



DanceUnited
YORKSHIRE

Transforming lives through dance

Annual Review
2021/22

Introduction

2021 marked Dance United Yorkshire's 10th year of operation and also saw us return to regular classes, intensive projects and theatre productions; a huge relief for an organisation which places group work and performance at the heart of everything we do. Although our revised programme of work during the COVID-19 pandemic enabled us to explore a new and innovative range of initiatives, we were thrilled to be able to proceed with face-to-face work this year.

We regained our momentum during the first part of the summer term. There were exciting and unexpected opportunities: an international project in Aruba, the completion and official launch of our intergenerational film 'Out of the Woods' and a series of 'Doorstep Duets' performed by Matthew Bourne's New Adventures.

We undertook our first 5-week intensive project of the year in Brighouse, Calderdale. 17 young people successfully completed the project with a culminating theatre performance in Halifax. The project was documented by Fresh Start Media who captured the journey of the young people for CBBC.

'Resi/Dance', DUY's community-based initiative in Holme Wood, Bradford, continued to demonstrate our commitment to reaching those least engaged in the arts. 2021-22 saw an increase in weekly class numbers and the addition of new provisions.

Our work with vulnerable women experiencing domestic abuse and/or poor mental health also expanded this year, reaching more people across the Bradford district. The Bradford Women's Company were invited to perform at the National Science and Media Museum and we hosted our first all-female platform for International Women's Day.

Primary and secondary school workshops increased as COVID restrictions eased and we delivered in excess of 200 Arts Awards during the year. Our evening provisions in Bradford and Halifax also continued to gain momentum. DUY Performance Company increased its numbers (with 3 members attending the Cygnet School training course with New Adventures) whilst our Halifax and Bradford Youth Companies have gone from post-COVID start-ups to fully established weekly sessions.

Gradient Company worked with renowned choreographer, Gary Clarke, to create a piece for our 10 year anniversary, and Akeim Toussaint-Buck led a week-long summer school with our young people.

DUY has returned to a more 'normal' way of working, although the impact of the pandemic is evident amongst our client groups and partner organisations. We have remained dedicated to furthering our reach to disadvantaged and marginalised communities whilst producing high quality work. We are proud of our achievements which are largely down to a committed, passionate and creative team who have demonstrated such resilience; not only during the pandemic but as we confront the ongoing demands of a post-COVID society.

We would like to thank everyone who has worked with and supported us this year.



Blair Davies
Chair



Helen Linsell
Artistic Director

'Out of the Woods': 8-11s Group
Photo: Dave Berwick



A young girl in a red floral dress is shown from the waist up, with her arms raised in a graceful, dance-like pose. She is standing in a grassy backyard. In the background, there is a wooden fence, a brick house with a chimney, and trees under a blue sky with light clouds. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

Our Vision and Mission

We are a Bradford-based charity and distinctive cultural leader connecting the very best of the professional contemporary dance world with marginalised communities. We increase access to high quality contemporary dance for children, young people and adults who are 'hard to reach' and living in challenging life circumstances.

We produce contemporary dance performances which engage members of the public who would not traditionally encounter this art form. We commission emerging and established choreographers to create high quality artistic work and offer regional dance artists professional development opportunities with culturally disengaged people and communities.

We offer creative experiences that will have a positive and lasting effect on the lives of those who are socially excluded. Our commitment is to reach across the region whilst maintaining a high quality choreographic vision, bespoke artistic training opportunities and ongoing progression routes for children and young people.

Artistic Provision

We work with disadvantaged children, young people disengaged or excluded from mainstream education, young offenders, young people and adults suffering with poor mental health, women in custodial settings, refugees, asylum seekers and families living in areas of deprivation. Most of our participants are non-dancers with little or no previous experience of contemporary dance or live performance. We continue to be recognised for our radical and transformative work by partners and funders representing arts and culture, education, criminal justice and health.

As government restrictions eased following the COVID-19 crisis, we returned to face-to-face delivery for all our weekly classes, workshops and intensive projects:



'Out of the Woods'
Photo: Dave Berwick

Intensive Projects

During the year, DUY delivered two 5-week intensive projects with vulnerable and disengaged young people referred from education partners. The **Calderdale project** culminated in a performance at the Square Chapel Arts Centre in Halifax. Our work in Calderdale was filmed by Fresh Start Media to create a 30 minute documentary: **'Sentenced to Dance'**, which featured as part of the **'My Life'** series on **CBBC**. The **Bradford project** was based in Holme Wood, targeting 'hard to reach' young people from the local area. This project culminated in a performance at The Carriageworks in Leeds. Our intensive projects saw the re-engagement of existing referral partners and the creation of 4 new education partnerships.

Youth Companies

DUY Performance Company, Bradford Youth Company and Performance Company HX returned to weekly live sessions in April 2021. All groups were offered a range of creative opportunities and performance platforms throughout the year - locally, regionally, nationally and internationally – and were taken to see professional work across the region. Activities included:

- Youth company members were invited to take part in a summer-school intensive led by Akeim Toussaint-Buck
- Resi/Dance Youth Company performed at the launch event, 'Out of the Woods' and East Riding's Community Platform at Bridlington Spa
- Bradford Youth Company created work for DUY events in Bradford and Leeds
- DUY Performance Company launched 'The Stitchling' (film created with New Adventures in 2021) and performed at Fresh, Yorkshire Dance's regional youth dance platform
- 3 members of DUY PC were selected to attend a year-long training programme with Matthew Bourne's New Adventures: Cygnet School
- 4 members of DUY PC were selected to take part in a 2 week project in Aruba
- Performance Company HX created work for the International Women's Day Platform
- DUY created access for our young people to watch the Ballet Boyz, Phoenix Dance Theatre and New Adventures.

"DUY have worked with my daughter to help her understand her own self-worth, helped her express her emotions and share her angst. Since starting, she is calmer in school and at home. She is now able to reflect and identify when her own behaviour has not been appropriate, and what she can do to prevent it from happening again. I am so grateful for the opportunities they provide for her to learn about herself & her wellbeing."

(Parent of Performance Company HX Member)

Primary School Workshops

During the summer term, we diversified our work programme to engage with more primary schools across Bradford and Halifax. This formed part of our strategy to recruit new members for Bradford Youth Company and Performance Company HX. We also delivered an intensive cross-community summer school for 8-11yrs during the summer holiday, which led to an informal performance at Kala Sangam Arts Centre. Between April and August 2021, DUY reached 770 primary school-aged children.

A total of **1,545** vulnerable and disadvantaged young people (aged 4 – 21yrs) participated in our programme during 2021/22.



'The Lasting Impression': Resi/Dance Youth Company
'Out of the Woods': Film Launch
Photo: Daniel Johnson



Adult Women

Our work with vulnerable women who have experienced domestic abuse, suffer with poor mental health and are socially isolated has increased during this year. The **Bradford Women's Company** returned to the studio in April 2021. The group created 2 new pieces of choreography and took part in a community dance festival at **Bridlington Spa** Theatre. The company also performed at the National Science and Media Museum (as part of **'Widescreen Weekend'**), alongside their film 'Here I Am'— which was produced during lockdown in 2020.

Funding from **Sport England** enabled us to widen our reach to vulnerable women across the Bradford district. This included refugees, women on probation and Asian women's centres. DUY hosted a platform at Kala Sangam Arts centre celebrating **International Women's Day**, at which 40 women performed.



*'I Rise': Bradford Women's Company
Photo: Daniel Johnson*



“Dance United Yorkshire brought us a joyful and beautiful experience. They worked with us to create a safe space that our women could participate in, thinking about how best to support everyone in the group and all our needs.”

(Volunteer at BIASAN: Bradford Immigration and Asylum Support and Advice Network)



Warm Up – ‘Dream Dare Do’ Project
Photo: Jhon Freddy Tobón Montoya



Aruba

DUY was approached by **Everything is Possible**, a non-for-profit organisation which provides volunteer and learning experiences for young people all over the world. We were offered the opportunity to create a partnership project with **Popcorn Dance**, a company based in Aruba who target disadvantaged young people. 4 members of DUY's Performance Company and Artistic Director, Helen Linsell, travelled to Aruba to take part in a week-long programme, '**Dream Dare Do**', alongside 120 young people from the island. The young people were involved with a series of creative workshops including dance, film-making, rapping and drama whilst the AD created a new piece of choreography, introducing contemporary dance to the young people of Aruba. The week culminated in a large scale festival at Aruba's biggest theatre, Cas di Cultura.

"Aruba is one of the best places I have ever been. The workshops and togetherness made me feel emotional. There were so many people to meet and great things to do. Overall it was amazing and an experience of a lifetime!"

(Member of DUY Performance Company)

Popcorn Dance and Everything is Possible has since sent 4 Aruban volunteers to work on our intensive projects in Bradford.

'Inbetween': Bradford Intensive Project
Photo: Simon Marshall



Resi/Dance

Holme Wood is a community in Bradford where people often find themselves invisible, defined by difficult circumstances and written off. The **4 year Resi/Dance project (2019-2023)** – funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation – offers a range of free opportunities for the local residents including weekly classes, school workshops, bespoke performance projects and partnership initiatives. As lockdown restrictions eased in April 2021, DUY were able to return to regular classes and start planning live and ambitious projects. The first of these was in **partnership with The Leap** (Bradford's Creative People and Places initiative funded through Arts Council England) which involved a dance, outdoor play and graffiti art project for 8-11yr olds during the summer holidays. This culminated in an outdoor performance and community BBQ at which **New Adventures performed their 'Doorstep Duet'**.

We held our first indoor VIP event in Holme Wood at the TFD Centre: the launch of the intergenerational film **'Out of the Woods'** – created during lockdown in partnership with Boca films and Gary Clarke. This event was hosted by Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe (Leader of Bradford Council) and attended by Bradford's Lord Mayor.





Arts Award

DUY has been offering the Bronze Arts Award (Level 1), validated by Trinity College London, as a fundamental element of our intensive projects for over 10 years and we have once again been recognised as a Trinity Champion. Although the work required to gain a Bronze Arts Award is substantial, we find this particular qualification successful in engaging young people who are struggling within mainstream education, many of whom may not achieve more traditional qualifications.

DUY also delivered a series of primary school initiatives which incorporated the delivery of the Discover Arts Award. These short-term projects targeted schools based in the most deprived areas of Bradford providing access to high quality creative dance to children aged 8-11yrs.

During 2021/22, DUY delivered **201 Arts Award qualifications**.

“The Arts Award delivery was superb. All the children were engaged by the activities and it was accessible for everyone. It brought a real togetherness for the cohort and allowed them to be part of each other’s successes. The positive impact on their mental health alongside their general health has been very clear”

(Vice-Principal, Ryecroft Primary School)

*Ryecroft School Workshop
Photo: Abbie Padgett*



Gary Clarke working with Gradient Company
Photo: Steph Donohoe

Artist Training, FE/HE Partners and Gradient Company

In 2021, DUY delivered bespoke artist training. The course, **'An Introduction to DUY's Practice in Social Inclusion'**, focuses on our distinct methodology, increases awareness of learner behaviour, develops skills in behaviour management strategies and improves understanding of the group process. The course was delivered over 2 days in Halifax. 12 artists travelled from across the region to attend:

"The course is incredibly relevant to so many people, not just those working in dance but anyone that works in group settings. It helps to educate people whose work has a direct and potentially life changing effect on those in society who are marginalised. If more people get to do this course it'll benefit society so much more as a whole." (Course Participant)

Lectures and workshops in colleges, universities and conservatories returned to face-to-face delivery. The first was a 2-week intensive in Bradford College, reviving 'Inbetween' for DUY's 10th anniversary. This was followed by a series of lectures and workshops at Leeds Beckett University and the Northern School of Contemporary Dance. Overall, 8 students undertook placements throughout the year:



“Working with Dance United Yorkshire as part of my university placement has been such an insightful experience. I have learnt so much about community practice and working with vulnerable people. It’s been really helpful to observe how DUY uses dance to create an uplifting and positive experience for the participants. The spaces they create are completely non-judgmental which is something which I will take with me into my own future work” (Student from Leeds Beckett University)

The **Gradient Company** has been DUY’s 19yrs+ talent development strand for many years, providing key training, performance and professional development opportunities for young adult dancers. Gradient fulfils DUY’s aspiration to retain new and diverse dance talent in Yorkshire. The Gradient company meets for short-term choreographic projects.



*DUY Performance Company 'Roots' at Fresh
Photo: David Lindsay*

Artistic Collaborations





Photo: Josh Hawkins

Gary Clarke

Award-winning Yorkshire-based choreographer, Gary Clarke, continued to work with DUY as an Artistic Mentor throughout 2021/22. His guidance throughout the creation of 'Out of the Woods' was invaluable and he remains committed to DUY's mission and purpose. For our 10th anniversary, DUY commissioned Gary to create a brand new piece on our **Gradient Company**, inspired by creative ideas produced by the Resi/Dance Youth Company. Gary and the dancers created a unique piece of work: 'A Piece in 5', which was performed at the Square Chapel Arts Centre, Halifax.

"What DUY does is truly remarkable and there is a need for their work to continue. The team create important bridges between the arts and disadvantaged communities and remove significant social barriers for marginalised children and young people. I am proud to be affiliated with the organisation"



Photo: Leach Cole

Akeim Toussaint-Buck

Initially, Akeim worked with DUY when he was a 3rd year student at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance. As an established artist, we invited him back to lead an intensive summer school with our young dancers from DUY Performance Company and Resi/Dance Youth Company. The week-long project, focusing on connecting movement with the voice, culminated in a performance at Kala Sangam Arts Centre. Akeim commented on his experience:

“My time working with DUY’s young people was unforgettable and invaluable. Unforgettable simply because of the transformation I get to witness when the youth express themselves creatively. Invaluable because my artistic ethos believes this is what art is made for. I didn’t only teach, I learnt from the staff and the young people alike. Giving them this experience to work together and grow, to express themselves honestly and creatively can only be something positive to help them flourish into responsible and respectful adults”



Matthew Bourne's New Adventures

Our relationship with New Adventures has continued to blossom. During the 2020 lockdown, Resident Artist Paul Smethurst invited DUY to work on a film project inspired by Matthew Bourne's 'Edward Scissorhands'. This process took over a year to complete, due to various COVID restrictions, but was finished in May 2021 over a weekend of filming in Bradford. The film, '**The Stitchling**', premiered in October 2021 at **Yorkshire Dance's Youth Conference**, at which DUY and New Adventures delivered a workshop: '*In Partnership: exploring collaborative working and how to embed artistic quality in socially engaged practice*'.

DUY and New Adventures came together again to plan a tour of the '**Doorstep Duets**' across the Holme Wood estate. New Adventures created a short professional duet, targeting people most impacted by COVID and those still isolating. Drawing upon our already established partnerships across the estate, we organised 9 outdoor performances taking place across 1 day – reaching in excess of 200 audience members.

3 members of DUY Performance Company have continued to attend '**Cygnets School**': Matthew Bourne's year-long training programme for young dancers. This has included workshops in dance technique, choreography and theatre crafts, as well as special performances and visits. One young person comments on her experience:

"I am getting a high standard of training from world renowned artists that have chosen me as one of their students. That in itself is an honour. It has made such a big impact in my life as I am able to better execute movement and I am always pushed to my limit. We go out as a company and watch performances and have a very strong bond even though we only see each other once a month. This opportunity is beyond any of my thoughts as I'm being mentored by the best of the best!"

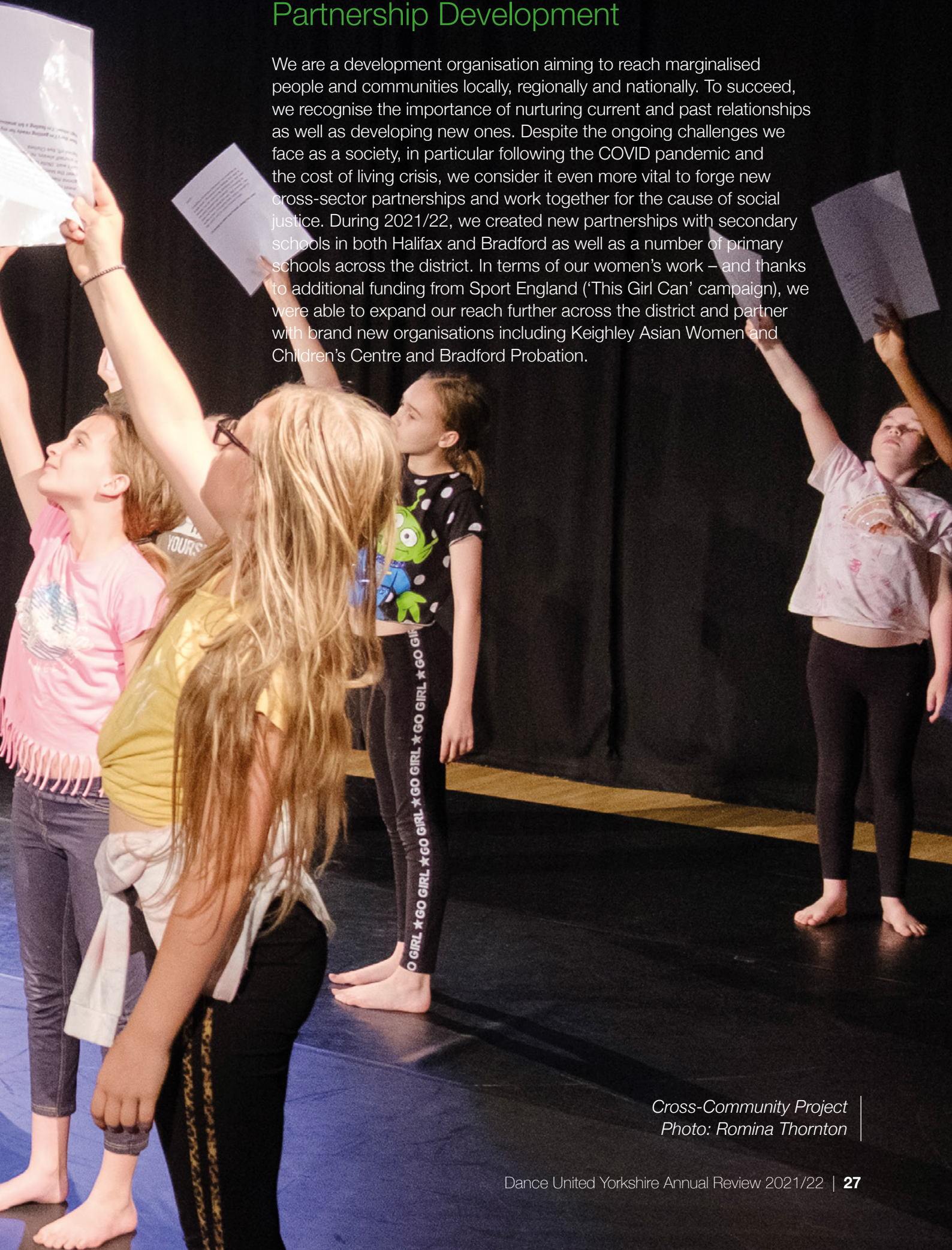
New Adventures recognised DUY as their chosen charity at **Darcy Bussell's Fundraising Gala at the Royal Albert Hall** in May 2021. We received a donation of £3,675 from the evening's event.

Cygnets School participant and DUY Performance Company dancer
Photo: John Baker



Partnership Development

We are a development organisation aiming to reach marginalised people and communities locally, regionally and nationally. To succeed, we recognise the importance of nurturing current and past relationships as well as developing new ones. Despite the ongoing challenges we face as a society, in particular following the COVID pandemic and the cost of living crisis, we consider it even more vital to forge new cross-sector partnerships and work together for the cause of social justice. During 2021/22, we created new partnerships with secondary schools in both Halifax and Bradford as well as a number of primary schools across the district. In terms of our women's work – and thanks to additional funding from Sport England ('This Girl Can' campaign), we were able to expand our reach further across the district and partner with brand new organisations including Keighley Asian Women and Children's Centre and Bradford Probation.



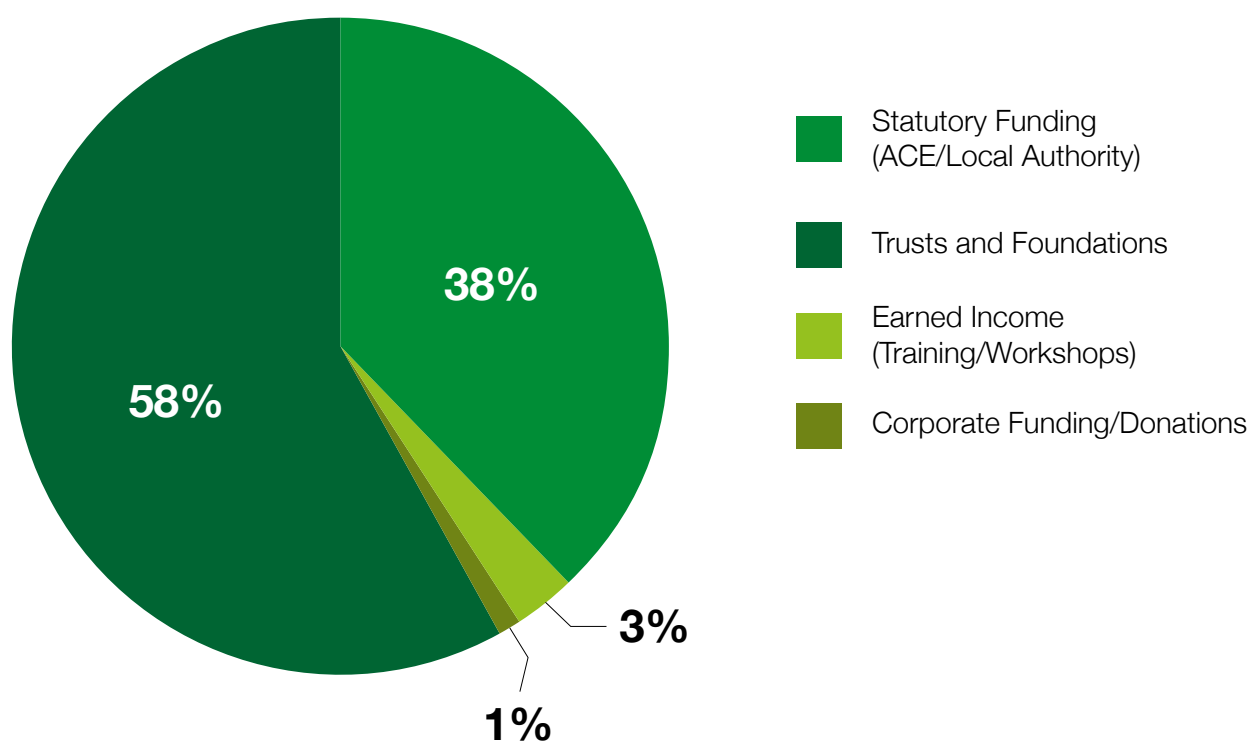
*Cross-Community Project
Photo: Romina Thornton*

Finance

	2021/22 £	2020/21 £
Income	262,900	293,012
Expenditure	273,269	222,089
Free Reserves	40,090	31,178

Funding and Donations 2021/22

The pie chart below shows the sources of income for Dance United Yorkshire.



Overall Impact

DUY engaged **1,719** children, young people and adults in projects, classes, workshops and training.

DUY's audience was in excess of **2,100** and the company created **24** new pieces of choreography.

The feedback received from participants, audience members, partners and funders has been overwhelmingly positive throughout 2021/22 with many recognising how valuable our continuing work has been during one of the most challenging times our society has experienced:

“DUY remains one of the best examples of organisations that use their extensive understanding of the barriers faced by vulnerable people and communities, especially young people, to increase access to high quality dance experiences with real integrity, imagination and commitment. DUY play a key role in the region as they share this good practice and expertise generously within the sector and employ and develop a next generation of excellent practitioners, in particular those with diverse backgrounds who find themselves excluded from formal training routes.”

(Wieke Eringa, CEO, Yorkshire Dance)

Staff and Governance

Dance United Yorkshire Team

Artistic Director:	Helen Linsell
General Manager:	Duncan Bedson
Dance Programmes Manager:	Romina Thornton
Dance Programmes Manager:	Stephanie Donohoe
Dance Artist:	Adrienne Melling
Administrative Officer and Project support:	Abbie Padgett
Fundraiser:	Bridget Eadie
Freelance Support Worker:	Emma Robertson

Board of Trustees

Blair Davies (Chair)

Nikki Crane

Stephanie Derrick

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Anne-Marie Teed

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radical dance
interventions with
socially excluded
and marginalised
communities

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