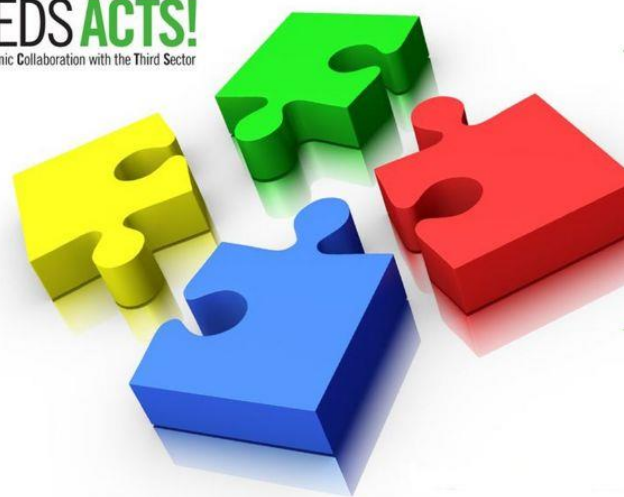


# LeedsACTS! Seedcorn Funding 2023 Right to Greenspace

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Mafwa Theatre and  
Leeds Conservatoire  
Collaboration

**LEEDSACTS!**  
An Academic Collaboration with the Third Sector



## Introduction

This Vignette describes the delivery and outcomes of the Flourish x LCON Seedcorn project. The project with Mafwa Theatre and Leeds Conservatoire was delivered between 19<sup>th</sup> March and 21<sup>st</sup> May and funded by the LeedsACTS! partnership.

## Background - Overview of LeedsACTS!

LeedsACTS! is a partnership between Leeds Beckett University, Leeds Trinity University and the University of Leeds, and the many voluntary and community organisations in Leeds. LeedsACTS! works to build closer relationships between researchers, students, charities, voluntary and community organisations to support joint work that benefits the communities of Leeds and to shape how the higher education sector engages with others in the city.

A core principle of our approach is co-production ensuring work develops jointly with mutual respect and learning.

The aim of the Seedcorn projects is to help stimulate collaboration. This may be achieved by:

- helping people to get to know each other better.
- identifying joint interests.
- developing/providing expertise that can be shared.
- raising awareness of the benefits of collaboration.
- helping to break down some of the barriers to joint working.

## Background - Overview of Collaborating Organisations

Leeds Conservatoire is a music and performing arts HE institution based in the Quarry Hill district of Leeds. It is part of the Luminate Education Group – an educational organisation spanning Colleges and HE throughout Leeds. The institution offers degrees and classes to all ages.

Mafwa Theatre is a charity which provides creative and gardening activities to bring refugees, asylum seekers and settled communities together to celebrate their diversity and create a more welcoming Leeds. They have been working on creating a Garden of Sanctuary in the Lincoln Green area.



## What is the Seedcorn Project?

The organisations worked together by holding regular meetings, sharing ideas, and worked on producing a Leeds Conservatoire 'takeover' at a Mafwa Theatre Flourish event. The Flourish events are a series of activities over the summer welcoming community members to use the new Community Garden of Sanctuary. The aim was to bring more people together and help address isolation and division in the communities, to encourage people to use the green space and offer an opportunity for student skill development and giving them the experience of working with an external organisation.

## What does the Project do?

Two student organisers were recruited for planning the event. They had regular meetings with Florence, Social Action Apprentice and attended regular meetings with Mafwa Theatre and Friends of Mafwa. The students developed the idea of a 'takeover' with student performances in the new Garden of Sanctuary. They contributed their ideas and were a key part of the planning process. The student planners recruited 4 student volunteers to help at the event and 8 student performers who performed music and poetry.

All the students supported at the event and raised awareness of the Conservatoire and of Mafwa Theatre. They spoke to community members and performed reflection and feedback.

Student organisers also planned food for the event and got in contact with Scoffs, who provided vegan food. Student volunteers helped to distribute food to community members.

## Achievements and Key Outcomes

### Outcomes for community members:

The community members enjoyed the event and tried lots of new activities. They liked seeing the children happy and the space being used. Most people had never used the space before and they all said they would use it in the future and that they would take part in events with Mafwa Theatre. They commented on seeing the space being brought to life and everyone said it helped them connect with their community. One quote from someone was *"I feel at home"*.



### Outcomes for student organisers:

The students were happy with the organisation of the event and felt the team worked well together. They felt the event connected students with other areas of the community, which are often very separate. The students were able to represent the institution well and felt that speaking to people at the event was good as it put a face to the institution. They enjoyed talking to community members and realised how willing people are to talk to you.

Students learnt and demonstrated many skills including organisation, time management, confidence, public speaking, initiative, problem solving, patience and event planning.

### Quotes from the students:

*"I wish I could have gotten more people of colour from the Conservatoire to attend and mix with the community. I felt like I wasn't a minority for the day."*

*"It was really rewarding, I felt at the end of the day that I had done something good. It feels good to help people and I felt really good about myself. It was such a lovely day. Nice to see all the effort pay off. Excited for people to use the space and for them to have that community space."*

### Outcomes for performers:

Students who performed enjoyed their time and felt good contributing to the community. They recognised what it meant to people and were inspired by the style of event. When asked about performing, one of them said *"It was exciting to share some things I had worked on with an encouraging, positive audience."* They really liked the use of bicycles to power the event.

### Outcomes for Mafwa Theatre:

Mafwa Theatre said

*"Our partnership with Leeds Conservatoire has grown stronger through this collaboration. We've worked together before, but this event allowed us to explore new opportunities. Their talented students performed live music, adding a vibrant and memorable touch to the event."*

*Having Leeds Conservatoire involved made a positive impact. The performances brought the community together and provided a cultural experience for everyone. We*



*also gathered valuable data on attendees' locations, helping us understand our reach and plan future efforts.*

*Overall, the funding bid process was smooth, and working with Leeds Conservatoire was pleasant. We look forward to continuing this partnership and making a positive impact on our community together."*

## What went well

The Seedcorn funding was a launchpad for this collaboration. The idea for the collaboration came about through the funding application. We used the money to make the day slightly larger scale and introduce more elements to the day. This meant we were able to have a larger impact with the event and engage more community members.

## Wider Impacts

Florence's main aim in her work is to get students to do projects that contribute to the community whilst developing skills and experience. Most of the work that Florence does aims to be student-led. This was one of the largest projects Florence has done, due to the number of stakeholders, and so she was able to use this as a demonstration of what can be achieved and the impact on the students. This leads to a greater understanding from other staff including senior leaders of the impact of social action.

## Challenges and Barriers Faced

Florence and the student organisers performed a reflection and came up with how we would improve on future projects.

We identified the following:

- The food should have been earlier, lots of people were asking and getting hungry. Alternatively advertising that the food would be at 5.
- It would have been better to have drinks available.



- Making performers aware of the type and scale of the event and the level of communication needed would have helped with stress levels and made organisation smoother.
- Having more meetings with the performers would have helped to get student communication, commitment and understanding of requirements.
- It was a bad time of year for student commitment, so other times of year may have worked better.
- We would change the time of our performances, so that more people were around and it felt like part of the whole day, not so separate. This could have possibly been done by putting acts throughout the day at different points.
- Could have been better with a larger core team to help with marketing.
- In future, encourage more people of colour to go. Nice to work in a diverse community.
- We would have benefited from more regular meetings with Mafwa, just to go over different areas and have more communication.

## Future Potential and/or Impacts

Florence is discontinuing her role at Leeds Conservatoire, due to funding changes. She will continue to work with Mafwa Theatre in the FE colleges.

The students, however, have developed their relationship with the organisation and expressed interest in continuing this sort of work. Other staff at the Conservatoire are also aware of the partnership, especially because of this project, and will look for opportunities.

## Contribution to Collaboration between the Third Sector and HEIs for the benefit of the communities of Leeds

This project has certainly developed the relationship between Mafwa Theatre and Leeds Conservatoire and led to a great collaboration that benefited the students and the community. Leeds Conservatoire were able to do informal research into how these sorts of charity partnerships can work and benefit the organisation and Mafwa Theatre were able to learn about how these partnerships can work, as it was one of the first times they had done this style of collaboration.



This worked towards the aim of Right to Greenspace as it encouraged people to use their new local greenspace more, develop a relationship with it and encouraged people to get to know others they will share the space with.

## Beneficiary Evidence and Feedback

*"This space was useless before, but they have done it up and it is nice."*

*"It is like a mini festival; it is a place that brings people together."*

*"I like that it is clean now, it is a good environment."*

*"Made me feel a greater sense of community, I'm meeting people I would not normally have."*

*"The performances went well, and all were smooth, the ones that were related to the space had the most impact. The children joining in with the performances was very special and memorable."*

*"I wish I could have got more people of colour from the Conservatoire to attend and mix with the community. I felt like I wasn't a minority for the day."*





1-7pm, May 21st  
**Family Flourish Day**  
Community gala  
Roxby Community Garden, LS9 7LR



# LC X FLOURISH IMPACT REPORT

230

COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
ATTENDED

4

STUDENTS FROM LC  
VOLUNTEERED

8

STUDENTS FROM  
LC PERFORMED

12

STUDENTS FROM LC  
ATTENDED



# OUR STUDENTS SPOKE TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND GATHERED FEEDBACK

Q: What have you enjoyed?

Henna  
Music Dancing and  
Hip-hop  
Face painting  
The atomsphere



Seeing the children  
smile."

"Lovely to see the garden  
finished and see people  
engaging with it."

"Everything is perfect."



Q: Have you tried anything new?

Making a bee hotel

The bicycles

Making masks

New Music

Henna

Portraits

Everything!

Dancing





Q: Have you used the space before and will you use it again?

Most people had never used the space before and they all said they would use it in the future.



"This space was useless before but they have done it up and it is nice."

"It is like a mini festival, it is a place that brings people together."

"I like that it is clean now, it is a good environment."

Q: Does this space and these events help you connect with your community?

Everyone we saw and spoke to said

**YES**

**"I feel at home"**

"Made me feel a greater sense of community, I'm meeting people I would not normally have."



There was a mixed response when people were asked if they knew Mafwa Theatre or Leeds Conservatoire, therefore this event was a great opportunity to raise awareness of the organisations within the local area.



Most people said they would like to take part in more activities and events with Mafwa Theatre.

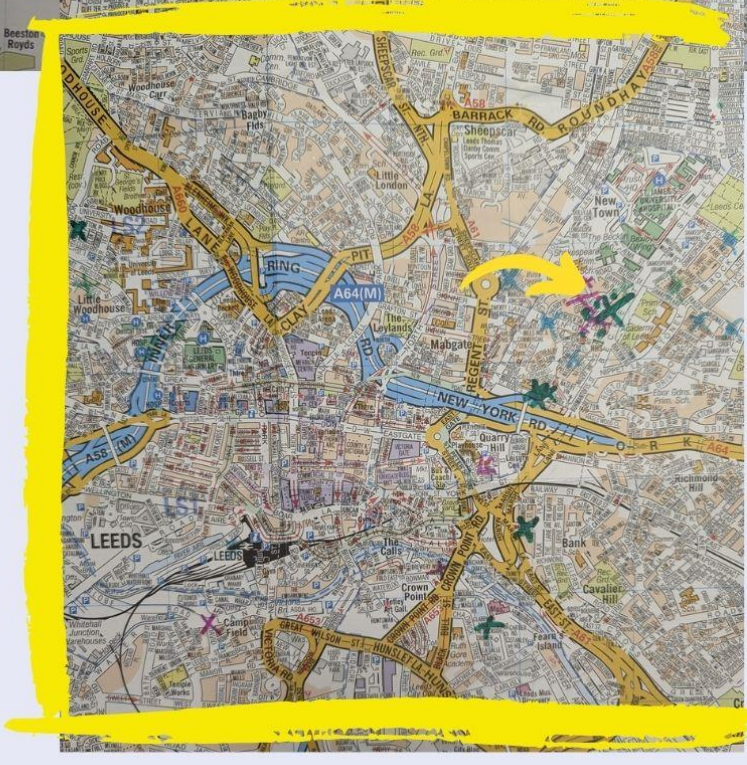
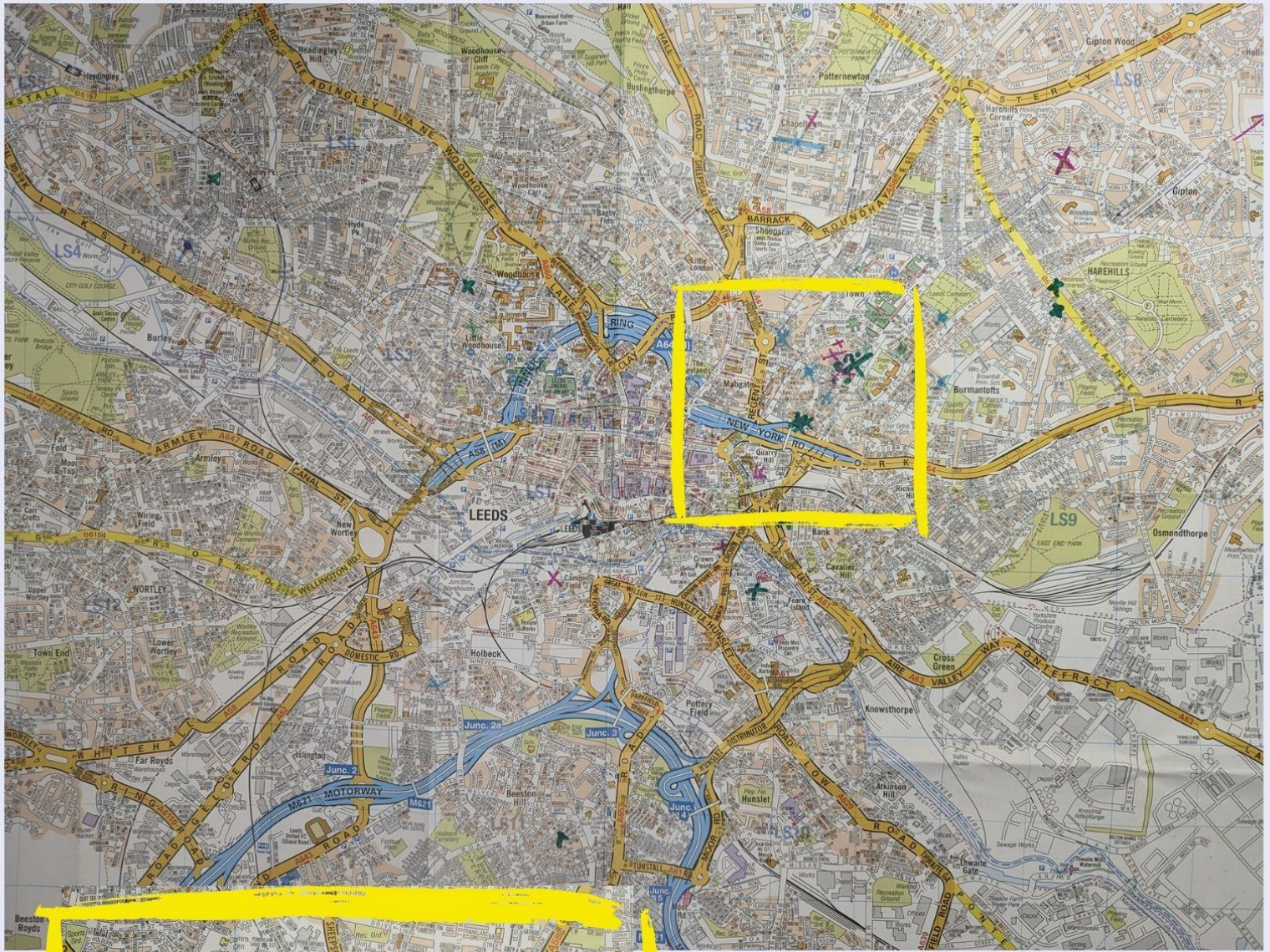
## MAFWA THEATRE REFLECTION

Our partnership with Leeds Conservatoire has grown stronger through this collaboration. We've worked together before, but this event allowed us to explore new opportunities. Their talented students performed live music, adding a vibrant and memorable touch to the event.

Having Leeds Conservatoire involved made a positive impact. The performances brought the community together and provided a cultural experience for everyone. We also gathered valuable data on attendees' locations, helping us understand our reach and plan future efforts.

Overall, the funding bid process was smooth, and working with Leeds Conservatoire was pleasant. We look forward to continuing this partnership and making a positive impact on our community together.





**WE ASKED PEOPLE TO TELL US WHERE THEY HAD COME FROM FOR THE EVENT**

22 people/families from Lincoln Green area

20 people/families from the wider Leeds area

6 people/families from other areas



# STUDENT ORGANISER REFLECTIONS

**TWO FIRST YEAR ACTING STUDENTS FORMED THE CORE TEAM. ONE OF THEM WAS THE STUDENT UNION DIVERSITY REP.**

"We felt the event connected students with other areas of the community, which are often very separate."

"The performances went well and all were smooth, the ones that were related to the space had the most impact. The children joining in with the performances was very special and memorable."



"The bikes worked well, it felt like a community act and like people were part of the performance."

"I wish I could have got more people of colour from the Conservatoire to attend and mix with the community. I felt like I wasn't a minority for the day."

"You gain a lot of skills, people skills and organisation. It's actually fun, thought it was going to be serious and just organising. But I had a really really great day and I walked home smiling thinking I want to do it again."





# EXTRA RESOURCES:

LINK TO PHOTOS AND VIDEOS - [HERE](#)

LINK TO FULL STUDENT ORGANISER REFLECTION - [HERE](#)

LINK TO STUDENT VOLUNTEERS AND PERFORMERS REFLECTION - [HERE](#)