

Big Draw Event Co-ordination

Staffing

Liaising with artists and other organisers

It is advisable to work as closely as possible with artists, freelancers and other staff on all aspects of planning the event right from the start. Communication is a key to success.

Induction / Preliminary meetings

Aim for an induction day for volunteers & artists & other staff prior to your activities so that they are fully briefed.

At the meeting:

- Assess strengths and weaknesses of volunteers, and allocate individuals to activities best suited to their experience and personality.
- If you are engaging more than one freelancer, ensure that they have the opportunity to meet and discuss the event fully. One project employed a local heritage worker who guided participants around various areas of interest and a lead artist who encouraged them to draw both in the studio and during visits. The two workers only had one preparatory meeting and would have liked more. This would have allowed them to collaborate more fully during the course.
- Ensure that all staff are fully briefed on the aims of the event. Example: costumed interpreters talk of the history of a heritage site, while other staff encourage visitors to draw. The costumed interpreters are in the best position to suggest subject matter to participants and to encourage drawing, but may lack confidence. If they are briefed, they will be able to contribute to the drawing activities. Many of these strategies have been used in the Drawing Attractions projects – see the book *Drawing On-Sites* in the Drawing Attractions resource pack.
- Provide a briefing sheet to volunteers, a contract to freelancers, detailing exactly what is required of them.
- Provide an information sheet including: event details; logistics timeline for the event duration; map; mobile phone contact; and a list of all staff roles, so that everyone knows who is doing what without asking you.

Evaluation sessions

A final debriefing meeting for all staff provides the opportunity for the team to review the programme and reflect on their experience. Workshop leaders are well placed to suggest how activities could be improved.

Numbers

Involve more than one staff member if possible with the running of the event

A project might have to be cancelled if the staff member running it leaves the organisation suddenly and other members of staff do not feel able to take over. Even if the project can continue with a change of personnel, it may lack firm direction and valuable time for planning and publicity could be lost.

CRB Checks

Check all staff with the Criminal Records Bureau

All staff working *regularly* with schools or with families should have their background checked. For England and Wales, the Criminal Records Bureau provides a regulated 'one stop' service of records checks from information provided by Police, Department of Health and Department for Education and Skills. However, if at one-off Big Draw events, volunteers are not working alone and unsupervised with children there is no need for a CRB check.

Volunteers

Energy and enthusiasm

Volunteers can prove a huge asset at any event as they bring enthusiasm as well as expertise and extra manpower. Ask your local art colleges or send out an email to local art groups asking for volunteer artist-facilitators. It gives college students valuable experience and can be added to their CV. The Campaign for Drawing regularly uses volunteers at the national launch of the **Big Draw** season and has built up a team of over 100 who are keen to volunteer year after year. If the event is enjoyable, as well as hard work, volunteers can get as much out of an event as they put in.

CRB statement

The Campaign has been in touch with the CRB to clarify the situation about disclosure requirements for volunteers. The following statement was made by the CRB in June 2005 and is still valid.

Your volunteers are at no time left alone with children or vulnerable adults and, additionally, these are one-off events and the volunteers are not caring for children or vulnerable adults as part of their normal duties. As such, there is no requirement to make a Disclosure application.

Contact: Criminal Records Bureau, PO Box 110, Liverpool L3 6ZZ
Tel: **0870 9090 844** Fax: **0151 676 1730** Email: **info@crb.gsi.gov.uk**

Artists

Many organisers of Big Draw events feel they do not have the expertise to support certain types of drawing activities. Consider the role of artists, designers, cartoonists or students who can act as *animateurs* to support activities and give people confidence to try. You could involve tutors from your nearest college or art club members. Some of your own colleagues may have creative skills. *Animateurs* need to share their enthusiasm and skills, and through demonstration and sensitive support, unlock a creative response from visitors.

There are different ways they can influence drawing activities:

- Showing off their skills – giving people an opportunity to see an expert at work!
- Showing how it's done – demonstrating drawing techniques for others to try too.
- Organising drawing activities – providing materials, prompts and explanations for drawing activities.
- Helping others draw – providing encouragement and suggestions.
- Directing drawing activities – running workshops.

Finding an artist

There are a number of different ways to find an artist. Before you start the search, identify and prepare a clear brief of your objectives. Artists will bring their own ideas for drawing activities, but you need to know your target participants, budgetary constraints, and the purposes of the drawing activities, as well as when and where the activities are to take place. You may want to involve an artist you have worked with before, you may get personal recommendations from colleagues, or you could search the Internet. The sites below could be used as a first step.

All UK regions

- **www.artscouncil.org.uk/documents/information/phpVB8I8N.pdf**
There are a number of sites recommended by the Arts Council in their document Arts Education. Although this is aimed at London audiences, many of the organisations that it recommends have a national remit. Published in 2004.
www.artscape.org.uk

- The artscape directory features organisations and individual artists who undertake educational work. All art forms and regions are covered. artscape ensures that all individuals who are available for work in schools have Enhanced Disclosure checks. Free registration.
- **www.engage.org/edlocator/index.aspx**
engage is a leading international association for gallery educators, artist educators and other arts and education professionals. It offers an educator locator service to help you find the right person to develop education programmes or policy and deliver education projects. **educator locator** helps you search for a freelance education consultant, a gallery educator, or an artist to meet your needs.
- **www.britisharts.co.uk/artistregisterlist.htm**
A register of artists and artist's studios, listed by county.
- **www.artistsinschools.co.uk**
Listing of artists and their CVs (select 'painting/drawing').

London

- **www.culturalco-operation.org**
Cultural Co-operation is an independent arts charity. Enables search for London-based artists.
- **www.lonsas.org.uk**
The London Schools Art Service Arts Directory is a showcase of arts in education in London. Search the directory to find artists, organisations and arts opportunities. Features an education community 'channel', alongside a new arts channel for arts practitioners working in education.

Selecting an artist

Try to work with local artists if possible. It makes communication easier and cuts down on transport and hotel expenses. In some cases, staff may resent an artist who is brought in from outside the local community. Try to ensure that your artist has experience of working with your target group. Although budgets may not allow it, it is a good idea to have two artists working together on an event. They will support each other and if one of them is prevented from running it, you have a fallback.

Case study

At Aston Rowant Nature Reserve, an artist was required to work with a group of students studying English as a second language.

We had very specific criteria for our artist. We preferably wanted a female artist who was used to working with family groups, with people from different cultures, had made artwork in connection with wildlife, and did not mind working outside: someone who would facilitate the creation of some interesting and unique artwork with a large group of people. We were basically starting from scratch as we had no knowledge or experience of using art in our reserve events and therefore did not have any previous contacts. We searched several internet sites for artists. I looked at their work and their background and to see how local they were to the reserve. I did not find anyone suitable through this search.

I then contacted various local authorities and spoke to the education officers and got names and lists of local artists. There were some very promising people through this search; I found links to previous community work that they had done, and some of them had done artwork linked to wildlife. I was led to the local authority's countryside service for one area where they had used an artist on their nature reserves to do children's art workshops. However, I did not find any artists that fulfilled our criteria closely enough and the hourly/daily rates tended to be very high. Then, through talking to different colleagues, several knew of artists that fitted many of our criteria.

Finally we chose one whose experience was perfect for the events that we were organising. It was extremely helpful that she had previously been an ESOL teacher so she was well aware of the various cultural sensitivities that would be involved. We were very lucky to have come across her in our search. She was very enthusiastic about the project from start to finish and was very good with the participants and everyone else involved in the events. Some lovely individual drawings/paintings were produced, along with a very impressive mural put together by the artist.

Sarah Mansbridge, Aston Rowant Nature Reserve

Visitors and Participants

As far as drawing is concerned, the key is to provide opportunities, encouragement and some support. See below for information on specific target groups.

Schools

School groups visiting heritage sites, museums or galleries as part of the regular education programmes may be self-sufficient and come prepared with their own materials and lines of enquiry already prepared. Other school groups will wish to participate in the programme that has been prepared by staff in consultation with the teacher. The Big Draw is an opportunity to make contact with schools that have not visited recently.

Liaise closely with teachers

Make sure that, where possible, you organise meetings with teachers to explain exactly what will be happening during the drawing activities so that they know what to expect and what their role will be. If you are going to require support from parents, this also needs to be discussed in advance. Parents may wish to transport children, but insurance and other matters should be checked. It is a good idea to ask a teacher to undertake a risk assessment visit with site staff, as teachers are likely to be more aware of what might constitute a danger to their students.

Ensure pupils are sensibly dressed

If children have to walk through vegetation, they should be advised to wear trainers, boots or sensible shoes, not sandals, and trousers rather than shorts or skirts.

Make contingency plans

If young people have nothing to do, they get restless very quickly, especially if they have to queue for certain activities. Make contingency plans and ensure that there is always something for them to do.

Single sex groups

Some women may prefer to work in women-only groups. If groups are predominantly women, it may be appropriate that staff assisting with visits and the lead artist should also be women. The artist should be experienced in working with such groups, and aware of sensitivities that might be encountered.

Communication

If you are aware that communication could be problematic, try to devise simple activities to help participants learn the English words for the objects that they will see during their visit. Participants with English as their second language may find it difficult to contribute to group discussions. Written activities are particularly difficult. For longer-term projects, participants could be teamed up with another participant to help explain instructions, or encouraged to write in their native language and a translator found.

Photography

If you wish to document the drawing activities, be aware that some members of the group may prefer not to be photographed. Due to cultural sensitivities and language barriers, there are particular challenges in taking photographs with certain groups. The process of gaining consent can be intimidating for some participants. Some may give permission so as not to offend, but are clearly uncomfortable. The whole process requires great tact and sensitivity and can be quite time-consuming.

Evaluation

Language and cultural barriers may present difficulties in recording participants' views about the day and about what they have learned. Asking for written feedback may meet with limited success and much of the information recorded about people's experiences should be collated informally.

Older adults

Working with older adults requires careful planning but can be extremely successful and rewarding, with many participants keen to continue drawing after the event.

Mixed groups

Try to ensure that the group has a good mix of male and female participants and that the age range is not too wide. Some projects fail when individuals drop out. The dynamics of the group often play a part. For example, if a project is targeted at the over 50s, but most participants are in their 70s and 80s, someone in their early 50s may feel discouraged.

A group with a very wide age range may not bond well. Similarly, a male participant may decide not to continue a course if he feels uncomfortable as the only man. However, some male participants enjoy this role! As art courses attract more women than men, extra effort will be needed to attract and retain male participants.

Getting to know you

Ensure that participants are given time and space to get to know each other and the event leaders. Begin with an introductory drawing workshop as a relaxed and informal way of preparing participants for the practice of drawing before they tackle larger projects. This is important as many of them may not have drawn for many years.

It's cold outside

Participants may be physically frail. In winter, ensure that the location is warm as this is a particular concern for the elderly. Regular refreshments help maintain energy levels. Some participants may find it difficult to carry art materials far. Walking and carrying art materials at the same time can be difficult. Participants may require walking sticks and folding seats when going outside to draw. They need easy access to toilets and somewhere comfortable to sit.

Risk assessment

If outings are to be organised for participants, they need to be carefully planned and participants consulted and given the opportunity to opt out if they feel unable to cope. It is important to ensure that the physical environment has been assessed and possible problems identified. These include uneven ground and uphill walks.

Attendance

Attendance can be irregular as participants may become ill during the project. The nature of a long-term project means that a group may share happy and joyous occasions but there may be sad times too, if a member is hospitalised or dies. Remember, attendance can be erratic due to infirmity rather than lack of enthusiasm.

Impairments

Older adults may have hearing and visual impairments. Hearing impairments can have an impact on the dynamics of a group. A partially deaf person can unwittingly end up dominating the group by talking too much, or become isolated or out of step because they have missed some instruction, or part of the conversation. It is up to the facilitator to be aware of these issues and to manage boundaries accordingly.

Organisers may find useful ways of initiating discussion about this subject. At one project, an ex-miner had hearing problems as the result of industrial injury. The group was able to have a non-threatening discussion about loss of function, the causes, social impact and their feelings around this issue. People were then able to talk about their own personal experience more easily.

Visual impairments are more common in the over 50s. This is an interesting subject to raise on a drawing course as it can lead to discussions about perception as a subjective concept, helping break down barriers to drawing. This can be used to demonstrate that there is no such thing as getting things right or wrong when drawing. You could discuss Turner's drawings of Somerset House to see how much his style was affected by visual impairment. Monet's late paintings could also be examined to see to what extent cataracts affected his work.

Small groups

Small groups work best as they allow artists to give more time to each participant. This attention enables participants to reflect on their experience, supports individual development and allows them to build confidence in their abilities.

Timing

Outings can take much longer than expected when working with older adults. Even three hours may not be long enough, given the social and learning needs of the group. A four-hour session may be more appropriate. Try to allow flexibility so that session lengths can be adjusted to suit the group and activity.

Drawn from Memory, or reminiscence sessions

When working with older adults, it is a good idea to involve those with experience in the sector, such as Age Concern staff. *Drawn from Memory* projects can be run by artists working closely with reminiscence workers and organisations such as Age Concern. Memories can be painful. If memories are too stressful, a participant may feel unable to attend after the first few sessions. Or a member may be going through difficult times and find that memories of happier times exacerbate their problems. This is challenging for organisers and the group.

One heritage drawing project involved a collaboration between a museum and Wearpurple, an arts project run by Age Concern Cheshire. Another was in collaboration with an Oral History Officer. The artists were supported by professionals who knew how to react if the process of reminiscence became particularly painful or problematic.

If a project is run jointly by an artist and a heritage officer, make sure that enough time is allocated to develop themes based on reminiscence and memory.

Special Educational Needs

Making contact

Participants may have varying special needs and careful planning is needed when working with people with disabilities to ensure they are able to access all parts of the activities. If possible, the organiser or leader of the activity should try to see participants in their own surroundings before they make their visit. The participants will then be familiar with the staff they meet in unfamiliar surroundings and have an idea of what to expect.

Preparation

It is also helpful to meet the participants in advance so that the team leader/artist can take into account a group's various special needs. If the group includes wheelchair users, the leader must ensure that all parts of the site that the group visit are accessible to these users. If members of the group are visually impaired, it may be possible to provide special tactile resources to engage them fully. For hearing impaired group members, ensure they sit where they can hear best. Finding out about the group beforehand will save time and problems when the group arrives.

Timing

When working with groups with special needs, particularly those with impaired mobility, it is important to take into account that getting from one location to another can take a long time. Toilet stops can also be very lengthy. Make sure this is taken into account when planning the timetable for the activity.

Ingenuity

Some participants may not be able to take part in regular drawing activities because of their disabilities. However, there are plenty of ways they can engage with drawing. Techniques that you could experiment with include mark making in clay, painting with fingers or using paint brushes attached to sticks on the floor, using foam brushes and shape stampers.

A hands-on approach works very well with children and young people with special needs, and the more resources you have at your disposal that they can touch or listen to the better. Resources may include art materials or the raw materials used in making the objects or site being examined, social history artefacts, sound and music recordings, costumes and many more.