

Beatroute Arts

In this Social Impact Case Study, Jenny Reeve, Director of Beatroute Arts gives an insight to how music and the arts are at the heart of community support. (5 Minute Read)

On the 16th of March 2020, Beatroute's staff team sat 2 metres apart and collectively took a moment to let the events of the day sink in.

All the forward planning possible on our part could not have foreseen this; the incoming pandemic and subsequent complete rewrite of every community service currently offered by us, a small but bustling creative community hub situated in

the North East of Glasgow, providing daily services for approximately 1500 local people per year.

The Voluntary (or Third) Sector is an incredible thing; the lightning speed with which webinars, information forums, succinctly gathered information around emergency funding sources and best practice emerged was nothing short of impressive. The Sector turned on a dime and rallied

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to the support of communities across the country.

and classes that make up such a meaningful part of their weekly routine.

For Beatroute Arts, this meant finding the fastest and most inclusive way to bring vital music, arts and holistic services online. To date, the charity has delivered 517 individual pieces of creative community-led activity (music workshops, arts tutoring and mentoring, yoga classes and social gatherings) providing vital tech equipment such as tablets and mobile WiFi for those most at risk of becoming socially isolated and offering individual, bespoke support for members (particularly older members) so that they might connect to the groups

‘Time moves slowly now. Stuck in my humble abode. Me and my guitar’ A haiku written by a local young person during their weekly online song-writing workshop with Beatroute. Indeed, time does move slowly now, and for those ‘stuck in their humble abodes’, services such as Beatroute’s are nothing short of necessary. Vital. Needed.

Adult members would also furrow their brow at the suggestion the services they currently benefit from are in some way superfluous. “I had depression before I

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Useful Facts

Participatory arts activities with children improve their cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. ¹

81% of people in Scotland attended or visited a cultural event or place of culture in 2018. ²

Participatory art interventions can improve the development of social bonds and a sense of community. ³

8 & 9 year olds who received weekly group music lessons for 10 months, showed improved sympathy and pro-social skills, provided they had poor social skills to begin with. 4

Participative music programmes for people with long term health conditions improved mood, socialisation, confidence, communication and concentration in over half of participants. 5

joined” said one member of the yoga group ‘Golden Yogis’ online recently. “I thought I’d do the class for two weeks, make my excuses and leave but that was 4 years ago! I’ve stopped needing my medication, this is my medicine now. Beatroute has saved my sanity”.

This got me thinking that perhaps rather than considering what additional benefits, both economically and socially, the arts bestow upon society, it would be more helpful for us to consider how life (particularly in lock down) would be without any form of creative input. The music we listen to, books we read, artwork on our walls,

movies we watch, Netflix series we binge and then instantly forget.

Culture is many things for an area like Balmorloch and others like it across Scotland which faces daily the effects of poverty. It is the opportunity for local people to be the driving force of their community’s identity. It provides opportunities to define who they are in their own voices, whether that voice is found through a guitar, a yoga posture, a lockdown haiku, a new friend met through a local community activity, a piece of art created and displayed in a community centre, library or online platform, or through a meaningful experience as a community



volunteer.

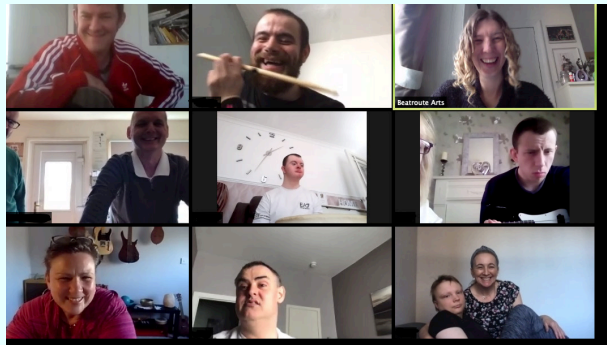
At Beatroute Arts, we regularly hear people expressing heartfelt gratitude for the free services we provide in the community, as though they were a rarity or a treat and that makes me incredibly sad. It may sound insultingly obvious but I'll say it none-the-less; a sense of identity, pride of place from

a cultural perspective creates waves which are vital to the lives of us all, whether or not we may realise it.

Find out more about Beatroute Arts and the services they provide here:
www.beatroutearts.com/

- 1 "Creative Health" APPG (ARTS, HEALTH AND WELLBEING)., 2017
- 2 "Scotland's People Annual Report 2018" SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, 2019.
- 3 "Changing the world through arts and kindness " PEOPLE UNITED, 2017.
- 4 "Group Music Training" SCHELLENBERG, E., CORRIGALL, K., DYS, S., MALTI, T., 2015.
- 5 "Participatory creative engagement..." TAYSIDE HEALTHCARE ARTS TRUST, 2017.

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