



Engage East Midlands Summary Report

The East Midlands Engage event was held at the Castle Theatre, Wellingborough on 27 April 2007.

The East Midlands was the fifth Engage event. 11 youth theatre leaders attended the event. A full report including information and findings from each event will be published on completion. However to keep our communication alive with the East Midlands region please find below a brief summary.

Training workshop: How to write a play

Ola Animashawn from the Royal Court ran a two hour workshop providing participants with transferable skills in writing. The feedback from both workshops was excellent, people found it inspiring and useful.

Afternoon Session

After 3 games Chris asked the various groups how they would spend £100,000.00 if it were available to them.

The responses were:

- Props, equipment and costumes.
- Own space to work in dedicated to the youth theatre
- Outreach work
- Minibus
- Network Coordinator
- Skill sharing – creative directors

As a result of the above exercise several headline issues were raised in relation to the needs of youth theatres. These needs were:

- Transport between youth theatres
- Central resource to access equipment, resources and staff
- A Co-ordinator post to make cohesion easier to diverse groups
- Space which was young person friendly
- Investment in the sector
- To develop relationships between large and small youth theatres
- To employ guest artists and to know how to access them for theatres.
- To share expertise through the region and create work for young people.

- NAYT – should make available a list of what funding is available in Onstage or on the website, as youth theatres only hear about it when it has gone
- Freelancer could join NAYT to advertise services from a database.
- As the NAYT operates in 9 regions WSW and events could be separated and held in each region. The question is funding for this..
- Put people in touch with others in new area if move job etc.
- Have 5 or 6 hubs nationally for information points.

Suggestions were made from the floor that the larger theatres should play host to the smaller youth theatres, festivals should be arranged between them with NAYT support and that meeting and networking events could be organised.

It was suggested that local links should be made first within the area to ensure some unity was established before involving NAYT. Consideration should be given to how and where events could happen and ground rules should be established before the area could ‘think big’. The Derby Playhouse immediately offered their services to help disseminate information and suggested that they would also advertise and promote the work of NAYT as a regional hub-----for a price!

Discussions were held on the use of the NAYT logo on all the East Midland youth theatre stationery etc but Maggie Morgan pointed out that there were legal implications to this ie it may imply some accreditation level which the logo could not be associated with. Suggestions were made that this situation could be altered by youth theatres attaining a set of standards, and then being allowed to use the logo. Setting of these standards to accreditation level could be difficult and specialist staff and funding would be needed. Maggie suggested that this would have to be carefully thought through and set up correctly. Who would define these standards that would have to be applicable to all youth theatres?

Box Office splits for combined productions was considered also 40% off ticket prices for members of other youth theatres.

Overall, much enthusiasm and many ideas were generated from the session but it remains to be seen if the actions suggested can be followed through in the area. The Derby Playhouse, headed by Michael Durrant, offered many ways to move forward and it would be excellent if they could help the smaller youth theatres as they suggested.

Use of the website and NAYT services was advocated by Maggie Morgan.

Conclusion

One of the very clear messages from this region was that people were keen to work together but needed help and resources from larger theatres.

Remember to use the NAYT forum at www.nayt.org.uk!