

Big Dance 2012 - 2013

Evaluation Report



A programme of dance development for Stockton primary schools and community groups

Prepared by Rachael Ankers, summer 2013

Funded by Dance City and Stockton Borough Council, Sports Development Team

Introduction

In partnership with Stockton Borough Council and Dance City, ARC delivered a Big Dance programme across Stockton to engage and excite children and young people in dance activity and to support teachers to be able to lead high quality dance beyond the life of the project.

The Big Dance programme included a dance festival, school and community dance provision, dance development opportunities for teachers and a final dance showcase.

This report reviews the programme against the original aims of Big Dance and identifies future development areas for children and young people's dance in Stockton.

Project Timescale

The original project was designed to run from April 2012 – December 2012; due to challenges with school engagement the project was extended to maximise the funding potential until August 2013 with a final report being prepared in this time.



Objectives

The intended outcomes for this project were:

1. Schools and community groups will engage with the Schools Pledge Big Dance 2012 dance resource which aimed to break the World Record for people dancing at the same time on Friday 18 May 2012
2. 15 primary schools and community groups will participate in a 12 week/equivalent choreographic dance programme which works with students to develop dance skills and create a performance piece for a dance showcase.
3. Dance specialists working in Stockton will form new work contacts and adopt new approaches to promoting their business
4. Non dance specialists and teachers in schools will be provided with sufficient professional development in dance to ensure delivery of dance in schools and community groups post the Big Dance project.
5. Sports coaches and dance practitioners will work together to create dance performance pieces with a sporting theme reflective of the Olympic Games legacy.
6. A Stockton Dance Festival – a celebration event involving youth performances, professional performances, workshops, open dance studios, platforms in unusual spaces and film evenings.
7. People will engage with dance as a personal podium challenge – 30minutes a day for Big Dance week/Join a dance class/perform in a dance ensemble
8. Increased public awareness of dance opportunities available to them in their local area
9. Increasing dance partnership work in the area and across Tees Valley including work with Tees Valley Local Authorities
10. An evaluation report which explores future pathways for dance activity in Stockton



1335 children and young people participated in dance through the Big Dance project

Outcomes

The list below offers a summary of the key activities undertaken and outputs achieved against the outcomes of the Big Dance Stockton project.

Outcome 1: School Pledge Resource

- 8 Stockton Schools and community groups signed up to access a national online School Dance resource
- 3 workshops were provided to support teachers to deliver the resource
- 330 participants in Stockton were recorded as having participated in learning the schools pledge resource
- All schools continue to have access to this free dance teaching resource

Outcome 2 and 5: Dance Delivery Programme

- 15 Stockton Primary schools and community groups were engaged in a 12 week dance programme leading to a performance for all the participants
- 448 children and young people engaged in the 12 weeks of dance activity

Outcome 3: Supporting practitioners

- 3 emerging dance practitioners connected to the wider dance hub for Tees Valley
- 5 Stockton dance practitioners promoted their companies, classes and business at Big Dance festivals
- 3 practitioners worked closely with schools to develop their own business and networks

Outcome 4: Supporting teachers to lead dance in their school

- **Dance in Primary Settings** led by Ludus Dance; attended by 8 primary school teachers
- **Dance Twilight: Primary Dance** led by Debbie Waistell; attended by 15 primary school teachers.
- **Dance Twilight: Secondary Dance** led by Debbie Waistell; attended by 6 secondary school teachers
- Resource packs were provided to teachers who attended the Dance Twilight sessions to enable them to continue leading dance in school
- All dance programmes were shadowed by non-specialist dance teachers to support them in their own development of dance teaching. 15 teachers shadowed the process and all schools were provided with a resource based on these sessions for future use.



Outcome 2, 5 and 8: Big Dance Showcase

- 293 primary school children performed the work they had developed through the 12 week dance programmes in ARC's main theatre
- 2 performances, 508 audience in total

Outcome 6: Stockton Dance Festival

- A dance celebration day was held with 4 dance platforms around Stockton packed with workshops and performances from professional companies, local practitioners and local groups. Video of SD Festival: <https://vimeo.com/48513880>
- 381 participants in the celebration day with estimated audience 2-2500 across 4 hours
- 57 young volunteers supported the celebration day on marketing, coordination and safety.
- 8 open workshops attended by 119 participants over a period of one week
- A Dance on Screen evening curated by Surface Area Dance Theatre was screened in ARC's cinema to a dance audience of 19
- Total Participation figures in Stockton Dance Festival 557
- Total audience figures in Stockton Dance Festival 2-2500

Outcome 8: Raising awareness of dance

- Big Dance Stockton activity was seen by an estimated audience of 3000+ people throughout the events
- 3 Information points signposted the public to dance opportunities available to them in the local area and showcased class information from local providers during the festival
- Practitioners working in schools provided a programme of classes outside school to the participants
- 1335 children and young people engaged in dance in Stockton

Outcome 9: Collaboration between Local Authorities

- A collaboration with Darlington and Middlesbrough took place through the form of a Mass Dance Routine where artists were commissioned to create a singular piece of choreography which was then taught across the boroughs and performed at 1pm in Darlington, Middlesbrough and Stockton on Sat 14 July 2013
- 800 people participated in Darlington
- 189 people participated in Stockton
- 30 people were transported to Middlesbrough to perform the routine at 1pm
- The Mass Dance choreography can be viewed at: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Dance-Festival/232847463399822>

Outcome 7: Personal Podium Challenge

We did not manage to achieve any outcomes on the Personal Podium challenge led by Stockton Borough council; ARC did signpost people to the opportunity but we had no registered intake.

Successes

There were a number of key successes throughout the Big Dance Programme which are highlighted below.



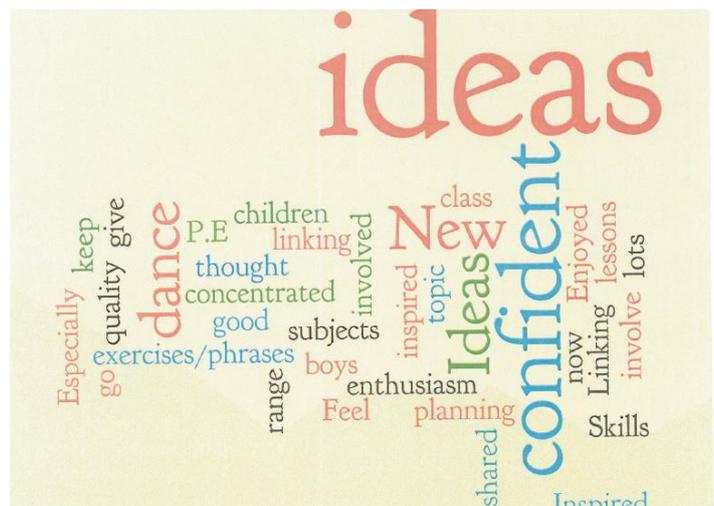
Dance Showcases

With two distinctly different dance showcases the Big Dance project provided numerous ways in which people could access and get excited about dance whether it was on the street, by the riverside or in a theatre. There were high numbers of participants and audience but the real successes could be seen in groups of young dancers getting involved on the spot, plugging their own music into platforms and performing and audiences making phone calls to their families to come and see the dance shows.

Professional Development

The Big dance Stockton programme offered 3 professional development sessions, shadowing opportunities and resources. Having undertaken these programmes 100% of the teachers involved stated they now felt more confident to deliver dance in school; some teachers added that they could put a full dance together and others stated they could now lead 5-12 sessions independently.

Prevailing feedback was that the programme offered new ideas and new dance skills with one teacher who 'came away with clearer ideas about where dance will now go in the curriculum'



Wordle of the dance twilight session feedback



Engagement

- 1335 children and young people participated
- 2600 participants overall participated
- 12 primary schools involved
- 3 community groups involved
- 3000+ in audiences
- 57 Volunteers
- 43 teachers supported by the programme

The volume of people who participated, were supported by and who saw the Big Dance Programme was a massive success.

Inspired and Healthy

The Big Dance project aimed to excite people about dance, encourage people to dance and support people to understand the health benefits of dance.

Through questionnaires we recorded feedback from 138 participants aged 5-11 and identified that 97% thought that dance was a great exercise with 25% feeling fit and healthy when they were dancing.

Other facts include 75% stating they wanted to do more dance in school, 50% felt excited when they were dancing, 40% felt confident when they were dancing and for 50% of the group performing was the best part of the programme.





Challenges

The Big Dance programme had considerable success against the original aims and achieved above what it set out to do in participation, professional development and showcase activity. However the project did encounter one prevailing challenge which had to be tackled mid project in order to move forwards.

- **Engagement**

Big Dance Stockton offered schools and community groups an opportunity to access dance practitioners in exchange for their commitment to developing skills in teaching dance. The programme offer was robust offering 12 weeks access to a dance practitioner, access to sports coaches and performance platforms with full technical support.

Surprisingly and unfortunately recruiting schools to the programme was a challenge and caused a delay in the original project timescale. The offer was circulated through the schools by email and letter, distributed also through Stockton Borough Council Sports Development Team and the process repeated at different times in the academic year; however take up to the programme by schools was minimal.

On a few occasions schools would sign up and then dissolve their commitment due to time constraints.

In December 2012 an interim report on Big Dance Stockton was produced to evaluate next steps and it was decided that relationships needed to be re-established with the relevant school contacts for dance.

Every school in Stockton was then contacted by telephone to establish the lead for P.E. or Dance/Drama; at times receptionists would not give this contact detail out and on some occasions they took details first but overall a new list of contacts was created.

This enabled us to contact directly the relevant person within the school about the project which subsequently led to a meaningful conversation with that person. At this stage different activity happened including meeting with the teacher, running taster workshops and in some cases it was confirmed immediately after this initial phone call.

Within 4 weeks of this process the school programmes had been taken.

On reflection we identified that establishing the most relevant person in each school was pivotal to the success of engagement but even more so at this stage exciting the school face to face with the teachers and with the students made the process far smoother. We utilised the support of the practitioners to assist us in the meetings ensuring that they were at the forefront of exciting people about the programme.



Anthony Lo Guidice leading a dance workshop for the Big Dance Programme. Enabling children and young people to have an opportunity to work with professional dance artists was really important to the Big Dance Programme in order to raise aspirations and excite people about dance.

Throughout Big Dance Stockton there were 4 performances from professional artists and 3 workshops led by professional artists.



Lasting Impact

Big Dance Stockton was designed to ensure that beyond the life of the project the dance ecology in Stockton would be more connected, the coverage of dance provision would be strengthened and more children and young people would actively want to look for more dance opportunities.

Since the project started we have supported 43 teachers in local schools to deliver dance and specifically we know that out of 15 dance programmes delivered 12 have continued to perform their work independently and confidently. With teachers stating they feel able to choreograph a dance and lead a series of dance classes we know that we have succeeded in ensuring that people feel able to lead dance; pivotal to strengthening the coverage of dance across Stockton.

We also know that more children and young people have not only engaged in dance through the programme (1335) but have also actively pursued dance outside of school as a direct result of being introduced to dance during Big Dance Stockton.

Introducing the dance practitioners to schools in Stockton has also been a success, not only in supporting the practitioners to build deeper relationships with organisations and demonstrate their skills but already 2 out of 3 practitioners have been offered further work with their schools and groups for autumn term.

By working across schools, community groups Stockton Borough Council and ARC Stockton Arts Centre have already started to develop the dance culture for Stockton by ensuring that people have had access to try dance, see dance, lead dance and above all enjoy dance. The foundations that Big Dance Stockton has laid can already be seen in the rise in schools taking on dance specialists, teachers delivering dance and young people taking up dance which only provides the area with a good base to continue developing dance.

Next Steps

Big Dance Stockton had a number of successes, namely that it engaged and excited large numbers of children and young people about dance; exposing them to the health benefits and the personal benefits of participation.

At the core of the programme was the intention to ensure children and young people could continue to access high quality dance beyond the life of the project and to identify how we can best do that going forwards.

- Professional Development

Big Dance Stockton supported teachers and leaders to access dance training both in and outside of the classroom - resource packs have been provided to teachers alongside shadowing



opportunities and twilight CPD sessions with both professional companies and local artists; the result was that teachers stated that they felt they could lead dance classes more independently and with confidence.

Going forwards we know that teachers may initially feel more confident to lead sessions but feedback gathered identified that teachers would not only take on another dance programme but would like further CPD opportunities to enhance their knowledge; one teacher commented that a staggered leadership programme would be useful.

The next step would be to offer more dance training to teachers in the form of twilight sessions and a shadow and lead programme. Feedback suggested that future twilight sessions should cover specific areas including boys dance and that a shadow and lead programme would provide an opportunity for teachers to shadow a dance artist and gradually take over the lead with support.

- Dance Provision and Performance

Big Dance Stockton highlighted a desire for more dance provision in school, after school and at lunch times as well as more performance opportunities for children and young people to perform their own dances and watch other dancers.

75% of participants on the Big Dance Stockton programme wanted to do more dance and the turnout of both audience and participants for both Stockton Dance Festival and the Big Dance Showcase indicated an enthusiasm in Stockton for showcasing dance. 75% of participants stated that performing was their favourite part of the programme with teachers commenting that the opportunity to perform in a professional theatre was something their students do not ordinarily have the opportunity to engage with.

- Funding

With the injection of government funding of £150 million per annum for 2013-2015 to improve physical education and sport in primary schools we know that the Big Dance Stockton programme could continue to be delivered and developed through this fund.

Head teachers will be allocated funding to the number of primary aged pupils which will be ring fenced for the provision of sport and PE in schools. Following on from Big Dance Stockton it would be advisable that the next steps for ARC and Stockton Borough Council would be to continue supporting primary schools in Stockton to deliver dance in the curriculum.



Summary

The next steps to build upon the Big Dance Stockton programme would be to:

- Improve teachers and leaders dance delivery skills and knowledge to ensure continued access to high quality dance in school and out of school for children and young people.
- Increase the provision of dance in schools and increase participation in platform and performance events to encourage aspiration, talent development and achievement in young people

To do this we would propose working with Stockton Borough Council and Stockton primary schools to deliver a dance programme which contained:

- Professional Development opportunities for teachers and leaders to develop their skills in dance. This would cover a mix of specialist twilight sessions and shadow and lead development opportunities.
- In school and Out of school dance programmes that lead towards group platform events
- Access to dance specialists and professional performers to ensure high quality and raised aspirations

This programme would meet the needs of the Stockton dance ecology ensuring that schools were working with both the local authority and local arts organisation to develop a cohesive coverage of dance activity for children and young people in Stockton.

List of key people involved with Big Dance Stockton.

ARC	Rachael Ankers – Creative Learning Manager Kelly France – Marketing Manager	Marketing Project Management
Stockton Borough council	Rachel Willis - Arts Development	Steering Group
	Emma Turnbull - Sports Development	Steering Group
Dance City	Mileva Donachie	Regional Big dance Project Manager
Schools	Whitehouse Primary	Participant
	Frederick Nattrass Primary School	Participant
	Holy Trinity Rosehill – 2 groups	Participant
	Wolviston Primary	Participant
	Eggelscliffe CE VC Primary School	Participant
	St Francis Primary School	Participant
	St Cuthberts Primary School	Participant
	Whinstones Primary School	Participant
	Norton Primary School	Participant
	Oakdene Primary School	Participant
	Hartburn Primary School	Participant
Community Groups	Urban Flo Seniors	Participant
	Urban Flo juniors	Participant
	Wreckonize	Participant
Professional Artists/Performers	Wreckonize	Performer
	Anthony Lo Guidice Dance Company	Performer
	Urban Kaos	Performer
Practitioners	Urban Kaos	Delivery
	DanceFuzion	Delivery
	Sarah Hearn	Delivery
	Zoe Bellamy	Delivery
	Urban Flo	Delivery
Media	Dean Coyle	Photography
	Hal Branson	Films
Volunteers	Event Academy	Volunteers
Sports Coaches	Middlesbrough College	Coach
	Gary Bell	Coach
Promotion	Alpha Creative	Print Design
	Power of Print	Distribution
Professional Development	Ludus Dance Company	CPD Provider
	Debbie Waistell	CPD Provider



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

