



# 2023 Impact Report

## Welcome

In 2023, Arts Emergency celebrated a decade of making a difference. Founded by comedian Josie Long and myself, our mission has been clear from the start: to empower marginalised youth by providing access to arts education and opportunities in the creative field to ensure it doesn't remain a playground for the privileged with connections.

Since its formation, Arts Emergency has supported over 2,000 young people with mentoring, coaching, resources, travel bursaries, work experience placements and traineeships - we've opened doors that might have remained closed otherwise.

As a result, these young talents have found themselves better equipped, more self-assured, and supported in their journey towards a creative future they are passionate about. I couldn't be prouder of what it's achieved over the past 10 years and it was fantastic to be able to celebrate this milestone with our young people, supporters and the team, with not one, but two memorable events. The first was a one-day festival organised by our Youth Collective for the Young Community to come together in Manchester, hear from industry experts and share their experiences with their peers. The second was a lively bash (complete with birthday cake) in Hackney - the borough where we first kicked off the mentoring programme. We showcased our young people's incredible talent including a screening of *The Art World Is Our World* - a film directed by the Youth Collective member Sam and featuring an original poem by Maya, I encourage you to [watch it here](#).

The impact of Arts Emergency is undeniable and life-changing. As you look through this report, filled with first-hand accounts from our young people, I hope you'll share in our pride. Together, we're part of something remarkable, ensuring our small but mighty organisation continues to thrive.

**Neil Griffiths**, Arts Emergency CEO & Co-Founder

## **About us**

Arts Emergency was founded by activist Neil Griffiths and comedian Josie Long over 10 years ago. We aim to open up pathways to arts education and careers through mentoring and long-term support for under-resourced young people from the age of 16 until they turn 26.

Over the past decade we've cultivated a Network of nearly 10,000 professional creatives: people who have studied arts or humanities, and those who believe that everyone, no matter their background, should have the opportunity to pursue the future they want. The Network acts as an alternative 'old boys' club' and is crucial to our work. They volunteer as mentors and coaches, offer work experience placements and paid opportunities, fundraise on our behalf, fulfil young people's Wish List requests, offer tickets to events, advocate for us in their industries, and donate to our cause. This proactive and generous community has enabled us to support over 2,000 marginalised young people with our programmes so far.

## **Who we support**

We work with young people who aren't already able to benefit from their parents' university experience and professional networks. We ask that all mentees meet at least one of our eligibility criteria.

Of our 2023 mentees:

- 10% are disabled
- 17% have a learning difficulty
- 51% have been eligible for free school meals or the 16-19 bursary
- 54% do not have a university-educated parent
- 60% describe themselves as being from a Black, Asian or ethnic minority background
- 63% grew up in a postcode that is in the bottom two fifths of the indices of deprivation
- Significantly, 83% of mentees met at least two of our eligibility criteria

## **Mentoring**

Our 12-month mentoring programme sees a young person aged 16-18 get matched with a volunteer mentor working in an industry they're interested in learning more about. Arts Emergency mentors are people working in the arts, creative, cultural or heritage sectors. They undergo training, referencing and DBS checks before preparing to meet their mentee.

In January 2023, we introduced 225 young people throughout London, Manchester, Merseyside and Brighton to their mentor. During the year the pairs met once a month either in-person or online. The meetings are a chance for the mentee to ask questions, share their ambitions, set goals, gain an insight into a career - the good and bad parts - and make their first networking connections, and to have some friendly support and encouragement as they decide the best pathway for them. For some, the programme solidifies their plan for their future, for others it broadens their knowledge of alternative routes and generates new goals.

After our 2023 mentees completed their mentoring year:

- 94% of mentees were more confident, or were quite confident, in applying to a course related to the creative and cultural industries
- 92% of mentees felt more confident, or quite confident, in articulating their interests and skills, and applying for courses
- 87% of mentees said they were more aware, or very aware, of the routes into the creative and cultural industries

## **George's mentoring journey**

**George, aged 17, from Liverpool, is currently at school studying for his A-levels. He's a passionate musician and applied for an Arts Emergency mentor, as he was unsure whether to pursue his passion at university.**

"I found out about the Arts Emergency mentoring programme through school and thought it would be a good way of getting some clarity on whether I should continue studying music at university or whether I should apply for a different course like Law.

I play the organ, piano and guitar and received the organ scholarship at my school. I accompany the choir so I play a lot of classical and church music but also play indie and rock music on the guitar at gigs in my spare time.

I was matched with Hilary Browning - a cellist with the Liverpool Philharmonic. During our meetings, we talked about applying to do a Music degree at Oxford University and applying for their organ scholarship. I knew it could be a good route but I didn't feel confident to apply. Hilary was incredibly supportive and encouraged me to and helped me a lot with preparing for the audition despite the organ not being her instrument.

The highlight of my mentoring experience was when Hilary arranged for me to have a private lesson with Ian Tracey who plays the organ at Liverpool Cathedral. Ian was really friendly and he gave me great advice for the Oxford University audition. Although I thought I did horribly at the audition I was offered a conditional place!

As well as giving encouragement, Hilary has been really generous by giving me complimentary tickets to Liverpool Philharmonic performances, which for me, was great entertainment and important for my music development. I'm lucky that my school is supportive of me taking a creative path but Hilary gave me the extra confidence boost I needed to take the next step and apply to pursue music at university."

## **Talitha's mentoring journey**

**Talitha, now aged 19, from Manchester, was looking for a mentor who could offer insights into working in the theatre industry.**

"I was in sixth form when I applied for an Arts Emergency mentor. I want to be a designer for theatre and film and I felt a bit lost when it came to what it would be like to work in the industry, and how you find work and opportunities. I was hoping a mentor would be able to give me advice and be able to offer feedback on my work as I don't know any people who have knowledge of the industry.

I was paired with Katy, a legislative theatre director who uses theatre to enact political change. I was studying sociology at the time so this was really interesting to me and Katy encouraged me to explore how theatre could be used in different ways.

At the time of applying for a mentor I felt a bit lost with planning the future. Having a mentor like Katy to bounce ideas off, get advice about things - not just about theatre, but also about practical things, like financial planning for moving to London - was brilliant!

I'm currently studying Design for Performance at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. I'm still in touch with Katy and have discussed some of my projects with her to get her thoughts. She's become a really good friend."

**"Everything felt like a shared learning journey. Mentoring is not just a great way to give back. It's also a great way for people who are already working in the industry to expand their sense of community and learn from younger artists."**

Katy, artist & civic practitioner and Talitha's mentor

## **The lasting impact of mentoring**

**Miko, now aged 21, from London, is a composer. He applied for an Arts Emergency mentor in 2020, as he had no connections to the industry and wanted to get some guidance on how to take steps towards achieving his ambition of working as a musician. Miko was paired up with mentor Edward, a composer and performer.**

"I've always had a strong drive to have a career in music but I wasn't sure what steps I would need to take to get a job and opportunities within the industry. I applied for an Arts Emergency mentor in 2020 hoping they could give me some advice.

To be honest, when I met my mentor Edward for the first time, I wasn't sure it was the right match. I've always focused on classical practice and Edward is a contemporary composer. But this changed by the end of the mentorship - the pairing was PERFECT! It was brilliant to have the opportunity to learn from a professional musician.

During the mentoring year, I got an insight into my mentor's contemporary practice and his community work and learned about different jobs available within the industry. I shifted my interest from a traditional music practice to

conducting, community work and contemporary practice - it kickstarted a whole new direction for me that I never expected when I applied for a mentor.

My mentor helped me with university applications as well as building my confidence and sharing his network with me to help me further my career. I'm currently doing a BA in Music with a specialism in orchestra conducting at Southampton University. I'm now a member of the Arts Emergency Young Community and applied for a summer work experience placement at Askonas Holt (classical music agency), an opportunity I found through the Young Community newsletter. The placement gave me a great insight into concert organisation. I really enjoyed working there and, despite being set on my goal to be a conductor, I have since been thinking about work in arts management as a post-graduate option.

The placement opened up a potential career path for me and helped me make contacts that I wouldn't have had access to otherwise. I never would have found it if not for Arts Emergency - not least because I wouldn't have thought to look for it. I am actually going back to work at Askonas Holt in summer 2024."

## **Coaching**

In 2023 we piloted a 10-week coaching programme for 18-25-year-olds. 55 coachees from London, Manchester, Merseyside and Brighton, were recruited from Arts Emergency's Young Community to test out strategies for making ongoing impact with young people who were already familiar with Arts Emergency and participating in our programmes. Alongside this, we partnered with London Transport Museum to offer eight coaching spots to their Young Freelancers.

Coachees applied to the programme with a specific project or goal in mind, and were matched with a coach to help them harness the tools and knowledge they needed to achieve their goal over a 10-week period.

**"I now feel a sense of direction going forward and have had a huge boost of confidence!"**

Millie, aged 25, 2023 Coachee

- 82% of respondents said coaching was 'very effective'

- 100% of respondents said they would recommend the coaching programme to other people

## **Harry's coaching experience**

**Harry, aged 22, from Manchester, is passionate about working in the TV industry. We matched him with coach Lucy, who is a development executive on TV drama and comedy shows.**

I applied to be part of the coaching programme because I was working on a script for a TV pilot - a project I was really passionate about pursuing, but had absolutely no clue on what I could do to take it forward. I wanted the coaching programme to help me navigate the path ahead and what it would take to deliver the project.

The best part of the coaching programme was that Lucy introduced me to some amazing people in the film and television industry in our meetings. They gave me invaluable advice and insight I otherwise wouldn't have had. The biggest takeaway has been that any creative can start their career from any point, and that there are so many places to break in.

I really wanted to boost confidence through this process. My amazing coach Lucy helped me learn that confidence is something that I don't have to just switch on, it's something I will learn over time to be better at, and it will come and go on different days. Even the most experienced in the field still have days where they struggle. It's something important to understand as a young creative starting out and being able to approach people with big plans and ideas.

Lucy shared her knowledge of what the process of taking a script proposal further entailed, and from her feedback, I produced a one-page pitch and have now sent it out on submission several times. I was also able to have a practice pitching session with one of her contacts.

The programme was an incredible opportunity. I feel like I really made the most out of it by knowing what I wanted to achieve early on and being prepared for our first meeting. It was absolutely worth the time commitment.

## **Work experience**

Getting work experience in a creative industry is notoriously difficult if you don't have the connections. As well as providing insights into an industry and a valuable asset for any CV, seeing the day-to-day workings of a place of work is very important for a young person's professional development and confidence.

In summer 2023 we offered 42 placements with providers such as literary and talent agency Curtis Brown, British Library Leeds, production studio Kode Media and Kurt Geiger Kindness Foundation. The placements took place in-person, online and a combination of both for a period of 5-10 days.

**“I am more prepared and confident in myself to continue with my work, to self-edit it to a high standard, and to approach industry professionals!”**

Rohit, 2023 Work Experience participant

- 100% of young people who participated in the work experience programme said it would help them in the future
- 100% of young people who participated rated their experience 'excellent' or 'good'
- 90% of our providers are happy to sign on for future work experience next year

## **Chloe's work experience**

**Chloe, aged 17, from London, wanted to learn more about working in architecture and urban design. She did a 5-day placement at Studio Egret West.**

“I applied to the Arts Emergency summer work experience programme, as I was in year 12 at school and I hadn't had the chance to do any useful placements that were related to the arts, despite trying to get some. I went to Studio Egret West, an architecture firm which has a broad workforce including graphic designers, landscape designers and model makers, as well as architects.

During my placement I developed the plan for a house using a prompt sheet. I based the design of the house on what the client's needs and wants were. I



was lucky enough to be able to create miniature models - one in clay and one in cardboard. I met a university student on placement who had created an installation in the office based on AI and got to talk with Jonathan, who is an architectural model maker, at the studio. The best part about the work experience was meeting the staff and hearing how they got to their position. It reassured me, as they came from all walks of life.

Due to this opportunity I have decided to do a foundation year to strengthen my craft and help me decide which career path to take. Initially I wasn't sure about studying architecture but being at Studio Egret West and meeting the staff showed me there are lots of different roles in the architecture sector.

Although the staff at school had tried to help me and my peers get work experience they had been unsuccessful so it is not likely that I would have got work experience like this without Arts Emergency.”

**“Architecture can be seen as an elitist profession, but the door is easier to walk through than people realise. There are also many roles within the sector that support the creative output of architectural studios in a variety of physical and digital mediums. There is an onus within the profession to reach out and engage with the minds of the next generation, and show them that opportunities are accessible.”**

Jonathan, architectural model maker at Studio Egret West

## **Youth Collective**

Launched in 2020, the Youth Collective embodies our commitment to amplifying youth voice. Comprised of ten talented young people from across the UK who are active in challenging the status quo, the Youth Collective ensures youth perspectives remain central to everything we do.

In 2023, in celebration of Arts Emergency's 10th Birthday, the Youth Collective created a manifesto and organised The Art World is Our World festival for the Young Community at Contact in Manchester. They planned and arranged everything from venues, panel speakers, and workshop facilitators to travel bursaries and refreshments. The Youth Collective ensured the day-long festival was a chance for the Young Community to connect with each other in-person and learn from creative industry professionals.

Two Youth Collective members serve as Young Trustees on the Arts Emergency board, making sure that the organisation's plans are aligned with the needs of young people.

## **Freda's experience in the Youth Collective**

**Freda, aged 21, from London, joined the Arts Emergency Youth Collective in 2022.**

"I applied to join the Youth Collective because I wanted to get more involved with Arts Emergency, be a voice for the Young Community, and meet like-minded young people. As a member of the Youth Collective I've attended workshops, events and meetings. Although the members of the Youth Collective are based in different cities around the UK, it's great meeting up, especially in person, and having space to discuss the challenges faced by young people wanting to engage with the creative industries.

In June 2023, to celebrate Arts Emergency's 10th Birthday, the Youth Collective organised a festival in Manchester for the Young Community. Together we curated the festival, which we decided to call The Art World Is Our World, booked panellists including actors Julie Hesmondhalgh and Lamin Touray, and workshop facilitators, budgeted for the event and delivered it on the day. I created digital content to promote the festival to the Young Community to encourage them to attend. Around 50 members of the Young Community came and it was so nice to bring them together to talk and network, and it felt like a real bonding experience for the Collective and the Community.

I really value being a member of the Youth Collective because it has connected me to a wider network of peers and given me access to opportunities."

## **Young Community**

When mentees turn 18 they are invited to join the Young Community - currently there are over 1,300 young people in this community. They receive monthly newsletters with updates on Arts Emergency's programmes, exclusive traineeships, commissions, free tickets to cultural events, the

opportunity to ask for advice from our Network of nearly 10,000 creative and cultural professionals, and the chance to request resources to support their learning and development.

When Young Community members turn 26 they are invited to join our Network and, when they're ready, can start supporting the next generation with advice and advocacy - just like they were supported.

**“As I did say on our first interview I will pay it forward. When I have my big agency I would love to be a mentor and coach to some individuals that are also interested in the PR/Advertising sphere and be of help to them!”**

Miriam, 2023 Young Community Member

## **Ella's experience in the Young Community**

**Ella, aged 20, from Manchester, is an aspiring actor, director and writer. Ella joined the Young Community after taking part in Arts Emergency's 12-month mentoring programme.**

“I joined the Young Community to get advice and support to pursue my career goals. I really like the monthly Young Community newsletter because there's lots of different opportunities in it that I go for, including networking opportunities, access to funding and the chance to get free tickets to theatre performances through the Ruby Ticket Scheme.

Being part of the Young Community has had a significant impact on my career - I've received support in pursuing acting, directing, and writing opportunities. These have led to achievements such as securing funding, assistant directing opportunities, and directing my own show. I've also gained confidence, professional development (such as getting an agent), and networking opportunities that contributed to my growth in the industry. By talking to people who were in the industry I now feel a lot more secure in my sense of self and professionalism and know that I'm good enough.”

**“The support I have access to is also very important. From support with work experience, career development and CV writing to support in purchasing materials and books essential for my music!”**

Theo, Young Community member

## **How you can help**

Hey there!

I'm Lolly Adefope, actor, comedian and Arts Emergency Bursar. I love and support Arts Emergency because I work in an industry that is notoriously challenging to get a foot through the door of unless you have the connections or the privilege to be able to work for free. I believe that everyone should get a fair shot at pursuing their passions no matter their background.

I love that Arts Emergency actually creates a network for under-resourced young people that they can call upon for advice. Their mentoring programme has tangible outcomes like work experience and uni applications that can lay the vital first paving stones for a young person's path to their future. The team and Network also offers resources, travel bursaries and facilitates conversations between young people and creative professionals. It's such a simple, proactive and practical approach which has the power to transform young people's life choices and future confidence.

I am lucky to be in the position to be able to donate and I know not everyone is, but if you can, I'd urge you to consider supporting Arts Emergency's work. Whether it's your equivalent of a £5 monthly donation or becoming a Bursar, or joining the Network, every single bit counts. Your donation could fund a network connection, free ticket or even a full year of mentoring. How beautiful and practical!

Together, we can help make the creative industries a more inclusive and equitable space for all.

Thank you so much for being part of this movement with me.

**Lolly Adefope**, Comedian, actor and Arts Emergency Supporter

## **Thank you**

A MASSIVE heartfelt thank you to our incredible community of major donors, bursars, our 1,677 monthly donors, organisations, and trusts and foundations, for your generous support. Your contributions are truly making a difference in the lives of under-represented young people, helping them access arts education and opportunities. We couldn't do it without you!

## **Bursar Club**

Alexander, Alexia, Andrew, Andrew, Andy, Anna, Ashley, Charles, Charlie, Charlotte, Chris, Corrie, Dan, Daniel, David, David, Dylan, Elaine, Ella, Emma, Emma, Eve, Gemma, Geoffrey, Hannah, Helen, Jack, Jesse, Jon, Kate, Katherine, Katy, Laura, Lisa, Lolly, Lucy, Lucy, Marcus, Mark, Mathew, Matthew, Michael, Michael, Mike, Miranda, Miriam, Nicki, Perminder, Peter, Peter, Rachel, Rich, Richard, Richard, Rico, Rob, Rocio, Rosie, Russell, Sara, Sarah, Sarah, Sarah Jane, Scott, Tony, Yomi, and Zoe.

## **Bursar Organisations**

Emma Davies Photography, DT Impact Limited, Four Corners Books, Plosive, Sadie Coles HQ, Show and Tell Productions.

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

## **Major Donors**

Alan, Alex, Andrew, Charlotte, Daniel, David, Emily, Harriet, Imelda, Jeremy, Joshua, Julia, Lolly, Matthew, Nicholas, Russell, Sarah, Tom & Tony.  
Thank you to all the anonymous donors.

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