



Lewisham Youth
Theatre's

DIRECTORS REPORT 2021-2022



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OUR STORY SO FAR



OUR MISSION

We bring young people together from across the Lewisham community to create outstanding theatre in an environment of high expectations and collaboration. We work from the core belief that artistic excellence is key to expanding young people's horizons and creating lasting transformation.

In 2015, Lewisham Youth Theatre was awarded a Gold Level London Youth Quality Mark, a quality assurance scheme accredited by City and Guilds.

Find out more: download LYT's new [2017-2022 Strategic Plan](#) from our Publications Page.

OUR PURPOSE

Lewisham Youth Theatre (LYT) nurtures and inspires young people's voices through free participatory theatre activities, helping them to develop enduring and transferable skills that lead to increased life chances and long term well-being.

**ALL
YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE A
POWERFUL VOICE
AND A RIGHT
TO BE HEARD.**

ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

1 Significant Growth

Over the last year, Lewisham Youth Theatre have experienced significant growth as we have transitioned back to in-person delivery post-Covid and moved to a new space – a disused 5-floor retail space on Lewisham High Street.

We delivered our planned youth theatre projects focused on the theme of 'Youth Voices 2022' – with young people taking on lead roles as writers, directors, designers and producers, and using their creative voices to respond to urgent issues affecting them including the mental health crisis and the climate emergency. At the same time, the new space allowed us to innovate new ways to allow groups to interact and to place young people's creative ambitions at the centre of our work.

2 Youth-Led Creative Hub

The success of this year has allowed us to develop plans for growing the model of Youth-Led Creative Hub. The youth-led model is a development of our core ethos of centering young people's voices.

We imagine a theatre where young people from our youngest age groups to our graduates and trainee facilitators drive the creative process – developing high-quality and creatively ambitious projects in collaboration with professional artists while tackling the urgent issues that our communities face.

In the last year, this work has resulted in young people designing the physical space of the new creative hub, co-creating plays about climate anxiety and mental health, and leading workshops with community members to explore these topics.



Over the year, a total of **800 participants** have taken part in **382 sessions** with **197** taking part in core activity.



JUNIORS

47 aged **8-12** and **5** peer mentors aged **12-18** engaged in **88** sessions across **4** session groups. In June, they produced *Stories from the Playground*, a play about young people's mental health and the experience of returning to school after lockdown.

40 aged **12-14** and **5** peer mentors aged **15-17** engaged in **47** sessions across **5** session groups. In July, the Acting Company producer *The Parched Lands*, a play about young people's mental health and climate anxiety. In August, Devising Company performed their response to these themes: *Everything is FINE*.

38 aged **14-21** engaged in **24** sessions across **4** session groups. The Acting Company performed *Confessions* at LYT and at a festival of youth-led work at the Borough of Culture's Climate Home.

SENIORS

3 participants led the Acting Company process as paid assistant directors/writers alongside the Artistic Director. The Devising Company performed *What Happens After* - their response to themes of climate emergency and mental health as part of the *Time To Act* performance in August.

OTHER PROJECTS

25 Outreach sessions in schools & community settings reaching **604** participants aged **7-14**

12 aged **12-16** took part in **11 Bronze Arts Award** sessions, **10** achieved Qualifications

36 aged **11-17** engaged in **32** sessions of **Technical Theatre** across **5** session groups, including the Easter Fit Out/Build Up projects to transform LYT's new space on Lewisham High Street.

MEMBER'S COMMITTEE

19 aged **11-18** took part in **37** sessions, including planning events and developing plans for a cross borough youth social action project.

13 participants aged **18-25** received paid work experience, gaining employability skills through supporting on LYT's youth theatre projects.

GRADUATE CREATIVES

6 also received dedicated training on delivering drama for wellbeing with young people affected by poor mental health.

Programme DEVELOPMENTS:

2

Creative Hub Pilot

In August 2022, we piloted the **Creative Hub** sessions, piloting collaborations with like-minded organisation Theatre Centre to provide more activity to local young people.

1

Friday Socials & 'Free Space Fridays'

29 attended **11** new social drop-in sessions to support participants' mental health. Once in the Creative Hub space, '**Free Space Fridays**' provided a space for youth-led creative development.

3

Young Producers

16 aged **14-21** attended **6** sessions to learn producing skills.

our LEARNING

STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Over the last year, we have seen more evidence that the strong relationships built at LYT with other participants and trusted staff, and the ability to return to these relationships, particularly at moments of transition or crisis, are a key mechanism for our impact. The importance of this consistency in LYT's support is strongly evident in stories and feedback:

One long-time vulnerable member had not been participating regularly due to mock GCSEs. When he received a bad result on one exam, he literally ran to LYT and asked if he could help out at an event, helping him to feel useful and accomplished.

Another long-time participant had lost friends at school and been bullied when he came out as LGBTQ. He told us he was able to be open and comfortable with his identity at LYT where he had a circle of friends who were accepting of him. This helped him to get through a difficult period.

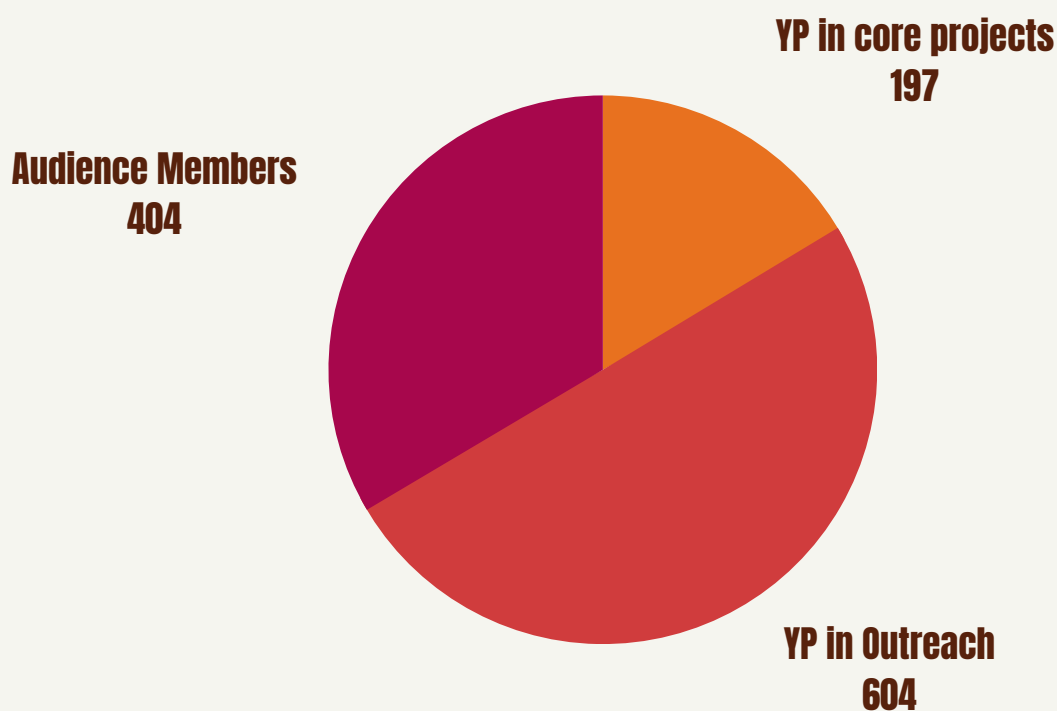
**"IF I DIDN'T
DIDN'T HAVE LYT, I DON'T KNOW
WHAT I WOULD HAVE
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LYT HAS GIVEN
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**"OVERALL
I FEEL LIKE HAVING LYT IN MY
LIFE CONSISTENTLY
HAS HELPED ME KEEP
BALANCED"**

MEETING OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

Key performance indicators are set out in our Strategic Plan 2017-2022 against each of our Strategic Objectives. A full strategic plan can be downloaded from our [website](#).

Strategic Objective 1: Improving transferable life skills of Lewisham young people (YP)



76%

Disclosed significant disadvantage*

90%

Young people have taken part in 3 or more sessions

56%

Young people have taking part in 10 or more sessions.

60%

Of 'workshop' project participants went on to join a next step performance project

Participant Self-Assessment Indicators:

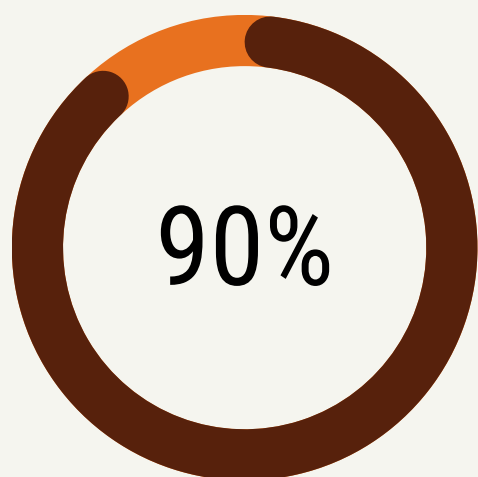
- **Social/Emotional Skill:** 96% of all evaluation respondents reported a significant increase in at least one social/emotional skill (confidence, teamwork, communication and emotional literacy)
- **Creative Skills:** 67% of all evaluation respondents reported an increase in their creative skills

*For more information on how LYT defines disadvantage, please see the introduction section of our Strategic Plan 2017-2022

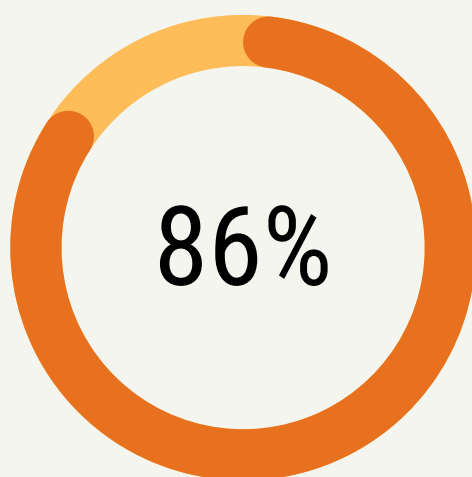
Strategic Objective 2:
Increased ambition and
access to further
opportunities

MEETING OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

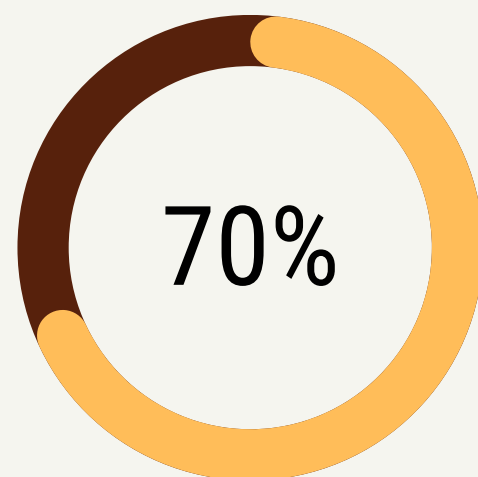
In our evaluations, young people reported...



An increase in resilience



An increase in ambition



An increase in leadership



Volunteering and opportunities outside LYT

- This year, **18 volunteers** and placement students gave up their time to support on our projects.
- **40** youth theatre members volunteered as part of **Members' Committee**, peer mentors on projects, technical and backstage crew.
- Our direct support to connect participants to next steps and opportunities around London has meant that **7 participants received paid work** with external arts organisations.

MEETING OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

Strategic Objective 3: Sharing our expertise and working practise

Strong Relationships

LYT continues to receive referrals through local partnerships. This year, we worked with over 25 partners including:

- Baseline
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Circle Collective
- Phoenix Housing
- Young Lewisham Project
- Youth Offending Service
- Rushey Green Primary School
- St. Marys CofE School
- Prendergast Ladywell
- Sedgehill Academy
- BRIT School
- National Theatre
- Theatre Centre
- Sounds Like Chaos

Borough of culture

We have engaged widely with the We Are Lewisham programme for Lewisham's Borough of Culture.

Alongside delivering the Youth Voices 2022 projects supported by We Are Lewisham, we have brought participants to events and supported participants into voluntary and paid opportunities in the Borough of Culture programme.

During the development of Youth Voices 2022, we met regularly with Sounds Like Chaos, who were developing their own youth-led 'Climate Home' space in Deptford for the Borough of Culture programme.

These meetings supported a joint sharing and growth of understanding of how to support youth-led spaces.

MEETING OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

**Strategic Objective 3:
Sharing our expertise and
working practise**

TedX Lewisham

Lewisham's first TEDx event saw contributions from Progression Coordinator Subira Damali and Artistic Director Helen Stanley.

Subira shared her story about her journey with LYT [here](#).

Helen shared part of a one-woman play in development about her journey with her mothers' Alzheimer's, watch the video [here](#).

My London

Lewisham Youth Theatre was successful in our bid for £210k over 2 years from the Mayor of London as the lead partner in the My London Youth Social Action project for Lewisham and Greenwich.

We are working with Charlton Athletic Community Trust, METRO Charity, Tramshed and Trinity Laban to seed youth social action across our organisations and across the two boroughs from 2022-2024.



Helen Stanley, Artistic Director



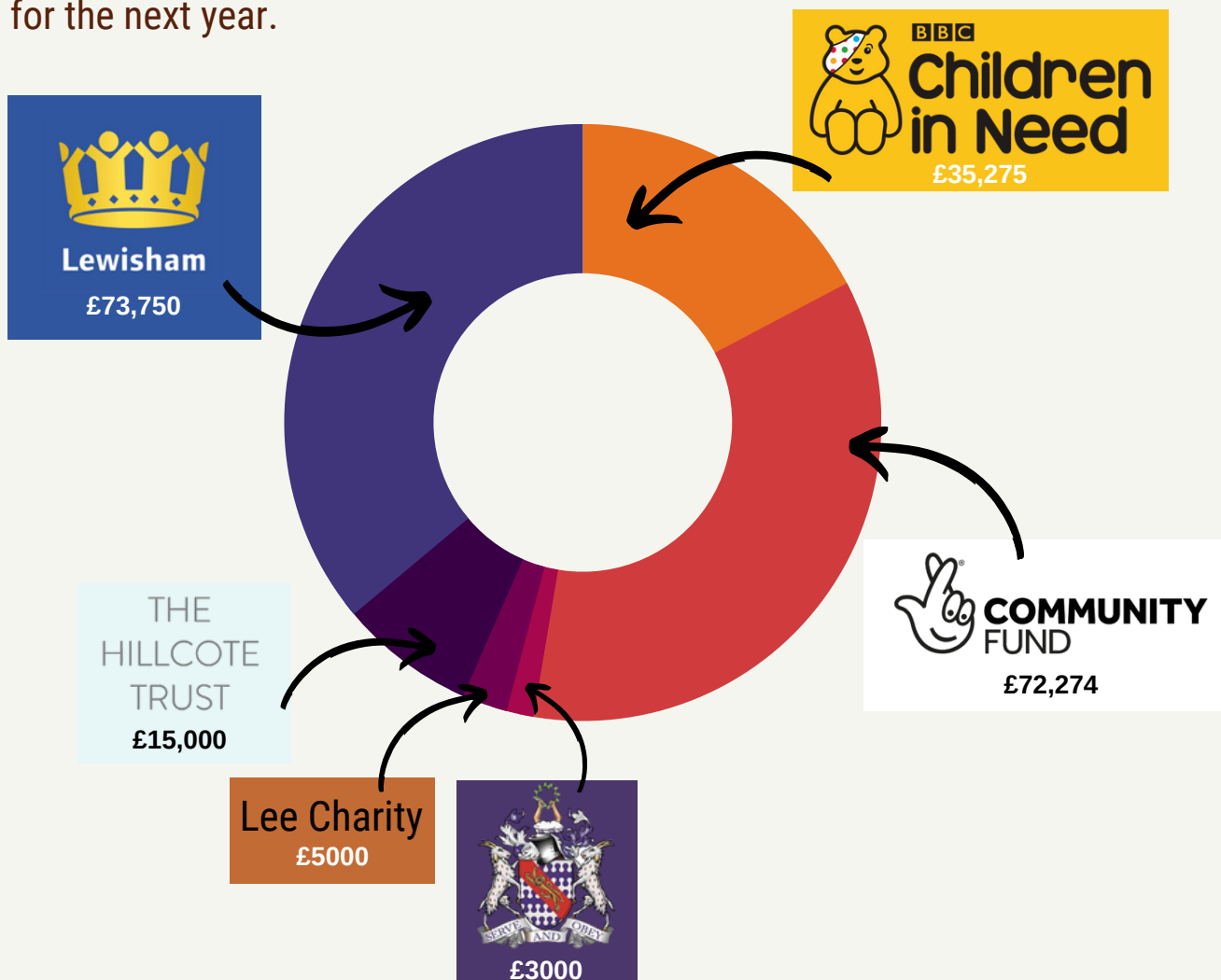
Subira Damali, Progression Coordinator

Strategic Objective 3: Sustainable Resources

MEETING OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

Increased & Sustained Resourcing

The organisation remains in a strong financial position moving into the 2022/23 financial year, with strong funding and commissioning partnerships. We are grateful for the support of new and returning donors for the next year.



We particularly want to thank **LandSec** who have provided the retail unit on Lewisham High Street rent and rates free for 18 months. This in-kind donation is estimated at a cost of £82,348.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE



YOUTH LED CREATIVE HUB

Over the next year, we will continue to explore a model for a space where young people's creativity is at the centre – not marginalised. We envision a theatre where young people of all ages are at the centre of making great art - as performers, writers, directors, producers, designers and technicians.

What do we mean by a Youth-Led Creative Hub? We mean a space where young people's creative horizons continue to expand and where they can develop their own creativity. It's hard to say exactly what this will look like, because it will depend on the vision of the young people involved.

What might it look like? Alongside our existing youth theatre activity for 8-25s, a youth-led programme may look like:

- Young Producers helping to programme and plan a series of specialist creative masterclasses;
- Producing plays written by participants in the Free Space Fridays incubators as part of our core youth theatre productions;
- My London youth social action participants using creative performance to advocate for wider change on issues of importance to them.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Over the next year, we will use the Creative Hub space in Lewisham High Street to expand our programmes and explore new ways to place young people's creativity and community engagement at the centre of our work. We will collaborate with other companies and community groups, opening our doors to more young people and community members. Alongside offering more creative opportunities, the we currently have plans to offer space for more community activity including partnering with the Young Mayor's Team, Theatre Centre, Lewisham Central's Local Area Assembly, Participatory Arts London, CRIptic Arts and LandSec's Design Champions.

**"IT HELPED
ME FIND NEW WAYS TO EXPRESS
MYSELF SOCIALLY
AND ON STAGE, IT HAS HELPED
ME BE
MYSELF"**

£55,373

End of year surplus, despite pressures of emerging from a global pandemic.

This year we raised

£356,987

rapidly scaling up our operations to take over a 5-floor retail unit in March.



In addition to these figures, LYT secured in-kind support estimated at

£85,012

towards the costs of meanwhile use of a retail unit.

£163,413

of funds carried forward to the next financial year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We'd like to thank all those who have supported on LYT projects this year:

Speical thanks to: Cllrs Aliya Sheikh & Edison Huynh; James Lee & Nancy Stridgen (Lewisham Culture Team); Birds Eye View; BRIT School; Greenwich Theatre; National Theatre; Sounds Like Chaos; Theatre Craft; Charlton Athletic Community Trust; Tramshed; Trinity Laban; METRO Charity; The Migration Museum and Landsec. **Referral Partners:** Baseline; Carers Lewisham; CAMHS; Circle Collective; Lewisham Children's Social Care; Family Thrive; Phoenix Housing; Safe Space; South London & Maudsley NHS Trust; Sydenham GP Practice; Young Lewisham Project; Youth Offending Service. **Local Primary Schools:** Holbeach Primary School; Rushey Green Primary School; St. Marys CofE School. **Local Secondary Schools:** Bonus Pastor; Forest Hill; Knight's Academy; New Woodlands; Prendergast Ladywell; Prendergast School; and Sedgell. **Volunteers and Placements:** Many thanks to all 18 volunteers and placements, and 40 youth theatre members who gave up their time to support on our projects. A full list, including Members' Committee, work experience and peer mentors, can be found on our website.

LYT Core Team: Helen Stanley (Artistic Director); Victoria Shaskan (Executive Director); Angus Scott-Miller (Participation Manager); Carys Williams (Outreach Producer); Subira Damali (Progression Coordinator); Monique Day (Workshops Coordinator); Nicole Alison (Creative Producer); Isla McGregor (Programmes Administrator); Molly Cox (My London Manager) and Louise Balhatchet (Technical Programmes Manager). Special thanks to Natalie Parsons. *Many thanks to Jesscia Moffat, Amy Lewis and Ania Straczynska who have gone onto exciting opportunities with the National Theatre, Punchdrunk Enrichment and The Place.*

Freelancers: Lydia Newman; Tanya Muchanyuka; George Fanzio; Sebastian Constantine; Jennifer Nesbitt; Andrew Davies; Emily Behague; Julia Couto; Amanda Mascarenhas; Cleopatra Falconer; Lakeisha Lynch-Stevens; Anna Yates; Aoife Brennan; Tunde Euba; Galina Rin and Rufus King-Dabbs. **Paid Work Experience:** Courtney Spencer; Aliyah Chaumoo; Bushra Baig; Eliezer Gore; Emanuel Mendes-Da-Silva; Emma Dawson; Joyce Osahon; Micah Ologbenla; Nathan Chettry; Ophelia Zarewicz; Rowan Fornah and Sasha Bond. **LYT**

Council of Management: Genine Whitehorn (Chair); Tom Toose-Smith (Treasurer); Mairi Hayes (Safeguarding Lead); Jamiel Thomas; Stella Jeffrey; Ed King and Frenka Mumford. *We thank Dani Moseley, a long time member of LYT and secretary since 2007, who has stepped down from the Council of Management.* **Advisory Board:** Jane Wilson (Clinical Psychologist). **Patrons:** Lucian Msamati and Phaldut Sharma.

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT IN OUR PROGRAMS