History of Transform

In 2005 National Theatre of Scotland embarked on an extremely ambitious programme designed to create theatre in contexts that addressed a period of radical change in the educational, cultural and artistic landscape of the country.

Simon Sharkey, Director of Learn at National Theatre of Scotland discusses the need for Transform and this period of change:

“With a new Scottish Parliament, a new National Theatre, a re-imagining of the Arts Council and Scottish Screen, a convergence of education and corporate agendas, the digital and information technologies explosion, the Glow intranet, the schools of ambition, Curriculum for Excellence, More Choices More Chances and Determined to Succeed agendas all promised great opportunity and demanded new thinking. Scotland was truly in a transformational age. Creativity and confidence were seen as the new paradigm for the shift in creating a successful Scotland. School practitioners and artists were thrust to the fore to respond and articulate, in practical terms, how we might engage our youth and communities in embracing and shaping this change”.

A series of in-depth consultations and scoping exercises resulted in the corporate (Scottish Power), the educational (LTS and DTS), and arts (NTS) institutions designing a response which became Transform.

“The aspiration for Transform was, first and foremost to create world class theatre with and by schools, learners and the communities they connected to. Secondly we wanted to develop creativity as a tool for learning. Next we wanted to create new ways of doing things through partnerships and finally we wanted to make any impact we had, sustainable through legacy. We initially engaged with 16 local authorities over a 3 year period and embedded teams of artists in schools across the country. In the process of creating theatre, we exposed the participants to professional training in all aspects of the production of theatre. As well as the creative processes such as acting, music, writing, dance, design and devising, we also included marketing, administration, producing, technical, costume and front of house experiences. The process was opened up to be exploited by curriculum areas but the main focus fell on the learning needs and styles of the individual”. (Simon Sharkey, Associate Director, National Theatre of Scotland).

Transform will now be opened up for anyone wishing to carry out the project, with or without the close partnership working with National Theatre of Scotland that previous Transforms had.