts organisations through visits and telephone calls. The interviews sought their views on the proposal of a Disabled Artists Collective.

- A database of artists, organisations and individuals interested in being involved in a Disabled Artists Collective was compiled.
- 11th February 2000. Individuals on the database were invited to an evening meeting, Disability Arts 2000, held at The Guildhall, Chester (a fully accessible location). Professional disabled artists provided entertainment. Free transport was arranged, free entry offered and a free buffet provided. This meeting provided the basis for development of a Disabled Artists Collective.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

- Disability Arts 2000 was attended by 68 people. As a result of the event further names were added to the database.
- A number of professional representatives volunteered themselves as potential advisory board members of any future Collective.
- The project consultant offered a model for a future Chester Disability Arts Collective, to be run by a person in post as a Disability Arts Officer.
- There is a high level of anticipation amongst local disabled people that something positive will emerge for their benefit as a result of this project.

Lessons learned

- Organisers must be more in tune with the feelings, experiences and wishes of disabled people. The phenomenological approach taken in this project by the freelance consultant was one which acknowledged what could be achieved and supported a service run for and by disabled people.
- Projects should concentrate on gaining the support and understanding of the beneficiaries. A personalised approach to disabled people as equal individuals is most likely to be appreciated.
- A Disability Arts Collective must actively pursue partnerships, foster relationships and encourage volunteer support.
- This action research project has indicated the need for project managers to be prepared to alter project plans in the light of findings.

Dissemination

Proposals for a Disabled Artists Collective have been discussed with project participants, partners and funders.

Chester City Council's Access Department will be made aware of the findings and will disseminate them to local groups in the course of its work, and to a national audience as appropriate.

The Foundation for Art & Creative Technology (FACT)

Statement of the assumption being tested

That access to the new FACT Centre (which is due to open in 2002) for disabled people is as much about attitudinal and creative access as it is about physical access.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

Investigate how disabled people are represented in, and have access to, the FACT Centre.

Objectives:

- Communicate and build good relationships with disabled people
- Make artworks accessible to disabled people
- Involve disabled people as artists and audiences.

Targets:

- Consultation sessions, each of two hours duration
- Maximum of 60 disabled participants in total recruited across the North West
- Produce a Report and Action Plan to ensure that the FACT Centre develops and runs as disabled people would like to see it do.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

- The project was managed by a member of the FACT staff supported by a specialist consultant working to contract.
- Disabled people were invited to participate in consultation sessions.
- Consultation sessions were observed and documented by the specialist consultant.
- Participants in the consultation sessions completed an evaluation sheet about the consultation session as a process. The specialist consultant completed an evaluation report based on her observations during the consultation sessions.

The process plan and implementation

The FACT project manager was responsible for selecting:

- A fully accessible venue, independent of FACT
- Three key discussion topics (with facilitation notes). Each topic to be discussed at two consultation sessions
- A target list of disabled people with the aid of partner organisations.

Invitations to consultation sessions (in appropriate formats) were distributed via the mailing lists of partner organisations (local agencies supporting disabled people). Travelling expenses were promised in the invitation letter and were reimbursed at each session.

A specialist project consultant was appointed to observe and evaluate the consultation sessions. A fully briefed disabled person facilitated each session. Sessions were designed and monitored by the project consultant, who took notes during the sessions.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

- 385 invitation letters were sent. 54 acceptances were received. A total of 21 disabled people attended five consultation sessions. One of the six sessions was cancelled as turnout reached only two.
- Some participants attended more than one session (because different topics were under discussion) but have not been double-counted in the total.
- Attendees included artists, visitors and campaigners for better access. Some attendees belonged to more than one of these groups.
- Despite the planning of venue, facilities and support staff, there were still some practical difficulties (non-attendance of an interpreter, interference between the induction loop and the air conditioning, and misunderstandings of the needs of other people).
- Participants expressed concern over some physical access/provision in the plans for the new FACT Centre. For example, specification of lifts, lack of ground floor auditorium, attitudes towards safe refuges, and details of design of some common areas were noted. The black box gallery received a cool reception, with people having sensory impairment and/or mobility/balance difficulties unlikely to engage. This input will inform the Action Plan for the new building.
- Participants assume that FACT will make good use of new technology for information and communication with them.
- Participants felt that a people centred approach from FACT Centre staff was the factor most likely to make a positive impact on their experience in the building. Seeing other people work there, being able to participate and feeling as if they had ‘the right’ to use the building would all encourage them to return.

The dialogue set up in the consultation sessions has convinced FACT of the need to maintain contact with these groups and it is proposed to set up a Disability Forum for this purpose.

Lessons learned

- A long lead-in time, good networking and clear information about access are essential for organisations wishing to engage with disabled people.
- Registrations of interest are not necessarily indicators of attendance.
- There is a history of failure to provide the promised disability provisions which adversely effects attendance at venues/events.

- The reason for a person attending might be different from the agenda intended by the host.
- Facilitators cannot assume that disabled people all understand each other's various needs, therefore 'House rules' need to be established for consultation sessions. Facilitators need assistance in managing the balance between physical issues and participation/representation issues.
- Informal discussions are as useful as formal discussions but there is a danger that they will be inadequately recorded.

Dissemination

The Evaluation Report will be sent to FACT Centre project partners, including the Design Team. A summary report will be made available to other arts organisations via FACT's publicity material.

Full Circle Arts (FCA)

Project Title: d@d@.org.uk

Statement of the assumption being tested

That one website could be accessible to all impairment groups, that it could be exciting and interactive, and that it could develop its own audience and participants from groups who were previously denied access by the barriers of bad design.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

To design and implement a test website and submit it to disabled people for comment.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

- Employ a specialist to research, design and develop an accessible test website (dada).
- Focus groups (comprising disabled people with a wide range of impairments) were set up and financial support given for travel and refreshments. Full technical support was provided.
- The first meeting of a focus group was to provide an awareness and appreciation of the use of the Internet, and give an opportunity for participants to comment.
- The second meeting of a focus group was to be an opportunity to comment on the test website as completed by the freelance project co-ordinator. At the second meeting individuals were shown the test site via projection screen and did not use the site personally. Three discreet sessions were commented upon: overall 'feel' of the site, access to the site, and content of the site.

- Focus group sessions were audio and video taped, from which written summaries were compiled. Comments made by focus group members were evaluated and acted upon by FCA staff.

The process plan and implementation

- October 1999. An experienced freelance disabled web-designer/project co-ordinator was employed on contract.
- December 1999. The project co-ordinator submitted the basic design for the dada site.
- Late December 1999 – April 2000. The freelance project co-ordinator commenced work on construction of the dada site. (The FCA project manager was absent through illness.)
- February 2000. The dada test website went on-line.
- 21st February 2000. Full day session, Focus group 1, at Greenheys Business Centre, Manchester.
- 29th February 2000. A full day Focus group session planned for Bury Met was cancelled by the freelance project co-ordinator.
- March 2000. The project finish date of 31st March was extended due to illness.
- 12th May 2000. Review meeting between the FCA project manager and the freelance project co-ordinator.
- 23rd May 2000. Half-day session, Focus group 2. As a result of their adverse comments the test website was taken off-line.
- 30th May 2000. A discussion forum on the dada site was arranged for the conference *Access Denied*. A re-direction had to be effected for FCA to maintain control over the content of the discussion site and to prevent input being redirected to the freelance co-ordinator's university site.
- A series of one-to-one sessions with disabled people using the test website confirmed the findings from Focus group 2. It was concluded that the site needed to be re-designed.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

FCA believes that this action research has disproved the original assumptions made by the web community and digital arts that:

- In making a website accessible to visually impaired users it will be accessible to all disabled people
- It is possible to construct a virtual community domain that will be accessible to all disabled people whatever their impairment.

A new site, due for completion in 2001, has been commissioned. A comprehensive and detailed design brief for the new site has been drawn up, using the findings from this action research project, for the new web developer. This includes:

- Specifications for access requirements
- Specifications for the 'feel' of the site
- Regular liaison between the web developer and FCA to ensure the design is progressing to specification.

Further developments to the site are planned for the future.

Lessons learned

Despite the freelance worker having been involved in planning and budgeting the bid, some of the estimates of the time involved in implementing the project slipped. The written contract was not sufficiently detailed to ensure that all planned work would be completed. When the allocation of freelance hours had been used up the remaining elements of the project (with the exception of essential additions to the test site to make it accessible) had to be completed by FCA staff.

Unexpected absences by key members of staff can quickly result in difficulties in keeping a project on target. Maintaining contact by telephone proved to be inadequate.

Publicising a complex facility such as dada too early in its development might adversely affect the profile of an organisation and can have financial consequences.

Dissemination

A publication *Designing @ccess Into Your Site* has been produced and will be made available to organisations setting up or improving websites. Delegates to the conference *Access Denied* were made aware of the project through the discussion forum facilities provided by the dada site.

North West Film Archive at the Manchester Metropolitan University (NWFA)

Project Title: Let's Get The Bigger Picture

Statement of the assumption being tested

By investigating the experiential requirements of people with visual and/or hearing impairments, North West Film Archive can design inclusive access services and open up the collection for more local people.

Aim, objective, measure of success/target

Aims:

- Find new audiences of disabled people in the North West, and test and refine ways in which they could access the collection effectively
- Identify disabled peoples' preferences for searching and receiving information about the collection
- Help shape the design and delivery of future inclusive access services.

Targets:

- Outreach to 25 groups to establish a focus group of 15 participants to attend five group sessions
- Identify 100 new names and addresses for the NWFA disability access database.

Methodology, documentation and evaluation

- Create a database of local, regional and national organisations involved with visually and hearing impaired people.
- Encourage individuals to participate in a focus group starting with an introductory session which would use a questionnaire to draw quantitative data about their engagement (or not) with screened material (TV, videos, cinema) and qualitative data about these experiences. Engage the group in research exercises on impairment-specific basis, evaluated by questionnaire, telephone survey and observation.
- A final focus group meeting was organised to feedback research findings to the participants and to provide the opportunity for further reflection and comment.

The process plan and implementation

- A Project Assistant was recruited to assist the NWFA Access & Marketing Officer in the organisation and smooth running of the Project.
- 17th January – 1st February 2000. Identification of, and contact with, disabled people's groups and professional service providers. Database compiled. Formed a focus group of 13 people. (Five members had

- participated in the previous research project with NWFA. Eight additional members were identified through the database.)
- 1st & 18th February 2000. Introductory focus group sessions at NWFA, followed by analysis of completed questionnaires from 1st February and 18th February.
 - This analysis showed an overwhelming preference amongst visually impaired people for enjoying moving images at home, whilst hearing impaired people accessed moving images in many different settings. It was decided to split the focus group into two – along impairment-specific lines – to test and evaluate screening scenarios. The decisions and forward plans were reported back to participants by letter/audiotape (8th March 2000), and followed-up by telephone (13th – 20th March 2000).
 - The visually impaired group (seven participants) tested four audio described NWFA video film extracts at home. This scenario was evaluated by large print evaluation form or by telephone follow-up as appropriate. Participants were asked their preferred methods of searching the collection and interest in/demand for future services. (25th March – 5th April 2000)
 - The hearing impaired group (six participants) attended the Archive (27th March 2000) for a group screening of four captioned NWFA film extracts. The group used the on-line catalogue to gain experience of content and method. This scenario, and interest in/demand for future services, was evaluated by completing a form at the end of the session.
 - 17th – 24th April 2000. Analysis of research findings and conclusions.
 - 8th May 2000. Focus group meeting to present findings and provide an opportunity for participants to comment.
 - May/June 2000. Dissemination of research findings.

Outcomes – expected and unexpected

- 30 organisations were approached to help identify focus group members. 162 names (individuals, groups and organisations) were added to the database.
- 25 individuals were willing to participate in the project. 13 people participated in five focus group sessions.
- Visually impaired participants enjoyed the control provided by using videos at home. They could pause, stop and review the tape independently or talk to friends and family about the content without ‘spoiling’ the experience for others. Some participants were willing to consider visiting the Archive for screenings. Receiving film information and archive search results in large print or audio tape was the preferred method although half the group would carry out their own computer searches using the NWFA’s on-line catalogue.

- Hearing impaired participants appreciated the opportunities to discuss the screenings with other people and used the signers provided who introduced the screenings to facilitate the discussion. They were also keen to enjoy the Archive collection on video at home with family and friends. The majority of the group would carry out their own searches on computer and would be happy to receive results and information by e-mail.

Lessons learned

Opening up the Archive to people with visual and/or hearing impairments must include providing access at home. Opportunities to borrow from a library of captioned and audio described films on video are needed.

Archive-based screenings with live sign language interpretation are needed. The NWFA website and on-line catalogue need to be adapted for visually impaired users.

Publicity and information about the Archive should provide details of access options so that individuals can make informed choices about the methods best suited to their needs. In order to provide these services the NWFA will have to secure the necessary funding.

Dissemination

To key visitors to NWFA: Director of Research, UCLA Film & Television Archive (30th May 2000), representatives of New Zealand Film Archive (14th June 2000) and representatives of the National Heritage Lottery Fund (27th June 2000).

Presentations to conferences – *Access Denied* conference (25th May 2000) and the *International Federation of Film Archives Congress* (5th to 9th June 2000).

Research summary published on NWFA website and outline details included in *Can I Hear That In Colour?* summary report.

Appendix i

Project Management and Steering Group

Project Management:

Jane Beardsworth NWAB Participation & New Audiences Officer
Greer Roberts NWAB Administrator

Publication:

Jane Beardsworth NWAB Participation & New Audiences Officer
Helen Grady NWAB Information Officer
Mike Noon NWAB Administrator

Report compiled by:
Judith Rose

Steering Group:

The Steering Group for the new audiences programme was set up to represent all sections of NWAB.

Members:

Julia Keenan NWAB Adviser
Brian Hilton NWAB Adviser
Julia Hallam NWAB Board Member
Jane Beardsworth NWAB Participation & New Audiences Officer
Maureen Jordan NWAB Touring Officer
Anthony Preston NWAB Local Authorities Officer
Paulette Clunie NWAB Access Officer
Bronwen Williams NWAB Literature Officer

Appendix ii Financial Details of Projects

Project holder	Total cost of project £	Contributions				
		NWAB - NAP £	Project holder £	Local authorities £	Other partners £	In-kind all sources £
3D Performing Arts Co.	19,476	8,000		1,000	10,476	
Arts About Manchester	13,000	10,000				3,000
The Blackie	10,397	5,000	397		5,000	
Burnley Youth Theatre	7,484	3,800		1,800		1,884
Cartwheel Community Arts	5,120	2,500		320	1,940	360
Chester City Council	13,117	5,000		3,749	1,000	3,368
Drake Music Project	4,766	2,300	306	1,160	1,000	
Ellesmere Port & Neston BC.	4,186	2,000		611		1,575
Foundation for Art & Creative Technology	30,700	5,000	13,650			12,050
Full Circle Arts	31,403	15,000	2,403		10,800	3,200
Harris Museum & Art Gallery	1,014	514				500
M6 Theatre Company	9,291	6,000	1,641		1,650	
North West Film Archive	26,443	13,000	2,297			11,146
Stalking Histories	20,440	12,500	877		1,783	5,280
TEAM	5,500	2,800				2,700
	202,337	93,414	21,571	8,640	33,649	45,063

Notes: Where Project Holder is also a Local Authority the Project Holder contribution is shown in the LA column.
Total in-kind includes in-kind both by partners and the Project Holder.

Appendix iii

Types of Audience/Participant

Project holder	Age groups	Culturally specific groups	Disabled people details	Geographical location
3D Performing Arts Co.			Adults with learning difficulties	Trafford, Greater Manchester
Arts About Manchester			Adults with disabilities	Greater Manchester
The Blackie	15 and over		People with physical impairment, learning impairment, behavioural problems	Liverpool
Burnley Youth Theatre	5-18 years	Pakistani	Young people with disabilities	East Lancashire
Cartwheel Community Arts			Physical and learning disability and mental health	Pendle
Chester City Council	19-30 years		Physically disabled people	Chester
Drake Music Project			Disabled people	Stockport, Greater Manchester
Ellesmere Port & Neston BC.			Disabled people and local disabled artists	Ellesmere Port & Neston
Foundation for Art & Creative Technology			Disabled individuals	Merseyside
Full Circle Arts			Disabled people	Greater Manchester
Harris Museum & Art Gallery			Adults with visual impairments	Preston & Lancashire
M6 Theatre Company	5-14 years		Deaf people and their families	Lancs & Greater Manchester
North West Film Archive			Disabled people with hearing and/or visual impairment	Greater Manchester
Stalking Histories			To attract disabled audience	Lancashire
TEAM			Disabled people	Liverpool & District

Notes: No project covered an area exclusively inner city or rural.
Projects were predominantly set in urban areas.

Appendix iv Audience/Participation Numbers

Project holder	Activity type	Activity number	Participant/attender number	Role of participants/attenders, and [Comments]
3D Performing Arts Co.	Video launch meeting	1	52	Visitors
	Workshops – full day	16	11	Participants [Working/development sessions]
Arts About Manchester	Independent visits to venues	15	15	Audience members [50 individuals expressed interest in participating]
	Focus groups		7	Participants
	Presentations		50	Audience members
	Feedback/dissemination		24	Readers, observers [To members of Arts About Manchester]
The Blackie	Workshops – full day	5	100	Participants
Burnley Youth Theatre	Arts workshops	42	397	Participants [74 young people attended both phase 1 & 2]
	Arts workshops		3	Workshop leaders [Artists with disabilities led some workshops]
Cartwheel Community Arts	Arts workshops	20	62	Participants
	Open day	1	202	Visitors [Held on World Mental Health Day]
	Exhibition	1	55 estimated	Visitors
Chester City Council	Live social/ celebratory event & discussion	1	68	Focus group/audience [Includes disabled artists performing at event]
Drake Music Project	Focus groups and video presentation	12	55	Focus group and physically disabled musicians [Four group visits, plus filming and video sessions]
	Movement & music performance week		18	Participants and observers [Weekly workshops continue and further Performance weeks are planned]

Appendix iv Audience/Participation Numbers

Ellesmere Port & Neston BC.	Dance Afternoon	1	160	Participants and audience [Groups met, performed for and watched each other]
	Workshops	3		Participants [84 participants – also involved in other large scale activities]
	Independent visits to venues	3		Audience members [105 visitors – also involved in other large scale activities]
	Performances following workshops	2		Audience members [48 visitors – also involved in other large scale activities]
	Performance workshops	1		Participants [68 in preparation for the New Moves Dance Performance]
	Dance performance	1	180	Participants [New Moves at the Blue Planet Aquarium]
	Training session	1		<i>Trainees [For 18 Day Centre staff and volunteers]</i>
Foundation for Art & Creative Technology	Focus groups	6	21	Participants [385 individuals targeted, 54 responses]
	Discussion groups	6	31	Participants
Full Circle Arts				[Publication of designing @ccess into your site]
Harris Museum & Art Gallery	Focus groups	4	34	Focus group participants/visitors
M6 Theatre Company	Performance of ‘Sssh’	14	160	Audience members [Numbers do not include mainstream audience]
North West Film Archive	Focus groups	6	13	Focus group participants [97 groups/individuals targeted]
	Dissemination		210	Visitors [Workshops and seminars]
	Dissemination		5	Visitors [Executive visitors to NWFA]
	Dissemination		1,500	Readers, observers [Distribution of summary report]
Stalking Histories	Performances of ‘Mendel’	3	104	Audience members [In-theatre venues]
	Performances of ‘Mendel’	3	82	Audience members [In non-traditional spaces]
	Workshops	3	54	Participants
	Taster	1	60	Participants
TEAM				

Note: Additional activities are shown in italics.

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E-mail: alex@aam.org.uk

Arts Council of England

Audience Development Unit
14 Great Peter Street
London SW1P 3NQ
Telephone: 020 7333 0100
Fax: 020 7973 6590

**The Blackie/Great Georges
Community Cultural Project**

Great Georges Street
Liverpool L1 5EW
Telephone: 0151 709 5109
Fax/Minicom: 0151 709 4822

Burnley Youth Theatre

Quarry Theatre
Queens Park Road
Burnley
Lancashire BB10 3LB
Telephone: 01282 427767
Fax: 01282 485655

Cartwheel Community Arts

Hind Hill Centre
Hind Hill Street
Heywood OL10 1AT
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Fax: 01706 361400
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cartwheelart@netscapeonline.co.uk

Chester City Council

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Chester CH1 2HS
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Fax: 01244 324338
Minicom: 01244 320915
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Drake Music Project

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claireturner@drakemusicproject.com

**Ellesmere Port and Neston
Borough Council**

Leisure, Tourism and Amenities
Municipal Buildings
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Ellesmere Port
South Wirral L65 0BE
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Full Circle Arts

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Telephone: 0161 279 7878
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E-mail: info@full-circle-arts.co.uk

Harris Museum & Art Gallery

Market Square
Preston
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Telephone: 01772 258248
Fax: 01772 886764
E-mail: harris@pbch.demon.co.uk

M6 Theatre Company

Hamer School
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Fax: 01706 711700
E-mail:
info@m6theatre.freemove.co.uk

North West Arts Board

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Website: www.arts.org.uk/nwab

**North West Disability Arts
Forum (NWDAF)**

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Telephone: 0151 707 1733
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North West Film Archive

Minshull House
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Manchester M1 3EU
Telephone: 0161 247 3097
Fax: 0161 247 3098
E-mail: nw.filmarchive@mmu.ac.uk
Website: www.nwfa.mmu.ac.uk

Stalking Histories

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Todmorden
Lancashire OL14 6LP
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Fax: 01706 816211

TEAM

4th Floor
Gostins Buildings
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Liverpool L1 4LN
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Fax: 0151 707 2555

3D Performing Arts Company

c/o Altrincham Methodist Church
Barrington Road
Altrincham WA14
Telephone: 0161 912 1214

North West Arts Board is the regional arts development agency for Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside and the High Peak of Derbyshire. It is one of the ten regional arts boards in England and part of the national arts funding system.

It works to support and develop the arts in the North West through funding, advice, information and other services and by working with a range of strategic partners across the region.

**North West Arts Board
The Arts and Disabled People:
A New Audiences Programme**

