



# ***ARTS EMERGENCY***

## **2020 Impact Report**

"I got lots of advice and help.

**I also feel more positive  
about the future."**

"My mentor has been incredibly supportive the whole time,  
**providing me with professional  
contacts, being a friend,**

always having great advice with my essay writing  
and helping me with my personal statement."

**"I feel like I have an in  
to the industry,**

which is hard as a person of colour, Muslim and just being young."

"The best part about Arts Emergency is that  
**they really care about the  
mentees, and it really shows.**

I love the newsletters and I enjoy the  
friendly community."

"My mentor has  
**connected me to amazing people**  
in the heritage sector."

"I've learnt to be more  
**optimistic about the future,**  
you never know what to expect next."

This has been one of the most challenging years for young people in living memory. A time of loss, intense stress and uncertainty. Unable to go into school, university or clubs, they have faced a sudden absence of the support networks they rely on. But I'm happy to say that Arts Emergency proved to be a lifeline. Our team adapted fast and worked tirelessly to support our Young Talent's wellbeing, our growing network of volunteers found new ways to create opportunity, and our remarkable mentors provided a sense of routine and, crucially, a tangible connection to the wider world.

As society re-opens things will be different, and I am reminded that as artists, thinkers and activists we have the ability to shape what comes next in positive and meaningful ways. That's why we must do all we can to ensure this generation keeps aiming high, imagining better, and taking their curiosity and creativity extremely seriously. We will support them as individuals for the long-term, meaning the connections they make through our charity are really powerful and lasting things. I know our Young Talent will make the most of this as they build a future they want to see. A future I'm sure we all want to be part of.

NEIL GRIFFITHS

ARTS EMERGENCY CO-FOUNDER & CEO



# A fair start in the arts and humanities

At Arts Emergency, we help young people flourish in the arts and humanities. Since 2013, we've opened up opportunities in higher education, the media and culture for hundreds of young people across the UK. We provide guidance so they can chart their own course. We create connections to help them get ahead.

In 2020, our priority was to offer young people high quality long-term support so that the pandemic didn't further disadvantage them. In response to the lockdown, we pivoted our programmes online, providing more pastoral care and creative resources. We also mentored our biggest ever cohort of young people, and for the first time invited over 18s to apply directly for a mentor to help them achieve their career ambitions.



## 87%

of Young Talent feel more prepared for the future since joining Arts Emergency



### Who we support

- **39%** of our 2020 mentees were eligible for free school meals
- **51%** had a household income below £25,000 per annum
- **62%** describe themselves as a person of colour or ethnic minority
- **16%** are disabled, D/deaf or neurodivergent
- **74%** of mentees met two or more of our eligibility criteria

### Why we do it

We think every young person should have the chance to contribute to the culture they live in. That's why we're dedicated to levelling the playing field. People from privileged backgrounds are more likely to dominate key roles in the creative and cultural sector, shaping what goes on stage, page and screen. Just **16%** of arts and media professionals are from working class backgrounds<sup>1</sup>. The pandemic has compounded many of the inequalities that shut out talented new voices. This year, all our programmes responded to the most urgent issues facing young people: their wellbeing, education and employment prospects.

- with exams cancelled, high attaining low income students are more likely to have their grades under-predicted<sup>2</sup>
- **83%** of young people have experienced a negative impact on their mental health due to the crisis<sup>3</sup>
- more than half the people who lost their jobs in the last year were under 25<sup>4</sup>
- young people entering the labour market now are likely to experience lower wages for up to five years after starting work<sup>5</sup>

## Life-changing mentoring

In January, we introduced **248** mentees to expert mentors in London, Manchester and Margate. As the country moved into lockdown, mentoring was re-imagined to take place online. The focus of conversations became navigating home school, health anxieties and life in lockdown. Volunteer mentors increased their pastoral support and offered on average an extra two sessions this year. Over and over again, mentor pairs and teachers described mentoring as a lifeline.



# 82%

of mentees applied for university

**Louis wants to study architecture so we matched him with Lorenza, an architect and urban designer in Manchester**

“

LOUIS: Our first mentor meeting was an eye-opening discussion that left me feeling inspired and enthusiastic. My favourite part of the year was my week in Somerset at an Architectural Drawing Summer School.

Since mentoring, I can confidently say I feel better prepared for the future. I now know it's okay not to know. Arts Emergency helped me see there isn't just one 'right decision' and introduced me to creative connections that I wouldn't have got to meet otherwise. I feel relief and peace of mind knowing there isn't one set path but in fact several pathways taking you to your destination.

“

LORENZA: I saw a great change in Louis. His confidence grew and grew through work experience, working on his portfolio and reflecting on his passions. At the Summer School he really started to see himself in the world of architecture.

I wanted to support a young person because without networks and connections making a career in architecture is really hard. Sharing my journey with my mentee helped me really appreciate how far I've come. It has brought me so much joy during a really difficult year and was full of moments of positivity.



# Opportunities and long-term support

This year we expanded our Community programme and support for over 18s, piloting a mentoring scheme for young people aged 18-25. We also:

- shared **372** creative and cultural opportunities, a **77%** increase on the previous year
- fulfilled **95** Wish List requests for networking opportunities, book vouchers and tutorials
- created **135** connections between Young Talent and Network members
- pre-lockdown, organised events including visits to **The Guardian** and the **National Theatre** costume department
- during lockdown, organised online workshops, Q&As and free tickets to theatre live streams

As of 2020 we support **576** Young Community members. They told us they're relieved to know Arts Emergency will continue to support them until their 26th birthday.

**“Taking part in a creative community empowers me and challenges me to get out of my comfort zone and meet new people.”**

“

MAYA: I've had nothing but positive and life-changing opportunities from Arts Emergency. I would love to be an actor and I feel much more prepared for the future having done my foundation course.

I want to incorporate other skills such as writing, devising and directing into my work. I built on my editorial skills through a paid writing commission from Boundless Theatre, writing a passionate opinion piece about why South Asian people should support Black Lives Matter.

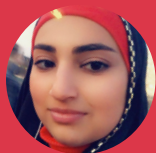
I feel so much more confident and empowered going into an industry in which I had no real prior professional connections. It's like having someone in your corner with a big banner that says 'YOU CAN DO THIS!'



# Youth Collective: community, campaigning and care

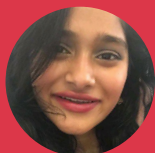
We have launched our first ever Youth Collective to ensure that young people's voices are amplified through our work. The collective is made up of seven young people who meet regularly to create projects. The collective co-curated our first ever online residential exploring activism, community building, imposter syndrome and structural inequality. Speakers included the activist **Amina Gichinga**, playwright **Travis Alabanza**, writer **Nikesh Shukla** and journalist **Yomi Adegoke**.

## Meet the Youth Collective



**AYAH, 20**

Being part of the Youth Collective allows me to let others know about this amazing programme. I want to learn how to help communities and build one for anyone who is creative. I'll always remember meeting all the staff and the other students at the mentor pair Introduction Event, their excited energy was contagious.



**SAMIRA, 21**

I found my first and favourite job through Arts Emergency. That job shaped what I'm now studying at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. In future I'd like to produce work that helps create change. Being in the Young Community makes us feel loved, welcomed and supported.



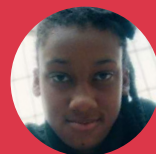
**MENDHI, 19**

I want to do something in graphic design or children's illustration. It feels comforting to be in the Young Community, being part of something bigger than myself and knowing that I have people around to help when I need a little nudge. The end of year Celebration Event was probably my highlight as I made my own design for the zine and had a really nice send off!



**BENIN, 20**

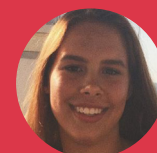
In a sector where making change feels impossible Arts Emergency's optimism and faith in people has helped start the shift. In my ideal future I'd go to the theatre almost everyday! The end of mentoring Celebration is my favourite memory so far, it was just a super wholesome, warm closing to the year.



**HOSANNA, 21**

Everyone I've met in the Arts Emergency community are people I want to be around. In future I'd like to be

a professional playwright, work in the props department and do some live comedy! I really enjoyed work experience on a Fringe theatre production, it was the first time I felt like I was doing professional theatre.



**SUNNIE, 19**

My favourite part so far was going into schools to recruit new mentees in 2019. Public speaking was a challenge but it was lovely to meet so many inspirational future community members. In my ideal future, I'd be working for Penguin Random House! Arts Emergency provides me with a sense of security and family, not just industry contacts and connections.



**SARAH, 26**

The best part of Arts Emergency so far was work experience at London Fashion Week! As a Youth Collective member I'm really excited to help foster a community of like-minded people who can support each other. I'm passionate about design, technology and media so in future I would love to work within the creative industries.

## Reaching out during lockdown

In response to the pandemic all our mentoring became remote. We inspired fun and creativity through online events and sent out **130** packs of artistic materials and prompts. We gave earphones to any young person who needed the extra privacy and our team offered one-to-one phone calls to check in with those experiencing difficult situations. We also made helpful resources including guidance about exams and support and information about Black Lives Matter.



# 94%

of mentees said that being part of Arts Emergency has had a positive impact on them during lockdown

Our team created resources and activities to help promote a positive mindset.

# “

**Arts Emergency has provided structure and normality which is what I needed. I completed the Curtis Brown online work experience over the summer and it was so insightful, it challenged my skills and made me feel more confident in what I want to do.”**

We supported Sam Oddie to create his own podcast series interviewing Network members about their careers.



# 78%

of mentees expanded their network in 2020

# “

**Mentoring gave me a safe space to share my worries and I've been able to develop a career path too!”**

# “

**I was able to interview people for my documentary thanks to Arts Emergency. During a time where we have had to isolate ourselves, this community has been a source of connection and communication.”**



## Work experience goes online

Work experience is one of the most valuable ways for a young person to build their CV, gain industry insights and make their first contacts. Finding quality placements can be much harder for young people without connections, excluding people from underrepresented backgrounds from getting crucial opportunities. In 2020, we moved work experience online and placed **75** young people at organisations including **Time Out**, **BBC Studios** and **Walker Books**. Our Network and Young Community became even more interconnected nationally, including a young person from Oldham doing an architecture placement in London, and a young Londoner carrying out work experience at a community arts organisation in Plymouth.



# 98%

said their work experience placement will help them in the future

**Anjalee did work experience with human rights charity EachOther**

“

ANJALEE: I mainly worked with the creative director and editor, who both gave me amazing pointers about entering journalism. During my placement I conducted research into the media's portrayal of migrants during the pandemic, did a Twitter takeover, interviewed the Chair at the Campaign for Broadcasting Equality and wrote a piece about my experiences with colourism.

Politics definitely felt out of reach for me before joining Arts Emergency. But now I'm more optimistic about the opportunities available in political writing and I'm more confident in my ability to analyse concepts and ideas. My networking skills have also improved since meeting so many brilliant people at the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, at EachOther and within the Arts Emergency Network.





## First steps into industry

Throughout 2020, we helped young people gain the knowledge and confidence to get in and get on in their careers. Information around creative careers remains opaque, **70%** of interns complete at least one unpaid placement and people from privileged backgrounds are more than twice as likely to land a job in the creative industries<sup>6</sup>. To help young people develop their employability skills we ran regular CV and cover letter reviews, and an online careers workshop with cultural professionals. Over thirty members of our Young Community took up paid opportunities through Arts Emergency in the last year with organisations including **CBBC** and **Boundless Theatre**.



# 93%

of our Young Community say that a career in the creative and cultural industries is more attainable since joining Arts Emergency

We commissioned Young Talent Nancy Stevens to create our 2020 Christmas e-card.

**The National Film and Television School gave a paid place to Blessing to attend their six week immersive scriptwriting course**

“

BLESSING: Since joining Arts Emergency I've learnt a lot, like how to access entry-level jobs in screenwriting and how to be confident in expressing my ideas to industry contacts. I now know that networking is only as difficult as you make it. When you connect with people whose work you're interested in, your interest will facilitate and sustain the conversation.

I was also lucky enough to score a place on the NFTS interactive storytelling programme. I was completely out of my comfort zone the whole time but I loved it! It sparked an interest in writing for games and VR, and I'm so grateful for that opportunity.





## How you can help

Without community and support, even more talented young people could see themselves locked out of the arts for good.

Thanks to their supporters, Arts Emergency has been able to continue their incredible work across the country, making sure that the future of culture better reflects the whole of society.

I'm proud to support Arts Emergency and be part of a network of volunteers and donors who are helping to send ladders down to young people. People giving anything from £5 a month to £1,000 a year have allowed Arts Emergency to grow at such an exciting rate.

I think it's on all of us who have weathered this storm to keep on helping young people on their way. Thank you so much to everyone who is already supporting. And if you aren't yet, then today's the day!

SARA PASCOE

COMEDIAN, WRITER AND ARTS EMERGENCY BURSAR

**[arts-emergency.org/donate](https://arts-emergency.org/donate)**



# Thank you

We'd like to say a massive thank you to our wonderful community of donors, who got us through 2020 and helped us support hundreds of young people across the country when they most needed it.

Thank you to every single one of our **1,800+** monthly donors as well as Bursars, major donors, organisations, trusts and foundations. Together, you are the lifeblood of Arts Emergency.

## Bursar Club

Alice, Alice, Alison, Andrew, Anna, Ashley, Barry, Bryony, Charles, Charles, Christine, Christopher, Daniel, Emily, Eve, Francesca, Hannah, Harriet, Hilary, Jack, Jack, Jack, James, Joshua, Josie, Kate, Katy, Laura, Laura, Lisa, Marcus, Mathew, Mike, Nish, Peter, Rebecca, Richard, Russell, Sam, Sara, Sarah and Scott.

Plus two anonymous Bursars and one in memory of Anne and Kenneth, Muriel and Bernard.

## Major donors

Andrew, Edward, Jeremy, Julia, Nicholas, Rhod, Sian, Thomas and four anonymous donors.

## Organisations

A Year With My Camera  
The Agency  
Four Corners Books  
Haworth Tompkins  
Imaginary Friends Productions  
INCK

IPJ Productions  
The Line Animation  
Show and Tell Productions  
Sotheby's  
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Ernest Hecht Charitable Foundation  
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Gaia Charitable Trust  
ShareGift  
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LAURA KINSELLA FOUNDATION

AKO Foundation





## Highlights from a year online

Network members Yomi Adegoke, Mathew Baynton, Sanjeev Bhaskar, Neil Gaiman, Nish Kumar and Joe Lycett shared words of encouragement with our mentees.

[youtube.com/watch?v=j2NXmNkgRjc](https://youtube.com/watch?v=j2NXmNkgRjc)

Our mentors and mentees told us about their favourite part of the year and what their hopes for the future are.

[youtube.com/watch?v=YfGpqEFQfO4](https://youtube.com/watch?v=YfGpqEFQfO4)

Our team created a host of resources to help young people get through lockdown life, including activity sheets on staying home, setting a routine and building self-esteem.

[arts-emergency.org/wellbeing-resources](https://arts-emergency.org/wellbeing-resources)

From setting goals to mock interviews, we shared a variety of resources for volunteers planning their mentoring sessions. [arts-emergency.org/mentoring-sessions](https://arts-emergency.org/mentoring-sessions)

The Youth Collective took over our Instagram account for a week, to introduce themselves and share what they're passionate about. [instagram.com/artsemergency](https://instagram.com/artsemergency)

We compiled a list of gifts you can buy directly from our young makers or supporters. [arts-emergency.org/gift-guide](https://arts-emergency.org/gift-guide)

We hosted a series of online workshops, including how to write a rom-com, getting into game design and perfecting your personal statement.

“The best bit about mentoring has been  
**getting to know my mentor and  
discussing really big issues**

together like the LGBTQ+ community, race and colourism.”

“I’ve become a better writer, which will

**benefit my studies  
and future career.”**

“One of my main goals this year was to

**understand the different  
roles within the industry**

and I achieved that.”

“It’s a very friendly and encouraging community.

**Everyone is lovely to each other**

and they have massively helped me during lockdown  
to keep pushing forward.”

“My mentor has been

**incredibly supportive –  
always seeing more potential**

and pushing me to reach it.”

“I feel as though I have access to

**great resources and great people**

whenever I need some assistance.”

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#### References:

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Photos: Charles Leek, Lilla Nyeki and Rachel Sherlock.