

Case study

Hands Up

Details

What:

Hands Up was a series of masterclasses for adults and young people in the Deaf community held in Brisbane.

Delivered in partnership between the Brisbane's Deaf community and Vulcana Women's Circus, the master classes included dance, theatre and Auslan storytelling skills aimed at new and emerging, young and adult, performers from the Deaf community

Two Deaf artists were also mentored in the areas of project management, financial management and workshop facilitation through the project.

The workshops culminated in a showing of the work for a Deaf and hearing audience.

The project was delivered entirely in Auslan. All participants communicated in Auslan as did all project staff and workshop facilitators.

Vulcana Women's Circus is a Brisbane based organisation working with the circus traditions of inclusiveness, strength, excitement, and daring to transform and empower individuals and communities.

When:

February to June 2015

Where:

Brisbane



Hands Up showcase. Photo: Katrina Garvey

Key stats:

- 80 attendees and 35 participants
- 97% respondents rated the work good or excellent
- 85% of attendees and participants were new

Arts Queensland contribution:

\$29 708 – Projects and Programs Fund

Contact for further information:

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Links:

Hands Up Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10153570138533313.1073741853.100580398312&type=3&uploaded=35>

Hands Up video <https://vimeo.com/142342898>

Outcomes

- Deaf artists were able to actively participate in the workshops developing skills and confidence. Participants expressed a sense of relief and satisfaction at being able to work in their community language without intervention and from their unique and shared perspective.
- Two Deaf artists were mentored in project management and performance skills. This increased the confidence and skills of the artists in leading performance making workshops and in project construction, delivery, assessment and fundraising.
- Delivering the whole project in Auslan was a first and major achievement for the organisation. Pursuing accessibility is a major goal for Vulcana and this project provided a major step in achieving that goal.
- The Hands Up group were invited to perform at the following Vulcana Cabaret, Leaping off the Edge. MC'ed by Julie Lyons, one of the project facilitators and mentored artist, the event was successful with an increase in Deaf audiences as a result of their involvement.



Hands Up theatre workshop with Jodie Mundy. Photo: Rebecca Jones

Learnings and reflections

Celia White from Vulcana Women's Circus had the following reflections on the project:

"To have workshop facilitators from the Deaf community was a significant achievement of this project. We were thrilled with the response participants had to being taught by members of their community. It created a sense of pride and respect for their own and their teachers' achievements."

All of us learned more about how to teach abstract performance forms to Deaf participants through Auslan. And all of us learned more about teaching new performance skills to newcomers to performance."

Through the project we learned about the problem of written feedback for this community. We conducted some feedback through video but we should have gathered more feedback in this way. Written feedback is limited due to the fact that for many in the project English is a second language."

Communicating these workshops to young people was more difficult than we anticipated. There were clashes with important sporting events that we didn't foresee. And because communicating to young Auslan speakers needs to be accessed through family that may not speak Auslan fluently there is more consideration needed about the best way to do this. The response from families of young people was extremely positive. If these kinds of workshops could be continued word or mouth and direct contact to build a network of interest would be more successful. "