



# Upstart Projects Annual Report 2020-2021

Charity Number: 1157864

59 Trinity Street, Shrewsbury SY3 7PQ

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# Introduction

Welcome to our review of 2020/21. What a tough year it was.

We are grateful to our trustees and supporters and proud of our staff and volunteers for keeping Upstart and Voice very much afloat though the Covid-19 era.

In fact, Voice, our online magazine, was in a fantastic position to support young people during lockdown and the team introduced innovative new activities to engage and entertain.

Alongside Voice, our projects also flourished in the online space, including youth voice training, youth panel facilitation and support for organisations to develop young people's voice.

Despite the external challenges, we've been able to experiment with far more wide-ranging digital activities and to develop a 'hybrid' way of working as a team.

We hope you will enjoying finding out more in this report.

Felicity Woolf, Chair, Upstart Projects



## About us

Upstart Projects supports young people aged 13-30 to find their voice in the arts and gain the skills and experience to grow as arts and media practitioners.

We want to help create a society which values the creativity and opinions of young people, and encourages them to flourish through arts and culture.

We run Voice magazine, Voice Outreach, training programmes and projects which help us achieve our mission.



## Our activities

**Voice magazine** is an arts and culture magazine providing opportunities for young people to develop as reviewers and journalists across the UK

**Voice Outreach** seeks out young people who think the arts is 'not for me' and supports them to explore arts and media events in their area

**Youth Voice Training** helps arts professionals to strengthen young people's influence on their organisations

**Commissioned projects** are undertaken where they support our charitable mission by working with other organisations with shared objectives





# Our mission...to champion youth voice and leadership

**We believe that young people should have a strong voice about arts and culture.**  
**We offer opportunities to explore cultural experiences and share opinions.**  
**We aim to create new and diverse pathways into the media sector.**

Opportunities for young people to review and report on the arts are currently both scarce and unevenly weighted towards those from more affluent socio-economic backgrounds.

We believe this bias acts as a barrier to access and participation in the arts and limits cultural commentary and feedback to the arts sector.

## Our theory of change...

We believe that attending and reviewing the arts builds **confidence** and **cultural capital**

We believe that forming and sharing opinions develops **thinking, critical judgement** and **communication skills**

## Our values...

**Opportunity Creativity Quality Trust**



# PROJECT | Voice magazine

Voice is our lead project and the symbol for our work - an online culture magazine which supports young journalists and arts reviewers and provides a platform for young people aged 13+ to publish reviews, opinions and showcase their art work

[voicemag.uk](http://voicemag.uk)

In 2020 we responded to Covid lockdown by developing Voice's online offer to young people - experimenting with Zoom workshops, Google Meet drop-ins and live Instaviews with artists. These activities proved very popular and are now part of our regular offer.

We also joined the government's Kickstart scheme, offering six-month training placements to six young people interested in journalism and media creation, which has increased the diversity of our content.



## Voice: facts and figures in 2020/21

- ★ **498,204 visits** in year
- ★ **379,761 unique visitors** in year
- ★ **7,500+ published posts** by young people, including 2,600+ reviews, 1,700 blogs, 1,500 interviews, and 130 resources
- ★ **6,065 registered users** who can post and comment
- ★ **12 Voice Contributors** and **6 Voice Local Reviewers** who get access to press tickets and support to develop their skills and publish their work
- ★ **UK-wide reach** with top reader locations in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol, Leeds
- ★ **Wide-ranging art forms and topics** to meet readers' interests, including film and media, literature, climate change and equality

## The pathway from volunteer to editor

*"It feels crazy that in two years, I've gone from volunteering as a Contributor, to reviewing Edinburgh Fringe to now being the Assistant Editor. Voice is more than just a gateway for young people to gain new experiences; it's a place where a person can grow, be nurtured and advance into an industry position that opens you up to a new world of interests, skills and experiences. I couldn't ask for a more supportive and encouraging environment to work in."* **Saskia, (25)**

# Innovating online during Covid-19

With support from Arts Council England's Emergency Fund, we experimented with our online offer to young people and artists throughout the lockdowns of 2020.

Between April and August 2020 the Voice team:

- ★ Engaged 12 artists for interviews and workshops, attracting 111 live interview participants, 600+ catch-up views, and 44 participants attending the workshops  
[voicemag.uk/artistworkshops](https://voicemag.uk/artistworkshops)
- ★ Launched a regular live interview series on Instagram, delivering 23 with 1600+ views, 300+ live  
[voicemag.uk/instaviews](https://voicemag.uk/instaviews)
- ★ Ran 28 online discussions exploring a range of online art experiences, attracting 135 attendees
- ★ Created **Media from Voice**, a resource hub that pulls in multimedia from Voice and other creatives  
<https://www.voicemag.uk/media-from-voice>
- ★ Launched two podcasts, covering pop culture and interviews with creatives
- ★ Worked with Brunel University to offer two graduates paid work to run DIY media training for our contributors and readers
- ★ Commissioned a filmmaker to showcase young digital creatives who were creating art throughout lockdown

*"I had an amazing time... All of you at Voice are so supportive...I will welcome any opportunity to work with the team again."* Akash Prasad, actor

*"Instagram is really accessible, great to see live content - feels fresh even when archived."* Survey respondent

*"I love all of them, especially the Hangout with Voice discussions, I love to share my thoughts about a specific subject, hear other people's opinion and discuss about it! It is a great space for learning and sharing."*  
Survey respondent





# Voice Contributors and Reviewers

## Voice Contributors

The Contributor programme was offered on a rolling basis this year, to accommodate those who were looking for new ways to engage with art and culture in a particularly turbulent time. We brought on 12 new Contributors over the course of the year, engaging them with lockdown initiatives like Hangout on Voice and giving them ownership of their own podcast. We were pleased to be able to offer 10 young people paid commissions, producing features like [The Tiger King of Wales](#) and [The New Vic: Establishing community through the power of theatre](#)

*“Voice Magazine offered me an opportunity to grow and be recognised for my time with continuous support, which is entirely invaluable and highly recommendable to any young creative.” Elle (24)*



**Voice Outreach** is our way of reaching young people who would not usually attend or review the arts. We work with partners to support local groups to attend events in their area, discuss their opinions and post reviews on Voice magazine. Local Reviewers can go on to join our national Voice Contributor network to gain access to training, events and artists across the country.

This year our local reviewers programme was funded by both UKYouth and Awards4All Lottery funding but was hit by Covid restrictions on live events. However we developed a new group in Brighton working with young people who never attend live arts and who met online to consider what Brighton has to offer, interview local creatives and explore digital culture. The full programme will run again in 2021/22 with additional funding from the Arts Council, enabling us to reach six new groups across England.

*“It’s been good to have thoughtful and deep discussions during the lockdown” Will (17)*

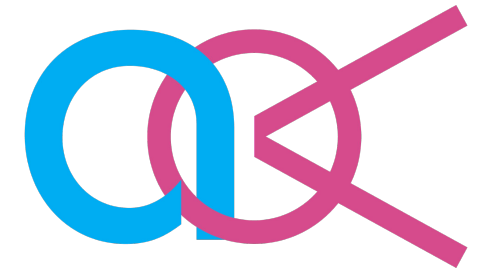
# Trinity College London

We are delighted to have worked with Trinity College London for the past seven years to support their arts qualifications in the UK. We run a range of projects for Trinity each year, two of which take place on Voice and are highlighted below.

**Arts Award Voice** We run Arts Award on Voice, a mini-site offering inspiration and guidance to young people taking part in Arts Award [artsawardvoice.com](https://artsawardvoice.com)

This year saw:

- ★ 70,000 visitors to Arts Award Voice
- ★ 4,000 registered users, who can post work and create portfolio collections for assessment for their Arts Award
- ★ 869 registered Arts Award alumni who we keep in touch with after they have achieved their award
- ★ 4 young people supported remotely to achieve their award despite lockdown



## TrinityTalent | Class of 2020

Since 2018, we have celebrated a group of stand-out young artists who have achieved Trinity College London arts qualifications during the year. Trinity specialists and a youth panel chose 35 young people selected from 120 public nominations and the artists are featured in an online gallery on Voice.

[voicemag.uk/trinitytalent2020](https://voicemag.uk/trinitytalent2020)

*"The experience was brilliant for her. It's the first time she has been involved in a selection panel. Thank you for making her feel so welcome." (parent)*





# PROJECT | Youth Voice Training



In late 2020 we gained support from the Social Investment Business, providing a grant worth £22,300 and access to the Enterprise Development Programme. This enabled us to work with the Centre for Youth Impact to build our offer for organisations.

We have developed our Youth Voice training as follows:

- ★ created courses for public and in-house delivery, including live and online versions
- ★ embedded the principle of training young facilitators to support more experienced practitioners to run the training
- ★ refined and targeted our course marketing
- ★ created follow-up online resources and a consultancy offer

We launched the training as an online course in March 2021 and were delighted that our first series sold out quickly!



# PROJECT | commissions & services



**Nottingham Youth Cultural Partnership** | In September 2020 we launched our first meetings for the Nottingham Local Cultural Education Partnership (ChalleNGe) with young people who represent arts partners across the city. We have met virtually due to COVID-19 and worked with a passionate group of nine young people to date. [connectingnotts.co.uk](https://connectingnotts.co.uk)



**Royal Opera House Youth Voice & Amplify website** | Throughout 2020 we worked with the Royal Opera House Bridge to research practice in youth voice from organisations across their region. The work developed into a national project with eight of Arts Council England's Bridge organisations. We gained the commission to create a new website and to create a series of six episodes profiling good youth voice practice in cultural education. See the results at [amplify-voice.uk](https://amplify-voice.uk)



**Kickstart Support Programme** | Working closely with The Mighty Creatives in the East Midlands and employers across the country we developed an offer for young people on the Government's Kickstart programme, part of their response to youth unemployment caused by Covid. We are supporting young people aged 16-25 with personal coaching sessions, access to online resources around employability, skills, webinars, regular support meetings and a peer network.



**UK Youth Digital Hub Consultancy** | We were happy to work with three youth organisations in England and Wales through 2020 to help them engage young people using technology and digital innovations. We also created and delivered an interactive webinar for youth organisations across the UK on how to build partnerships and plan projects in collaboration with young people and partners.

# PEOPLE | our participants

Our mission is to create opportunities for young people from all backgrounds to explore, enjoy and comment on arts, media and culture. We work hard to attract young people who might not usually engage in the arts and to monitor the impact of our activities.

## Profile of our staff, volunteers and project participants

Those who we worked during the year as participants, volunteers, trainees or freelance staff who submitted anonymous EDI information (36 responses)

**Age range** 83% under 30

**Gender as self-identified** 25% Male | 75% Female

### Sexual Orientation

25% Bisexual | 3% Gay | 67% Heterosexual | 5% Prefer not to say

### Ethnic Background

67% White British | 8% White Other | 9% White and Black |  
3% White and Asian | 6% Asian | 3% Black | 3% Prefer not to say

### Highest educational attainment before joining us

44% Degree | 25% A-Levels or Level 3 | 11% Masters Degree |  
8% Foundation Degree | 3% GCSEs | 9% None

## Voice Readers (379,761)

**Age** Around 70% are under 18 and a further 10% are 25-35

**Gender balance** Google Analytics indicate 51% female and 49% male reader

**Location** Readers are spread across the UK, with concentrations in many cities but reach to rural areas too

## Voice registered users (6,065)

Readers who create a Voice profile so they can post their own content

**Age** 55% of Voice's users are under 25 and a further 15% are 25-35

## Arts Award users (4,098)

Young people and professionals register to get access to guidance for Arts Award. Many become magazine users and join other projects.

**Arts Award participants & achievers:** 3,590



# PEOPLE | trustees and staff

## Building board expertise

In 2020 Upstart benefitted from the impact of trustees who joined the board in 2019 bringing fresh perspectives and expertise. The board has refined our fundraising, developed a new Friends of Voice scheme and engaged fully with organisation development. Our young trustees help us to focus on the interests of young people and early career creatives. [Meet our trustees](#)

*“Serving on the board of trustees has been a huge learning experience and I am so grateful for being given the opportunity.”* **Muhammad Ibrahim**

## Staff team

The staff team has been maintained as four core part-time freelance roles plus six associates running projects and training, supported most recently by six paid trainees.

[Meet the Upstart team](#) [Meet the Voice team](#)

## Planning for the future

Trustees and staff have celebrated seven years of independent existence and are working together to plan the organisation's future, with a focus on creating new roles for early career professionals and building our participation work at local level.

As the year ended, we received the offer of an Arts Council Cultural Recovery Fund grant of £19,695 which will help us to restore our reserves and work with a specialist fundraiser in 2021-22.

### Trustees serving throughout 2020/21

Felicity Woolf (Chair)

Beth Troakes

Holly Howe

Maddy Ryle

Martin Russell (Deputy Chair)

Muhammad Ibrahim [resigned 13/06/2021]

Olivia Porritt

Phoebe Hill

Tom Edwards

### CIO Governing Document

The CIO Foundation Constitution

Trustees appointed through recruitment & invitation

### Reserves policy

To build reserves of 3 months of core running costs (£16,209)

At 31 March 2021 our reserves were £8,000

# MONEY | Grants and donations 2020/21

## Grants received and used in year

Arts Council England Emergency Fund	£15,072
Trinity College London	£45,000

## Grants received and used partly in year and partly in 21/22

Social Investment Business, Access Foundation Grant	£22,330
Department of Work & Pensions (Kickstart scheme)	£9,360

## Grants received prior to year and used in year

UK Youth Fund (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport)	£6,910
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## Donations

Via personal fundraisers, Amazon Smile and Easy Fundraising	£2,242
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## Friends of Voice

Scheme launched this year and attracted 15 friends and two patrons	£1,415
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<b>Total received in year</b>	<b>£102,531</b>
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Thank you to our funders, donors and supporters for investing in young people's voice

# MONEY | ACCOUNTS

## Statement of Financial Activities For the Year Ended 31 March 2021



	Note	Unrestricted Total £	Restricted Total £	Designated Total £	2021 Total £	2020 Total £
<b>Incoming resources</b>						
Donations & legacies	2	3,657	-	-	3,657	3,077
Charitable activities	3	55,012	43,862	-	98,874	67,028
Investments	4	67	-	-	67	137
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>58,736</b>	<b>43,862</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>102,598</b>	<b>70,242</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>						
Charitable activities	5	73,615	8,592	-	82,207	93,423
Fundraising costs		61	-	-	61	-
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<b>73,677</b>	<b>8,592</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>82,269</b>	<b>93,423</b>
<b>Net incoming resources before transfers</b>		<b>(14,941)</b>	<b>35,270</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>20,329</b>	<b>(23,181)</b>
<b>Transfer between funds</b>		<b>12,935</b>	<b>(13,390)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(455)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net incoming resources after transfers</b>		<b>(2,006)</b>	<b>21,880</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>19,874</b>	<b>(23,181)</b>
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		<b>4,750</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>13,200</b>	<b>36,381</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>2,744</b>	<b>22,330</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>33,074</b>	<b>13,200</b>

**Independent examiner** Community360  
Winsley's House  
High Street  
Colchester  
Essex  
CO1 1UG

**Bankers** The Co-Operative Bank  
Albert Hall Building  
High Street  
Colchester  
Essex  
CO1 1JW

Signed: *Felicity Woolf*  
Felicity Woolf (Chair)

Date: 16/11/2021



# MONEY | ACCOUNTS

Balance Sheet, as at 31 March 2021



	Note	2021 £	2020 £
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	9	1,431	7,510
Cash at bank and in hand		91,406	24,751
		<u>92,837</u>	<u>32,261</u>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	<u>39,308</u>	<u>19,061</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>53,529</b>	<b>13,200</b>
Creditors: amounts falling due after one year		20,000	-
<b>Total assets less total liabilities</b>		<u><b>33,529</b></u>	<u><b>13,200</b></u>
<b>Income funds</b>	11		
Designated funds		8,000	8,000
Restricted funds		22,330	450
Unrestricted funds		2,744	4,750
		<u><b>33,074</b></u>	<u><b>13,200</b></u>

# Notes to the Financial Statements For the Year Ended 31 March 2021



## 1. Accounting Policies

### Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement on Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019). (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

### Cash Flow

The financial statements do not include a cash flow statement because the charity, as a small reporting entity, is exempt from the requirement to prepare such a statement under Financial Reporting Standard 1 "Cash flow statements".

### Assessment of Going Concern

Preparation of the accounts is on a going concern basis. The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

### Incoming resources

Grants receivable are recognised in the accounts when conditions for their receipt are satisfied. Grants with conditions attached to their use are included in restricted funds. Donations, legacies and other forms of voluntary income are recognised as incoming resources when receivable.

### Tax reclaims on Donations and Gifts

Incoming resources from tax reclaims are included in the SOFA in the same financial period as the gift to which they relate.

### Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is recognised when there is a legal or constructive obligation to pay. Expenditure has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to a particular heading they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

## 2. Donations & legacies

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2021 £	2020 £
Donations	3,657	-	3,657	3,077
	<b>3,657</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,657</b>	<b>3,077</b>

## 3. Charitable activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2021 £	2020 £
Commissions to run activities	7,116	-	7,116	16,144
Trinity marketing commissions	-	-	-	4,084
Grants	47,896	43,862	91,758	46,800
	<b>55,012</b>	<b>43,862</b>	<b>98,874</b>	<b>67,028</b>

## 4. Investment income

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2021 £	2020 £
Interest	67	-	67	137
	<b>67</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>137</b>

## 5. Total resources expended

	Staff costs £	Other costs £	2021 £	2020 £
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Management team	13,715	-	13,715	19,297
Marketing	-	131	131	1,329
Delivery of activities	37,939	28,319	66,258	70,267
Accountancy	-	553	553	505
Trustee expenses	-	205	205	783
Administration	-	1,347	1,347	1,242
	<b>51,653</b>	<b>30,554</b>	<b>82,207</b>	<b>93,423</b>

# Notes to the Financial Statements For the Year Ended 31 March 2021



## 6. Staff costs

The average number of employees for 2021 was 4 (2020 - Nil).

## 7. Trustees

The trustees were reimbursed £0 (2020 - £783) for travel expenses and £340 (2020 - £1,200) for project work.

## 8. Related parties

There were no related parties during the period.

## 9. Debtors

Trade debtors

2021	2020
£	£
1,431	7,510
<u>1,431</u>	<u>7,510</u>



# Notes to the Financial Statements For the Year Ended 31 March 2021



## 10. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade creditors	10,035	6,458
VAT	-	181
Accruals and deferred income	29,273	12,423
	<b>39,308</b>	<b>19,061</b>

## 11. Statement of funds

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Transfers £	Carried Forward £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	4,750	58,736	(73,677)	12,935	2,744
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Arts Council	-	15,072	(7,021)	(8,051)	-
Social Investment Business	-	22,330	-	-	22,330
Trinity College	-	-	-	-	-
UK Youth Fund	450	6,460	(1,571)	(5,339)	-
Subtotal	<b>450</b>	<b>43,862</b>	<b>(8,592)</b>	<b>(13,390)</b>	<b>22,330</b>
<b>Designated funds</b>	8,000	-	-	-	8,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,200</b>	<b>102,598</b>	<b>(82,269)</b>	<b>- 455</b>	<b>33,074</b>