

## Case study: 20 Stories High

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**Leanne Jones**  
**Participation Manager**  
**20 Stories High**  
**June 2014**

# Customer: 20 Stories High

## Project: Customer Donation Fund

Award-winning theatre company, 20 Stories High, believes that everyone has a story to tell and their own way of telling it. By nurturing young people and showcasing their talent, its productions not only thrill audiences, they are also helping to change lives.

### Taking centre stage

Based in Liverpool, 20 Stories High creates bold, contemporary and imaginative theatre with, and for, young people aged 13-30. Driven by values that encompass diversity, democracy and positive social change, the company is passionate about pushing the boundaries of what theatre is and what it means to young people.

Set up in 2006 by Co-Artistic Directors Keith Saha and Julia Samuels, the company's first project was entitled 'Making a Difference'. This engaged over 2,000 local young people who proposed solutions to the problems facing their communities. Encouraged by this high level of participation, the founders were convinced of the need for regular, high quality, free and inclusive arts activities that were accessible to young people who feel vulnerable, excluded and disenfranchised.

This led the company to expand both professionally and creatively. Today, an in-house team of seven work alongside external industry professionals and provide access to a wide range of activities – from outreach workshops in partnership with local authorities, services and schools to training and voluntary placements. An early measure of success came in 2008 when the weekly Youth Theatre, that offers 13-21 year olds skills development, mentoring, performance opportunities and confidence building, was selected as a model of best practice by Arts Council England for engaging socially excluded young people.

### Playing a vital role

Leanne Jones, the Participation Manager at 20 Stories High, explains why the theatre company chose The Co-operative Bank. "We joined the bank in 2006. As an organisation, the bank's values are very much aligned with ours. We are both committed to supporting local communities and young people in particular" she said. "Our directors, who are personally linked to the bank, were also impressed by the bank's Ethical Policy and the responsible way it invests customers' money."

Leanne also appreciates the benefits of being a Community Directplus customer. "The staff are friendly and helpful and we use telephone and online banking so it's easy to keep track of our money. Plus, we value the additional support that's available, such as the Customer Donation Fund."

20 Stories High is an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation and is also funded by Liverpool City Council, as well as generous grants from various trusts and foundations. "Without a steady income we would not be able to deliver high quality work" said Leanne. "We are always looking to develop new projects so when we received the award from the bank's Customer Donation Fund it gave us all a real boost – we were very pleased."

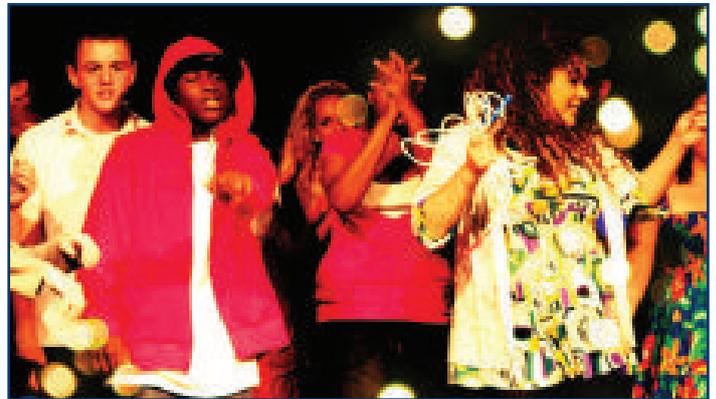
### Putting on a show

The donation has been used to fund three dictaphones, 12 MP3 players and the work of an experienced Technical Manager in order to help develop and stage a new production, 'Tales from the MP3'. The play is a collaboration between The Young Actors Company (YAC), a group of 12 young adults aged 18-22 who were previously members of the 20 Stories High Youth Theatre and 84 Theatre, an Iranian theatre company.

"The ultimate aim of YAC is to bridge the gap between youth theatre and professional work. Some of our young people feel that formal education is not for them" said Leanne. "This experience will provide hands-on theatre experience, as well as building on other roles within theatre and documentary making."

20 Stories High is a satisfied customer in more ways than one. "The Fund gives Co-operative Bank customers the opportunity to undertake projects that help to support their local organisations. It also tangibly demonstrates one of the unique ways in which the bank supports its customers and that is fantastic," said Leanne

For more information, visit [20storieshigh.org.uk](http://20storieshigh.org.uk)



**A show-stopping performance:** 20 Stories High creates professional touring theatre and produces participatory projects, enabling young people not only to develop their skills, but also perform themselves.

**For more information on The Co-operative Bank Community Directplus account call**

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