

CHOICE & VOICE



An Arts Based
Creative Exploratory
Research
Project

THE PLAYHOUSE
Tel: 02871 268027
Address: 5-7 Artillery St,
Derry-Londonderry, BT48 6RG
Email:
info@derryplayhouse.com
Socials @Playhousederry





“We were in our own space and could talk freely about anything, while being productive”
Young person from Reach Across

CHOICE & VOICE – AN ARTS BASED CREATIVE EXPLORATORY RESEARCH PROJECT

From January to June 2022 we ran the Choice and Voice hands on creative research project with 4 groups of local young people. This was based on a recent body of research undertaken by Derry City and Strabane District Council with young people in Derry and the North West. This was part of their bid to UNICEF to establish Child Friendly Status for the City of Derry. This enabled the young people to have a say in the development of their own programmes from the initial stages, from the themes right through to the artforms and the message they wanted to convey to the public. They creatively explored and addressed youth related issues of their own choice.



Registered with the Charity Commission
for Northern Ireland No: NIC 100119
Company Registration: NI 26912
VAT Number: 836105347



An Roinn Gnóthaí
Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade

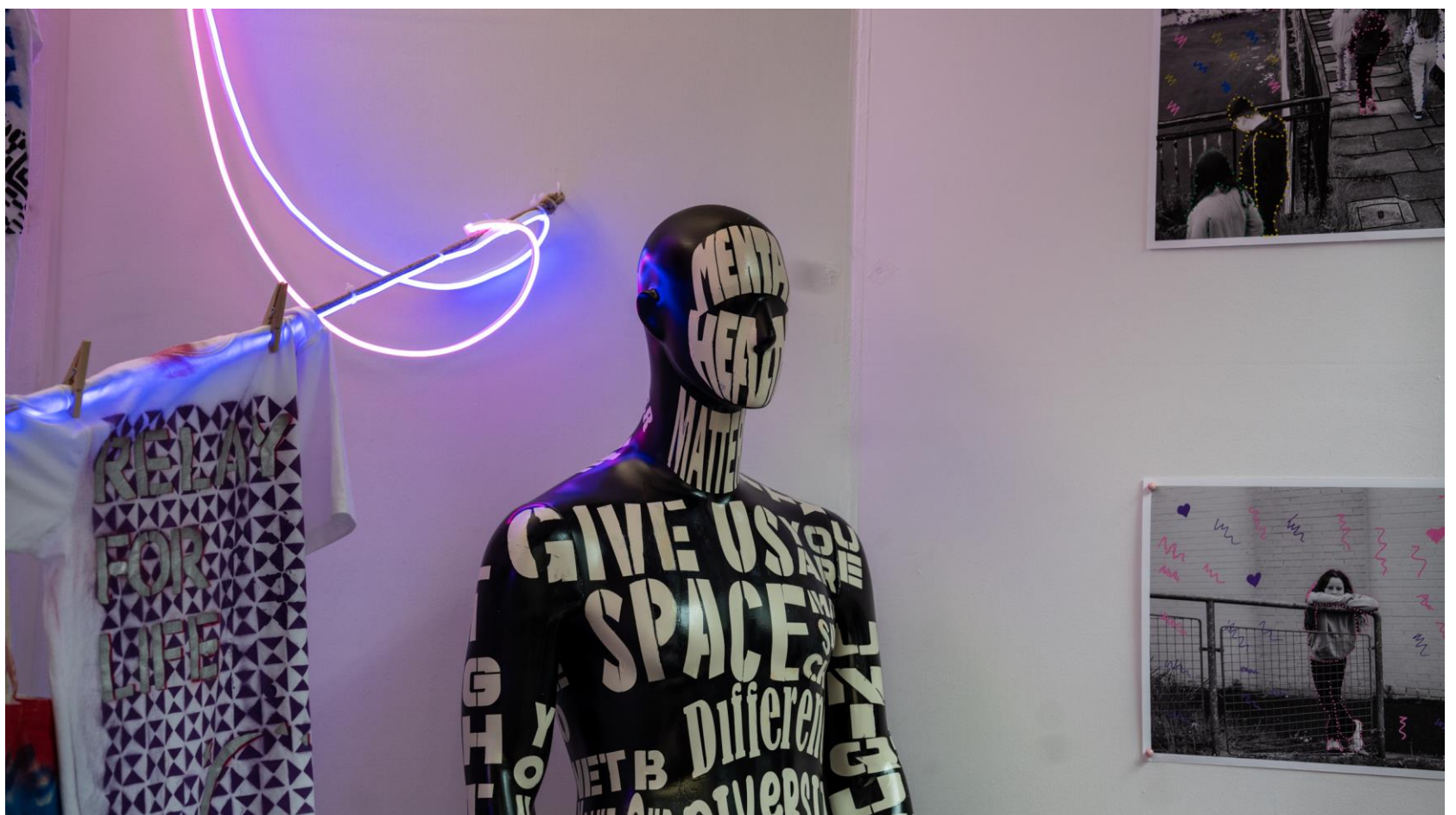


PLAYHOUSE CORE FUNDERS:



Throughout the workshops the young people explored issues including mental health, gender identity and sexuality, good relations and shared space. They also articulated that there are lots of facilities for local young people, but there is a big issue in even knowing that these exist. This led Include Youth to design a symbolic sculptural signpost to direct people to these services.

The young people helped organise their own showcase through participating in the Playhouse's new Events Management training.



This resulted in a shop front art installation and an interactive showcase event in Foyleside Shopping Centre on 16th June 2022. It remained on display for the public to enjoy for another fortnight.



Meeting the Mayor at our showcase event

“I FELT EMPOWERED”

Young person from Lincon Courts



The young people are from some of the most socially and economically disadvantaged areas in the North. As a result, the young people suffer from poverty and health inequalities. COVID 19 has had a further negative impact on the lives of young people, with a marked increase in mental health issues among young people.

We work with care experienced young people, young people from the LGBTQAI+ community and young people from interface communities. We also work with young people who have been excluded from mainstream education due to both behavioral issues and emotional trauma.

Groups involved:

- Reach Across
- Lincoln Court
- Include Youth
- Glens Development Initiative

“WE LEARNED ABOUT DIFFERENT JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ARTS”

Young person



(Please see Choice & Voice video links below)

<https://youtu.be/2O9pcHvtLiw>

<https://youtu.be/ZztO5914688>

OUTCOMES/ POSITIVE CHANGES

A SENSE OF EMPOWERMENT THROUGH HELPING DESIGN THEIR OWN ART PROJECT AND SHOWCASE

- 100 percent of the young people at an evaluation session feel a sense of empowerment through having helped design their own art project and showcase
- 41 people completing the Choice & Voice programme & public art showcase event

IMPROVED PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION

- 100 percent of the young people at an evaluation session feel they have learned new things
- 41 young people completing Playhouse Events Management Training
- 41 young people learning new artmaking skills
- 41 young people completing educational issue-based arts programmes

BETTER USE OF FREE TIME

- 100 percent of the young people at an evaluation session feel it was a good use of their free time
- 41 young people participating in positive arts activities in their free time, when otherwise they would be bored and potentially susceptible to engaging in harmful or risk-taking behaviour

RAISED AWARENESS OF CAREER PATHWAYS WITHIN THE CREATIVE SECTOR

- 100 percent of the young people at an evaluation session feel they know more about career opportunities in the arts
- 20 young people on fact finding tours of The Playhouse & The MAC, the Cathedral Quarter mural tour, with interactive presentations from creative professionals at each

MARKED INCREASE IN SELF ESTEEM

- 100 percent of the young people at an evaluation session feel it has helped their self confidence
- 6 young people experienced public speaking for the first time at events
- 5 young people were involved in producing promotional videos
- 41 young people were involved in managing public events
- 12 young people showing and teaching their new art skills to others at public workshops



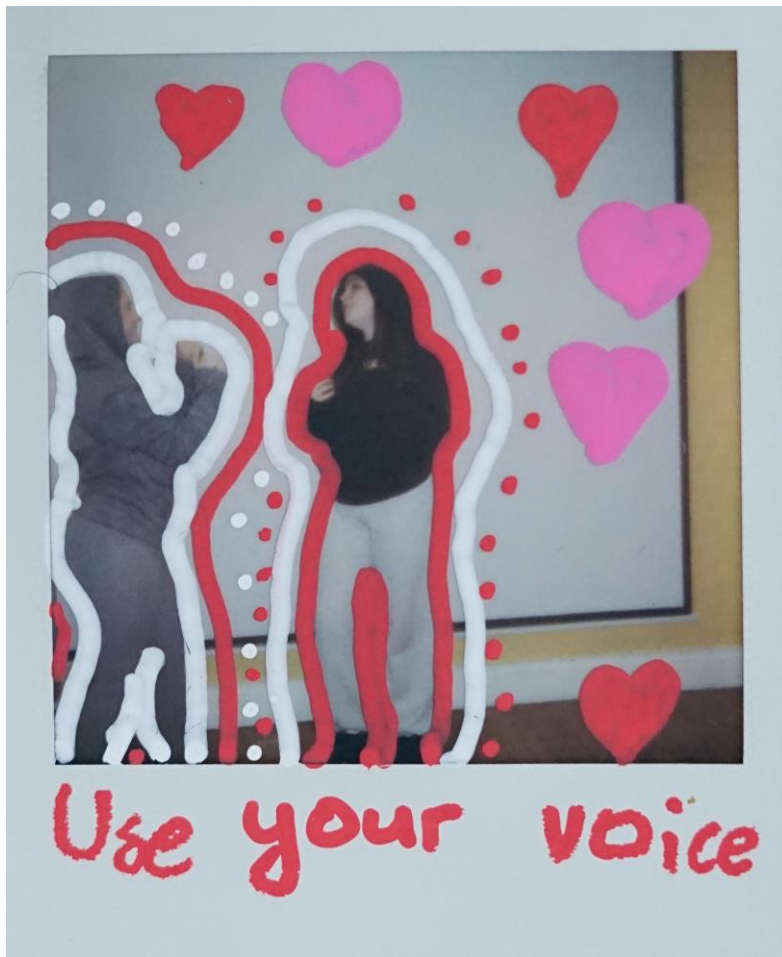
**“ No free green spaces to be free in”
Young person from Glens Development Initiative**

POSITIVE IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

What came out very strongly throughout the project was that a lot of young people wanted to creatively address issues relating to their mental health. At the evaluation stage it also became apparent that focusing on these issues was very therapeutic as was the artmaking itself

- Issues the young people chose to address throughout the project included;
- Mental health
- Body image
- Eating disorders
- Self harm

TRAPPED



Other issues creatively addressed throughout the project included;

- Disability awareness
- Pride
- LGBTQAI+

When asked what they liked most of the project the young people said;

- I enjoyed forgetting my problems and focusing on my art
- We were in our own space and could talk freely about anything, while being productive
- Getting closer to the people in the group
- Meeting up and socialising
- Meeting up every week
- The bonding while working
- Painting my own interests onto my wooden stool
- Building the wooden stools



We collected various sources of evidence that tells us what positive differences have been made in the lives of the young people. The evidence consists of;

- Evaluation questionnaires
- Self evaluation
- Observation at workshops and events
- Statistics
- Evaluation feedback sessions
- Case studies
- Testimonials
- Text on pieces of artwork that the young people made
- Creative writing
- Symbolic artwork with written descriptions about individual experiences of the project. Interviews; video; enclosed presentation and video link
- Young peoples' speeches about the impact of the project on their lives
- Videos of events
- Photos of workshops, artwork and events



“I was nervous about public speaking at first, but once you got going it was grand.”

Young person from Reach Across

At an evaluation session we asked the young people questions and had a reflective discussion about the impact the programme had on their lives, in relation to the outcomes/ differences.

CASE STUDIES:

CHILD A – Age 16. “At the start of the project I was in a really bad place, but by the end of it I was confident and happier, knowing that I could distract myself by doing the art. It just felt good, all of it.”

CHILD B – Age 15. “At the start I was very nervous about the new people that were going to be there. My sister said it would be good to get talking to other people and get out of my comfort zone. Now I’m talking to most of them and I get on well with most of them. The art was calming and gave me an escape from what I was going through. I’ve improved a lot. I don’t need my sister to be with me all the time now when I’m meeting other people. I can do that on my own now.”

CHILD C – Age 15. “At the start I wasn’t really getting on well with people at the club) because I have really bad social anxiety. It helped me a lot because I was having fun and it also helped me because I was talking to people in a familiar place. I learned new art things like stencilling and I’m getting on better with people at Reach. I’m getting better with peoples’ names because I was terrible at remembering anyone’s names. I think that’s because when you speak to people for a while you are more likely to remember their names.”

CHILD D: Age 12. CHILD D was involved in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). The programme provided much needed opportunities and a structure. It improved his confidence and give him a sense of empowerment as the project was very youth led & he was involved in a lot of decision making!

It allowed him to make better use of his time which limited the opportunities to engage in ASB.



“I WANT TO DO MORE PLAYS”

Young person from Reach Across

What we have learned:

We have learned how to put young people at the very heart of decision making within their own programmes, from the initial development stages, and how important this is. We have learned a lot about what matters to young people and developed our programme accordingly. We have learned this through asking young people what issues matter to them and also through looking at research undertaken by Derry Strabane District Council as part of their bid to UNICEF to make Derry a Child Friendly City.



This Choice and Voice hands on creative research art project has enabled young people to identify their own issues which they wanted to creatively address. Throughout the programme they collectively steered the direction that the programme would take in terms of content addressed, artforms and materials used, messages to creatively convey and what format their public showcase event would take.

This has brought about opportunities for young people to participate in all aspects of events management, including public speaking, performing and media and journalism interview techniques. It has proven to be a very positive way to increase empowerment and self confidence among the most vulnerable of young people, for example young people in care and young people from Refugee and Asylum seeking families, in partnership with Include Youth.



We have developed new elements to our programme including Arts and Events Management and this enables the young people to contribute to the managing of their own event, and takes in creative sector career tasters and tours of arts organisations.

We plan to develop and build upon this with further exciting elements of events management that the young people have asked for, such as graphic design, writing press releases/ making press bookings, and co-ordinating entertainments such as DJ set up.

We are also exploring new OCN courses to coincide with our new Events Management programmes.



“I expressed my passion for issues”

Young person from Reach Across

PLAYHOUSE CHOICE AND VOICE – FRAMEWORK FOR ARTISTS

TABLE OF TOPICS FOR CHOICE

COMBINED RESULTS OF TOP IDENTIFIED ISSUES

BASED ON RESULTS OF SURVEY BY PEACE 1V YOUTH COUNCIL STEERING GROUP FOR UNICEF CFC BY DERRY CITY AND STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL

The following tables came from the survey by the Youth Council Steering Group. The artists presented the results to the four groups of young people on the Choice & Voice project, who further discussed the topics and ranked them in order of importance.

Rate 1-5 (1 = highest/ 5 = lowest)

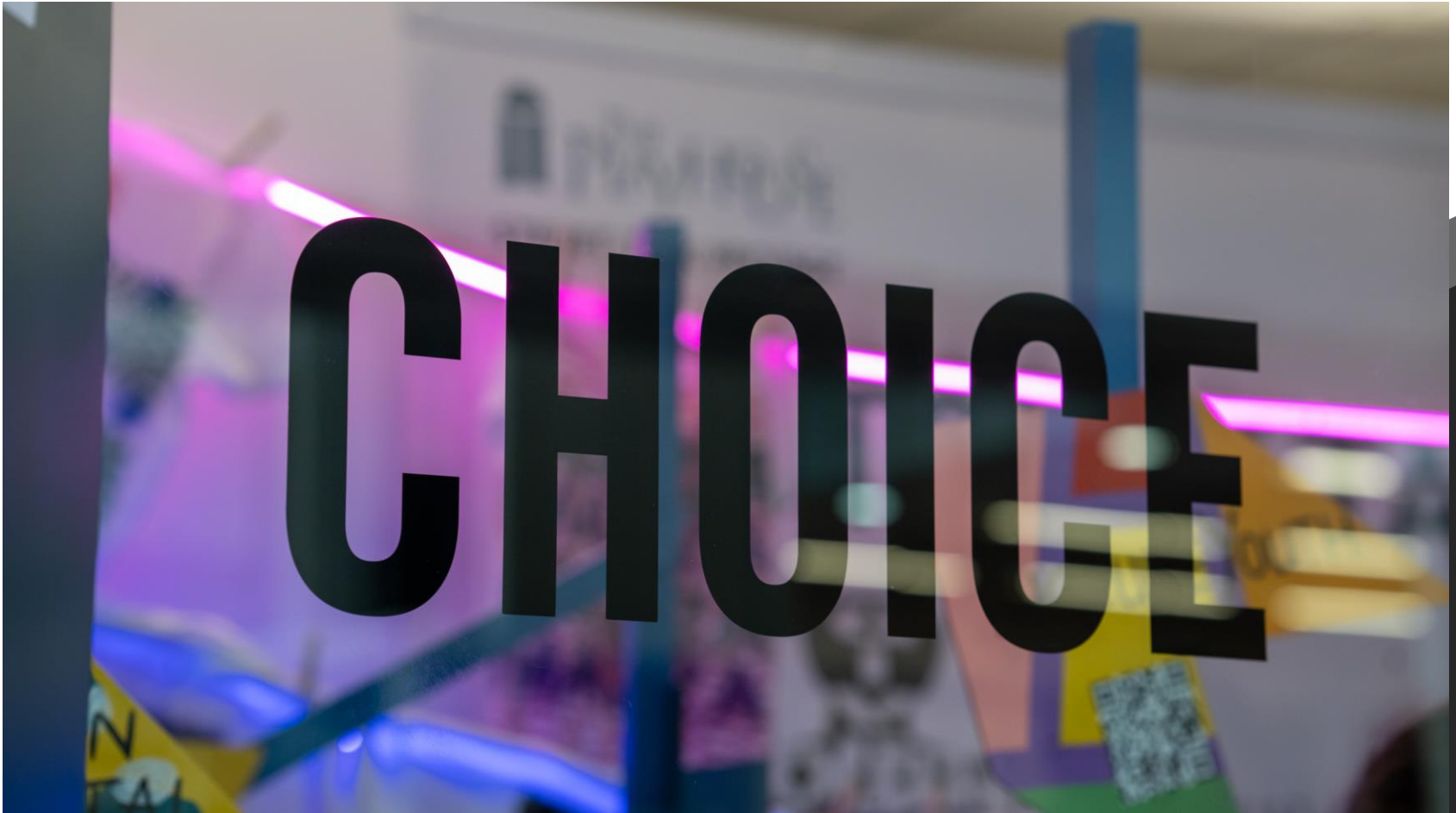
RESULTS FROM LINCON COURTS GROUP

TOP 5 MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. Create more <u>positive</u> opportunities to bring people together	4
2. Integrated schools	2
3. Learning about each others' religions/ beliefs	3
4. Shared space and feeling safe in different areas	5
5. BREXIT	1

TOP 5 THINGS THAT ARE ENJOYED/APPRECIATED ABOUT LIVING IN DERRY/STRABANE:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. People	4
2. Festivals/ Events (Music to Science Festival)	2
3. Shopping centres	3
4. Facilities (shopping centres and cinemas)	1
5. Youth Centres	5



“I’d like to go into gaming design”

Young person from Reach Across

TO 5 MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN LIFE:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. Education and exam stress	2
2. Health; mental, physical, sexual.	5
3. Suicide and self harm	4
4. Drugs and alcohol	3
5. Nothing to do (boredom)	1

TOP 5 HIGHEST SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. Physical activity and sport	1
2. Parks and open spaces	5
3. Transport	4
4. Healthcare	2
5. Leisure Centres	3

TOP 5 LOWEST LEVELS OF SATISFACTION:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. Mental Health and Counselling	5
2. Careers Advice	3
3. Housing	2
4. School	4
5. Youth Centres	1



VOICE

***“It made me feel good to have
my art seen by the public”***

Young person from Reach Across

RESULTS FROM GLENS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

TOP 5 MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. Create more <u>positive</u> opportunities to bring people together	1
2. Integrated schools	4
3. Learning about each others' religions/ beliefs	2
4. Shared space and feeling safe in different areas	3
5. BREXIT	5

TOP 5 THINGS THAT ARE ENJOYED/APPRECIATED ABOUT LIVING IN DERRY/ STRABANE:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. People	1
2. Festivals/ Events (Music to Science Festival)	5
3. Shopping centres	4
4. Facilities (shopping centres and cinemas)	3
5. Youth Centres	2

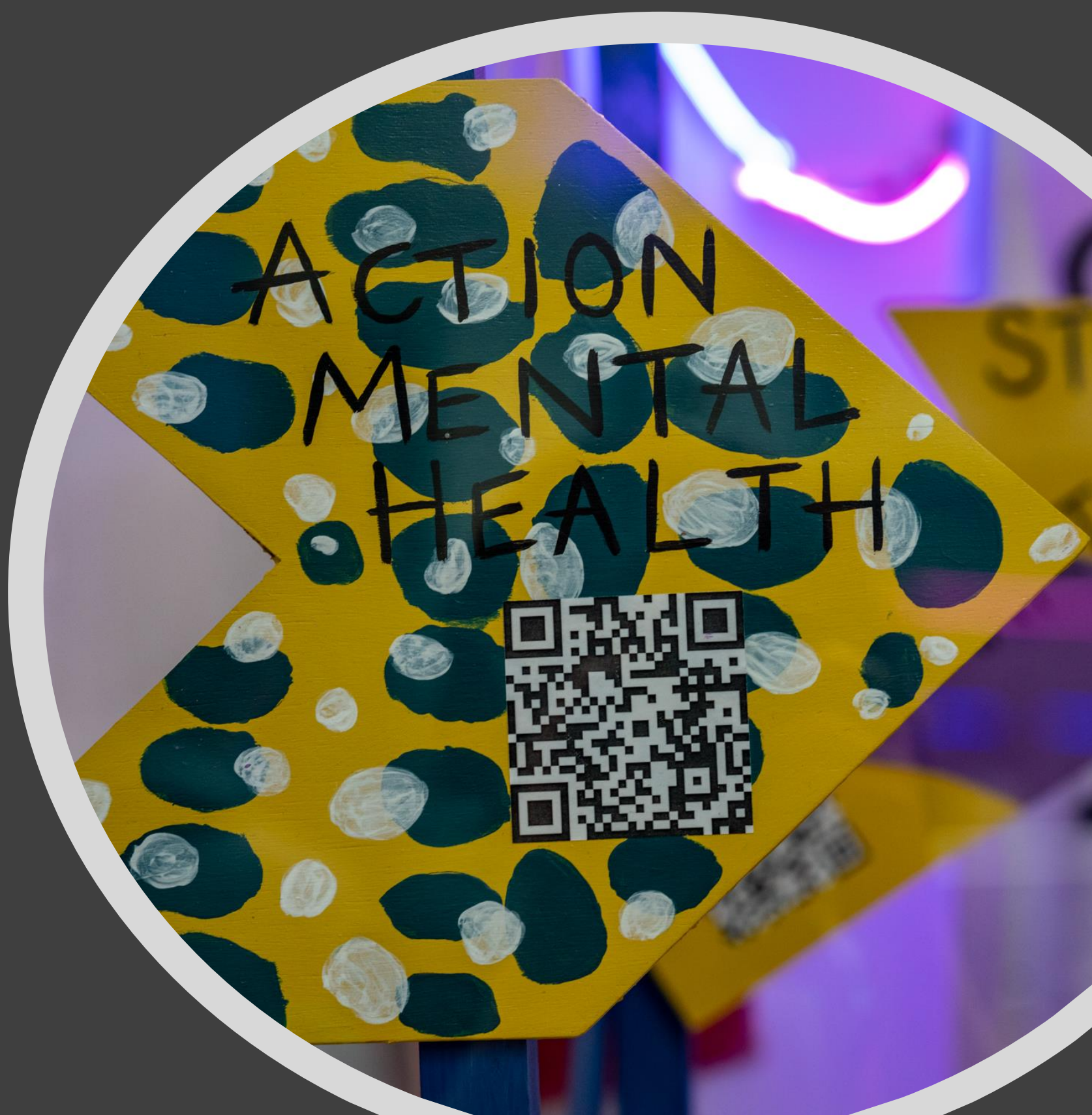
TO 5 MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN LIFE:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. Education and exam stress	2
2. Health, mental, physical, sexual.	1
3. Suicide and self harm	3
4. Drugs and alcohol	5
5. Nothing to do (boredom)	4

TOP 5 HIGHEST SATISFACTION WITHSERVICES:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. Physical activity and sport	3
2. Parks and open spaces	1
3. Transport	5
4. Healthcare	4
5. Leisure Centres	2

The young people articulated that there are facilities for local young people, but there is a big issue in even knowing that these exist. This led Include Youth to design a symbolic & functional sculptural signpost to direct people to these services.



TOP 5 LOWEST LEVELS OF SATISFACTION:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. Mental Health and Counselling	
2. Careers Advice	
3. Housing	
4. School	
5. Youth Centres	1

RESULTS FROM REACH ACROSS GROUP: The evaluation for this group differs slightly. They partly completed these tables, and also included extra findings from their Conversation Discs session further into the report.

TOP 5 MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. Create more <u>positive</u> opportunities to bring people together	1
2. Integrated schools	4
3. Learning about each others' religions/ beliefs	3
4. Shared space and feeling safe in different areas	
5. BREXIT	

TOP 5 THINGS THAT ARE ENJOYED/APPRECIATED ABOUT LIVING IN DERRY/STRABANE:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. People	
2. Festivals/ Events (Music to Science Festival)	1
3. Shopping centres	
4. Facilities (shopping centres and cinemas)	
5. Youth Centres	2

TO 5 MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN LIFE:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. Education and exam stress	
2. Health, mental, physical, sexual.	2
3. Suicide and self harm	
4. Drugs and alcohol	
5. Nothing to do (boredom)	



Placing young people at the very heart of decision making within their own programmes.

TOP 5 HIGHEST SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. Physical activity and sport	
2. Parks and open spaces	3
3. Transport	
4. Healthcare	
5. Leisure Centres	

TOP 5 LOWEST LEVELS OF SATISFACTION:

RESEARCH SCORE	YOUR SCORE
1. Mental Health and Counselling	4
2. Careers Advice	
3. Housing	
4. School	5
5. Youth Centres	

ANY NEW EMERGING ISSUES ?

Issues creatively identified throughout the workshops, and feedback gathered at the evaluation session, that will feed into and inform the new “Showrooms” Empowering Young People project.

NEW ISSUES
Gender equality
Pride month – LGBTQ+ rights
Body image
Bullying
Racism
Eating disorders
Self esteem
Getting out of your comfort zone
Anxiety
Mental health
Self harm

- “I learned more about mental health and expressing it through art”.
- “I enjoyed forgetting my problems and focussing on my art”
- “We addressed issues with mental health.”
- “Expressing mentality through art.”
- “If I didn’t do the project I’d just be lying in bed.”
- “I was able to help distance myself from exams.”

“There’s not any space, just adult space to hang out in”

Young person

“Nowhere is our space we keep getting moved on”

Young person



“Even in waste ground we are threatened by residents from nearby housing”

Young person

- To explore the young people’s VOICE further, the artist from the Reach Across group created a fun question and answer session, “**Conversation Disks**”, devised using clear plastic disks, containing question from the following topics;
- SAFE CITY
- PEACE BUILDING
- IDENTITY- DIVERSITY
- 13 questions in total with one or two questions for each participant, some of the disks contained a prize sticker, 5 prizes in total for eg. an infinity cube or bubble fidget to keep the young people’s interest and create a surprise fun element to the session. Each young person lucky dipped a question and read it to the group, with a random chance of winning a prize.
- See Below, Topics, questions, young people’s responses.
- **Topic SAFE CITY**

QUESTION, DO YOU HAVE SAFE SPACES TO HANG OUT IN ?

No there’s not any space, just adult space to hang out in

Nowhere is our space we keep getting moved on

Even in waste ground we are threatened by residents from near by housing

We have witnessed young people vandalising in parks

Reach Across is our safe space

We Feel threatened by a person who threatened to video us

QUESTION, WHAT THINGS DO YOU LIKE ABOUT LIVING IN DERRY?

Carnivals -Halloween /St Patricks carnivals

Clubs with activities like Reach Across

When the amusements come to town

Walks, views, green space

Reach Across

QUESTION, MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN LIFE?

Racism- sexism

Mental Health,

Home safety

Homelessness

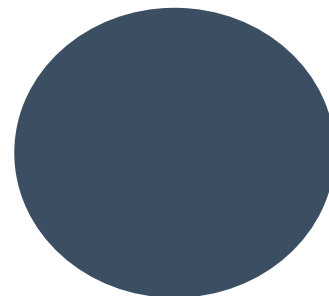
Period poverty

Homophobia

Animal Rights



**The young people helped
organise their own showcase
through participating in the
Playhouse's new Events
Management training.**



QUESTION . WHICH SERVICES ARE YOU MOST / LEAST SATISFIED WITH ?

Not enough accessible leisure centres to expensive

Parks and open spaces that aren't locked up

No free green spaces to be free in

Not good mental health services

School

Topic: PEACE BUILDING

QUESTION. HOW DO WE BUILD PEACE IN OUR COMMUNITY?

Mix with different people from different cultures and backgrounds

Train police force to deal with mental health

Respect each other's views and religions

Intergrate housing, schools, youth clubs

Mix social housing estates

More interconnected festivals instead of St Patricks and the Twelfth - one world festival

QUESTION . WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO ACHIEVE PEACE AND RECONCILIATION?

By not caring about people's religion

Mixed police force

Respect each other's views

More cross community clubs to help youth to connect

Mix social housing estates

More mixed and integrated schools

QUESTION WHAT DOES CITIZENSHIP MEAN TO YOU ?

Right to protest

Right to opinion

Human rights

Freedom

Work

Topic: IDENTITY/DIVERSITY

QUESTION WHAT IS DIVERSITY?

Culture and traditions from different people

Different races

Different religions and traditions

Different sexuality

Different age groups

QUESTION HOW IMPORTANT IS GENDER IDENTITY -WHY?

The older generation doesn't understand

You have to accept people for who they are

Its changing people are accepting more now that before

Its important to respect people's pro nouns

Transgender are not respected in schools

Need More information to understand

QUESTION HOW IMPORTANT IS DIVERSITY TO YOU AND WHAT VALUES DOES IT BRING

We learn from each other

Its interesting to learn about other people's culture

Its important to value and respect people's sexuality

Culture diversity make the world different and fun

We learn by sharing



CHOICE & VOICE



**An Arts Based
Creative Exploratory
Research
Project**

THE PLAYHOUSE
Tel: 02871 268027
Address: 5-7 Artillery St,
Derry-Londonderry, BT48 6RG
Email:
info@derryplayhouse.com
Socials @Playhousederry