

Arts Emergency 2021 Impact Report

“I remember feeling like architecture was a massive world that I’d never feel welcome in but since mentoring I’ve been able to access so much more and feel like this is for me.”

“I learnt how to pitch and I got my first freelance writing gig.”

“I never thought in a year I would have a full time job in TV and be on the Channel 4 screenwriting course.”

“When I’m working in a role I enjoy I would like to be a mentor as it has impacted my life for the better and helped me better prepare for my future.”

Welcome

At Arts Emergency we believe that by providing networks, opportunities and support to young people today, we'll change the UK's media, arts and politics tomorrow. I hope you feel as inspired as I do reading about our young people writing novels, creating podcasts and getting their first jobs in the arts. It's real, hopeful, heartwarming stuff.

In 2021, the UK's cultural and creative sectors were reeling from the impacts of the pandemic and recession. But our Network rallied to ensure young people weren't left behind. Taking all we'd learnt from the previous year, our community continued to adapt to the changing circumstances; with mentors offering in person and remote meetings, work experience taking place on site and online, and our team running a host of workshops on Zoom. With the vaccine rollout and lockdowns easing it was fantastic to see our Young Talent out

and about exploring local venues and reviewing cultural events through our new Ruby Ticket scheme.

2021 was a challenging and hopeful year. After two years of trying to get a 16-18s mentoring programme running in Thanet we did not have the uptake to continue. So, we reinvested the funding in our Community programme, supporting young adults across the UK whose career progression was impacted by the pandemic. Our team offered more opportunities and fulfilled more requests than ever before. We launched our mentoring programme in Merseyside and welcomed five new people to the team. We also decided to invest in improving our operations, HR, safeguarding policy and database, to provide the infrastructure our growing charity needs. For me, seeing all the ingenious ways our supporters managed to fundraise for us during this time

has also been a real highlight (shout out to the
crochet Bernie Sanders auction!)

In October, we ran a campaign to raise awareness
of the barriers young people are facing and to
encourage people across the sector to take action.
It was brilliant seeing 1,000 people sharing their
stories of breaking into the industry, being featured
on Sky News, and learning that millions of people
had seen the appeal. And, most importantly, I was
delighted to welcome hundreds of new Network
members and donors into the fold. If, like them, you
want to see a different future, with a culture that
genuinely reflects everyone, then please join us
today.

NEIL GRIFFITHS

ARTS EMERGENCY CO-FOUNDER & CEO

About us

We help young people without connections flourish in further education and navigate their way into creative and cultural careers. In 2021, we supported over 1,000 young people aged 16-25 across the UK. But we didn't do it alone. Arts Emergency is a people-powered movement. The charity relies on those already in the arts and humanities opening their networks and sharing their knowledge with young people. Mentors change lives by providing advice, encouragement and offering gateways into hard-to-crack industries like museums, publishing and theatre. Our Network members also make valuable professional introductions, offer crucial work experience and share paid opportunities. Our former mentees are now studying at Oxbridge, doing traineeships in the West End, and working as literary agents and music journalists.

2021 in numbers

- Pairs met up for 3,084 mentoring sessions
- Young Talent enjoyed 60 free tickets to plays, concerts, festivals & more
- We shared 223 creative and cultural opportunities
- On average, each mentoring pair met 10.6 times, with sessions lasting for 66 minutes

Who we support

To ensure we are working with those 16-18 year olds that need our support most we work with schools with high pupil premium and ask that all mentees aged 16-25 meet at least one of our eligibility criteria.

Of our 2021 mentees:

- 52% had a household income below £25,000 per annum

- 15% are disabled
- 32% have been eligible for free school meals
- 56% describe themselves as Black, Asian or from an ethnic minority background
- 57% do not have a university-educated parent
- 14% have a learning difficulty

Significantly, 74% of mentees met between two and eight of our eligibility criteria.

Life-changing mentoring

This year we continued our work supporting young people aged 16-25 in London and Manchester, launched a new project in Merseyside, and grew our mentoring scheme for young people aged 18-25. We introduced 352 mentees to skilled mentors. Pairs worked adaptively to the changing lockdown circumstances, meeting online and in person. Mentors provided young people with support, guidance and motivation, alongside

industry knowledge and opportunities. Mentees overwhelmingly expressed that they have more purpose and found having a mentor helpful during the pandemic.

92% of mentees feel more prepared for the future

Aspiring writer Joseph, aged 18 from Liverpool, was looking for support applying for university and finishing his novel.

Joseph: Having a mentor is genuinely one of the best decisions I've ever made. Because of Covid-19 we did all of our mentoring over Zoom. We did a lot of talking about writing, life and school, and working through current drafts of my novel. Sophie also let me join her own writing group for a few sessions. I got to meet a lot of writers from varying backgrounds and ages, and see a healthy critiquing environment, which is something I hadn't experienced before.

Sophie helped me with writing my CV and personal statement. For a while I was conflicted on what I should study at university; should I do social studies, like I'm studying at the minute, or should I follow my passions and go into creative writing?

The moment it really clicked for me was when Sophie introduced me to some of her PhD friends and I realised you may as well do something you love, and then not regret it. It's what I want to do, it's one of my favourite things, why not take three years to study it?

Sophie (mentor): "Reading the work of a gifted young writer and having regular discussions was an absolute joy. I was blown away by Joseph's talent and dedication to his craft and I can't wait to see what he gets up to next."

Real-world experience

Work experience is one of the best ways for young people to get to grips with an industry. Finding quality placements in the arts is hard for those without connections and even harder at a time where the pandemic has meant that competition for opportunities is high. Through our work experience programme, young people are able to make their first contacts, get glowing character references, add skills to their CVs and get their first bylines. In 2021, we placed 40 young people in London, Manchester and Merseyside at organisations including the Royal College of Art, Beano and Kiln Theatre.

85% of mentees feel more confident when in a place of work

Meghan, aged 24 from Solihull, learnt how a draft becomes a finished book on work experience at Faber.

Meghan: On my placement I met with professionals from Editorial, Design, Marketing, Sales, Contracts, Rights and Publicity. I attended departmental meetings, where I observed what their jobs look like day-to-day and the challenges they face. I was asked to compare two actual cover briefs, conduct image research, and read a children's book and identify scenes for chapter head illustrations.

I had an hour one to one session with the head of the company about my interests and experiences, and his own career progression and the publishing industry. Having someone as senior as him make time to see how he could help made me believe that I do stand a chance of entering the industry, and that my career aspirations are as valid and realistic as anyone else's.

The best part of the placement was being able to talk honestly and openly with the team. I asked what makes candidates stand out to them and their answers have directly impacted my job applications, and have even led to my first interviews in publishing.

Opportunities and long-term support

After a young person completes their year of mentoring, they'll become part of our Young Community and we'll keep offering them support until their 26th birthday. In 2021, our Young Community became 646 people strong. We launched a Discord channel so they could connect with each other, commissioned young people to write for our website, and ran fifteen events including How to Write a Rom-Com and Dyslexia and Creativity. Working with our voiceover artists, the Royal College of Art produced an animation that celebrates what being in the Young Community

is all about. We continue to signpost hundreds of creative jobs and resources in our monthly newsletter, with 44% of the community following up on opportunities.

- We shared 223 creative and cultural opportunities
- We introduced 70 Young Talent to Network members for 1-2-1 advice
- We provided 83 vouchers for essential books, art materials and tech
- We ran an Alternative Art School for 20 Young Community members

Kimberly, aged 19 from East London, was a Camera Trainee on Loop Talent's diary service for a year.

Kimberly: Before this I'd only been on set once, and if I'm being honest, I didn't know anything about the camera department or cinematography. I was

partnered up with a mentor, a cinematographer called Rick. We had a few Zoom calls to get to know each other and he would try and get me on any set that he was working on. I've been on set for four different productions so far as a Camera Trainee, three of them were short films, and one was a commercial. My first time on set was for a short film and before the shoot I was really scared but I didn't leave feeling that way. I honestly really enjoyed it. I had to help with the director's monitor and Felix the film loader literally explained every little thing to me. It made me understand everything a bit more. The whole experience has allowed me to see what roles exist and it's made me more curious and excited!

Our Youth Collective: one year on

Our Youth Collective was launched in 2020. In 2021, they began working on their self-led campaign, Crash Culture. With funding from the University of Edinburgh, the seven Youth Collective

members created a podcast exploring inequalities in the arts and how they affect real people struggling to break into the industry. They interviewed exciting guests including author Kit De Waal and produced a fascinating series examining class, race and climate justice.

Mendhi, aged 20 from East London, graduates this summer and has a job lined up at Autograph Gallery.

Mendhi: I joined the Youth Collective to help open up more opportunities because when I was younger I never knew that a career in the arts was a viable thing. For the most part I do things alone, so it was really nice to be part of a creative community and learn from a team. Together we made a podcast and I did some of the audio editing!

I found the job at Autograph Gallery through the Arts Emergency newsletter. In the interview they

asked about my previous experience and I was able to talk about the projects and transferable skills that I've learned in the Youth Collective. I used to struggle with imposter syndrome but now I feel more confident in myself and the arts feel more accessible - I'm not just being left in the dark.

73% of young members say that Arts Emergency makes them feel like part of a community

First steps into industry

We support young people for up to nine years - longer than any comparable programme. Thanks to this extended timeframe we get to know our Young Talent well and have the privilege of watching them take their first steps into creative or cultural work.

The access to resources and advice from our Network is crucial as young people move into adulthood, leaving the structures of home, school and uni. By providing both moral and practical

support our Network helps nurture them as they figure out how to thrive in their chosen industry.

Dominic, aged 23 from Bolton, is a freelance theatre technician. In 2021, he worked on four festivals, a local tour, and over 100 different performances.

Dominic: I wanted to get into theatre and decided to go straight from university into self-employment. My family weren't able to give me relevant advice because they were never in my shoes. So, I applied for a mentor to guide me through creating industry connections. Through Arts Emergency I met other freelancers, who then helped me connect to other freelancers and theatres. Andrew ran me through finances, Hannah told me about networking, and through Lindsey I experienced different parts of the sector during Manchester International Festival's Factory Project.

I've discovered more about myself, particularly since attending the Dyslexia and Creativity workshop. I heard from other professionals who have embraced their learning differences and it's helped me communicate about my own way of doing things.

82% of Young Talent have widened their professional networks

Ruby Tickets

In 2021, we launched our Ruby Ticket scheme to help young people without disposable income access cultural experiences and develop their critical skills by writing reviews. Young Community members have so far received over 60 free tickets to plays, concerts, festivals, conferences and more in both London and the North West.

“I found the roundtable conversation of post-graduates with museum-related degrees particularly helpful. I came away from it with a clearer idea of how to build experience.” Georgia attended the 2022 ICOM Working Internationally Conference

“It’s practically a VR without the VR; it’s the type of installation that keeps you coming back, leaving you with guaranteed phone storage bloat.” John saw Yayoi Kusama’s Infinity Rooms at Tate Modern

“I loved the moments of clowning, competition and physical movement. I also like that they are trying to explore masculinity and help us reflect on stereotypes and bias.” Youyangg saw BOYS at the Barbican

“It’s practically a VR without the VR; it’s the type of installation that keeps you coming back, leaving you with guaranteed phone storage bloat.”

John saw Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Rooms at Tate Modern

“It is a homage to Black culture past and present, and its themes are relatable to every Black man living in the UK. It is a beautiful tragedy, but also liberating and hilarious.”

Gwent saw For Black Boys Who Have Considered Suicide When The Hue Gets Too Heavy at the Royal Court Theatre

How you can help

Looking back, I realise I was part of the last generation to have access to a publicly-funded arts education; a full grant and subsistence, no fees, no debt, supportive and encouraging teachers. If I was pursuing the same career now, would I have made the same choices and taken the same risks? I don't think so. That door was closed a long time ago.

Which is why I'm proud to be a passionate champion of Arts Emergency, and was so pleased to support their fundraising appeal as a match-donor in December 2021, raising over £15,000 towards their programme.

Arts Emergency does fantastic work, building a community for talented young people who wouldn't necessarily have the contacts or financial backing that the creative industries too often demand.

So, a huge thank you to everyone who has offered a helping hand through these last few difficult years. There's still a long way to go, please do donate if you can.

David Nicholls

Author and Donor

9/10 Network members would recommend joining
Arts Emergency

Thank You

We'd like to say a huge thank you to our incredible community of donors, who have allowed us to get through 2021 and keep doors open for young people while others slam shut.

Thank you to every single one of our 1,850+ monthly donors as well as Bursars, major donors, organisations, trusts and foundations. Together, you are the lifeblood of Arts Emergency.

Bursar Club

Alex, Alice, Alice, Alison, Andrew, Anna, Ashley, Barry, Bryony, Charles, Charles, Christine, Christopher, Daniel, David, Emily, Eve, Francesca, Hannah, Hilary, Ian, Jack, Jack, James, Joshua, Josie, Julie, Kate, Katy, Laura, Laura, Lisa, Lucy, Marcus, Mark, Mathew, Mike, Olly, Peter, Rebecca, Richard, Russell, Sam, Sara, Sarah, Scott, Tim, Tony and Yomi.

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

Major donors

Alex, Andrew, David, Edward, Harriet, Jack, Jeremy, Julia, Nicholas, Nish, Rhod, Sian, Thomas and four anonymous donors.

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“I learnt about how to transition from working for someone to becoming self-employed.”

“I have made connections with some knowledgeable, creative and caring people”

“Having a mentor to just say ‘this isn’t over and we’ll come back fighting as an industry’ really helped me cope.”

“After being unemployed, I had a lot of doubt around my value. My mentor really helped me to build my confidence back up and gave me the tools to assess my strengths and priorities. I cannot stress how helpful and uplifting it has been.”

info@arts-emergency.org

+44 (0)20 7683 1077

Arts Emergency

Unit W3, 8 Woodberry Down

London N4 2TG

www.arts-emergency.org

Registered Charity Number 1152377