

# Report

Report to:	<b>Education Resources Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>1 June 2010</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Education Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>'The Street' Project Update</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ inform members of the developments within Regen:fx Youth Trust in relation to 'The Street' Project.

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the progress made by 'The Street' Project as a diversionary scheme to address issues of youth disorder and anti-social behaviour be noted; and
- (2) that the proposal that Regen:fx seek and secure additional external funding to further develop and sustain 'The Street' Project be endorsed.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. The first of its kind in South Lanarkshire, 'The Street' Pilot Project is a targeted, diversionary scheme aimed at young people involved in, or on the brink of becoming involved in, youth disorder and anti-social behaviour. The format uses gritty, hard-hitting theatre and is supported by professional and experienced youth workers.
- 3.2. 'The Street' uses hard hitting and immersive theatre to demonstrate to young people the potentially serious and dangerous consequences of actions that are often all too common in their social environments and backgrounds.

It is designed to challenge those young people who may be involved in:

- Alcohol Abuse
- Bullying and Intimidation
- Domestic Violence
- Knife Crime
- Personal Safety
- Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health
- Vandalism

- 3.3. Young people have been involved in the development of the project and are an integral part of the project. The original group of young people involved in establishing 'The Street' (first identified by youth workers) came together almost a year before the show opened, when they were taking part in a series of workshops with Express Yourself Youth Arts Project in Terminal One. In the workshops they learned about every aspect of the production, from acting to make-up and set design to special effects so that when the time came the young people, with the support of industry professionals, were able to fill every role on the production team.
- 3.4. The pilot went live during February and March of 2010.

#### **4. The Street Experience**

- 4.1. There are two main elements to 'The Street' experience; the theatre event and the post-show workshop.
- 4.2. The immersive theatre event brings a group of targeted young people to an industrial unit in Hamilton, in which a virtual Street has been created. The young people are not informed about what to expect or that any of what they are about to experience is simulated or staged in any way. In a high octane and hard hitting experience groups are escorted on a 20 minute walk around the dark twists and turns of 'The Street', meeting several of the locals, played by groups of these targeted young people themselves, on their way.
- 4.3. It begins with an all too common window smashing, but where the young audience would normally flee the scene, this time they must stand and watch as the owner of the house – a young mother – runs out screaming for help for her baby who was showered with the glass, before being moved on to the next scene. By making the young audience watch the aftermath of activities they regularly engage in and showing them how wrong things can go, the project aims to encourage young people to think about consequences before they act and challenge their potentially harmful and destructive behavior.
- 4.4. The theatre experience is immediately followed by a workshop facilitated by trained and experienced youth workers who help the young people explore their thoughts and feelings about what they have just witnessed. The workshop allows young people to identify and come up with alternate options at crucial decision points within the scenes.
- 4.5. Given the sensitive issues within this activity and hard-hitting content, the Psychological Services Manager, was invited to assess the impact of the activities on young people to enable support to be provided, where appropriate.
- 4.6. Running three nights a week with two sessions each evening, 'The Street' Project has so far engaged with more than 255 targeted young people from across South Lanarkshire.

#### **5. Monitoring and Evaluation**

- 5.1. One of the most interesting and effective elements of 'The Street' is that it is monitored and reviewed by the young people who experience it. After finishing the workshop element of the event, young people are asked to rate from one to five the following eight aspects of the whole event:

- Overall Impact
- The Issues
- The Acting
- The Workshop
- The Build-up
- The Special effects
- The Volume
- The Venue

5.2. This system of self-review ensures that 'The Street' experience is kept as realistic and as authentic as possible as it is the young people themselves who determine how genuine and engaging the different scenes are.

5.3. Extensive feedback was attained throughout the duration of the project and each of the 255 participants over the course of the project were asked to rate several aspects of the show from 1-5 (5 being the best, 1 being not very good), write comments on how individual scenes made them feel, and also leave comments for the cast and crew on their overall thoughts. (see Appendix 1)

## **6. Impact**

6.1. The impact of a project such as this cannot be measured overnight as the real impact is much further-reaching than the initial reaction of the young people involved. It is the effect it has on young people in the long term – the choices they make months down the line based on better awareness of the potential consequences.

6.2. Regen:fx are developing a resource pack which youth workers can use to continue work with their groups building on the events of 'The Street': continually reminding them of the issues, keeping a dialogue open and monitoring the change (if any) in their attitudes and behaviour.

6.3. Youth workers from various organisations and Regen:fx will evaluate the impact of the project 6 months after the groups' visits, using a variety of methods including self evaluation from the young people, youth worker observation sheets and information from local problem solving groups.

6.4. A number of guests and representatives from organisations attended a viewing of the pilot project.

- Children's Reporter
- Procurator Fiscal
- Executive Directors of Social Work Resources and Education Resources
- Divisional Commander of Strathclyde Police 'Q' Division
- Anti-Social Behaviour Team
- Chief Executive of YouthLink Scotland
- Victim Support
- Locally elected members including the Spokesperson for Youth and both the Chair and Depute Chair of the Education Resources Committee
- Christine McKelvie MSP (on behalf of Kenny MacKaskill MSP, Justice Cabinet Secretary) representing the Scottish Government

- 6.5. In support of 'The Street', Christine McKelvie (MSP) presented and passed a motion at the Scottish Parliament on 11 March 2010 commending Regen:fx and stating that the Parliament "...further believes that this model has the potential to reduce offending by young people in communities across Scotland" (<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/Apps2/business/motions/Default.aspx?motionid=18577>).
- 6.6. Further to this, as part of the 'No Knives, Better Lives' initiative, Gina Nowak of YouthLink Scotland, acknowledged 'The Street' as a good example of youth work that is helping to combat youth disorder and anti-social behaviour in Scotland.

## **7. Next Steps – Key Challenges and Future Plans**

- 7.1. 'The Street' is making a difference in helping young people themselves to combat youth disorder and anti-social behaviour within communities. A key factor is that it challenges young people's negative behaviour and highlights starkly the consequences of their actions. The key challenges for further development include:
- Specific targeting, recruitment and retaining of young people currently involved in youth disorder to become trained in drama, special effects and technical skills in order that they can deliver to other young people (from the workshops 28 participants have already signed up to be included in the next cast)
  - Securing long-term sustainability
- 7.2. Partnership working and creativity of Express Yourself, Home School Partnership, Youth Learning Service and Regen:fx.
- 7.3. In the short-term Regen:fx have the venue secured until July 2010 and whilst actively seeking out funding opportunities, Regen:fx will also be recruiting new cast members and training them up during this time.

## **8. Employee Implications**

- 8.1. None

## **9. Financial Implications**

- 9.1. 'The Street' pilot project was funded through Regen:fx Youth Trust and the Fairer Scotland Fund. The costs on an annual basis are £82,000 of which £14,000 is for the accommodation within the Industrial Unit. External funding sources are being sought to help to sustain the long-term viability of the project.

## **10. Other Implications**

- 10.1. None

## **11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 11.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.
- 11.2. Consultation has taken place with young people during the development stages and continues to take place as part of the on-going dialogue to assess the impact of young people's involvement in the project.

**Larry Forde**  
**Executive Director (Education Resources)**

11 May 2010

**Link(s) to Council Objectives/Values**

- Increase involvement in Lifelong Learning
- Improve Community Safety
- Improve lives of vulnerable children, young people and adults
- Increase participation in arts and culture
- People focused
- Working with and respecting others
- Tackling disadvantage and deprivation

**Previous References**

None

**List of Background Papers**

- Regen:fx Youth Trust Business Plan

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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## Education Resources

### 'The Street' Project - Comments and Feedback

Topic	Question	Scoring (1- Not Very Good, 5 –Very Good)				
		1	2	3	4	5
Overall Impact	Did your experience of what you saw and discussed in the workshop have an overall impact on you?	1	1	4	53	196
The Issues	Did the content of the scenes reflect reality? Are these issues that affect young people today?	2	3	6	24	220
The Acting	Knowing that only a few of the cast have ever acted before, how well do you think the cast preformed?	8	5	7	37	198

Topic	Question	Scoring (1- Not Very Good, 5 –Very Good)				
		1	2	3	4	5
The Workshop	Coming directly out of the experience of 'The Street' into the workshop, did you get the opportunity to explain how each of the scenes made you feel, did you get to discuss the other choices that some of the characters could have made and how their actions affected other people?	6	4	27	41	177
The Build-up	Did you experience the element of surprise, did you imagine that this was what it would be like, and did you get a bit scared?	6	1	11	16	221

Special Effects	Knowing that behind the scenes young people were responsible for lighting and sound effects, how well do you think they did?	2	1	11	47	194
The Volume	Could you hear the actors or do we need to be louder?	6	24	67	68	90
The Venue	What did you think of the location of 'The Street'? Did the venue help with the element of surprise and help build an atmosphere?	2	3	11	26	213

Comments included:

- "Good way of showing knock on effect. How your actions have consequences"
- "Realistic and emphasised the seriousness of the issues"
- "Shocked And Sad – Futility To Lives Ruined"
- "Shows How Quickly Things Can Escalate"
- "Powerful for young people to see how serious things can get and how quickly"
- "Realistic but upsetting"
- "Shows responsibility needed when drinking – what happens with none"
- "Every 14+ year old should come to this its an eye opener"
- "Really good and left an impact on me. It is realistic and more people should see it."

Testimonials from various special guests and youth practitioners who attended a special viewing of the show were also obtained, some of which are below:

"In addition to the impact of the various scenarios acted by the young people, it is clear in discussion with them that it made a personal impact on each of them. Whilst the climax of the programme is the performance, a lot of support is offered to young people in the scripting and commitment to the programme by the young people. 'The Street' is emotional, sad and ultimately uplifting in its approach to engaging young people"

***Executive Director (Social Work Resources)***

"I found this dramatic production very hard hitting and a fantastic way to involve young people in confronting issues and choices which face them on "The Street". It feels very different to discussion type approaches; it feels real because you are part of the action developing on the street and events are happening very fast. It highlights how quickly poor choices can be made which are devastating for individuals and communities. But it also then gives young people an opportunity to consider how to help change things in the future. The young people's acting was tremendous and the fact that they are bringing these important messages to other young people must be very rewarding for them."

***Head of Children and Justice Services***

“The Street is a forward thinking and innovative way of tackling antisocial behaviour, perpetrated mainly by young people, in a community where they should feel valued and in fact feel very isolated and misunderstood. It allows the community to open up new lines of communication with its young members who will hopefully be the new community activists of the future.”

***Breaking the Cycle Intensive Support Officer***

“The Street is amazingly realistic, gutsy and provocative. It asks hard questions of the young person about behaviour while giving them the time to consider both their options and the consequences of their actions in a safe environment. A project with the potential to evolve into a very useful management tool relating to the education of attitudes and behaviours within a housing and community environment. I really hope that this project can continue and grow.”

***Housing Support Officer (Youth Justice)***