



## **Respond in Practice: Developing the cultural diversity of your audiences**

Case studies from the participating organisations  
**Audiences London**  
July 2009

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## Architecture Centre Network

[www.architecturecentre.net](http://www.architecturecentre.net)

Architecture Centre Network is the development and advocacy organisation for the 22 architecture centres in the United Kingdom. Their role is to:

- Nurture innovation and good practice by facilitating knowledge sharing
- Broker, develop and deliver projects and consultancy with a wide range of stakeholders including government
- Advocate for the unique role that architecture and built environment centres can play in improving public engagement with, and the quality of, architecture and the public realm
- Create resources and events to enable architecture centres, and Architecture Centre Network, to promote and maintain excellence

Respond Champion was originally the administrator. Following staff changes, Clare van Loenen, Head of Education took over the role.

### How was it for us?

*“Respond offered Architecture Centre Network a well-supported and practical means to help increase the cultural diversity of our audiences.*

*It was a challenge, as a non venue-based company that functioned indirectly with its audiences through a network structure. However using this position to impact on the wider architecture centre sector was critical for us, in both the immediate and longer term. The initial training and inspiration events led by Audiences London engaged many of the 22 architecture centres and ourselves with the issues at hand. Integrating the thinking from these was central to the action plan we evolved. Our focus was on integrating culturally diverse stakeholder voices into the organisation.*

*With an ambition to introduce five stakeholder voices per annum, with two retained in a long term capacity, we reviewed board development, partnerships, collaborator membership, mentoring, professional reference groups, resources development and our continuing professional development programme. Of particular note is our successful application to the GAIN programme and our appointment of a new board member, the identification of culturally diverse mentors for a sector-wide mid-career scheme and the commissioning of resources as well as the contribution of the Stephen Lawrence Trust to our knowledge exchange programme.*

*Our aspiration is to expand the notion of diversity from this programme for 2009/10 so that those five stakeholder voices address gender and disability, as well as cultural diversity.”* **Clare van Loenen**

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## Architecture Centre Network Respond action plan

Objectives	Actions	Impacts of the programme	What helped /learnt	What were the challenges
To develop a range of stakeholders from more diverse backgrounds	<p>Applied to GAIN programme to recruit additional board members</p> <p>Using contacts identify potential mentors and trainers for professional development programme from BME backgrounds</p>	<p>One of four trainers recruited is from BME background</p> <p>Identified one mentor from a BME background</p> <p>Appointment of new board member through GAIN programme</p>	<p>Not having to state the case internally – shared understanding of the importance of the issues at senior and board level</p> <p>Being on the programme focused attention on issues of diversity and started debates around wider issues eg gender</p>	<p>Initially champion was a junior staff member and struggled with the programme</p> <p>Staff changes , new director joined at the end of the programme</p> <p>Lack of practitioners from BME backgrounds in the architecture sector, so hard to identify appropriately senior people</p> <p>As an organisation dealing with a wide range of architecture centres, which each have a very different set up – struggle to obtain an accurate strategic overview</p>



## Improbable

[www.improbable.co.uk](http://www.improbable.co.uk)

Improbable is a theatre company founded in 1996 by Artistic Directors, Julian Crouch, Phelim McDermott and Lee Simpson and Producer, Nick Sweeting. They create theatre, opera and site specific work; and engage in, support and develop the theatre community; and do both of these things on a national and international level.

Improbable have established an international reputation for innovative, exciting and accessible theatre, touring throughout the UK and internationally with shows such as *70 Hill Lane*, *Animo*, *Lifegame*, *Cinderella*, *Coma*, *Spirit*, *Sticky*, *The Hanging Man*, *Theatre of Blood*, *Stars are out Tonight*, *The Wolves in the Walls*, *Satyagraha* and *Panic*. As a company they consider their journey to be as much about process as end product or piece of work. As well as making shows, Improbable have been developing a more direct approach to tackling complex social and cultural issues through hosting and facilitating Open Space events, which have happened all around the UK and in Bulgaria, Romania, Israel, Canada, USA, Serbia and Brazil.

Respond champions were Sarah-Jane Rawlings, General Manager and Nick Sweeting, Producer.

### How it was for us?

"We began, excited but not completely sure of where our journey through the programme might take us, concerned at where we might fall down, but ready to see where it took us. The flexibility of the programme and the gentle support of Audiences London led us through months of robust and invaluable debate, and a programme of work aimed at developing audiences from BME communities, that we continue to be excited about. We still feel very much at the early stages of our journey and currently have no extraordinary statistics to relate, but the thinking is becoming part of our culture, and that feels a good place from which to continue." **Sarah-Jane Rawlings**

## Improbable Respond action plan

Objectives	Actions	Impacts of the programme	What helped/learnt	What were the challenges
<p>To develop new audiences for Improbable's work from BME communities with particular reference to <i>Panic</i> and <i>Devoted and Disgruntled 4</i> (D&amp;D 4)</p>	<p><i>Panic</i> Discussions with Shoreditch Audiences to include <i>Panic</i> as one of their promoted shows and as part of their Ambassadors programme</p> <p>Education programme for 90 Year 10 'students at Morpeth School; a mixed 11 -16 comprehensive school in Tower Hamlets. Pupils reflect the local community with the two largest ethnic groups being white pupils and those of Bangladeshi origin</p> <p><i>D&amp;D 4</i> Lee Simpson to continue informal meetings with BME practitioners in order to develop ambassadors to help encourage attendance from BME communities for this annual open space event.</p>	<p>Established relationship with Shoreditch Audiences and <i>Panic</i> was one of the eight shows they promote each year. As a result 30 new attenders from the local community came to see <i>Panic</i>. Shoreditch Audiences are now interested in working with the company again on their next show</p> <p>Established relationship with Morpeth school, which Improbable plan to build on with their next Barbican show in 2011. All 90 students came to see <i>Panic</i>. Workshop structure very successful and will be used again to support other shows</p> <p>An opportunity to think and discuss the issues, leading to: Informing the company's on-going development and perceptions of 'community'</p> <p>Strengthened understanding of diversity issues, leading to greater confidence in talking to peers about D&amp;D 4</p>	<p>Having a plan focused thinking and activity</p> <p>The programme fitted with Improbable's vision and strategy</p> <p>Being realistic about what could be achieved</p>	<p>Numbers are small and legacy is hard to measure however these are just early steps in a longer strategy.</p>



## London Philharmonic Orchestra

[www.lpo.org.uk](http://www.lpo.org.uk)

The London Philharmonic Orchestra has long established a high reputation for its versatility and artistic excellence. These are evident from its performances in the concert hall and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, its trail-blazing international tours and its pioneering education work. Vladimir Jurowski succeeded Kurt Masur as Principal Conductor in September 2007.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra has been resident symphony orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall since 1992 and there it presents its main series of concerts between September and May each year. In summer, the Orchestra moves to Sussex where it has been the resident symphony orchestra at Glyndebourne Festival Opera for the past 40 years. The LPO also performs at venues around the UK and has made numerous tours to America, Europe and Japan, and visited India, Hong Kong, China, Australia and South Africa.

Respond champion was Kath Trout, Head of Marketing

### How was it for us?

“The beauty of the *Respond* programme lay in the fact that making mistakes was part and parcel of the experience, and was in many ways welcomed. It meant that we could be more experimental and adventurous than we might have otherwise felt comfortable with. The length of the programme, over the course of a year, allowed us to not only learn from these mistakes, but to adapt and fine tune our plans accordingly, under the expert guidance and support of Audiences London, and in a way that fitted with our organization’s overall mission statement. We look forward to continuing this evolving journey.” **Kath Trout**

## London Philharmonic Orchestra Respond action plan

Objectives	Actions	Impacts of the programme	What helped/learnt	What were the challenges
<p>To increase concert attendance and the cultural diversity of the audience; specifically targeting black professional networks to attend the Excite concert on 7 June 2008.</p>	<p>Identify potential networks to contact</p> <p>Research each network – background, what they do as a community, their purpose, identify the best way that we might engage with them and get contact details</p> <p>Discuss the Excite concert project with each network to find best way of promoting and encouraging participation</p> <p>Using this information, promote concert to target networks</p>	<p>Identified 15 networks to build relationships with</p> <p>Made contact with <i>Precious Online Network</i> and offered tickets to the network</p> <p>Made positive contacts with <i>National Black Police Association</i> and opportunities to offer a corporate entertainment package hospitality followed by concert</p>	<p>Inspiration days allowed time for thinking, developing ideas and linking marketing with other departments</p> <p>Action Planning allowed organisation to focus on aims and objectives.</p> <p>Identified more networks to be covered than staff capacity would allow, therefore scaled down and focused on specific networks to generate closer, lasting relationships</p> <p>Taking a realistic approach works best</p>	<p>Staff changes in the marketing team meant that the Head of Marketing had to take on the project, and did not have the time to research and contact the number of groups originally intended</p> <p>Despite all best efforts to arrange tickets for networks to participate at concerts, there were some no-shows</p>



## London Symphony Orchestra

[www.lso.co.uk](http://www.lso.co.uk)

The London Symphony Orchestra is one of the world's top five orchestras. It is Resident at the Barbican, giving 140 concerts a year there and at LSO St Luke's, the UBS and LSO music education centre, where it continues to expand its artistic programme with artists from diverse musical backgrounds, building strong local community links and continuing its mission to reach out to the widest possible range of people through great music. 105 years after it was formed, the LSO still attracts the best players, many of whom also have flourishing solo and chamber music careers alongside their membership of the LSO. Its many activities include an energetic and ground-breaking education and community programme (LSO Discovery), recordings and downloads (LSO Live), and exciting digital work. The LSO also draws on an enviable roster of soloists and conductors, starting with Principal Conductor Valery Gergiev, President Sir Colin Davis, and Daniel Harding and Michael Tilson Thomas as Principal Guest Conductors.

Respond Champion was Karen Cardy, Head of Marketing and Centre Director of LSO St Luke's.

### How was it for us?

"Diversity is the elephant in the room in the orchestral sector, and *Respond* was an opportunity to carve out some time to focus on what diversity means for the LSO. The MD wanted achievable diversity, so for us this is about the long-game, about 'evolution not revolution'. Our vision is to make great music available to the widest possible range of people, so the willingness was there but I had difficulty persuading colleagues to write it down. Through *Respond* I met people from different arts backgrounds and made new friends in my Action Learning Group, where we found many similar difficulties to overcome. Having an opportunity to talk, and feeling supported is really important when you are trying to undertake new things." **Karen Cardy**

## London Symphony Orchestra Respond action plan

Objectives	Actions	Impacts of the programme	What helped /learnt	What were the challenges
<p>Originally - Create a community action plan and a diversity plan to achieve a 10% increase in diversity of audiences at LSO St Luke's and Barbican</p> <p>Revised – Introduce a programme of audience monitoring and expand the programme at LSO St Luke's</p>	<p>Meetings with Managing Director to get internal buy in</p> <p>Drafting Diversity plan, working closely with Head of Education and Finance and Resources Director</p> <p>Planning Bishi and LSO Strings concert in Eclectica series and meeting with Nitin Sawhney</p> <p>Setting up Audience Diversity Monitoring and London Orchestral Marketing Consortium</p>	<p>Didn't create a community action plan but did create a diversity plan</p> <p>Did get a stated objective to increase diversity of the programme included in new Business Plan</p> <p>Created a more diverse Eclectica programme at LSO St Lukes, including artists from a range of ethnic backgrounds</p> <p>Introduced a programme of audience monitoring across LSO St Luke's and Barbican concerts to provide a baseline on diversity of existing audiences</p> <p>Increased the profile of the Champion with ACE - now involved in ACE's engagement group and leading on London Orchestral Marketing Consortium</p>	<p>Support of other senior staff eg Head of Education and Director of Finance and Resources, necessary to make change in a large organisation</p> <p>Start with small steps and don't give up – persistence and 'sheer bloody mindedness' are vital</p> <p>The underlying principle of broadening audiences fits with the LSO vision, everyone believes it and wants to do it (they just needed to be encouraged to formalise it and write it down)</p> <p>Beware 'touch paper issues' eg diversity of the orchestra players which will scare people and put them off the whole process</p> <p>Understand how people like to be communicated with and adapt your style accordingly</p>	<p>Getting internal buy in</p> <p>Limited co-ordination of activity across departments</p> <p>Struggled to find time for reflection and learning, as success is judged by activity and delivering events</p> <p>Successes not reflected in plans and policies</p> <p>Tendency to be reactive rather than strategic in some areas of the business</p>

## Lyric Hammersmith

[www.lyric.co.uk](http://www.lyric.co.uk)

The Lyric is the largest subsidised theatre in London after the National Theatre with over 550 seats in the main theatre and 110 seat studio and a turnover of £3.5 million.

Collaboration is at the heart of the Lyric's work. They invite the most exciting and audacious artists from many different artistic disciplines - writers, directors, musicians, actors, dancers, puppeteers, circus, video and visual artists - to work together to tell stories that resonate with a modern, urban audience. Alongside work on stage, a pioneering programme of Creative Learning activities give over 10,000 young people a year access to high quality arts provision to develop their creative and personal skills and gain qualifications. The programme includes talks, workshops and teacher-training for schools and colleges throughout London, and a strand of activities for 11 to 19 year olds of all backgrounds who live or go to school in West London – the largest of which is the Lyric Young Company.

The Respond champion was Ian Whitaker, Head of Marketing and Sales; much of the practical work was undertaken by Charlotte Handel, Marketing Manager.

### How was it for us?

“Working on *Respond* gave us the chance to focus on audience development with more time and space than had previously been possible. The flexibility of *Respond* allowed us to look at what was really important for the Lyric, whilst Audiences London's support and regular meetings kept us on track. The programme brought together departments across the organisation and made us realise the need for this sustained and strategic work, leading to a restructure of the marketing department and my role. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting and engaging with our local community via the project. What began as a small but integral project has become something much bigger, and will continue to do so.” **Charlotte Handel**

## Lyric Hammersmith Respond action plan

Objectives	Actions	Impacts of the programme	What helped /learnt	What were the challenges
<p>Deepen relationships with local community groups based on 'free first nights' for <i>Love the Musical</i></p>	<p>Researched and made contact with 50 community groups in the borough</p> <p>Offered free tickets for <i>Love</i> via e-mail and letter as an introduction to the theatre</p> <p>Face to face meetings with small number of groups</p>	<p>Created ongoing relationships with 25 of the groups</p> <p>Internal discussions with other departments such as creative learning and development, who also have contact with the same groups has resulted in the creation of an organisation wide community strategy</p> <p>Community engagement work now formally included in the job description of one member of the marketing team</p> <p>Opportunity for internal discussions and clarity about definitions and positioning of 'community work'</p>	<p>That the project had a strategic focus but was also directly relevant to campaigns</p> <p>Developing internal stakeholders in other departments to support the project – don't allow projects like this to be 'pigeonholed' to just one department</p> <p>Need to move at the pace of the community – groups were not ready for a discussion about future relationship with the Lyric when the theatre thought they would be</p> <p>Widening the scope of the project beyond BME communities made it more sustainable</p> <p>'Not everyone wants to be your friend' – accept that it's OK for some groups to decline your offer</p> <p>Do a through internal audit at the start to find out about existing internal relationships and contacts with the groups you will be contacting</p> <p>Ensure people taking part in external events eg stalls at community events are fully briefed on all aspects of opportunities, particularly if junior staff</p>	<p>Internal communications – discovered other departments already had contacts with some of the groups and the information wasn't joined up</p> <p>Time – long lead times for community groups to respond</p> <p>Community contacts constantly changing – need to keep up to date</p> <p>Internal staff changes</p>

## Poetry Translation Centre

[www.poetrytranslation.org](http://www.poetrytranslation.org)

The Poetry Translation Centre (PTC) was established in February 2004 to encourage fresh translations of contemporary poetry from non-European countries. It aims to:

- Make lasting connections between immigrant communities in the UK and readers of English poetry by introducing them to each other's literatures
- Enrich English poetry through making high quality translations of non-European poetry widely available
- Give readers a deeper insight into the culture, history and background informing non-European poetry in a wide variety of languages.

The Centre publishes its translations on the web and runs a series of workshops and events. The World Poets Tour of 2008 featured a return to the UK for Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac 'Gaarriye' from Somaliland and Al-Saddiq Al-Raddi from Sudan, with the addition of Farzaneh Khojandi (Tajikistan), Corsino Fortes (Cape Verde), Noshi Gillani (Pakistan), and Kajal Ahmed from Kurdistan.

Respond champion was Assistant Director Tom Boll, succeeded by Charles Beckett

### How was it for us?

"I began working for the Poetry Translation Centre as Assistant Director: Community Engagement in July 2008, and took over from Tom Boll. Tom was the original member of the *Respond* scheme, and it was he who developed the PTC's audience development action plan with Audiences London. Taking on the community development work shortly before the tour started sometimes felt a bit daunting, but the *Respond* programme helped to give me a very supportive and encouraging network for feedback and advice. I really valued the opportunities I had to talk through some of the challenges of working with different communities around the country and always got very sympathetic and useful advice from Audiences London. The programme made me feel more confident about what I was doing and made it easier to plan each stage of the project." **Charles Beckett**

## Poetry Translation Centre Respond Action plan

Objectives	Actions	Impacts of the programme	What helped/learnt	What were the challenges
<p>Attract a Somali audience of 50 people of different ages to attend Bluecoat Arts Centre to hear a reading by 'Gaariye' and other members of the PTC's World Poets' Tour</p>	<p>Researched and met Liverpool partners including poets from local Somali community, Literature Officer at Bluecoat, and co-ordinator of Liverpool Reads</p> <p>Organised two discussion groups; one with Somali teenage boys involved in Liverpool reads, one with adults recruited through the Somali community. Aims: to understand the barriers and motivations of the Somali community in terms of attending arts events in Liverpool city centre</p> <p>Ambassadors recruited from teenager discussion groups</p> <p>Findings informed publicity campaign for Gaariye: Word of mouth crucial (no posters/leaflets); Visits in family groups; Unlikely to advance book</p>	<p>Approximately 50% of the audience (100 people) for Gaariye reading were from the Somali community. Many were first time attenders</p> <p>Gaariye reading also including readings from Somali young people involved in Liverpool Reads</p> <p>Insights from discussion group and PTC's experience helped develop the confidence of Bluecoat team in developing relationship with Somali community</p> <p>Created a relationship between Bluecoat and Somali community, which is now ongoing with ambassadors working front of house at the Bluecoat</p>	<p>Long lead time to establish relationships and trust (one year)</p> <p>Shared understanding amongst all the partners about objectives and what could be achieved</p> <p>Partners were flexible, eg Bluecoat box office issued vouchers instead of tickets for Ambassadors to use, café offered different menu and performance time was shifted from usual time slot</p> <p>Artistic product was directly relevant to the community and they had a sense of ownership over it</p> <p>Discussion groups provided specific and practical information that informed the marketing campaign and Bluecoat's ongoing relationship with the Somali community</p>	<p>Finding the key people to work with in the community was time consuming</p> <p>Identifying the most useful people to work with involved:</p> <p>Lots of desk research ( local authority lists of cultural associations, community arts groups, local authority service teams in childrens services and libraries)</p> <p>Lots of meetings and conversations to check potential partners understood the issues and shared the objectives</p>



## Rambert Dance Company

[www.rambert.org.uk](http://www.rambert.org.uk)

Rambert Dance Company is Britain's flagship contemporary dance company, employing the largest group of artists of any contemporary dance company in the UK. The Company is committed to programming the broadest possible repertoire, programming established works from choreographers of international stature alongside the new and challenging, thus offering audiences' quality and innovation in equal measure. Emphasis is also placed on the development of British-based choreographers, particularly from within Rambert's own ranks. Underpinning these activities is Rambert's commitment to an extensive education programme.

Rambert Dance Company mounts two annual tours to approximately 15 venues, mainly large scale, in England, Wales and Scotland, as well as two one week visits to Sadler's Wells, London. The Company's work also includes some international touring and workshop seasons of new pieces created by Rambert Dance Company's own dancers.

The Respond Champion was Craig Titley, Director of Marketing

### How was it for us

"Working on a year long project like *Respond*, gives an organisation the opportunity to learn and grow in an environment that is not governed by short term deadlines and unrealistic expectations. It offers time to reflect on successes and an opportunity to adapt initiatives that are less successful. Rambert is certainly a more enriched organisation for *Respond* and looks forward to continuing its work in the improvement of diversity amongst its audiences. If it were possible, every RFO should have the opportunity to participate in such a supportive and strategic programme – it can be a real eye opener!" **Craig Titley**

## Rambert Dance Company Respond action plan

Objectives	Actions	Impacts of the programme	What helped /learnt	What were the challenges
Inspire Rambert's touring venues to attract new audiences from diverse backgrounds by including discussion of diversity in each press and marketing campaign meeting	<p>Originally Rambert planned to compile a local population audit for four of their 2008 tour venues and devise one objective with each of these venues around increasing the proportion of diverse audiences.</p> <p>Conversations with tour venues revealed that this was too ambitious, a revised plan focused on audience diversity activities at three venues.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Lowry, Salford - Identified community liaison person and made contact with group of young Muslim women</li> <li>2. Wycombe Swan, High Wycombe - Made links with local Black History Month coordinator</li> <li>3. Sadler's Wells, London - Invited <i>Fast Track</i> participants (BME positive action scheme for theatres) to matinee and a post performance discussion</li> </ol>	<p>Generally – got diversity on marketing meeting agendas with venues and challenged 'there isn't any diversity around here' responses. It is now a regular part of each of these meetings</p> <p>Specifically- Made useful contacts at tour venues, to build upon for future visits</p> <p>Insights from <i>Fast Track</i> discussion group</p>	<p>Finding supportive internal colleagues</p> <p>Integrating conversations about diversity into existing processes rather than 'making a big deal over it'</p> <p>The 'resource pot' (that Rambert or the touring venues could access) signalled the value of the project, even if it wasn't used</p> <p>Be realistic about what you can achieve - make a start and do something, think long term but small steps</p> <p>Consider diversity in its broadest sense, not just race, and appreciate that understanding and approaches to diversity are varied</p> <p>The learning is as important as what you achieve</p> <p>Be clear about why you are doing it, and do it because you want to, not because you think you should</p>	<p>Being reliant on other partners (touring venues) to have an impact</p> <p>Convincing other partners (in this case touring venues) to commit time and resources to the work, on top of their already busy workloads</p> <p>Staff turnover in the department</p> <p>Keeping the momentum going</p>