**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN DANCE – ONTARIO DANCE WORKSHOP**

Notes – Day One & Two

Expectations – from this workshop

* I hope to come away with two new community engagement projects to introduce to my city
* TO FIND WAYS FOR PEOPLE TO DANCE
* Reciprocity – Ideas on how to connect diverse sections of our community to dance- strengthen the relationship
* Learn a dew new outreach /engagement strategies
* Hear and share experiences – learn a couple more strategies
* Explore new ways to engage ‘non dancers’ in some form of a dance experience
* To learn some thought provoking ideas about community engagement
* New creative ideas that I can implement to help build a dance community
* Practical techniques – tips re community engagement
* Develop new ideas
* To return home with a couple of realistic, practical methods – requiring few or only one staff
* Strength in numbers – what can we be doing as a region to facilitate dance touring and engagement
* To come away with at least a general outline of a community strategy for dance, as well as some new skills for community engagement in all aspects of our business
* Inspiration examples strategy
* Learn a strategy I never thought of
* Community engagement – Plan , shared experience
* Learning about new strategies for engagement
* To learn about some innovative and creative ways of engaging communities
* To meet new people, to communicate some ideas in community engagement through dance
* How to get more people engaged in dance
* Learn about creative ways to connect work in my community
* To go home with three new ideas
* New tools for increasing community engagement
* Connect, learn, create
* Idea sharing
* To see some dance
* Creative inspiration
* Networking

**Community Engagement Why Do It? Responses from reviewing film examples and case studies from the UK**

1. Feeling closer to the artist – experiencing their process
2. Desire to participate
3. Distance
4. Structure of decisions
5. Personal interpretation
6. Enhanced understanding
7. Inspiration, energy, anticipation
8. Making dance that responds to their sense of place
9. Build that bridge between artists and audiences
10. People who would not go to the theatre get to see dance
11. Dance as a social activity – we all come together to do it
12. A way to demonstrate one’s culture
13. Dancing together, like singing together, makes people happy
14. Revealing the process
15. Fun doing childish things as an adult
16. Unexpected, cross cultural, draws people in communication and response, connection
17. Dance artists- providing access for those who wouldn’t come to theatre to see dance
18. To be integrated in the process
19. Duration of projects
20. Dance is stimulation – like living…...integrating balance with your life
21. Making connections
22. It’s a learning experience

**Community Engagement – Observations/quotes. Responses from reviewing film and case studies from the UK**

* Add a dance element to another event?
* Legacy
* Verbal communication and jokes between participants
* Site specific – cross cultural groups
* Enhance connections and investment
* A way to cross and/or merge cultural and accessability boundaries
* Artistic skill development
* Access
* Celebrate
* Cultural access/inclusion
* Self expression and social commentary
* People who never had a chance to -------before , had a chance to ------------
* Celebration of diversity
* Feeling closer to the artist because of artists struggles- otherwise do lay people think its all easy?
* Interact with the environment
* Non-verbal communication
* Take risks
* Social Situations
* Relating dance to everyday life – balance
* Anticipation created by being involved in process – a privilege to be part of the process
* Understood the concept by being part of the process
* Relating dance to childhood experiences – how fun it must be…
* Active participation
* Online take viewers beyond the passive role into part of the creation
* Cross pollination of skater culture/cheerleading and dance . .Big Dance
* ‘pull down the veil’
* Engaged with new people in the group
* ‘we’
* Overlapping – professionals , participants, spectators

**Community Engagement – Audience/Participants views**

* Dance can be life changing
* A form of expression for people who may have difficulty with words
* Digital projects – reach beyond project – impact wider arts world
* Everyone and anyone can dance mix of genres and cultures under a banner of dance
* ‘it’s free..outdoors on beach…everyone was watching us….’
* Challenge if artists vision is too radical for community that will engage
* Dance responding to a sense of place
* Enhance audience reach
* Celebrate Diversity
* Improv – immediate projects

**Community engagement – Artists**

* If a community engagement project is a ‘bridge’ do the two parties meet half way on the bridge
* Critical response processes can allow artists to reframe ‘criticism’
* A relationship with the audience at a distance can help structural decisions
* Young artists need apprenticeship opportunities
* Discomfort with the idea of competition –eg voting on 2 favourite pieces
* Workdays 350 for dance artists for Big Dance Project
* Site specific work
* We had 1 day to put together with the dancers – bodies on the beach
* Beyond geography
* A way to share different dance forms and techniques
* Lineage of community art practices
* Online connectivity makes you hungry to create
* The way we communicate in verbal and non-verbal ways is he progress of dance in society

**Practical Task – to mimic how participants may feel in a community engagement experience**

**Positive Responses**

* Talked/walked with someone I didn’t know
* Wasn’t alone
* Trust- new unknown experience
* Got u moving around and opened up the senses
* Participatory
* Moving with each other
* Game made sense did not leave me feeling vulnerable
* Being in a room with a bunch of fun people
* Loved moving around
* Got to get up and move around
* Made me awareof the community around me
* Didn’t last long
* Being paired up with a friend
* Felt in control as the driver
* Accessible& Ice breaking
* Highly interactive
* Randomness of choosing roles
* Free (didn’t have to think for myself)
* Felt useful
* Trusting a total stranger without even seeing them approach – got over it surprisingly quickly

**Neutral Responses**

* Wanted to watch activity
* Felt comfortable
* Short and sweet
* Walking – basic movement
* THE EERCISE WAS NEUTRAL
* ENGAGING
* NO REAL CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER PEOPLE
* Some people had nice pressure/energy
* So much as it was community involvement
* Heard some natural and chatting
* Level of engagement
* Could be better with more space
* Type of movement
* A change of space
* Great to move in a different way
* Smell of pine..
* Loss of a sense disconcerting
* Fan
* The rules of the task
* It was easy
* Breaking down barriers

**Negative Responses**

* Fear of the unknown
* Being ‘watched’ by Judy with a clip board
* Went in to an unknown activity
* Wanted to watch
* Dizzy with eyes shut
* Made me not want to sit down again
* Bad ‘drivers’, anxiety, lack of trust
* The intent wasn’t clear
* Nothing major but a few fender benders
* The amount of time we spent in exercise could have been more
* Had to be trustworthy of the driver if you were the car
* Easy icebreaker
* Would not introduce as dance
* Disproportionate number of cars and drivers
* Able to lose inhibitions of task
* Little too crowded I wanted to drive faster
* Didn’t help me to get to know anyone
* Not knowing everything about the situation

**Community Engagement – Model**

**In setting out a community engagement plan, strategy or project think about the following:**

**Needs**

(What are the needs of the community that you intend to engage with – and what are your needs)

**Evidence**

(How you prove the need is there. Meetings/consultations/requests/statistics/alliance to any other strategies locally)

**The overall aim/s for the project**

(This is where you state your aim which should correspond with tackling the need)

O**utcomes for the project**

(The results you expect, improvements, changes)

**Tracking Progress**

(This is how you show your progress, it can be any type of charting or mapping, perhaps using the following :)

**Outcome Indicator Indicator Level Timescale**

**Activities**

(The actual activities you engage in, this can be meetings, consultations, events, activity, workshop, performance, creating network, making a newsletter)

**Learning**

(What the learning outcome is – this can be learning outcome for you or the community engagement process. Perhaps findings and next steps are included in the learning too)

**Tracking/Mapping tools**

A model shared for using in community mapping creating a spreadsheet and keeping a record in the following:

**Group Their Goal Your Goal Tools**

Volunteers Support your work Increase engagement build leadership Facebook, in person

Donors Give to your cause To increase donations/create campaign Gala event

Staff To enjoy working more To help them engage more fully training

Partners

**Using this template then:**

Identify all the groups in your community

Define the goals that match each group

Identify the tools

**Identify all the groups in your community:**

To start mapping the community you need to first identify which groups are within it. Do you have volunteers, interns, or adjunct staff? Maybe you work with schools so you have segments for teachers, administrators, parents, students, and then groups outside of school. Here are some questions that can help people get talking to start sharing the groups they work with. The more diverse group you can get together to have this conversation and work through this planning together, the more complete a picture you can draw of your community. You can have really rich discussions about the way different parts of your organisation view he community.

**Define the goals that match each group:**

There are two sets of goals to be discussed here: the fist are the goals of the group – what do they want from you, why do they want to come to you, what do they get out of it? The second are the goals your organisation has for that group – what are you hoping they will do, how will they contribute, what are you asking from them?

**Identify the tools:**

This means identifying the spaces, platforms, and applications where each group congregates and where you can communicate with them. Even though much of these will be online social technologies, don’t forget about the offline spaces too. Identifying mechanisms you can use to communicate with each group can help you target your efforts, but in many cases illuminates areas where only one or a couple of groups use a certain platform, while others use another, not only will this help you figure out where to say things but can dramatically change what you say where.

T**en Handy Hints in Community Engagement**

**1 Built in, not bolted on**

Effective community engagement means thinking about it at the outset. Involving people at every stage of the process can greatly improve the quality and the sense of ownership with what’s happening

**2 Kill apathy as a concept**

Despite a widespread belief that people aren’t interested, the reality is that they do care about the issues that affect them. Start where people are at, not where you want them to be.

**3 Be clear about the constraints**

Don’t promise the world if you can’t deliver it! It’s better to offer something small that you can deliver then to offer something big that you can’t. Try to be clear where the boundaries are, who makes the final decisions and what resources are available.

**4 It’s a marathon not a sprint**

Delivering change and regenerating communities takes a long time. Be prepared for the long haul; everyone gets disheartened if things take forever to happen, but try to be realistic about how long things take too.

**5 Communication X10**

Show what has been achieved – it’s not just about doing, it’s also about letting people know what is being done. Make sure you let people know what is going on – information is always the first stage! Two-way dialogue is critical to any change process.

**6 Have a champion**

The most successful strategies have someone – or sometimes lots of people at different levels – pushing them forward who really believe in the cause. If community engagement is important, make sure it’s included as part of people’s roles.

**7 Make it meaningful**

Remember that any plans you make should lead to action. Everyone gets bored of participating when nothing actually happens. As people see things happening, confidence in the process will follow and soon theyre’ll be no holding them back!

**8 Assess your goals at every stage**

Keep asking yourself – is what we are trying to do realistic? Targets should be clear and achievable and have milestones along the way. But don’t be afraid to change direction as you go along if that makes more sense.

**9 Be prepared to be unprepared**

If you think you know exactly what’s going to happen, it’s probably not engagement. Don’t try to stifle or control the process too much. Be flexible and prepared to respond to what’s happening around you.

**10 Have Fun!**

Anything new can be scary but remember to have fun! If you want people to get involved it’s got to appeal. After all, having fun makes us happy and well-being is important to us all.

**Remembering Dance**

Target Stakeholder-Elderly

Style-Social Dancing

1 year plan

Approach CARP ask key stakeholder/partner

Use their contacts and networks for venues, participants and communications ect.

Session 1-September

Dance on Film

Viewing, facilitated discussions, sharing stories and memoires.

(Artist makes notes on stories)

Session 2-November

Sit and dance, guided instruction

(Session: Formed/based on story shared in Session 1)

Session 3-February

Creation of piece and discussion

(Involves private presentation for family and friends-will be filmed)

Session 4-April

Performance of creation proceeded by film of Session 3

Aspiring/Dance Artists (Professional/Pre-Professional)

Emerging All Ages

Criteria & Open Call (Individuals, companies, collectives)

Research, Solicitation, Invitation

Peer –To –Peer Mentoring & Dramaturge:

* Network
* In-Person Critique
* Artist Readiness
* Virtual Exchange
* Presentation & Tour
* 2 Year Process

Works in progress- Development process

Potential for presentation & Touring in region

Advisory committee

Selection committee (Grads of the program)

Frequency-Bi-monthly in-person meetings at different venues

Passes to see performances at all the venues

The Modern Harvest

Site: Owen Sound, Harrison Park

* Large green space with small river, boat access(kayak & canoe)
* Walking trails
* Play area-last stop underground railroad

Dance Focus-QR Code

* Choreography that is reflective of native technique
* Simple letting animation of nature of nature around
* Targeted social groups, community, park goers-would film(phones) and upload.

Festival

* Footage created by the community edited & shared-

 Leads to a final performance where exerts of common choreography is used.

Participation-(Need & PM)

* Identify groups & allow for random park goers
* PM & Choreography-take group thru process and film

Community

* Social Media, Parks/Rec
* Final-at festival
* Feed back-during & at final event, survey and interviews.

Non-Venue: Indoor Climbing Gym

Project: Performance on rock climbing wall with local participants

Visiting Dance Company: Aeriosa-British Columbia

Local Community Group:

* Local Circus Troupe
* Vestafire Entertainment
* Social Circus

Stakeholders:

* Social circus participants
* Rock climbing clubs
* Gymnastic clubs
* Community Centre youth groups
* Boys and Girls Clubs

Limitations:

* Physical (Mobility) Impairments
* Scheduling
* Transportation

Communications:

* Promotion through summer camps/programs
* Create group page on social media
* Incorporate into social media group marketing strategy
* Media releases/local paper, television, etc.

Evaluation:

* Track your enrollment/Interest
* Blog your journey (documentation/photos, videos)
* Audience reaction to performance
* Teaser-trailers-overseen by the facilitator
* Scheduled feedback sessions-adapting programming to feedback

Next Steps:

* Use testimonials/feedback to market next project
* Peer mentoring
* Follow up with participants/groups
* Possible case study to promote and support future projects

Observations

Fictional Community Engagement

* Utilize group to facilitate the elderly
* Unique venue
* Era-facilitator stories & participation
* Outside eye (not dance)
* Reminisce
* Mixed ability…not necessarily leading to a performance
* Connect through a virtual program
* Project ending performance-attendees, critiques, meetings, blogs
* Artist readiness
* Peer collaboration
* Artists making choices
* Passes to attend performances
* Professional development
* Various collaborators
* Creating opportunities for artists