

TANIO - PARTICIPATORY ARTS - CAPTURING THE LEARNING

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Host: Lisa Davies (Tanio)

Hannah Jenkins - Community Music Wales

- Community Music Wales cover the whole of Wales. They run roughly around 200 projects across Wales. Most of their work is participatory - young people, marginalised groups. All their work is face to face.
- They work in groups of between 5 and 30. They also run training and peer to peer training and cpd. They also run placements and mentoring.
- They had various projects in process when lockdown started, in schools, charities and hospitals. The company had just moved the head office to Merthyr and they were planning a range of projects to start embedding themselves in the valleys.
- The first issue was safety - looking at staff and participants. Physical and mental safety. They shut the office and then paused projects. They worked with each partner to explore how to move the projects online.
- All their work is delivered by freelancers - all existing contracts were honoured. But they were very keen to make sure freelancers had further work.
- Most projects wanted to end projects but Ty Canna wanted to continue online.
- They made a short term plan and a long term plan. They didn't expect things to last so long. They have now looked at what other things they can offer online.
- They made Short online videos - which could be put out on social media - and are looking at training and mentoring now to see how it can go online. A grant from ACW will now fund mentoring.
- Challenges - IP - they wanted to create films but there were questions about who will own it. They developed a new contract so that it was clear that CMW owned the film but artists still owned the artistic content.
- Digital poverty - this was an issue on Ty Canna project - not everyone had access to the internet. They had to find ways around that.
- They looked carefully into what platform to use - Gwyneth Council was not happy with Zoom. They realised that it depends on the group - each time they started a project, they needed to consider what was best.
- Evaluation - they've now made them all online and made them easy to complete.
- Charging for activities - they are looking at how to charge for things. They need to consider what will work - they need income against projects.
- It's definitely changed their way of working - training can now go to anyone and this will extend reach and potential. They are developing a new strategy and exploring a digital inclusion officer.
- It's not going to replace face to face work but its definitely opened up new ideas.

KATHRYN WILLIAMS - RUBICON DANCE

- Kathryn danced with Rubicon when she was young. Dance helped her to gain confidence. Rubicon works with a wide range of people from lots of different backgrounds. No-one goes around labeling themselves as deprived but many of them are experiencing poverty,

- It occurred to Kathryn that the workforce is also very low paid and vulnerable to poverty. Covid 19 has really exposed this. Kathryn has been thinking about this.
- Rubicon delivers ongoing projects and their artistic team is on the payroll. They have a range of contractual arrangements and arrange that staff can also do other work.
- When Covid 19 struck, they were clear that they would honour spring contracts and summer contracts.
- Before lockdown, they spoke to 113 participants about their experiences and many people felt they were isolated in some way - dancing at Rubicon was helping their mental health and connecting people. Rubicon were using dance to change people's life for the better. Culture should be something we do together - it should be a democratic thing and a human right.
- But in a global pandemic Rubicon couldn't connect people.
- Kathryn became aware of Covid spreading across the world in December / January. So she created a pandemic policy - it consisted of three things:
 - 1. Having a dynamic risk assessment
 - 2. A policy that laid out what they would do if pandemic happened and how they would change their work
 - 3. A plan for business resumption
- On Monday 9th March they had news from a care home that they had a case of Covid19 and Rubicon leaders had been there the Friday before. Following the Pandemic Policy, Rubicon shut its doors that day. They thought it would be for 3 or 4 weeks.
- Then they undertook a large communication exercise to let people know what was happening. They didn't rush to make work initially but considered what they needed to do next.
- Once they realised that it wasn't going to end quickly, they started to resume classes online and stuck to their existing schedule.
- They have even developed new work with Menter Caerdydd.

Challenges

- how to keep the sessions human. They have had to learn about film making and production values, and think about intellectual property and ethics.
- Performance is difficult - much of the work they created before lockdown was never intended to have a digital life. They are getting involved in Tafwyl but its not an easy process.
- They are looking at a new financial model and exploring how they can charge for their work.
- Digital Communities Wales says 11% of Wales is not online - this is probably higher in the communities most community arts organisations generally work with.
- Kathryn - I think there's more to come and I'm wondering if there will be a second wave and what that means.

Laura Bradshaw - Community Musicians

- Laura trained with Sarah Harman and Frankie Armstrong with Natural Voice Network
- Laura runs community choirs for Newport Mind and also facilitates a project with people who are displaced from all around the world with Tanio. This has been an incredible journey.

- Laura - "People come in and we smile and dance! It's an equal way of being not just creating art."
- Laura showed a video of a session she did with Ty Cerdd where her group joined to share a song.
- Lockdown was a huge shock. Both Laura and her partner are freelance. So she turned to the Natural Voice Network for support - there was lots of sharing practice on facebook. She immediately started using zoom - she is running 5 session a week on zoom.
- Zoom is difficult with music. She is working through the technical issues and her partner is helping her.
- Her independent groups are engaging and they are paying to attend.
- Newport MIND - these groups also managed to get online. Laura also created videos for them. She has a small group and sessions can be quite relaxed.
- Keeping the human contact has been what Laura is concentrating on.
- Negative side to zoom is that people are excluded. This is hard and some people just can't get in for whatever reason. Laura has ended up doing whats app video calls with some people just to stay in contact.
- The latest zoom update excluded lots of people who had been joining in because their phones were not new enough.
- Sing for Water Cardiff - took place online. It was a huge event and participants were really pleased to connect.
- Oasis singing sessions are now happening online - this means that lots of people who wouldn't be able to get there can now attend. One person who was moved to London could come back and connect.
- Security and sharing permissions are also a big issue.

DISCUSSION

How are people connecting, especially with Elderly People

- Kathryn - we've talked people through how to connect online. I think you have to meet people where they are. No one size way to solve the online platforms. We've also used postcards and phone calls
- Big initiatives being developed - Dawns i Bawb have purchased tablets for use in care homes (see notes from NDC Wales meeting 10.06.20)
- Balancing Creativity and social needs - Laura - has been doing some songwriting but we do a lot of sitting down
- Hannah - CMW is managing to do song writing but only on one to one
- Is there a drop off in participation as people get zoom weary? - Drop off tends to happen when people get frustrated.
- Laura - about half my participants are engaging.

Connecting with New People

- Hannah - about to embark on a new project so we'll see how we can reach out. We'll work with partners to reach out.
- Partnership model still works in a digital world and we mustn't forget this.

How do we continue to grow authentic relationships with our participants?

- Kathryn - we need to work differently on each project. Menter Caerdydd sessions - we had to rehearse to test what the experience was like. There were lots of things we didn't know that we didn't know. We needed to value it ourselves in order to make it into a valued piece of work. The new participants we met really enjoyed it. Joe Wicks has broken a boundary for us all. We need to keep experimenting.
- We need to stay true to our artistic values.
- We need to take time to question the work we do and ask questions.

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

- We are at an interesting point now in this process of working online - and I am starting to think about the balance between creative risk taking and quality of experience for the participants. I would be interested in others ideas about how we strike this balance as we explore this new working space.
- Kathryn - spoke about culture is something we do together. As there has been so much content generated and shared on social media during this time. How can we capitalise on this engagement and the want for this creative material now - with regards to drawing this community in to embodied music/art making
- I would be interested to hear more about which platforms people are using - I work in health and zoom is not encouraged! I have worked through 6 different platforms to find which works best...
- Pwer cysylltu trwy'r celfyddydau cymunedol... the power of connecting through community arts!
- Are there any other social media platforms you're or anyone is using?
- My dance teacher uses Cisco Webex, which I found no better or worse than Zoom
- Other platforms out there include instagram and facebook live :) dont know if these are useful
- Wonderful to see so much innovative work taking place online. Mindful though at the Arts Council that not everyone can access technology etc - often specifically certain socio economic groups. How can we ensure we are not inadvertently excluding these people?
- a question, most of my participants are older and many don't use internet, mobiles, email any ideas?
- Age Cymru Gwanwyn : We are trailing using the audio-only input through Zoom,
- We created a "pub crawl" through different video conferencing tools, which might be useful:
https://blogs.staffs.ac.uk/c3centre/files/2020/06/2020_04_29_VideoConferencing.pdf
- Some people don't have a smartphone though...
- Accessibility is key, and there are concerns that an over reliance on digital delivery can exclude certain socio economic groups
- we all need to update our GDPR and consents, lots of work!
- Age Cymru Gwanwyn : There's a way to connect to a Zoom call using a normal phone number without a smart phone. Again happy to talk about our experiences with engaging with older people who may or may not be connected to the internet or use smart phones - kelly.barr@agecymru.org.uk
- Yes I am doing that through my 'Fun Palaces' Ambassador work. It involves hand-delivering resources, newsletters households to ensure that those on social

media etc aren't excluded. Also having a dropping-off /sharing point for people to collect and leave materials.

- we're trying to address that though activity packs delivery to homes of children and young people to make something for older people living in isolation, it has to be local to practitioners though.
- Hugh Nancavile CM Devon - spoke at a meeting about how he is working with senior members of society over a landline phone. The audio quality is not as clear as online but clear than mobile. Some consideration of music being broadcast was necessary. Mostly he said that the participants wanted the connection and maintaining the schedule.
- There is also the issue of digital fatigue for community artists and organisation staff... important to consider!
- Yes, it's a real challenge. Important to note that non-digital activity doesn't relate to older people specifically - often it's primarily those from disadvantaged and deprived backgrounds.
- I am currently working on a project where local people have contributed art materials - 30 family art packs with project ideas are being delivered to Welshpool Food Bank tomorrow.
- yes I agree..., we've also been working with a local council to support activities with young people in areas of disadvantage... again relying on a partnership chain to produce and disseminate activity.
- G expressions in Newport are using Tik Tok to reach their young people - think about the participants and where they are engaging already.
- if you checkout the NDCWales social media channels there is a free guide we created on using Zoom as a creative tool for performances
- Here's the NDCWales Zoom guide
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xOHOJcQUBsIVS1ZsG6IUKyn9GbUpt8-/view>
- I have had some recent success with online working with Young People and a digital platform...this was with People Speak up... here is the link happy to chat any time about process...<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-hVi9IJOK4>
- The People Dancing website is worth checking out for information relating to working on-line.
- what Kathryn is talking about is my worry about quality - the broadcasting nature of many of the creations and the limited participation