

HERE TO STAY

Evaluation Report
January 2021



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ALL OF US WHO WERE HERE TO STAY

Core Volunteer Team

Shawab Iqbal former Executive Producer Eclipse, now Executive Director/ Joint CEO Gate Theatre
(AllofUs: logistics, finance, relationship management, connector, crisis fund panellist, risk monitor)

Annika Brown Operations Director Woolwich Works
(AllofUs: Logistics, finance, connector, crisis fund panellist)

Titilola Dawudu Coventry City of Culture Programme Manager for Young People
(AllofUs: content creation, marketing assets, resource pack creator, social media lead, connector, web platform sourcing, masterclass practitioner)

Monique Baptiste Brown Head of Marketing and Audience Development Brixton House
(AllofUs: social media, marketing assets, marketing, and communications lead)

Stella Kanu Executive Director LIFT
(Key driver, fundraising, logistics, finance, crisis fund panellist, connector, relationship management, internal documentation, programme design, chief smiler, manager of mischief and laughter)

Casual Volunteers

Dan Jacques LIFT (Design, crisis fund admin support)

Jessica Pentney Bush Theatre (admin and mentorship administration)

Beatrice Burrows Bush Theatre (marketing and social media)

Extended Team

Freelance Project Manager (Sept 2020) **Camille Leforis**

Freelance Project Coordinator (Sept 2020) **Lily Batikyan**

Development Lead/ funder reporting **Asma Hussain**

Press Liaison & PR **Kim Morgan**

Partnership support from **Lynette Linton, Lauren Clancy, Daniel Bailey**, and trustee **Mark Dakin** at Bush Theatre.

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SECTION ONE

Introduction

1.1 Deep roots: Devised and designed by a small group of senior Black professionals working in the arts and cultural sector, **Here to Stay** sought to address the disproportionately harsh impacts of Covid 19 on the livelihoods of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse professionals working in the arts and cultural sector through the development of a customisable programme including masterclasses, wellbeing sessions, coaching / mentoring and practical support including interview preparation and CV guidance. In addition, using investment from a range of sources, **Here to Stay** was able to offer financial support to individuals who had been particularly affected by changes wrought in the sector due to Covid 19. Whilst the programme was open to eligible applicants from across the arts and cultural sector, there was a strong emphasis on theatre.

Utilising a mixed economy of funding – individual giving, the sweat equity of a coordinating group and some Arts Council England funding – the operating principles of **Here to Stay** can be traced back to the values of mutual support and self-help embodied in Black and Asian community development from the 1950s onwards, specifically an acute understanding of need and of the ways in which that need can be met. The Black, Asian and ethnically diverse community sector began with the wave of post war immigration primarily from the Commonwealth. From its beginnings the sector was defined by three characteristics¹

Self-help and self-organisation

Mutuality

Political resistance

What is true of the wider community and charity sector applies also to the development of Black British theatre whose evolution is summarised by Stella Kanu (co developer of **Here to Stay** and Executive Director of London International Festival of Theatre [LIFT]) in the **Here to Stay** programme document. Pioneers of the movement including Pearl and Edric Connor, Mona Hammond and Yvonne Brewster paved the way for the establishment of theatre companies including Temba Theatre, the UK's first Black theatre company. Alongside the development of a Black theatre ecology, Black, Asian and ethnically diverse artists and creatives made work across all art forms, establishing dance companies, developing a thriving network of Caribbean Carnivals, creating Black publishers such as New Beacon Books and developing new artistic forms – such as dub poetry – which responded to the socio-political realities of Black lives in Britain.

Reports such as Naseem Khan's *The Arts Britain Ignores* (published in 1976) sparked debate and dialogue about diversity and culture whilst the Black Arts Alliance² founded and led by SuAndi in 1985 provided a focus for advocacy, events and activism. In later years, archival approaches to documenting, collecting and preserving evidence of Black contributions to the nation's cultural output have emerged, including the Black Cultural Archives (founded in 1981 and moving to its home in Brixton in 2014) and the National Theatre's Black Plays Archive which catalogues the first professional production of every African, Caribbean and Black British play produced in Britain.

¹ *The Pied Piper: The BME third sector and UK race relations policy, brap, 2009*

² *Later renamed the National Black Arts Alliance*

1.2 Impacts of Covid 19 on Black, Asian and ethnically diverse communities: In this country and elsewhere particular groups – often minority ethnic groups – have been affected first and worst by the pandemic. Government data³ show that the highest age standardised rates of Covid 19 infection per 100,000 population were of people in Black ethnic groups whilst the lowest rates were in White ethnic groups.

After accounting for sex, age, deprivation and region, people of Bangladeshi ethnicity had approximately twice the risk of death compared to people of White British ethnicity. People of Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian, Caribbean and Other Black ethnicities had a 10% - 50% higher risk of death.

1.3 Impacts of Covid 19 on the theatre and wider arts sector: According to Philippa Childs, the head of entertainment union, BECTU, by October 2020 at least 7,442 theatre and live event workers have been made redundant as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic⁴. She further explains that these losses come on the back of many thousands of casual and zero hours contracts workers having been laid off and the thousands of freelancers who have had their income completely cut off.

As a point of reference, according to BECTU, theatre employs in the region of 290,000 people, of whom an estimated 70% are freelance. It is reported – again by BECTU – that many freelancers have been unsupported by government income support schemes since they slip through eligibility gaps.

1.4 A whiter post Covid arts sector? In an article in September 2020⁵ about likely impacts of Covid 19 on the arts sector, Adele Redmond reports that trades unions feel that redundancies will have a serious impact on Black, Asian and ethnically diverse staff who are disproportionately represented amongst casual, zero hours and contracted staff.

The situation pre Covid 19 was not strong in terms of representation of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse staff⁶. Amongst the leadership of the 50 highest funded theatres, all but one Executive Director was White. The one Black Executive Director is Stella Kanu. Only 8% of theatre leaders – artistic directors and executive directors combined – are of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse groups.

Looking more widely at performing arts organisations, there are no Black, Asian and ethnically diverse leaders amongst any of the ten that receive most funding.

Across the entire National Portfolio, Black, Asian and ethnically diverse people make up only 12% of the workforce. Meanwhile, looking at our big cities which are home to many of the theatres and performing arts venues subsidised by Arts Council England funding, London has an ethnically diverse population of 40% and Manchester of 33%.

Black, Asian and ethnically diverse workers are more likely than their White British colleagues to be engaged as freelancers and as we have seen, freelancers appear to have been particularly badly affected by Covid 19 precipitated staff cuts⁷. From the same research, IncArts notes that Black, Asian and ethnically diverse staff are less likely than others to be found in roles which are associated with progression to leadership.

³ *Beyond the Data: Understanding the Impact of COVID – 19 on BAME groups* (Public Health England, 2020)

⁴ *The Stage*, 14 October 2020

⁵ *Arts Professional*, 4 September 2020

⁶ <https://www.thestage.co.uk/news/slow-progress-on-diversity-exposed-as-the-stage-survey-shows-92-of-top-theatre-bosses-are-white>

⁷ *Covid – 19 and its Impact on the UK's Black, Asian and ethnically diverse workforce* (IncArts, June 2020)

SECTION TWO

Project outline

2.1 Purpose: As Covid 19 escalated into a national emergency from March 2020 onwards, it very quickly became apparent that the performing arts and the wider cultural sector would be particularly badly affected and that workers occupying the lowest paid, most insecure roles would be at particular risk. Those high risk roles – often front of house, often on zero hours contracts, often freelance – were disproportionately likely to be occupied by Black, Asian and ethnically diverse workers.

The **Here to Stay** programme was designed and developed by All of Us, an informal but focused collective of senior professionals working in the sector, and was designed to be a direct and rapid response to the impacts of Covid 19 on Black, Asian, ethnically diverse people and migrant workers working in the arts and cultural sector. After a very short lead-in time during which investment was secured, a core delivery team assembled and a programme devised, the **Here to Stay** programme was delivered over a four-week period in August and September 2020.

2.2 Eligibility: The programme was open to Black, Asian and ethnically diverse workers in the arts and cultural sector whose roles had been made redundant or who were at risk of redundancy or of having their contracts terminated. The programme was open to individuals resident anywhere in England and working across all art forms and in all roles.

2.3 Content: The programme was delivered remotely and comprised a range of interventions, sessions and events which participants could select from according to their needs and interests. These were as follows:

- **Financial assistance**
- **Coaching (participants selecting this option were able to access two hours' coaching)**
- **Mentoring (participants selecting this option were able to access two hours' mentoring)**
- **Master classes delivered by industry leaders**
- **Health, wellbeing and faith-based support**
- **Employment support including CV preparation, interview guidance etc.**

It was hoped that in addition to participating in programme sessions, the cohort would develop a sense of joint endeavour, creating informal peer networks which would outlive the duration of the programme.

Though **Here to Stay** was open to all ages, a discrete young people's strand was developed which young people aged 18-25 could access in addition to any other sessions and events they attended. The young people's strand provided opportunities for peer support and networking along with sessions delivered by young facilitators.

2.4 Delivery: Delivery of the programme required specialist professionals and leaders including mentors, coaches and those skilled in providing employment information, advice and guidance. In addition, specialists were engaged to deliver subject-specific master classes.

The programme included a wellbeing strand in recognition of the combined impacts of Covid 19 and job insecurity. This strand was designed and delivered by coach and arts producer Gaylene Gould and was designed to support the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of participants.

A further strand – On the Shoulders of Giants – was a series of talks delivered by senior Black, Asian and ethnically diverse senior leaders charting the course of their careers.

SECTION THREE

A note on methodology

Here to Stay was a response to a state of emergency. By necessity, its development and delivery took place at an accelerated pace. We were appointed as evaluators in September 2020. At this stage, most of the project activity had been completed and it was our role to superimpose an evaluation structure on a programme which had essentially concluded.

Despite this, we were keen to work with the team at the outset to design a set of questions for the evaluation to address. To this end, we facilitated a focus group attended by the core project team, most of whom had volunteered their time to the project.

It was originally envisaged that the focus of the evaluation would be on finding out from participants how they had experienced engagement with the programme. The problem we quickly encountered, however, was that participants had largely completed the work and it proved difficult to gain sufficient buy in to the evaluation process. This may in part be due to the fact that the programme was explicitly designed to meet an immediate crisis and – understandably – participants were perhaps more concerned with addressing their pressing financial and employment priorities than with contributing to a programme evaluation.

What this meant was that the methodology we had designed to measure distance travelled over the period of engagement met with only limited success. We had hoped to collect a baseline and distance travelled measure from all participants but despite the best efforts of team members to encourage completion of the short surveys, only a minority of participants completed them.

We were, however, using original application data able to learn about individuals' motivations for becoming involved, what they hoped to achieve, the sectors in which they worked (or had worked) and a range of other rich data. In addition, a programme participant provided us with her detailed reflections on **Here to Stay** and these are included in the Reviews section of this report.

Having reassessed the purpose of the evaluation, we decided that a primary focus of the evaluation should be an examination of the processes and motivations which combined to produce the **Here to Stay** programme. In particular, we were interested to learn how principles of self-help and mutual aid had helped to shape the programme.

A detailed analysis of original application data also gave us a snapshot of how Black, Asian and ethnically diverse professionals whose roles had been made redundant or who were at risk of redundancy were experiencing the Covid 19 induced crisis. We also pulled from that application data detailed information about what they hoped to gain from **Here to Stay** engagement.

To these ends, we used a range of methods including:

- **Collation of data, both quantitative and qualitative**
- **Session feedback surveys**
- **Analysis of application data**
- **Observation of project processes**
- **Conversations with key project actors**
- **Focus groups with the core team**
- **Desk research and analysis of secondary data**

SECTION FOUR

Here to Stay in numbers

How many people applied for the programme?

42 individuals completed application forms; this includes volunteers and participants.

Where were they from?

Most (**30**) applicants were based in London, making up **71%**⁸ of the cohort.

The North and the South East each attracted **4** applicants, just less than **10%** of applicants.

Scotland, the South West and the Midlands each attracted one applicant.

Gender

Most applicants (**31**) described themselves as woman / trans woman. Please note that that 'woman / trans woman' represented one amongst a number of gender options as did 'man / trans man'.

Five applicants identified as man / trans man.

Three applicants identified as non-binary.

Ethnicity

The most frequently cited ethnicity category was Black or Black British: Caribbean selected by **8** applicants. This was closely followed by applicants identifying as Black or Black British: African (**7**).

The following categories were each selected by 4 applicants: Mixed: White and Black Caribbean, Asian or Asian British: Chinese and Any other Asian background.

Sexuality

A total of **36** people chose to disclose their sexuality.

As to the question "Do you consider yourself as belonging to the LGBTQI+ community?", of those choosing to answer the question, 16 stated that they were LGBTQI (**38%**).

Age

21 participants, representing half of the population surveyed, were in the **26-35** age categories.

The **18-25** age category represented **19%** of the survey population (8 participants).

Only **12** applicants stated that they were aged over **35** and of these only one was aged over **50**.

Sector representation

Applicants were asked to specify which sector/s they work or had worked in from the following options (please note, applicants could select more than one option):

Theatre

Dance

Music

Literature

Visual arts

Museums and galleries

Multi-disciplinary

Of a total of **66** responses to this question, just fewer than half of all applicants (**47%**) specified theatre. Museums and galleries, music, multi-disciplinary and visual arts each accounted for around **10%** of applicants.

Job roles

The most frequently cited job roles were front of house making up more than half of all applicants. Front of house applicants were more likely to be on casual contracts than on full employment contracts (28% and 23% respectively).

Redundancy

Half (**21**) of all applicants had occupied roles which had been made redundant.

Areas of interest

Applicants were invited to state which areas of support most interested them; they were able to select more than one. The most frequently cited areas of support are summarised below.

Mentoring support proved most popular with **32** applicants stating that this was of interest.

29 applicants stated that they were interested in receiving support around interviews and application guidance.

19 respondents expressed an interest in receiving expert assistance through masterclasses.

⁸ Percentages rounded throughout

SECTION FIVE

Why did individuals apply to the programme and what did they hope to achieve?

A number of recurring themes arose in response to this question. These are summarised below and illustrated with direct quotations from applicants.

5.1 Confidence and empowerment

It was notable in applicants' responses to this question that many – despite having worked in the sector for some years – felt that they lacked confidence and / or that they had been disempowered in their current or most recent roles. The following comment is typical,

I didn't go through an official redundancy but was encouraged to take a payoff to leave while the company streamlined operations as soon as lockdown kicked in. My confidence has therefore taken a bit of a knocking. So really, I'd like to regain the confidence that I think I should have, but which seems to have deserted me.

For other applicants, a lack of confidence arose as a consequence of the sector's risk aversion,

I feel that I have lost confidence in the work that I would like to pursue due to the industry not really being ready for it and also being too 'safe' and risk averse to the challenging work that I feel needs to happen for the industry to stay relevant.

Others found themselves in a state of suspended animation,

I think I have gotten a bit stuck in this purgatory - like moment we are living in. I am hoping that this programme would give me tools to gather myself together again, realise what I have to offer and give me the confidence to go get what I want.



TAKING LEAVE

5.2 Career progression

Unsurprisingly, many applicants hoped that engagement with **Here to Stay** would afford them the time and space to critically reflect on their career to date and to think about what they would like to do next. This was particularly the case for individuals who stated that their roles had been made redundant. For this group of applicants, practical skills and support such as application and CV guidance felt particularly important,

I would like to get a more grounded foundation to look over my applications and my CV. A chance to learn from seasoned professionals would be greatly beneficial to me. I hope it gives me the applicable knowledge for job applications and to keep positive during these incredibly uncertain times.

Reading between the lines of applicants' responses, it felt as if some had been disempowered by dispiriting experiences of seeking work in the sector,

Things like writing a cover letter or going to an interview often seem disproportionately hard to me and sometimes networking or talking to a person whose work I admire – which is essential in this business — can look impossible, not only because I might not find the right words but because I often feel out of place and out of cultural context.

5.3 Feeling marginalised

Many applicants specifically referenced feelings of being marginalised and / or of feeling themselves to be on the outside looking in. This was the case amongst individuals who had worked in the sector for some time as well as relative newcomers. Many spoke about the impact of working in predominantly white environments where it was rare to come across others who shared similar experiences to themselves. This comment is typical,

Although I have been in the sector for a significant period, I haven't had the benefit of much professional careers support. I've basically been 'muddling on' in my own way with the help of the odd friend and supporter. This has sufficed so far. However, as processes within the [visual arts and higher education] sectors are becoming more formalised and competitive I wish to have a better understanding of procedures and my rights. As well as more proficiency in applying for jobs and funding. I am in my mid 40's, which I believe will make it harder to get another teaching appointment, that is compatible with my art

practice and other activities. I would also say that I have (starkly) been a minority in these environments — I feel this has affected my personhood and practice, my confidence to push for other ways of working...

The same applicant went on to talk about the impact of Black Lives Matter and the ways in which it had provoked a questioning and examination of their choices,

The recent galvanising of awareness in relation to the BLM movement has put me in in some odd situations. It's really got me thinking about my position and the choices I've made. I do not have a network of BAME professionals around me and I'd like to change that.

Another applicant shared her frustration at feeling unable to progress in the sector despite having acquired a range of skills,

I want to take part in this programme as I feel that I have a lot of potential and gifts to offer the world. However, as a 45 year old disabled POC woman, I am not being given any chances to develop beyond an entry level job in the art and heritage sector. My whole work ethos is about empowering disadvantaged POCs in accessing opportunities to start / develop their artistic practice.

Applicants who occupied or had occupied junior positions within the sector shared a sense of being both within and on the periphery of the cultural sector. For the applicant whose comments follow, this sense of being an outsider was exacerbated by the fact that s/he had not been born and brought up in this country,

I hope through this program, especially through mentoring and coaching, I will have more in-depth insights as opposed to just observing as an outsider whilst volunteering or working in junior positions which might not have direct access to the process of making and creating projects and works.

Some applicants spoke about the value they felt they would derive from being part of a network whose members were not predominantly white.

I'd like to be part of a supportive learning community, that isn't predominantly white. ... I also don't know how to help myself as an artist beyond just [plodding] on forwards. I've mainly taught myself so far to navigate the industry...

The following comment – from someone who fears redundancy – exemplifies a feeling common amongst applicants to the programme of becoming untethered from the sector in the wake of imminent changes,

With redundancy on the horizon, I am terrified I will fall off the cultural landscape forever. Jobs are going to be few and far between come November – let alone for people like me - and I feel I have never even really had the chance to explore or support the kind of work I really want to help make. It has been so hard trying to elevate myself out of a junior/assistant role in an organisation where 97% of the staff are white. I've never felt connected to, or felt a part of the Global Majority within our industry because I have always worked in such heavily dominated white areas. I want to feel a part of that community, not just in name but also in reality. I feel this programme will help me develop tools to progress to a position where I can make decisions that will affect change. I would like help finding my voice and the confidence to believe in myself.

5.4 Mutual support

The following two comments are typical of those made by applicants for whom the opportunity to participate in a programme built on foundations of mutual aid, self-help and peer networking was a key motivation to apply,

I want to take part in this project to be in a space of creative BIPOC and queer people who understand the complexities of wanting to return to an industry which statistically shows it wants you out. I'm looking for support in being able to stay in the arts sector financially after 5 months of unemployment and upskilling myself for finding more stable work.

I would love to meet people in the same boat as me as well, and form a community that could support and help each other.

Some applicants expressed the view that being part of a supportive network would embolden them when advocating for change within the workplace,

I want to take part in this programme because I'm exhausted from asking for a seat at the table. ..I'm really interested in collaboration and conversation. I hope that through this programme I'll be more confident and robust when telling senior management about change, rather than asking. I hope to feel more resilient as this sector has slowly chipped away at my instincts.

For some applicants, the programme represented both an opportunity for mutual support and a call to action to address structural inequalities within the sector,

This programme recognises that Black, Asian, ethnically diverse and migrant arts workers will be disproportionately affected by this pandemic, from redundancies to regression in the path towards a more inclusive industry. This programme acknowledges and wants to be part of the solution, that is why I would love to be a part of it. The lockdown period has prompted me to reflect on what I want from my creative career and how I can make a positive impact on this industry and be part of the solution. I hope that this programme will help me connect with like-minded people who want to make a change, I hope this programme will inspire me and I hope I can inspire others in return.



SECTION SIX

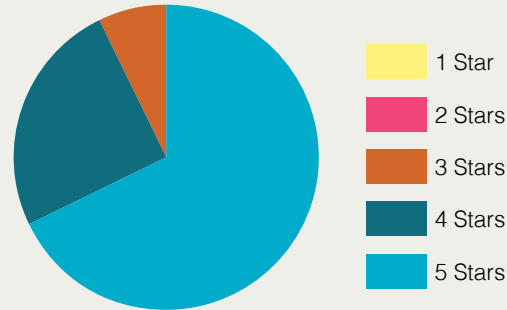
Reviews

Though feedback from participants was patchy, many responded to light touch feedback surveys which were circulated to participants on our behalf by members of the core team. We received 28 feedback forms relating to a range of sessions delivered as part of the **Here to Stay** Programme. The outcomes of these surveys can be summarised as follows.

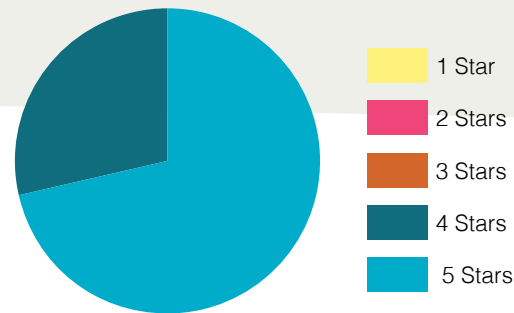
6.1 Pace of the sessions

We asked respondents to consider whether they felt that the sessions were well-paced. Of 28 respondents, all rated the pace of the sessions as at least 3 Stars with the vast majority (19, or about two thirds) rating the pace of sessions at 5 Stars.

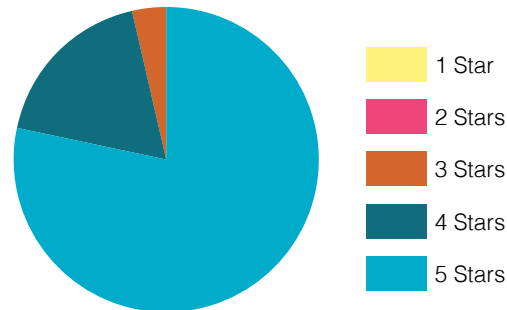
Pace of Sessions



Content of the of Sessions



Facilitator approach



6.2 Content of the sessions

Session content was particularly appreciated by respondents. 20 out of 28 respondents rated content at 5 Stars. No one rated content at below 4 Stars.

6.3 Facilitator approach

Again, respondents were very appreciative of facilitators' approaches to delivering sessions. 22 of 28 respondents rated this aspect of the sessions at 5 Stars and five rated the facilitator's approach at 4 Stars with only one rating at 3 Stars. No one rated this aspect of delivery at less than 3 Stars.

6.4 Most appreciated elements of the sessions

We asked respondents to let us know what they most appreciated about the session/s they attended. All comments were positive and the following are typical:

This session was very uplifting and I felt inspired to be a more confident self-advocate in the future in my artistic practice and life in general.

The honesty and willingness of Shawab to offer and share so much of himself with us. Best session I've had so far and I am so grateful. What a wonderful person he is!

How motivated it made you feel while having a practical focus.

It was a very, very lively session. I enjoyed her explanation about writing emails tactfully. It was very valuable to me.

6.5 How could sessions have been improved?

Only a minority of attendees felt that the sessions could be improved. Responses to this question are reproduced in full below.

More question time.

There's nothing really to improve. I only wish we had more time because time flew by for me, despite feeling poorly and hiding behind a camera.

I think it was brilliant. I just think it should be a thing: a regular practice that's accessible and workshops you can attend frequently.

I loved it. I'd do it again.

Nothing to improve. I valued every bit of it.

6.6 A participant's reflections

Though we yielded insufficient baseline and distance travelled data to form any conclusions about the impact of **Here to Stay** on individual participants, one participant generously provided us with her reflections on [participation in the programme. We reproduce these below.

Reflecting / evaluating against the goals I set out in my application

When I applied to the programme, I had already been unemployed for 6 months, hence was feeling quite desperate/can't really focus on the bigger picture. At the introduction meeting, we were all asked what do we want to get out of it, most people say something like refocus myself, find my confidence, network with others, I remembered I was very straight-up and honest and said my immediate goal is that I need a job. In my application I said I wanted to find another Development Assistant/Officer role.

1-2 month later, I more than smashed this (And YES, I am more than pleased – but the real impact is below is actually in the later section)

- *I got offered and started a full time job as Fundraising and Operations Manager for [my new employer].*
- *I was commissioned by the Film and TV Charity and worked with BFI Network to produce/curate a series of workshops/events to demystify fundraising for artists/filmmakers (Which is what you saw on Twitter).*
- *I got offered the Blackbaud Scholarship (Blackbaud is the lead sponsor at the Institute Of Fundraising for the Fundraising Convention) to pursue an MA in Philanthropic Studies at the University Of Kent (part time / distance learning)*
- *My application to the Government's New Enterprise Scheme to set up my own business as a "freelance fundraiser" was successful and I received a grant towards it (currently working out logistics with them because I decided to take a job but it's all good, and I won't bore you with it)*
- *I had my first successful job interview in months – I applied for a short freelance assistant producer contract with a company and was successful.*



I am going to own it and I say I personally have put in many many, many hard work to get here, but AllOfUs helped me by giving me those little pointers, allowing me to focus my energy and maximise “return on my output” / the impact I was able to make for both myself and my community etc

- *Mary, the mentor I was paired with, reminded me how important it is to hold onto relationships and having glowing references for job-hunting – this was when I said to her I love [working for my new employer] but I only work for them 1 day per week – I since then hold on to that thought when managing my relationship with [my employer], and it worked out!*
- *At one of the most difficult moments (when I just had all three fundraising job rejections), meeting, communicating with you gave me that glimpse of hope. There was a moment where I thought to myself, I am never ever going to be a fundraiser again, no one wants me... but knowing you're on the other side of that email and having some encouragement from someone whose path I really admire, I hold on and kept going. I didn't get the job [with that employer] at the end, (the feedback was they went with someone with more wider charitable sector experience rather than quite specialised in the arts), but that felt so important knowing that I have the ability to stand out in job apps/int. (For context, I'm not sure whether I've told you this, but both fundraising jobs that I had/have now didn't come via application/ interview, my first as Dev Assistant was promoted internally from Box Office Assistant and this current one was progressing from grant recipient to interim freelance cover on bid-writing to where I am now) – Therefore, the opportunity to work through that process, understanding success/rejections with you is hugely hugely valuable, in particular I see myself going for a Head of / Director of role, in say 3-5 years time. The impact may not be immediately seen right now, but it will become more measurable/seen in future*

- *At the same time, knowing how valuable your support was in making a difference in my job hunting process, made me think, 'Gosh! I still probably have a long job-hunting process to go through and it would be such a bother to someone more senior everytime I need a proof-reader.' (I know now you don't mind me getting in touch), I need to find more solutions/ find a way that doesn't bother people so much – That's when I actually properly reached out to other fundraisers and properly began to value my “side-ways networking”. I think I mentioned to you briefly – [another **Here to Stay** participant] also applied for the exact same three jobs that I didn't get, and that conversation with her talking about it was a game-changer.*
- *I have now started to apply this attitude, thinking (and I truly understand it as well) into all aspects of my work, relationship building etc. The change isn't easy, in particular having had two years of working where I am the only person in my work place in that position (no one side ways, everyone was either more senior/junior (I don't like that word but hope you get me), and where I constantly felt the competitiveness with my peers – but the change is happening, slowly, but surely, for example I noticed I started feeling more genuinely thrilled for peers getting jobs that I wish I got, and it's getting there. I think this impact that AllOfUS gave me, will benefit me for a lifetime.*

SECTION SEVEN

Perspectives

7.1 Whose perspectives?

We wanted to learn how those most closely involved with **Here to Stay** had experienced the work. We were, of course, interested in what they had done and what they thought had been achieved. What had motivated them to become involved? Were their expectations met? What had they learned and what had they contributed?

But we also wanted to understand where they felt that **Here to Stay** sits as a response to this past year's crises. What might it tell us about Black, Asian and ethnically diverse creatives (and creativity)? What should be the responsibility of the wider creative and cultural sector in addressing and redressing structural inequalities? What might this approach tell us about self-help and mutual aid and its wider application?

To these ends, we scheduled Zoom conversations with Dr Sylvan Baker, Gaylene Gould and Stella Kanu.

7.2 Dr Sylvan Baker, Lecturer Community Performance Applied Theatre, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama⁹

Sylvan Baker is a practitioner and researcher who has worked in the UK and internationally for the past 30 years. His practice spans applied theatre, socially engaged art and social justice. He has a particular interest in international interventions in sites of conflict and transnational justice.

Prior to taking up his current post, Sylvan was Artistic Director of Youth Action's Rainbow Factory, the largest cross community Arts project in N. Ireland. From 2000-2006, he was Associate Director of London Bubble Theatre company working on participatory projects and on its intergenerational promenade theatre performances.

Sylvan has also worked with the arts and social justice research centre – People's Palace Projects – (PPP) where he coordinated the UK partnerships projects between Brazilian Social Project AfroReggae, based in the Favela communities of Rio de Janeiro, and arts organisations from across the UK exploring the knowledge transfer of artistic practice between AfroReggae and artists in the UK. He became Associate Director of PPP in 2010 and completed a practice research PhD focusing on his work with AfroReggae in 2014.

Alongside his current role, Sylvan is an Associate Artist for the Clod Ensemble's Performing Medicine programme of courses, workshops and events, which use the arts to support the training of medical students and practising NHS health professionals. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA) and Education & Creative Learning Associate at the RSA in 2015.

Prior to joining the team at Central, he taught BA and MA students for the Drama department at Queen Mary and MA students at Goldsmith College and Queen's University of Belfast. He remains an Artistic Fellow at Queen Mary.

⁹ <https://www.cssd.ac.uk/staff/dr-sylvan-baker-ma-phd-frsa>

Each one teach one: Sylvan began our conversation by discussing the unifying themes which draw together three decades of practice,

My practice for the past 30 years has been working in communities in the broadest sense – interest, geography and intent — using the mechanics of theatre and performance to make some offers to those people whoever they are. Sometimes it makes them change the way they think, sometimes it makes them more aware of stuff or just makes them happy and all of those are valid.

Though he remains committed to his practice, he described his modus operandi as having shifted a little with age,

As an older soul, some of the more challenging groups that need a wider panoply of support I feel I'm just too old to work with so I now teach younger souls to work with them.

This shift of emphasis towards supporting younger practitioners aligned well with Stella Kanu's emerging ideas about what was to become **Here to Stay**. He explained that he first met Stella at an event at which he had used Long Table¹⁰ as a method for facilitating conversation. Stella had been impressed by the approach and as **Here to Stay** developed she invited Sylvan to contribute. Designing the precise nature of his contribution was arrived at through a process of conversation and collaboration. He and Stella discussed his practice and what it might contribute to the programme,

So we settled that I would do some facilitated discussion with them to allow them a different kind of reflective space...that was really insightful and it highlighted how little of this type of provision is being given to artists of colour and any workers of colour in the arts really.

A space to be: It felt clear that Sylvan had been drawn to the processes **Here to Stay** sought to use and to the project's underlying principles of self-help and mutual aid. He felt that participants had particularly valued the space the project offered for self-reflection,

The project at very short notice with minimal resources has been able to assemble a structure that so artfully held its participants. The thing that was really clear in lots of those participants is that they were in challenging places in terms of reflection and life choices and worry about the uncertainties of Covid and the ongoing economic implications of it. And they just needed support and encouragement and a space to be in an environment where they could see themselves reflected in the people that were assisting them.

Sylvan's sessions provided facilitated spaces for **Here to Stay** participants to share openly with peers. For many, this was particularly valued,

There was a lot of relief, honest sharing about anxieties and concerns with anger but an over-arching feeling that the project had been incredibly impactful for them – so impactful that in some cases it was overwhelming. One participant talked about the fact that there was a fine line between empowerment and disempowerment because the quality of the artists and practitioners was so high that it was slightly intimidating.

For some participants, though, their circumstances had hit them hard and being silently present at sessions was as much as they could manage,

For a minority, they had just about enough emotional energy and strength to be present, audio muted and camera off. They'd occasionally post in the chat which showed that they were there – being laid off plus the pandemic and the loss of income had hit them very, very hard irrespective of where they were in the sector.

A psychological slam: Programmes of work do not tend to deliver outcomes and impacts in uniform ways: some interventions are more effective than others; unanticipated positive outcomes emerge; or the external environment shifts unexpectedly. We were keen to learn from someone who had delivered one of the key **Here to Stay** strands which aspects of the programme had worked well and which had worked less well.

For Sylvan, a key success of the programme was the way in which it managed to engage mentors, facilitators and others at very short notice. He described a sense of can do fuelled by an understanding that this was an emergency response to a critical situation,

Engagement at all levels for mentors, masterclass facilitators and all contributors. There was I felt an atmosphere of 'Yes, I'm on' at every level. Some may have been hampered by resources and timescale. The intervention had to happen, and it had to happen then. It couldn't happen in nine months' time – all those who needed it would've dropped off the radar by then.

Imagining a second (and even third) phase, though, Sylvan spoke about the necessity of reconnecting with the original cohort, encouraging alumni to support delivery of subsequent programmes,

Phase one was high intensity but if there's a phase two it should be about bringing phase one participants back in six months and going 'What have you taken forward? What are areas for development now that you're six months on? How can we engage you in delivery to the next cohort?' Phase three would be longitudinal follow up.

¹⁰ https://cdn.ymaws.com/ipayweb.org/resource/collection/54ECDF2C-12E6-43D2-8491-9568D2D2C958/LONG_TABLE_ETIQUETTE.pdf

Though both the rapidity of the response and the supportive environment created were key strengths of the **Here to Stay** programme, Sylvan felt that some participants' circumstances meant that they were less able than others to participate in and benefit fully from the approach,

The enormity and volume of it might have made it difficult for participants. They were having to manage lockdown, unemployment and the psychological slam it delivers whilst being on the course and for some it was too much.

The way in which they were held was wonderful, but some needed to be held more and needed the course to progress at a different speed.

On a more practical, logistical level, Sylvan also wondered how potential participants who were experiencing digital poverty might engage with a programme which – by necessity – relies on an individual having access to a reliable WiFi signal.

Making networks; sustaining change: We were interested to learn from Sylvan what structures, networks and actions might help to sustain the momentum created by **Here to Stay**.

Some kind of informal alumni network would be good, very arms-length but just enough to allow the participants to report back. I think the mentoring system was incredibly helpful though some found it intimidating being paired and having time with so called greats but others got a lot out of it, so some process which allows dialogue between emerging artists and others in the sector...

We wondered what changes Sylvan would like to see in the sector more widely so that it is more able to convincingly embody its stated commitment to diversity, inclusion and racial justice across all of its systems, processes and practices. To be effective, he feels, change needs to be dramatic and irreversible,

There needs to be a seismic shift that I don't think the sector can envisage a shift that's so great... it's kind of about instilling the sector to think the unthinkable and do the undoable. It's got to change so much that it can't revert back...otherwise this will peter out. I was shocked by the global traction that the deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd bought about.

I saw white people who don't have to engage with this on a daily basis actually stopping and going, 'This is not on. What are we going to do?' ...And then the discourse shifted to statues and that was the response of power shifting the narrative and the wheels started to come off a bit. What's evident is there's no going back.

He sees a place for white leaders in making sustainable change, arguing that though Black, Asian and ethnically diverse people have expert knowledge and experience to contribute, if they alone are expected to lead, change will be piecemeal.

Approaching the end of our conversation, we asked Sylvan what nourished him, what kept him going.

I have a thick, deep, rich seam of cynicism in me. I'm a cynical optimist which sounds like a contradiction in terms. I'm in networks of scholars of colour and white scholars who can act as accomplices – who aren't doing it for kudos. Silly things like the sense of surprise and relief when new students see me when I walk into the room and they weren't expecting me to be black. So, a lot nourishes me and allows me to carry on. I'm in a discipline predicated on those opportunities for change.



7.3 Gaylene Gould: Creative Director, broadcaster and writer¹¹

Gaylene designs interactive art projects and spaces that generously connect us with ourselves, each other and the world. She explores the healing and growth potential of sharing space, stories, ideas and knowledge through her artistic, writing and consultancy practice. She believes the transcendent moments that art and culture creates can change how we are in the world. Her projects have been commissioned by and performed at the Tate, V&A, Arts Catalyst, Vivid Projects, Selfridges, h club, Moderna Museet Sweden and BAM, New York. Her new creative company is The Space to Come.

She is also an arts broadcaster for the BBC, a published fiction writer, a cultural reviewer and a Cultural Ambassador for London appointed by Mayor Sadiq Khan. She has been a cultural leader for 25 years heading up major cultural institutions and projects including Head of Cinemas at BFI Southbank and producing, programming and consulting for the Arts Council, Toronto International Film Festival, National Theatre, Young Vic and Bernie Grant Art Centre amongst others. She is on the Artistic Advisory Board for Brixton House, the Advisory Board for the Decolonising Arts Institute, University Arts London and a Trustee for ANU Productions.



¹¹ <https://www.gaylenegould.com>

Care and connection: We spoke to Gaylene as she was in the development phase of her new company – A Space to Come – an artist-led company which seeks to create convened spaces of care and connection,

The spaces we design are, on the one hand, interactive art projects and on the other allow people space to connect more deeply with themselves and others and the world at large.

Gaylene also brings to her new venture her expertise as a coach and facilitator, a writer and broadcaster. She was delighted to be approached by Stella Kanu to put together the wellbeing strand of **Here to Stay**. She agreed to be involved, explaining that she'd bring a Space to Come spin to the strand.

Through some of her other networks and in her role as a Cultural Ambassador for London, Gaylene had quickly become aware of the catastrophic impact of Covid on the cultural sector. It wasn't long before organisations – big organisations – started talking about redundancies. Gaylene recalled a conversation she had with Stella Kanu around that time,

Stella said, 'I'm really worried about what this is going to do in terms of diversity and inclusion. The people who are going to be the first to go are going to be the ones in those vulnerable positions within organisations.'

We asked Gaylene what had motivated her to get involved.

80% of the driver was to support the cause. What was very clear with the conversations was that where the big conversations around who should be supported or what was happening at government level which didn't include people who make things happen — the artists, the freelancers, the people of colour, all of them — so it felt like I needed to support that in some way. The other 20% is that I'm trying to set up my own practice and looking at opportunities for bringing this quite rarefied kind of work to people that need it the most. This felt like a perfect opportunity to test that.

Like Sylvan Baker, she was also driven by a sense of urgency and a desire to respond to immediate need,

This was a critical time this year for all kinds of reasons: Covid and then George Floyd's murder. There was clearly a need for black cultural leaders and artists to have spaces of support... It was clear that those larger organisations were not fleet enough of foot to be able to deal with it and that is Stella's MO.

The Solace Salon: As we have seen, **Here to Stay** aimed to meet the needs of participants dealing with a range of disparate issues – practical, emotional, spiritual, financial, professional. The wellbeing strand was baked into the programme from its inception. As creator and facilitator of the **Here to Stay** wellbeing strand, Gaylene tested The Solace Salon, a set of three interlinked sessions she had developed which were part performative and which offered tools for solace, supporting participants to find internal resource. She summarised for us the constituent elements were of the Salon.

One was called the Sound of Self Compassion which was myself working with an ethnographic composer and we collected stories from participants and essentially, they created a graphic score based on some of their emotions.

The second – The Pleasure Principle – saw Dr Cindy Gordon and comedian John Simmit jointly curate a space which explored where **Here to Stay** participants might find their belly laughs. Finally, the third – co curated by choreographer Freddie Opoku Addaie and coach Jackie Holder – was a highly interactive session focusing on a Zimbabwean philosophy known as Tree of Life. With admirable ambition, Freddie delivered the session from an outdoor setting in the woods whilst Jackie delivered from her studio.

Here to Stay participants were encouraged to select and participate in sessions on the basis of their needs and interests. Around 15 people attended all three Solace Salons, just over one third of **Here to Stay** participants. This would seem to suggest that the decision to embed wellbeing into the Programme was well founded.

What was wonderful was that almost the same core group came to all three so we knew people wanted to come back and experience them all but it also meant that they... got a rounded experience that looked at all the different aspects of solace and resilience.

Thinking about that core group, we asked Gaylene whom she felt the Solace Salon had particularly appealed to,

...they were mid to late 20s and they seemed to be emerging and mid - career, very culturally diverse in an interesting way. We had people from Argentina, someone who I think was Filipino but from the States. There was all sorts of interesting cultural mixes and really engaged. It can be really challenging this work, because it requires self - reflection and that's not for everybody. But this group stuck with it.

We wondered how remote delivery had worked given the issues the Salons sought to explore. Did the screen help or hinder?

We had a few technical difficulties but there are some plusses because people are in their private space and this is quite intimate work so we could play with the fact that people are relaxed and in their own space.

Collaborators and facilitators, too, were well taken care of,

We were so cared for and I know care was a big part of Here to Stay. As collaborators, I felt incredibly cared for. Anything we needed, people got back straight away. They were the dream team...as an experience it's one of the best I've had.

Impacts on practice: As we have learned, the opportunity to contribute to **Here to Stay** was particularly welcomed by Gaylene as it enabled her to test new approaches which would form the core of her new company's practice. In the event, the opportunity felt pivotal to the development of A Space to Come.

What you need as an artist is to be able to pitch someone a vague idea and to get them to see the potential of it and say yes. And that's what Stella did. I can't thank her enough...Without that opportunity to develop the Solace Salons I definitely wouldn't be as far along with understanding what I want my company to do. This is so experimental and I need that space to experiment. Stella completely understood that. I needed a particular group just like the group they'd gathered at Here to Stay. They were one and they were in the midst of transformation. It was pivotal in the development a Space to Come and what I want to do next.

Thinking about impacts of the programme as a whole, Gaylene observed that participants had appreciated the opportunity to pause, to reflect and – in a time when many felt cast adrift – to find common purpose with others,

From the participants' side what was nice...was that you heard the stories that people brought in and all we heard was about how invaluable this session was and how that session had made them think. That sense of cohort and community was there which shows that something had developed and a sense of trust and camaraderie.

She spoke about one participant in particular who had seemed to derive particular benefit from being involved,

*Leah¹² had lost her job and really needed care and was questioning her role in the cultural sector. It felt to me that **Here to Stay** was a lifeline for her at a really tender and vulnerable place. It's been a lifeline for her to feel well again...*

Countering cosy politeness: We asked each of the people whose perspectives we sought what changes they felt needed to be made in the wider sector to ensure that Black, Asian and ethnically diverse people feel represented and engaged. In responding to this question, Gaylene referred to a very British approach to culture characterised by cosiness and politeness. This – she felt – is antithetical to creativity,

I think there's just got to be...the concept of culture being a place of radical growth and radical imaginings... I think culture in Britain is so far from that. It's cosy and polite. It's to do with the kind of people who projected themselves into culture, I think it's become a very middle class, possibly upper middle class pursuit...

But there had been grounds for optimism pre Covid – particularly in theatre,

If you look in London at how many people of colour are leading theatre — shows were selling off the charts and money was being made and shows were being toured internationally.

We wondered how and whether change could be sustained or even accelerated given the challenges the whole of the cultural sector faces. Gaylene first clarified what does not need to change,

I think people of colour don't have to do anything more than they are already doing because they are brilliant. The reason there is a wave is because there are some brilliant people who create...the talent, the energy, the ideas are already present.

She went on to reflect on the task facing the wider cultural sector and the changes it will need to embrace if it is to become fully inclusive. Discussing the sector's reaction to Black Lives Matter she told us that the cultural sector should not have had to wait for the resurgence of Black Lives Matter before addressing issues of 'race' and racism. She felt that there ought to be people within organisations who can act as radical receivers – people who can receive, respond to and be excited and energised by new ideas,

I think that has to be a pre requisite. If things stay the same, you lose people with radical ideas [and] there's no potential for progression.

The Creative Rapid Response Unit: Finally, we asked Gaylene what had particularly struck her about the **Here to Stay** approach. This was the point at which she introduced us to Stella's notion of a Creative Rapid Response Unit which turned out to be something like a peripatetic creative emergency service,

Stella's got what she calls her Creative Rapid Response Unit so you draw on the network to make things happen. That is genius and works so well because that means you're in the moment where you need to be at the right time. I think that's really great and you mobilise the energy of the moment.

Whilst the Creative Rapid Response Unit was deployed to respond to a particular challenge experienced by a particular group of people at a particular time, in Gaylene's opinion the wider sector has a great deal to learn from the approach,

I think there's something that Stella has found a practice for that is truly radical which has affected and galvanised people to take immediate action and change and I wonder as an inspiration what that could offer to the whole sector. It has a deep well of integrity from inception to how it's delivered. All the way through you felt that integrity. It felt really fresh so I'm really excited to see what Stella can do with that as a process and how she can develop it. It feels very particular to her. I was so honoured to be part of this.

¹² Name has been changed



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Stella Kanu: Executive Director, LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre) and instigator of AllofUs, the driving force behind Here to Stay¹³

Prior to attaining her role as Executive Director at LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre), Stella was as Executive Producer at Ovalhouse where she spent four years overseeing a comprehensive artistic, organisational and community-led transition as Ovalhouse constructed London's newest purpose built £15m theatre in Brixton. She created the concept design for Black Womxn in Theatre and is co-curator of BWinT events and the #WeAreVisible movement.

She has worked in the theatre, festival and cultural sector for over 27 years shaping ideas, communities, events, people and organisations for great shifts. Working in the UK & US including Soundwave Cumbria where she was CEO, Cardboard Citizens Theatre Company, Harlem Stage, Southampton Live Street arts Festival, Africa Centre, Dance UK, Theatre Royal Margate, Women and Girls Network and Clean Break Theatre, as well as arts, community and regeneration directorates at numerous local and city councils. Stella created The Pivotal Place to coach and mentor emerging, mid-career and established leaders across multiple sectors, and is a long-term leadership mentor on Engage (The National Association for Gallery Education) UK wide Leadership Programme, Extend.

Stella is a former Powerbrokers International Leadership Fellow (Cultural Leadership Programme, 2008), she is a sought-after speaker, strategic brain and trainer on topics including Diversity in Theatre, Inspired Leadership, Art/Activism and Women & power.

A graduate of the UK's first full time BA Writing course, Stella is a practising writer, musician and maker. She has served on boards including Creative Margate (including interim Chair) and New Writing South, Stella is Chair of Eclipse Theatre's Board of Trustees, an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and the UK's Black Theatre & Production Company.

¹³ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/users/stella-kanu>

We knew – having spoken to others – that Stella’s role was critical in the creation, development and manifestation of **Here to Stay**. She describes her role as follows,

A multiple role: as well as designing the programme, I was instrumental in making sure we understood what was needed. I drove the meetings of the core team.

As we have learned, the project was devised as an immediate response to crisis in the cultural sector brought about by Covid 19. This coincided in late spring with a renewed interest in issues of ‘race’, racism and racial justice following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Floyd’s murder and the murder of Breonna Taylor which preceded it. What had primarily been a US movement expanded across the globe and across sectors. Corporations, local authorities, charities, public sector organisations and others issued statements. There was a collective focusing of attention across the cultural sector in the UK. It became clear to many organisations that on top of issuing supportive statements, actions needed to be taken.

This was perhaps particularly true of theatre and the wider performing arts, both sectors where some progress on racial equality and racial justice had begun to be made prior to Covid. They were also sectors which had been particularly hard hit by closures necessitated by the pandemic.

Stella Kanu and Shawab Iqbal sensed immediately that some people were going to be more at risk than others when the inevitable rounds of redundancies began,

It was predictable that redundancies would happen in the sector and when the early-stage conversations took place about the impact on the cultural sector back in March and April, all of the conversations were focused around freelancers and what became clear from Inc Arts was that there was something around the disproportionate impact – if there were going to be mass redundancies — on those in junior and casual roles and we know that in that space exist Black, Asian and ethnically diverse people.

A response which met identified need would be critical but it would have to happen quickly. By summer 2020, discussions about redundancies had become plans and even whilst Stella and colleagues were designing the programme, they were aware of 800–1200 redundancies and jobs at risk.

Stella and Shawab began talking to colleagues and potential collaborators within her extensive networks. Learning from previous interventions and initiatives had taught her that even actions which sprang from crisis could not be saturated by it,

Based on what we’d done with Black Women in Theatre, every action needed to be celebratory even if there was trauma and disappointment in it. So, for us it was about how could those who might feel forgotten see a future. So, the idea was to bring in these giants – people with longevity in the game – so they could see and talk to them up close and learn how they’d navigated the peaks and troughs.

Investment: Because time was of the essence, Stella and Shawab decided not to wait to submit funding applications and instead decided to pursue a mixed economy of funding. As it turned out, this would give All of Us significant leverage when they did – later – approach Arts Council England. In the first instance, though, a Go Fund Me page was set up and Stella and the whole core team (see back inside page for details) made individual approaches to senior leaders in the sector, asking them to make personal donations. What this meant was that by the time the Go Fund Me page went live, a number of significant donations had already been lined up.

So, in the first round of the funding the reason we got to £5000 so quickly was because we put Go Fund Me on line privately and emailed 300 CEO’s and leaders and said to them, ‘Get in this first. We’re asking a minimum donation of £100 if you’re an individual so when we open it to the public it’s not empty.’ We got to £5000 by the second day.

Additional interest was generated through press and PR attracting local, regional and national coverage across radio, podcasts and social media. At the time that we interviewed Stella, £17000 had been raised through crowdfunding and an additional £20000 through Arts Council England funding.

All of Us: All of Us was chosen as the name for what was to become a movement of creatives seeking to address the critical issues of redundancy and job insecurity amongst Black, Asian and ethnically diverse creatives. It became a rallying call and an expression of unity and a means of defusing latent conflict. As Stella explained,

The reason we called it All of Us was because at the time there were elements of the conversation which were pitting people against each other: the freelancers on one side, organisations on the other, individuals in another, black people somewhere in between so I recognised that we could use a programme for togetherness. This was particularly for people that were having to make their colleagues redundant. We didn't want to say this is a programme for all the people you've [messed] up. We wanted to say, 'You support them and then you have an opportunity to show your kindness and generosity'.

The first time that the cohort was together in a room – albeit a Zoom room – was intense and impactful, exposing a sense of incredulity that this was really happening and that it really had been devised and was being led by Black, Asian and ethnically diverse professionals,

That very first session was shocking. Most of the cohort was there and all black, Asian and ethnically diverse and then the tears started flowing and people were offloading and being really jolted by the look of the Zoom. They were like 'I've never in my career...' because the average person on that Zoom will have been the only black person in their organisation. Those Zooms never calmed down. It made people really emotional. It also made them quite distrustful of the space because: Where was the white person leading this? Every session was led by a black person every time and it started to come up a bit and to show itself in 'So, it really is this thing' Internalised racism was also present [and participants were] recognising their own experiences of racism which they were trying to express and process.

Pressure: Whilst it was clear talking to Stella, Sylvan and Gaylene that Here of Us delivered clear benefits to participants which were much appreciated (see Section 6, Reviews), there is a cost associated with making and delivering something so quickly and to a high standard. This is particularly the case when the labour involved is voluntary and the people contributing it are doing so on top of their paid work,

I would have done it with fewer people because hidden within all of this is that we were all volunteers and the dynamic when there's a mix of skills in the workplace is different from when you're working in a voluntary capacity. I always wanted to have a smaller cohort. I would have brought in a project manager much earlier. It broke everyone's back. And I would've brought on the evaluation earlier.

Like Sylvan and Gaylene, Stella understood that a significant aspect of the programme would have to be about renewing hope and optimism amongst a cohort whose faith in the sector might have taken a bit of a knocking. Holding on to that intention helped to make it possible to keep the faith when the pressure – on Stella in particular – increased,

The intention was strong and we felt compelled to deliver. At the same time because of my level of experience I knew what it took to make it happen and because of that it put me in the driving seat but meant also that because of the pace the hecticness of it there were lots of people in the core team who didn't understand what it took to make it happen. So, I carried a lot.

I've got a full-time job already but the beauty of it was what we knew what would happen - that it would have massive impact and would change people's perspectives on themselves. It wasn't about how to manoeuvre your way in the sector; it was always about giving people a mirror to reflect on what and who they were and what they wanted. That's the only route to hope. We know we left people with hope.

A culture of generosity: Throughout this report, we have spoken about a culture of self-help and mutual aid which seems to us to infuse All of Us and the **Here to Stay** programme. We have thought of **Here to Stay** as a 21st Century iteration of the values that drove the development of the first Black, Asian and ethnically diverse organisations that emerged to meet the needs of post war immigrants from the Commonwealth.

Stella, on the other hand, talks of an intention of generosity as a key driver,

Every person had to consider the level of generosity they were going to give... someone deciding between giving £100 or £150. I asked people to bring themselves. The culture of generosity is supposed to ignite itself and repeat itself.

Finally, we asked Stella what impact **Here to Stay** had had on her. Her response spoke to the twin values of generosity and self-help which had driven the programme from its inception,

I'm proud of it because I just drove that thing. There are not many people at my level within the sector who are doing that sort of grassroots, volunteer work. Everyone's trying to attach it to their organisation. I didn't want it under the auspices of my work and I wanted to use it to reset the conversation about our contribution in the sector.

SECTION EIGHT

Observations and conversation starters

8.1 An Underground Railroad: We use the Underground Railroad metaphor to indicate the networked nature of the **Here to Stay** programme. Stella Kanu used the term, Creative Rapid Response Unit. Both terms speak to the critical roles of individuals connected by a shared set of values and shared objectives.

A distinguishing characteristic of **Here to Stay** was that it emerged from conversations with a network of practitioners, activists and leaders who were able to respond quickly and effectively, tapping into Black, Asian and ethnically diverse professionals across sectors along with White supporters who shared its values and ethics. This feels to have been the appropriate delivery mechanism for an intervention of this type since it enabled the engagement of a range of talents which together delivered an integrated programme of support.

Conversation starters

- **Can and should this network be sustained?**
- **Should it remain an ad hoc network of talents which can be galvanised when needed?**

8.2 A call to arms: Critical to the success of **Here to Stay** was Stella Kanu's reach into a range of networks which included senior leaders across the sector as well as talented creatives, producers and others who could develop and facilitate aspects of the programme and also coordinate the significant logistic challenge of assessing 40+ applications, timetabling sessions and matching coaches and mentors to participants.

That the programme attracted significant numbers of applicants and contributors is a key indicator of its success. However, as Stella discusses in her conversation with us, this came at a cost. Developing, representing and facilitating a programme of this type in addition to holding a full-time role is a mammoth task.

Conversation starters

- **Given the scale and scope of the work involved, is the model which All of Us used sustainable?**
- **What would have been lost or gained by relying less on unpaid labour?**

8.3 Self Help: This feels to us to have been a central tenet of the approach and harks back to the organisational techniques which resulted in the development and growth of the earliest Black, Asian and ethnically diverse voluntary, cultural, political and faith organisations. For organisations which were developed by first generation Black, Asian and ethnically diverse people, reliance on self-help and self-funding was a necessity. For projects such as **Here to Stay**, it is a choice. And that choice offers interesting opportunities to think about how Black, Asian and ethnically diverse arts and culture might combine public funding with self-generated income.

Conversation starters

- **What might be the benefits and challenges of such an approach?**
- **Might such an approach let public funders off the hook**

8.4 Rapidity of Response: This proved to be both a strength and a weakness of the approach. The short duration of the project was also a strength and a weakness. It may be that everyone who participate got what they wanted but we can't know because participants didn't fully engage with the evaluation. That said, the two thirds of participants who returned session feedback forms were very happy with the sessions they had attended.

The Emergency Fund required immediacy. For a volunteer-led network of fellow travellers, working across sectors and locations, developing a bid alongside its twin track approach of raising private finance, was a huge challenge and it is to the group's credit that they raised the finance necessary to make **Here to Stay** a reality. However, looking more closely at some of the processes and systems employed we feel that – should there be opportunities to repeat the programme – attention should be paid to:

- **Developing systems which support the team in clearly articulating how and whether participants needs were met;**
- **Building in clear evaluation systems from the outset (including the collation of baseline and distance travelled data);**
- **Building in routine methods for collecting light touch feedback data for all sessions;**
- **Developing methods to measure the impact of mentoring and coaching.**

Conversation starters

- **Is the relative lack of feedback systems and processes a necessary price to pay for an emergency response?**

8.5 Reproducing inequality: As we have learned, **Here to Stay** was devised as a response to the disproportionate impact of redundancies and contract terminations on Black, Asian and ethnically diverse staff in the cultural sector. In completing this evaluation, it struck us that the sector as a whole – and particularly those organisations which receive substantial ACE investment – should critically reflect on the ways in which its processes, assumptions and actions might reproduce inequalities. It didn't just happen that Black, Asian and ethnically diverse people were worst hit. They were in the highest risk, lower paid, most disposable roles. We are not the first people to highlight this. In her foreword to Inc Arts' 2020 report, Hold on. Diversity and Managing in the Arts¹⁴, Amanda Parker (Director, Inc Arts) succinctly sets a challenge for the sector:

The sector is at an important point of inflexion. It is the perfect time to experiment with radically different strategies for employment, progression and retention in the sector.

Most subsidised arts organisations are charities. Charities (in the community and voluntary sector in particular) have a history of striving to be exemplar employers. Not all succeed, of course. Arts charities by contrast, appear to have been much more open to embracing less secure employment practices, terms and conditions.

Conversation starters

- **What are the critical determining factors that have led us to the point where Black, Asian and ethnically diverse staff and creatives are disproportionately affected by these most recent crises?**
- **What decisions did the sector make incrementally along the way that led to where we are now?**
- **What was the trigger for the arts and cultural sector to embrace less secure employment models?**
- **Should zero hours contracts be the exception rather than the rule?**
- **To what extent do arts organisations want to be known as exemplar employers?**

¹⁴ Hold On. Diversity and Managing in the Arts (Inc Arts and Bridge Group, 2020)

A BIG THANK YOU

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Helen Murray *for the use of her photography (website)*
Yoga Sessions with Vikki Moorhouse

Sunday Service

(reflections) with
Dr Sylvan Baker

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