



INVESTING IN CHILDREN

Membership Evaluation

Date July 2005

PROJECT NAME	Them Wifies
PROJECT LOCATION	2 nd Floor, British India House Carlisle Square Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6UF
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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

Sector	Community Arts Youth Provision
Ages	13-25 years
Area	City
Ward	

Number of beneficiaries



investing in children

Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

Them Wifies

'Them Wifies is a community arts group that exists to combat social isolation and to encourage traditionally silenced groups to gain control over their own lives, to speak for themselves and to effect change. Our priority groups are girls, women and women with learning disabilities.' Taken from Them Wifies Annual Report 2003-2004.

I have attached the annual report to highlight everything that Them Wifies has achieved over last year.

For the purpose of this evaluation I met with some young women from Theatre Pie, Sophia, Ram, Lisa, Ashley, Kate, Bev, Shelley, Naomi, Faye and the two Theater Pie workers Sam and Veronika.

Theatre Pie, Theatre speaks for itself and Pie stands for participation, inclusion and empowerment. The group is made up of young women aged between 13-25 who meet every Thursday for fun, discussions, drama and planning. Planning for workshops, productions, community events, festivals and special activities.

Theatre Pie also provide all young women who participate the opportunity to achieve a National Diploma in Community Arts. 'Through Theatre Pie's accredited training programme, we aim to broaden young people's understanding of the social structures they inhabit and increase their participation at a neighbourhood and local level'. (Highlighted in Theatre Pie's information.)

Or in the word of one young woman 'I received a National Diploma at the age of 17 years and was so ahead of other young people, infact too ahead I was too young to apply for college courses that would progress from what I had done. I feel I have such a edge thanks to pie. I hope to be a part of pie for many years to come'. **Shelley Charlton**

Shelley also told me a little about her feelings of Theatre Pie via e:mail, *'theatre pie has helped me in so many ways , in my personal and professional life , I have a wider perspective on life , issues and people. I have worked professionally, "my acting debut" if you will, he he! Thanks to pie, I have ran workshop with young black minority women and men, who I pride now as friends, and I have experienced so many beautiful things. Pie is about achievement in any way possible, getting to know people, having your say, being able to express yourself'*.

On the evening I met with Theatre Pie the young people discussed:

- 'Who says shoes can't talk?' a performance the group have devised to challenge the audience asking 'who are you, who are we?' Exploring identity through the shoes of another.
- Reviewed feedback on how the group felt their 'tour' was going.

Fused

- A special event to be held in Newcastle over the Summer to bring all young people together. To pro-actively mix young people from all backgrounds, Black and Ethnic Minority Groups and White.
- The group is part of the organising group and will be responsible for running some drama workshops during the day as well as taking part and having fun.

Youth Exchange

- Veronika introduced the idea of an international Youth Exchange. All of the group liked this idea and are looking forward to finding out more.

Investing in Children

- After introducing the idea of Investing in Children the group told me about their experience of Theatre Pie and Them Wifies.

Sophia said *'my experience of doing plays is that they are made up of ideas that we have, our ideas are never brushed aside. Everyone makes you feel valued.'*

Everyone joined in at this point:

- *'they never put anyone down'* **Ram**
- *'no-one ever gets picked on'* **Ram**
- *'you get help and advice on things we need to know'*
- *'everything that comes up is discussed'*
- *'theatre pie opens opportunities'*
- *'everyone is made to feel welcome'*

Faye told me about 'Pie Nights', a take away, chill evening where all the young women are offered one to one support if they need it or want it. This also provides the group with the opportunity to evaluate what they have achieved. *'The group is open to everyone!'*

Sophia also said *'I think Theatre Pie gives people opportunities to make them more confident.'*

Ashley *'it makes you more aware as we cover important issues'*.

Faye *'we go on residential – cool. We work towards goals etc.'* *'We went to Otterburn before the launch of the play, it stimulates the mind and fills up a Thursday night.'*

Sophia said *'Residential give us the experience and let us explore ways of expressing ourselves. Doing workshops, developing acting skills, building our confidence and generating our stability.'*

Bev shared what being part of Theatre Pie has meant to her, *'They train you up to be workers and support you in looking for jobs. I have a national diploma through this. I have been coming since I was 11, I'm now 21.'* Bev also has a youth work qualification, and is also employed on a sessional basis with Them Wifies.

Naomi was the newest member of the group, although Naomi has had experience of Them Wifies before. Naomi became a new recruit after seeing 'who says shoes can't talk' at a local venue.

Quiet **Kate** agrees with all that has been said and told me *'I haven't been coming as long as some people but have really enjoyed it and I have learnt a lot, not just drama'*. The young women all agreed that they all talk about *'where we are going and what we are doing'*.

Pie -Participation, Inclusion and Empowerment is the ethos of Theatre Pie and appears to be well and truly achieved with the young women in the group.

Sam, Veronika and Donna (whilst Veronika was on leave) facilitate the group and support the group in achieving their aims through the medium of art, drama and music.

Participation is the essence of Theatre Pies success. Change is affected in the hearts and minds of the young women who make up theatre pie and in turn they affect the people they meet.

The group choose the issues and topics they discuss, they create, plan and design their drama, their sets and their workshops. 'The issue based drama begins from the young people's starting point.'

Them Wifies is a colourful, creative and individual space for girls and young women to have fun and learn new skills. Whilst talking to the young women from Theatre Pie someone said *'they aren't like workers, we all make up the group.'*

The young people said they were definitely listened to and saw themselves as an integral part of Theatre Pie. Therefore on behalf of the young women who make up Theatre Pie I have no hesitation in recommending that Them Wifies receive their Investing in Children membership.

Helen Mulhearn
Investing in Children
July 2005

Pie for everyone

Community arts group Them Wifies works with girls, women and women with learning disabilities, encouraging them to take control over their own lives. Working through drama, arts and IT, they are encouraged to train for nationally recognised qualifications.

In a group called Theatre Pie, girls and women from 13-25 plan their own workshops, productions, community events and activities from their own standpoint.

Theatre Pie member Shelley says, “I received a National Diploma at the age of 17 years and was so ahead of other young people, in fact too ahead! I was too young to apply for college courses that would progress from what I had done. I feel I have such an edge, thanks to Pie. I have a wider perspective on life, issues and people. I have ran a workshop with young black minority women and men, who I pride now as friends. Pie is about having your say, being able to express yourself.”

“...Pie is about having your say, being able to express yourself...”

Sophia adds, “My experience of doing plays is that they are made up of ideas that we have. Our ideas are never brushed aside. Everyone makes you feel valued.”

The Investing in Children assessor says, “Participation is the essence of Theatre Pie’s success. Change is effected in the hearts and minds of the young women who make up Theatre Pie and in turn they draw in the people they meet.”

[suggested pics – anything showing drama in action]