



# **Audiences London & Community engagement in the cultural sector**

## **Our learning so far**

*Research funded by*



# “Community Engagement”

*the way cultural organisations invest in the community whilst also working towards their own audience development objectives, to mutual benefit... hybrid, combining techniques drawn from marketing, arts education, participatory arts and community development*

## Practitioners

*A new generation creating multiple routes into cultural organisations using a wide range of skills and techniques*



# Purpose of our research

- ◆ Enable more organisations to adopt community engagement practice
- ◆ Raise awareness and understanding of this way of working
- ◆ Approaches to professional development and support



# Research Approach

- ◆ structured, confidential interviews with 15 practitioners
- ◆ In total 27 practitioners
- ◆ large/ mid-scale performing and visual arts, museums
- ◆ some freelancers, local authority-based and regeneration-project workers
- ◆ All based in London
- ◆ Desk research
  
- ◆ **So by no means exhaustive**



# Context: the bigger picture

*arts organisations are going to come under increasing pressure to become responsive, customer-focused organisations, which seek to engage customers in more dialogue and collaboration.*

- John Knell: Whose Art is it Anyway  
(Personalisation in the Arts)



# Learning: key themes

- ◆ **Building relationships** is at the heart
- ◆ Practitioners need better **recognition and opportunities** to support their work
- ◆ **Professional development** is needed for existing practitioners (skills and confidence) and as a legacy to newcomers
- ◆ **Training etc must be flexible** to recognise diverse demands
- ◆ Better **networking** between practitioners (emerging practice, inter-institutional partnerships)
- ◆ More dialogue between **cultural providers and the third sector**



# Research: the report

- ◆ Characteristics of practitioners
- ◆ The process
- ◆ Organisational context
- ◆ CPD needs
- ◆ Potential to build the profession



# What happened next?

- ◆ **Generate** – A pilot CPD programme for/ with existing practitioners (2007)
- ◆ **Looking Both Ways Conference** targeting wider sector (June 07)
- ◆ **Local Networking Events** bringing together cultural and voluntary sector
- ◆ **Community Engagement Network...**  
information exchange, ideas and partnership development
- ◆ **Community Engagement support service** launched (2009)



**Audiences London are committed to supporting and developing Community Engagement practice in the cultural sector.**

**To find out more contact:**

***Helen Ball, Community Engagement Coordinator***

***[helen@audienceslondon.org](mailto:helen@audienceslondon.org)***

***020 7367 0813***

***[www.audienceslondon.org/communityengagement](http://www.audienceslondon.org/communityengagement)***