



ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2017 – 18

Summary

In 2017 – 2018 Playback Theatre South West provided activities to support the refugee community and develop skills that support their social integration in Plymouth.

We provided opportunities for women to gain understanding of issues that affect their lives, strengthen their voices in their communities and build confidence to take leadership roles. Women from different cultures have grown understanding of each other's lives and built connections promoting equality and diversity and social integration.

We have built social cohesion through regular open performances in community venues in Devon.

We took part in Clinical Psychology events at Plymouth University; we assisted Unison SW Women's Conference and provided a forum as part of the Economic Social Reform Festival at Exeter University '*Stories of hospitality in a time of global change*'.

We provided training for Playback Theatre practitioners with School of Playback Theatre UK and European Playback Theatre Conference to develop their skills. We participated in peer supervision for Accredited Trainers to share good practice.

The main activities of the charity are overseen and approved by the Trustees to ensure they are in accordance with the declaration issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

The performance of the organisation has strengthened – The Trustees have worked together establishing roles and responsibilities.

Trustees and members of the performing companies Mirror Mirror and Tarte Noire volunteer in the following ways; fundraising; awareness raising; promotional activities; rehearsal time; administrative support.

Long term projects

Refugee Women's Creative Group

A diverse group of women from 15 different countries benefitted from 25 sessions. Women have made friends, found support for their lives, practiced speaking English in a safe atmosphere. This contributes in reducing feelings of isolation. We sing, play theatre games and do some physical exercise and we encourage women to speak out in the group with support from others. This is informing our planning for a future training programme as the issue of 'performing' is complex for some women in relation to their religious precepts.

Student Involvement for working with Refugees



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We supported each new intake of students on placement who are supporting refugees. We built connections between the students who became stronger as a team involved in challenging work. START has noticed that the groups who take part in these sessions find the rapport and relationships between them are much stronger and so they work better as a team. As a result these students were better equipped to provide a welcoming environment for the women's creative sessions and support the mothers with their children. We use team building exercises and theatre games to help them connect and a performance where they share their stories of why they're doing this work and to hear about each others' lives.

Cultural Kitchen Social Evenings for Refugees

8 sessions at Cultural Kitchen have supported social integration for the children of refugee families. Boys and girls are sometimes reluctant to work together so we've explored different ways of engaging with them both separately and together. We play more interactive games and do fewer formal performances with the intention of building relationships of trust and the right circumstances in which to feel safe to share their stories and experiences. By hearing their stories of the tensions and successes of their daily lives at school we support their integration into life in British society.

Performances for Refugees with Integr8 and Beyond Borders Totnes

We collaborated with Integr8 and Beyond Borders Totnes supporting refugees settling in the South Hams by providing the opportunity for refugees to share about their lives. People shared the painful reality of their journeys to be here and the suffering they've encountered in leaving behind or losing family on the way as well as the struggles of making a meaningful life for themselves here. There was much laughter as well as tears during our performance and we played lots of games afterwards to help everyone integrate their experiences after such a deep acknowledgement of their life situations.

International Women's Day Performance for Refugee Women in Plymouth

Tarte Noire engaged 50 refugee women from 15 different countries many of who we haven't previously encountered. One of the successes of this performance was that we were able to engage the Afghani women present who are normally reluctant to speak in any public setting. They can be an isolated and hard to reach group but on this occasion their voices and lives came more into focus within the community.

Supporting Women's Issues

Tarte Noire performances bring the issues women face into focus and offer insight and support by the sharing of life experiences that happens through Playback Theatre. Tarte Noire offers regular public performances and open rehearsal evenings which empower women and strengthen their voices.

Bodykind Festival in Totnes

The first ever festival looking at body acceptance over 3 days. Tarte Noire ran 2 events as part of this festival.
"The most connected I've felt in a while and authentically so" "I felt overwhelmingly refreshed and renewed"

Unison South West Women's Branch Conference
Supporting women's equality in the workplace.



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“The theatre performance was really, really good; emotional; heart-touching uplifting drama”

Young Carers Group

15 Young Carers aged between 12-16 years felt less isolation and offered helpful advice to one another at St Cuthbert Mayne School in Torbay. We worked in collaboration with Torbay Young Carers to provide opportunities for young people to hear from others who are caring for a parent or sibling with a mental or physical health problem and including drug and alcohol misuse. Young Carers felt less isolation as they witnessed other young Carers day to day experiences of caring and they reported this helped them to put their own situation into perspective and they offered helpful advice to one another. We did a one-hour workshop followed by a performance then we all had lunch together. They are all very keen for more sessions. We have been asked to help co-ordinate a residential weekend for Young Carers where Playback Theatre activities are a key part of the respite weekend.

Short Term Projects

Clinical Psychology Department at Plymouth University

We worked with the Clinical Psychology Department at Plymouth University supporting PhD students at the end of their training to integrate their learning experiences.

Forking Food Festival Totnes

An intergenerational exchange focused on sustainable food to build bridges between people from diverse life situations at the Forking Food Festival in Totnes was attended by members of the public including some homeless people.

Economic Social Reform Council Festival at Exeter University

‘Stories of hospitality in a time of global change’ event raised awareness of issues refugees and explored issues involved in people from different cultures integrating socially through Playback Theatre delivered by Mirror Mirror.

Training and CDP

Artistic Directors offered training at the European Playback Theatre Gathering in Budapest attended by 30 people from Europe and South America who benefited from sharing good practices. Continuing Professional Development for ‘Breathing Fire Black Women’s Playback Theatre Company’ in Bristol developed facilitation skills for 8 company members.

Aviva Apel-Rosenthal came from Israel to deliver artistic development to both Mirror Mirror and Tarte Noire companies and supervision for the artistic directors who also attended a CPD ‘master class’ with Peter Hall one of the leading practitioners of Playback Theatre.



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Additional Achievements

We celebrated the 10 year Anniversary of Tarte Noire Women's Playback Theatre Company. This successful and uplifting event was attended by 50 people where we raised awareness of our work with refugee women and collected donations.

Adults with learning disabilities used Playback Theatre forms in their wonderful production of Shakespeare's Macbeth having consulted with our artistic directors, building on the training provided in previous years.

We Stand Together - A film was made about the charity's work with refugees in Plymouth that was viewed by 52,000 people online.