Leaps & Bounds

A Cultural Pathfinder Project in Birmingham and the Black Country
Introduction

• Local Authorities, Youth at Risk and Birmingham Royal Ballet
• Project commissioned at CEO level
• To address Shared Priority of improving the Quality of Life for young people and their families
• Combination of personal development/community coaching and arts
Project Aims

• Varied aims of partners including
  – To engage young people in an artistic process and ballet performance as a means of personal exploration
  – To engage with corporate sector
  – To secure meaningful accreditation for participants
  – To review youth service practice
  – To share practice between authorities
Expected Outcome

• Enabling young people to achieve something beyond their previous expectation, thereby
  – Revealing how much they had been limiting themselves
  – Raising aspirations for the future
  – Increasing confidence and motivation
Recruitment

- Trailblazers
  - Youth Service, Connexions, YIPs etc

- Young People
  - Wide range of disadvantage
    - Young offenders, homeless, teenage parents, abuse sufferers, mildly autism etc

- Life Coaches
Phased Approach

• Phase 1
  – Intensive personal development
  – Creative drama and contemporary dance
  – Community coaching around 3 goals

• Phase 2
  – Staging, rehearsal and performance of MacMillan’s Romeo & Juliet at Birmingham Hippodrome
Project Management

- Network management
- No overall Director
- Partners led on different aspects
- Joined up evaluation
- Joined up promotion
- Shared practice
Participants

• Phase 1
  – 120 young people
  – 15-18 years old

• Phase 2
  – 70 young people
  – 25 male and 45 female
  – Average age 17
  – 32 life coaches
The Ballet Element

- Discipline closely aligned to Youth at Risk methodology
- 100% participation ethos
- Physically demanding, health outcomes
- Building on excellent practice at Birmingham Royal Ballet
- Participants will dance some key roles
Evaluation

- Outcomes approach
- Analysis of application forms and Life Coach records
- Interviews with participants leaving the project
- Analysis of applications for Phase 2
- Use of Connexions Wheel
Case Studies #1

- 18 year old male
  - Anger management issues
  - History of violent behaviour
  - Now recognises “red flag” and walks away from confrontation
  - Uses dance as an outlet for anger
  - No violent incidents since enrolment
Case Studies #2

• 16 year old female, living in care
  – History of abuse, abandonment and educational under-achievement
  – Stable new family
  – Academic predictions good
  – No longer disruptive
  – Physical appearance greatly improved
Case Studies #3

• 17 year old male offender
  – Fascinated by technical side of theatre production
  – Also participated in dance elements
  – Recognises himself “before & after”
  – 100% committed to a change in his life
  – Has not re-offended since enrolment
The Evaluation Wheel

- Participation
- Achievement
- Basic Skills
- Key Skills
- Life Skills
- Aspirations
- Identity & Self Image
- Attitude & Motivation
- Relationships
- Capacity of Parents
- Risk of (re)offending
- Family History & Functioning
- Social & Community
- Housing
- Income
- Physical Health
- Emotional Wellbeing
- Substance use

Legend:
- Blue: Improved
- Green: Stayed the same
- Red: Lapsed
Interim Findings

• 36% reported benefit from social interaction
• 27% said it prompted positive action about their circumstances
• 18% indicated improved self-esteem
• 18% indicated increased confidence
• 30% said increased self-esteem had made them feel able to tackle goals
What Next?

• Young People progress through BTEC and Youth Arts Award qualifications
• Company rehearses for Romeo & Juliet intensively
• Filming continues
• Performance on 28 September
• Final evaluation, including assessment of relative importance of arts and coaching elements