



ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2018 – 19

Summary

In **2018 – 2019** Playback Theatre South West provided activities to support the refugee community and develop skills that support their social integration in Plymouth.

We have 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 and community resilience through regular open performances in community venues in Devon.

We took part in Clinical Psychology events at Plymouth University and we assisted British Psychological Society SW Branch's annual conference exploring the theme 'Public Health and Social Justice - Stronger Together'

We provided training for Playback Theatre practitioners with School of Playback Theatre UK to develop their skills and attended 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.

Supporting Refugees

Attendance doubled this year in the Refugee Women's Creative Group. Refugee women built strong friendships across diverse backgrounds, improved their spoken English, grew in confidence and became less isolated and more socially integrated. Families were strengthened and supported in Plymouth City and Truro, Cornwall. 32 sessions in total were attended by an average of 20 women per session and 12 young people in Plymouth City and 5 sessions for 8 newly arrived women in Truro. Women from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Turkey, Kurdistan, Pakistan, Malaysia, China, Eritrea, Albania, Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, Egypt, Azerbaijan, and Afghanistan came together and shared stories of their cultural backgrounds, their arrival in UK and how they manage their integration into their new lives. On International Women's Day Playback Theatre facilitated a process where refugee women spoke openly about FGM, following a brave presentation by a Sudanese woman. 300 women attended this event in Plymouth. Building on the success of this day we are now involved in a steering group with refugee women and Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council to create three events annually - putting women's events firmly on the map in Plymouth.

'Having the playback sessions has helped women find a voice and feel that they are valued. As the women take charge of what they want to share people feel safe to discuss any area and not pressured. Running the sessions as a block has really helped the women as they know what to expect'



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at each session and this is also helpful to our planning.' **Susie Dent, Manager at START (Students and Refugees Together) Charity**

Student volunteers face many challenges working with refugees and need to provide support to their clients. Our team-building sessions support them with difficult emotions arising from the work they do and they are better equipped to support these vulnerable people and offer a welcoming environment for the women and children in the women's creative groups.

Supporting Women

Women's issues brought to life by Tarte Noire Women's Playback Theatre Company in 12 regular local performances. These performances offered insight and support for women audiences through the sharing of life experience that happens in Playback Theatre. Women's voices have been strengthened in performances and Open Rehearsals empowering women by taking part in a supportive group of women. Themes this year have been '*Our fights for freedom*' (Summer 2018) '*Anger- it's expression and suppression*' (Autumn 2018) *50 Shades of Red – suppression and expression of Anger* (Spring 2019) and '*Be Bold for Change*' for International Women's Day.

'Thank you for creating such a powerful performance but more importantly a place to share and listen to our stories.' **Audience member**

'I was in awe of how you explored the various experiences and questions people shared. Your responses were so tender, delightful, poignant, respectful and honouring.' **Audience member**

Supporting Community

Community resilience has grown as local performances have offered a space for difficult and taboo subjects to be discussed and explored in a non-judgemental and open setting. Airing taboo themes can ease stigma and shame. Community performances have supported emotional release and unburdening has taken place within the community and people have offered advice and support for each other by sharing their own experiences. These themes attracted people who have never seen Playback

Theatre before. Members of a homeless group of men and women were given complimentary tickets to the performance on Anger. Participating freed them to express strong emotions within their own devised performance about

domestic abuse, in Exeter. Company members attended their devised performance and our artistic directors will run some workshops for their group in the future.

'It was like coming home! What a fabric we wove! You were amazing. Much respect. Thank you.' **Audience member**

Tarte Noire 10 Year Anniversary was celebrated with a community event in collaboration with Mirror Mirror, which was attended by 100 people including past audiences, donors and supportive friends. A presentation about our charitable work was made by trustees and celebrated, followed by a performance on the theme of community connections. A Project Summary document was prepared for the occasion to celebrate past



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achievements and looking ahead to future projects and funding.

Supporting Young Carers

A residential weekend for young carers is in development with Torbay Young Carers organization, aimed at Young Carers aged between 11-16 years to support and strengthen them in their lives at home and school.

"Playback sessions strengthens them (young carers) by taking part in a bigger context and seeing others' stories. They've seen others are doing it and still standing" **Angela Poole, Support worker Torbay Young Carers.**

Training

In collaboration with UK School of Playback Theatre our Artistic Directors delivered two Level 2 training weekends, 'Facets of the Story' and 'Attending to the Social Dimension'. 24 people from across the world participated as part of a year-long Practitioner training programme.

Local training in Playback Theatre was delivered in affiliation with Centre for Playback Theatre and the UK School of Playback Theatre at Level 1 and Level 2. 'Role of the Conductor' weekend developed local practitioners skills and Level 1 over 10 weeks introduced Playback Theatre to a new group of 10. This group intends to form a new community Playback Theatre Company responding to community issues locally. As accredited trainers the artistic directors teach ethics and good practice in Playback Theatre, develop performance skills and build confidence for participants

'A journey of personal development allowing me to be safe with my vulnerabilities and talk openly, share and listen to others. An amazing experience.' **Participant**

'You cerate a beautiful space to explore, play, visualise our inner lives. Always feel a nourishing welcome. It's gold!' **Participant**

'The exercises at the beginning opened me up for playback and transitioned me into a different world.' **Participant**

Training activity is a secondary benefit but essential to meeting the Charity objectives.

- keeping abreast of current social issues and changes in social issues thus having awareness of relevance and being up to date on the issues affecting the people we are working with.
- continuing professional development ensures the skills of performers to engage with sensitivity and developing new artistic forms to reflect the issues affecting the people we are working with.
- sharing good practice and continuing to develop high professional standards.



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Short term projects

The British Psychological Society SW branch used Playback Theatre to reflect on the day at their event ‘Public Health and Social Justice – Stronger Together’.

“It was wonderful that so many participants stayed on for the Playback performance; we appreciated it very much. It was definitely pushing at our boundaries and so it was great to see our lovely BPS President sharing values and recognising the importance of that creative approach.” Event Organiser South West Branch BPS

Plymouth University graduates of Clinical Psychology PhD programme used Playback Theatre to reflect on their journey at the end of their three-year course.

‘Thanks so much for making your ending session with our trainees possible. It was, as ever, moving and memorable.’ Dr. Jacqui Stedmon Programme Director Doctorate Programme in Clinical Psychology, Plymouth University

Supporting Adults with mental and physical disabilities

Developing a project for adults with learning disabilities based at The Rose Hill Centre in Bideford in collaboration with Northam Care Trust to deliver arts based work including dance, drama, movement and music.

Supervision

Supervision for projects involving vulnerable groups and for psychological issues that may arise for participants, audiences and company members supports the ethics and good practice of PTSW activities. This is fulfilled by ongoing monthly supervision for Artistic Directors with a qualified Supervisor, quarterly supervision specific to refugees and asylum seekers and biannual peer supervision with UK Playback Theatre Leaders. Artistic Directors provide ongoing support for company members involved in projects and performances.