

SENCITY

A multi-sensory music event for deaf and
hearing people

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Abstract <p>The objective of the project thesis was to provide an insight into event management, especially when organising an event for a specific target group like the deaf community. The event in question is Sencity, a multi-sensory music event for deaf and hearing people which has been organized in various territories but never before in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Event and project management are an essential part of organising an event. It is important to observe all aspects involved in organising an event, like brainstorming, planning, budgeting, marketing and evaluation. A well organised event has a much greater chance of reaching its objectives and satisfying the audiences.</p> <p>This thesis discusses different ways of organising events as recommended by the academic literature and gives an insight into the deaf community. The theory was applied to practice when organising the Sencity event and analysing the results. The event was organised by a team of inexperienced deaf and hearing youngsters led by the author of this thesis, Dominique van der Peet.</p> <p>This project thesis is a study of event management where the focus lies on creating a multi-sensory music event for deaf and hearing people. It uncovers how the event was implemented and makes comparisons to the literature and describes the challenges that came up in the organisational process.</p>		
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1 INTRODUCTION

There still is lack of understanding of the deaf community by the general population. Some older people still refer to the deaf community as “deaf and dumb” and seem to feel that if one is deaf one simply cannot enjoy music. That is not true. Since 2003 the Skyway Foundation has organised the so called Sencity events bringing together the deaf and hearing communities. It gives everyone a sensory music experience while providing a platform to showcase deaf talent. Sencity is also an initiative in which preconceptions are destroyed and which presents the deaf community as a minority language group instead of a disabled one. It has inspired deaf people to go beyond what they think is possible and it has become an eye opener for the hearing visitors. The project is generally organised by a group of deaf and hearing young people. They do not all know sign language and they might not have known each other before becoming involved in the project. Together they start a learning process where many of them organise a larger event for the first time and gain invaluable skills that will benefit them later in their working life.

This thesis is a reflection on the first Sencity organised in London on the 8th of October 2011 at the IndigO2. It will first present certain literature on event management and then provide general information about the deaf community. The information on the deaf community is general since it is a topic one can write several papers about. After that it will provide a more in-depth analysis of the organising process, the workshops the team attended and the Sencity event itself followed by the results and conclusions.

The author has been personally involved with Sencity since organising it for the first time in Jyväskylä, Finland in 2008. Since then she has organised one more in Jyväskylä and one in London. Sencity is a fascinating event, both to attend and organise. It has taught the author a great deal about event management, team work and leadership and she has enjoyed every minute of it.

2 THEORETICAL BASIS

The following is a theoretical overview of event management and the Deaf community. The overview is necessary in order to achieve a better critical understanding of the Sencity event and its organisation.

2.1 *Definition of an event*

There are many broad definitions of an event. According to the Oxford Dictionaries, an event is “a thing that happens or takes place, especially one of importance” and falls under one of three categories: “a planned public or social occasion, each of several particular contests making up a sports competition and a single occurrence of a process, e.g. the ionization of one atom.” (Oxford Dictionaries 2012).

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines an event as an occurrence, the most relevant being “a noteworthy happening” and “a social occasion or activity”. (Merriam-Webster dictionary, 2012).

Another interesting and more specific definition is given by Shone and Parry, (2004, 3). They step away from the more general term above and instead focus on the term *special events*.

That phenomenon arising from those non-routine occasions which have leisure, cultural, personal or organizational objectives set apart from the normal activity of daily life, whose purpose is to enlighten, celebrate, entertain or challenge the experience of a group of people.

This definition looks more at the psychological side of events. A more practical and narrow definition is given by Verhaar, (2005, 36) who states that “an event is a special occurrence tied to a certain time and place, consciously planned by an initiator (individual, group, or organisation) and aimed at a certain target group, to achieve a certain goal through consciously selected means”. This is the definition that will be used in this thesis.

2.2 Organising events

Definition of an event manager

Conway (2009, 11) gives an accurate description of the role of an event manager.

Their primary duty is to make or confirm all decisions and act as central liaison, directing and controlling the activities of individuals to whom they have delegated responsibility for elements of the organisation and arrangements for an event.

This means that an event manager assumes the final responsibility, has the final decision in all matters related to the event and decides how tasks are delegated. This definition is shared by other sources and will be used in this thesis.

Brainstorming ideas

The first step in event organisation is to define the objective of the event. Conway (2009, 13) describes the event objective as “a simple statement that encapsulates the reason(s) for running the event”. It is important that all staff know what the objective is and that there is a common goal. Conway (2009, 14) goes on to state that before event managers make any decisions, they should think of the objective and make sure the decisions are in line with it. Shone and Parry (2004, 165) recommend the use of the SMART formula to test event objectives. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. These characteristics will help create the best objectives possible, which will be easily understood by the event staff.

According to Shone and Parry (2004, 64), the event organising process starts with two tasks: finding people to do the job and defining the event format (party, conference etc.). Sometimes the event format will have been decided for the event managers but at other times they only know it has to solve a particular problem.

The process for generating event ideas according to Shone and Parry (2004, 70-76) is based on a set of questions which all need to be answered. The questions are:

- What is the idea or objective of the event?
- What is the general nature of the event?
- What is the purpose of the event?
- How should the event operate?
- What are the benefits to the participants?

After that the event manager will have created a number of concepts for events. Shone and Perry then suggest screening these concepts with three different filters. The first filter is the marketing filter where the event manager decides which concept is most suited for the event's target audience (age group, income level etc.) and researches other similar events taking place in the region. That should then make it possible for the event manager to narrow down the concepts to those that will stand a better chance of competing with other events. The concepts that pass the marketing filter then need to be taken through the operations filter. At this stage the event manager will need to consider what is achievable based on different factors such as what resources are available (human and financial), legal implications, venues with desired capacity and availability, timescale etc. This will filter out the less realistic or unachievable concepts so that the event manager can take the final ideas and test them against the financial filter. Here they need to work out the financial issues. First it is important to understand the financial aim of the event. Is it a cost-only event (like a wedding) or is the aim to break even or to make money (either as fundraising or revenue for future events)? After deciding this it is important to make a basic budget for the final concepts in order to see which fulfil the financial aims. This is how the event manager can decide which concept to implement.

Conway (2009, 2-3) gives a short summary of what is required to organise an event.

To plan, organise and run an event, you will need time to investigate, research and plan; you will need methods to help you with that investigation and research, and you will need to possess or 'buy in' a variety of skills. Those skills include such diverse trades and professions as project management, sign writing, accounting and personnel management.

Event planning

Shone and Parry also write about planning. Once the event manager has decided what kind of event they would like to organise, it is important to start making a draft plan. This plan gives an overview of the concept of the event, ideas for programming, the target group, possible dates and venues, basic budget and a schedule on how to proceed. Shone and Perry (2004, 81) find that “planning is vital to the success of events, because of their complexity, their unusual requirements (...), and because of the possible unfamiliarity of those organizing an event with what is required”. The event manager will have to think ahead and identify any issues that need sorting out. The plan works best when it is designed with a systematic approach, involves people and encourages them to collect all the necessary information. Once the event manager has collected more information based on the draft plan he/she can start formulating a systematic detailed plan. This plan will go into more detail on subjects and issues raised in the draft plan, e.g. a detailed budget, a plan on how to raise sponsorship, a more specific idea of the programming, logistics, a marketing plan etc. Once the event manager has made the final plan, he/she will also have a guide against which to measure the progress of the process. A plan is never a fixed document. Once the event manager starts implementing the plan minor or major changes are expected and required (2004, 81-83).

These ideas are supported by Conway (2009, 16) who remarks that the event manager needs to adopt a structured and logical method of planning and managing all aspects of the event organisation so as to ensure a successful event. When Conway (2009, 3) writes about the amount of time it takes to

organise an event, he mentions that an event manager's first attempt to organise an event for more than 1000 people will take between 12 and 18 months.

A very important aspect of the initial planning is to estimate the number of visitors. This is important since it influences many aspects of the plan, like venue size, budget (e.g. how much money can be made from tickets and how many staff are required) and programming. One can estimate attendance based on various aspects: the size of the venue, how much money needs to be made and an estimation of how many people would like to attend etc. A good way to make an accurate estimation of attendance is given by Conway (2009, 57-62). He advises to use three or more approaches to give confidence in the accuracy of figures. Accurate estimates can be made with: previous years' attendance, similar event attendance, club/team entries, registrations, fixed capacity, time/venue limit and restricted and prescribed attendance. Once these factors have been considered one should have quite an accurate estimate of attendance. Next, one should take into consideration the effect of current circumstances such as the economy, the weather, transport problems, terrorist activity, national emergency and season/fashion/craze.

Something that will also influence visitor numbers, amount of press coverage, sponsor interest and finance is the kind of entertainment the event provides. Before anything is decided, some research should be conducted to estimate why visitors will come to the event. What is the factor that interests and attracts them? Generally the type of event and its objectives will limit what attractions and entertainment the event can offer. There are two ways to decide on attractions. First, there are the visitor-led attractions where the kind of visitors will define the entertainment. For example, an event for the members of a model aircraft club will almost certainly have model aircraft as a theme. Secondly, there are attraction-led visitors with whom the entertainment offered defines the kind of visitors the event will attract. For example, organising a literary festival will attract visitors interested in literature.

When considering entertainment, it makes the event more enjoyable when there is variety. Thus, at a model aircraft event there can also be models of cars and ships. In this way the event can surprise the visitors and make them “discover” something new.

Once the research has been done, the best options need to be discussed and selected. When doing this the event organiser should bear in mind the target audience, costs, safety, income and popularity of the attraction. The entertainment is supposed to attract visitors hence it is advisable to select entertainment that will attract a wide range of visitors. Once the event manager starts booking the performers it is essential to obtain their requirements, which are generally provided in a rider. This will outline what kind of space, technical equipment, food, transport etc. they will need and the event organiser will have to arrange and pay for (Conway, 2009, 72-77).

Budgeting for events

First it is important to define the exact purpose of the budget. Shone and Parry (2004, 108) state that “a budget is a forecast or plan, which helps to regulate the operation of an event (or any business) over a given period of time”.

Generally events budgets are limited by the time period of the event. A budget can also be used as a management tool where responsibilities for various activities can be checked and the progress of the event organisation monitored. In this way the budget forecast and the reality can easily be compared and any issues can be spotted early on. Generally the event manager starts with a preliminary budget for the draft plan and once the event details become clearer, a detailed budget can be created.

Shone and Parry (2004, 97-98) mention that some events will be cost-orientated (with no need to generate profit) while others will be income-orientated (meaning the event is meant to raise money). However, they also state the following:

There are a very large number of events that require both these things and have to be financially managed in a conventional way, with careful assessment of the potential income, expenditure and profit, surplus or breakeven, depending on the type of event.

Shone and Parry go on to say that the objectives that are set for the event will influence the financial decisions and that clear event objectives make the job of the financial officer easier. They also point how important it is that the financial officer understands cash flow, since certain items (like venue hire) will have to be paid in advance while most of the income will be generated much later after the tickets are sold. This can leave the event organiser in serious trouble. A way to avoid this is to start early with the generation of sponsorship so as to pay for the advance costs. If the event is meant to be a regular event, it will be helpful to save part of the profit for the starting costs of future events.

To make an event less risky it is important to generate as many income streams as possible. An obvious stream is ticket sales, but funding from government organisations, sponsorship (either in money or in kind) and money made from activities such as bingo, raffles, letting pitches for stands etc. can be equally important. When looking for sponsorship it is important to keep in mind that “potential sponsors have to get something out of the event, and are extremely unlikely to provide money for nothing” (Shone and Parry, 2004, 114). This is why it is important to ascertain that the event has the same target audience as a potential sponsor. The event manager needs to ascertain that the sponsors receive adequate media exposure and visibility at the event and think of the other benefits that they can offer beside media exposure, such as free tickets for their staff. Once sponsorship has been secured, it is wise to draw up a sponsorship agreement, which outlines exactly what the sponsors will provide and what they will receive in return.

When planning and running the event it is “imperative that the event manager should keep detailed accounts of income and expenditure, if only to prove that all money has been accounted for and that none has been illicitly used for private purposes” (Conway, 2009, 250). This is important since the event manager needs to keep on overview and control over what everything costs. It is also important that the event manager receives several quotes when wanting to purchase something of higher value and that he does not automatically accept the cheapest quote since quality, availability, delivery etc.

may affect the final decision. When buying goods and services it is essential to keep all the receipts in order to make it easier to keep the accounts up to date and to provide copies when required by the funding bodies (Conway, 2009, 250-251).

Implementing plan

In general the preparation and development of an event are conducted simultaneously with the planning but due to the sheer amount of time, effort and hard work involved, it is good to discuss them separately. The planning stage is all about doing research and forming ideas, the implementation is about going into detail and confirming aspects such as performers, catering and venue. It is important to have a venue and a date sorted as soon as possible so that the preparations are not delayed.

When choosing a venue, it is important to keep the objectives of the event in mind. The first aspect to consider the location and then see what venues are available within that location. Once possible venues have been identified it is essential the event organiser goes and visits them to ascertain that they suit the event. It can be helpful to create a checklist beforehand in order to easily identify which venue matches the event criteria, such as the transport links and suitability. When visiting venues, the event manager needs to keep in mind that the first impressions are important. Light and decorations can be used to change the ambiance of a venue, but it is easier to achieve this with a venue that is already of a good standard. It is also good to check all the areas of the venue to make sure that places such as the kitchen and toilets are kept to a good standard. It is also recommended that the event manager has an in-depth discussion with the venue managers to assess how capable and active they are. This will make the job of the event manager easier in the long run (Shone and Parry, 2004, 121-123).

When considering venues, it is essential to keep the logistics of the event in mind. This means assessing the location and how accessible it is for the equipment and visitors etc. Logistics are defined by Shone and Parry (2004, 121) as “the discipline of planning and organising the flow of goods, equipment and people to their point of use”. Once the venue has been

decided, it is essential that the event organisers develop an overview of which additional utilities might be necessary (for example extra electricity), identify their lead-time and start working on those with the longest lead-time. With most events it is advisable to have a logistics plan which indicates what needs to be done, what the lead time is, by when it needs to be completed and who is responsible for it. This logistics plan will be part of the event production schedule. A production schedule is “a list of activities that the event involves, in time order” (Shone and Parry, 2004, 125). In most cases it will also state who is responsible for which activities and what methods will be used to fulfil them. It is likely that there will be several versions of the production schedule before a final version is agreed upon.

Nowadays clients and visitors will expect more high-tech events thus it might be helpful for the event organiser to outsource the technical needs to production or multimedia companies. These high-tech features can include satellite links, screens, audio and video, content from digital sources etc. It is important that these are all tested before the event so that any technical difficulties can be anticipated. The same applies to backdrop, staging and lighting. These can all be very basic, like a banner as backdrop and a little basic lighting, however when everything becomes more advanced and thus complicated it can make a great difference to the quality of the event when professionals are hired. In particular lighting can be an underrated feature. It can create ambience, highlight artists or speakers, light backdrops and be decorative. Good lighting can make a significant difference to the final appearance of the event. Adequate sound is equally important. The visitors must be able to hear the presentations and enjoy the full range of aural stimulation that the event has to offer. These aspects are important and can increase the production values of the event when they are well planned and executed. Hiring a professional company, testing everything beforehand and allowing enough time for construction will increase the chance of a positive production outcome (Shone and Parry, 2004, 134 – 136).

When looking at different venues Conway (2009, 33) gives good advice about event sites. If a venue is designed with a specific use in mind, the event manager would need to think carefully how a different use of the venue could

create new risks. He says that one should “always view the venue with your specific event, audience and attractions in mind”.

A part of event management is risk assessment. Conway (2009, 24-25) defines a risk as “the likelihood that the identified hazard will cause any harm and a measure of the severity of the harm it causes”. He goes on to explain that likelihood is the chance of “it happening” and that the event manager needs to take its possible impact into consideration, which is “the scope and depth that will result if an incident happens”. He explains that a risk assessment should be made for each stage of event management and assess everything that might be a risk. However, he also says “do not restrict yourself to jobs and activities that you know are hazardous; even activities that seem totally safe might have hidden risks”.

Conway (2009, 12) gives some indication on how to delegate when he mentions that organisational and management tasks and roles should not be delegated to more than two levels below the event manager. This is to avoid the risks of mistakes and oversight due to misunderstandings and communication problems.

Marketing & PR

Another important aspect of the plan is marketing. Marketing can be a costly part of the plan. Marketing might not actually be necessary depending on the type and size of the event. If the event is small with a very limited number of possible visitors who can be easily reached by the event manager, it is not necessary to market the event. When the event needs to attract a significant number of visitors from the general public and it is organised for the first time, it will be necessary to market the event.

There are different ways of marketing an event, such as paid advertisements in newspapers, magazines and on the radio. An even better way to achieve this is to have these media provide some free coverage. The best way to arrange this is to write press releases. It is advisable to ascertain the press release includes something print-worthy so as to increase the chance of the press release being published. Another way to receive free coverage is by

submitting the event to the free listings. Many publications will have a page where they list all the events relevant to their readers. Two other ways to market the event for free is through word-of-mouth and email marketing. In this case it is best to ascertain that relevant people within the target group know about the event and ask them to spread the word. These tastemakers are often trusted by the community and they will inspire more people to visit the event. Email marketing can also be an effective free tool. However, one must be careful not to make it seem like spam. Other cheap tools are an informative and attractive website, posters, flyers, signs at the event site or a sponsorship deal with a local travel company offering a combined travel and entry ticket and recommended to the visitors for travel. In return the travel company will help advertise the event and reach people whom the other marketing channels might not have reached (Conway, 2009, 65-69).

It is important to start the marketing plan in good time so as to ensure that everything can be achieved within a realistic time scale and within budget. According to Shone and Parry (2004, 93), there are two ways to identify a marketing budget: “one way is to say, well here’s the income, marketing can have so much (...). The other, more preferable way is to look at the event objectives and work up a marketing budget based on what needs to be done.”

If it is an event with a limited budget, the marketing might have to be based on good public relations instead of advertising. In the marketing action plan the marketing team needs to outline the lead times for each activity to avoid a situation, for example, where a poster has to go to the printer on a specific day but the final decision on what will be put on the poster will be made a week after that. Shone and Parry (2004, 94) write “it is essential to find out, genuinely, how long marketing and public relations matters will take and then to plan them accordingly.” Event managers should start marketing by making a solid plan and realistic budget. This will make the implementation of the plan and successful marketing more attainable.

Running an event

According to Conway (2009, 234-237) before the event is scheduled to take place it is essential to create an event manager’s manual. This contains all the

information that is required by managers, staff and emergency services at the event. This includes the set up time, the running of the event and the clearing up. This manual should include the following information: event title, objective, licences required for the event, the event manager's contact details, a chart showing the management structure, a reference sheet with job descriptions, contact details for all key staff, a site map, an event timetable and schedule, a risk analysis and schedule of control measures and a checklist for control measures and procedures for significant and possible occurrences. In addition to that it can be useful to include forms for reporting new risks, an emergency radio log reporting incidents where risks are identified and recording casualty details. Conway suggests producing three copies of the event manual, one for the event manager to keep at their office during the event, one copy kept at the cashier's office in case something happens to the event manager and his office, so the cashier can take responsibility and work from the manual. The last copy is kept at the main gate. Thus if anything happens to the event manager and cashier, a copy is available for the nearest supervisor to work from. Conway also advises to distribute copies of specific parts of the manual to certain people, e.g. the management staff chart, job descriptions and contact details of staff to anyone who may need to know which manager has responsibility for a given function (Conway, 2009, 234-237).

No matter how much preparation goes into the event, running it on the day can still be a challenge. Shone and Parry say "the co-ordination of a wide range of disparate and even unusual activities, facilities and services can be overwhelming" (Shone and Parry, 2004, 190). That is why it is important that event managers are good communicators and delegators in situations that might constantly change. Part of the preparation also includes arranging staff. Some staff (for example bar staff or security) might be provided by the venue. Other staff from organisational staff to coatroom staff will most likely be a combination of paid staff and volunteers. If expertise or certification is required from staff it will be harder to find them as volunteers (Shone and Parry, 2004, 200-204).

On the day of the event it is important to start with a good breakfast and make sure the event manager and the staff take sufficient time to eat and rehydrate

during the day since dehydration and low blood sugar levels encourage poor decision making and slow problem recognition. It is likely that right after the event manager's arrival at the venue the load-in will start with the more time consuming pieces of equipment like staging, sounds and light. These need to be set up as soon as possible so that sound-checks and rehearsals can take place. It can be useful to make one person responsible for receiving all the supplies, directing them to the right area and informing the responsible manager. In case wrong items have been delivered it is usually better to accept them and write on the delivery note that they do not comply with the order. If the correct items can not be delivered in time it might be possible to make-do with the available supplies.

To ensure smooth running of the event it is essential there is a central point of enquiry for the event. This should be the event manager's office, which should be a convenient location in the venue and always be staffed by someone who has all the information at hand and knows who is responsible for what. This office can also be used as a meeting area when any of the parties involved (such as sponsors or managers) need a private place to talk. To ensure clarity for everyone badges should be used indicating whom someone is and what kind of access they have. Limited access can be given to media or volunteers to ensure they do not access off-limits areas. Before the event starts a briefing should take place for the casual and specialist staff, like security and bar staff. This briefing should include information about the event, the target group and possible special needs, information like closing times, toilet location, what action is required in case of emergency etc. All staff and volunteers should receive a copy of the site map, basic information page, emergency contact list and emergency procedures. Ascertain that these pages are short and to-the-point to ensure staff will read them and can use them easily in case of an emergency. Ticket control and handing out of programmes etc. should be organised in such a way that they do not create hold-ups at the entrance. If it takes 20 seconds to process the ticket and hand out a brochure and over 2000 visitors are expected it might be a good idea of create more than one access point (Shone and Parry, 2004, 178-188).

Once the event has ended it does not mean that the work has finished. The closedown of an event should be treated the same way as the set up, well organised. At the end of a long day the event manager and the staff will be tired however it is important to handle the closedown and clear up properly and carefully as to avoid accidents. A work breakdown schedule can be created to make sure everyone is aware of their responsibilities and the order of breakdowns. Staff should be properly briefed on the process and control must be maintained until the end because of safety and security of goods and equipment. The event manager must ascertain that any hired or borrowed pieces of equipment are returned to the suppliers to avoid paying extra. If cleaning needs to be conducted by the organisers the event manager must ensure that there is sufficient basic equipment so that the closedown is not held up. After the entire closedown is completed, the event manager must thank staff, preferably in writing. It is good manners and the event manager might need them again (Shone and Parry, 2004, 214-218).

Evaluation

After the closedown it is time to examine the necessary administration, like sorting accounts, paying bills and collection of questionnaires. The event should be properly evaluated, especially if it is scheduled to happen again. Evaluations should be collected from visitors and from organisers to see what can be done better next time. Even if the event was a one-off it will still be valuable to conduct an evaluation, especially if the event objectives were economic or social in origin (Shone and Parry, 2004, 214-224).

2.3 The Deaf community

It is estimated that there are around 10 million people in the United Kingdom that are deaf or hard of hearing. A large part (6.3 million) are people over the age of 65 that developed hearing problems due to age. Around 3.7 million are people of a working age (18 – 64) and of those over 135,000 have severe hearing loss or are profoundly deaf. People with severe hearing problems are four times more likely to be unemployed than the general population (Facts

and figures on deafness and tinnitus, 2011). It is estimated there are between 22.000 and over 100.000 people in the United Kingdom that use British Sign Language as their first or preferred language however there is a lack of conclusive data on this (Is the number of signers lower than previously thought? 2013).

Deaf culture is quite different from hearing culture. Deaf people use a great deal of physical movement and facial expressions compared to spoken language. There are also different rules for how deaf people position themselves when signing and how they take turns in conversation, interrupt someone or get someone's attention. In addition the way deaf people refer to other people is very visual. Instead of using their given name they will point to the person or use physical characteristics like size, weight, hairstyle etc. to describe them. It is quite common to give someone a sign name which describes the person. Deaf culture has its own language and shared values, interests and ways of viewing matters, which can be hard to understand for outsiders (Smith, Cath, 1992, 65-66).

Deaf people live both in the hearing and in the Deaf world. A different language and way to communicate makes it harder for deaf people to participate in the hearing community. That is why many deaf people prefer to socialise with other deaf people. A good place to do this is in deaf clubs. They tend to be an important place for deaf people's social and leisure activities, a place where they can come together and use their preferred language – British Sign Language (BSL). Deaf clubs give the deaf community a place to meet new people, form relationships and marry. Deaf clubs are also open to hearing people who are involved in the deaf community and use BSL. (Smith, Cath, 1992, 68-70).

There are various social events organised in the deaf community but few involve music and partying. Deaf Rave is a party organised for deaf people, which also focuses on music. It was organised for the first time in London in 2004 and each event features deaf DJs, dancers, poets, comedians, MCs and VJs (Video Jockey). Deaf Rave events now run regularly and attract international visitors as well (Dillon, Teresa, 2005).

3 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

3.1 Concept and history of Sencity

Sencity is a multi-sensory music event that has been organised in the Netherlands since 2003 under the name Deaf Valley (and has been renamed twice, to Sense and its currently name Sencity). It is all about letting people experience music in a different way and inspiring them by showcasing how other people overcome certain difficulties/disabilities.

Since 2003 Sencity has been organised many times in many countries, such as Belgium, Spain, France, The Caribbean, Australia, New Zealand and Brazil. The first event was organised by Ronald Ligtenberg with a group of deaf and hearing youngsters. After that Ligtenberg started the Dutch Skyway Foundation and every Sencity has been organised by the foundation since. Moreover the foundation oversees the organisation of all Sencity events worldwide.

Dominique van der Peet got involved with Sencity when she moved to Finland. She contacted the Skyway Foundation and agreed to organise it in Finland. The first Sencity in Finland took place in April 2008 in 'Aalto-Sali' in Jyväskylä and was organised Dominique together with other members of Campus Entertainment. 450 mainly deaf visitors attended. They were enthusiastic and gave some positive feedback for future events. On this event Dominique van der Peet worked as a team member and her focus was on the links with the deaf community and online marketing.

Since the event was so successful the teachers and students decided to organise it again the year after. The second Finnish Sencity took place in April 2009 at the local club – 'Night' – in Jyväskylä. 1050 visitors attended and the feedback from the community was again positive.

During May 2009 Dominique van der Peet moved to London, United Kingdom. When she did so the Dutch Skyway Foundation asked if she would like to be involved in the organisation of a Sencity in London and she said yes.

3.2 Phase 1 – six workshops and a seminar

She began the project in London began by sourcing suitable team members. Through the Dutch Skyway Foundation Dominique van der Peet got in touch with Timothy Bonham-Carter, who would become essential in finding team members. He is hard of hearing and works as an interpreter; hence he has good connections in the Deaf community. At the same time as team members were being sought Dominique van der Peet worked with an intern to set up the company, its bank account and apply for funding to run workshops with the team members. The team members were all young (between 18-30) and either deaf, hard of hearing or hearing and involved in the Deaf community. None of the team members had any experience in organising events. As soon as the first team members were found, meetings were organised every two weeks to start initial discussions about a Sencity in London and workshops for the team to increase their understanding of Sencity and to provide them with tools to organise this event.

The funding application was put in with the Youth in Action programme from the British Council for €11.000 to hold three workshops, travel abroad to meet with other young people and attend a Dutch Sencity and organise a seminar afterwards. For the first workshop it was decided to invite Sencity creator Ronald Ligtenberg to come and visit London. This workshop was the first chance for the inexperienced team to organise something. The tasks were divided and together they organised this small event.

Workshop 1

The workshop took place in October 2009 in London. Ronald Ligtenberg spoke about Skyway and Sencity, explained the history, the vision of Sencity, how it is run in other countries and the values that are behind it.

At Skyway it is said that 'not even the sky is the limit'. The organisation wants to inspire people to overcome their obstacles/disabilities and push them to do something new. The workshop gave the team a better understanding of Sencity and Skyway and they found it really motivating to hear the information from Ronald Ligtenberg directly.

The team felt very inspired after the workshop and were very motivated to be more involved with Sencity. However it was thought it would still be beneficial for the team to visit an actual Sencity. The next Sencity was planned for December 2010 in Utrecht, The Netherlands, which is where the team travelled to and attended the second workshop.

Visiting the Netherlands / workshop 2

In December 2010 the whole team went to the Netherlands to visit a Dutch Sencity and to do a workshop there. Youp Selen from Imaginheroes led the workshop which was about getting objectives clear, finding a common mission and vision, how to ascertain everybody is in sync and finally to understand what the team members personally wanted to achieve from being involved in Sencity.

The team did the workshop together with some students from Finland (from JAMK University of Applied Sciences) and other students who were involved in Sencity events around the world. In the evening the team attended the event, which was very visual with numerous dancers and live performers on stage and interesting interactive areas.

The team found the workshop and visiting the Dutch Sencity very useful. It gave them many different ideas and really inspired them. They came back with a great deal of passion and were really willing to go for it and to create something really special in London.

During these months Dominique van der Peet had started discussions with “Momentum – Youth Development”, an organisation that organises leadership workshops for young, disadvantaged people. It was decided that they would be a partner organisation for the next funding application for Sencity and that they would provide the team with three workshops about team work and project and event management.

Workshop 3

This was the first workshop given by Momentum. They discussed themes like team building, strategic thinking and communication. The team wrote and signed a cooperation agreement, which outlined their responsibilities for the months to come.

Seminar

After these three workshops the team organised a seminar for different (potential) partner organisations. It was an evening to discuss the project, the workshops and the plans for the future. The team members shared their experiences and what they had learned and gave a professional presentation. Afterwards the team answered a great deal of questions and networked with different people to establish future partnerships. The discussion with the audience gave the team new ideas for the upcoming event.

Katrina Jones is one of the team members; she is an artist, Deaf and has been involved in all the workshop and seminars. This is what she said about the workshop process:

"Attending workshops with Ronald Lightenberg, Youp and Sencity Utrecht at the start of my participation was a great start. I believe that I was introduced to Sencity in the best way possible, I was so inspired and determined to be a big part of the project, making Sencity London happen! Workshops with Momentum had come at the right time, when we all had a better idea of Sencity's vision and mission and it was time for us to look into our strengths and weaknesses. The workshop was mind-blowing and significantly improved our team-building and confidence and trust in each other."

After the workshops the whole team gave positive feedback and mentioned they felt really inspired to continue with the process.

During these workshops applications for funding were put in with various organisations. One with the Youth in Action programme from the British Council for €50.000 was partly awarded. Other successful applications were made to the Arts Council for £10.000, the Co-operative bank community fund for £500 and the RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts) award for £2.500. It was great to receive all this funding and when topped up with some sponsorship and ticket income it would enable the team to organise a great event.

Workshop 4

Another workshop was provided by Momentum. This workshop focussed on aspects like leadership and professionalism. It again was organised by the team, who enjoyed taking part and found it useful.

Workshop 5

This was the third and final workshop provided by Momentum. This workshop focussed on event management and dividing tasks based on interest and existing skills. After this workshop the team felt more confident about organising Sencity.

Workshop 6

The third workshop was a sign dance workshop that was all about combining Sign Language and music. The workshop was given by Mirjam Stolk, a very experienced sign dancer from the Netherlands who regularly works with the Dutch Skyway Foundation. The workshop provided training for English interpreters with an interest in music. In the end the participants of the workshop performed at Sencity, interpreting music coming from the DJs.

3.3 Phase 2 – Sencity and a seminar

Task division

After the 5th workshop the team felt really motivated to start with organising Sencity. Most of the funding was in place and they were all ready to go.

Dominique van der Peet was responsible for dividing the practical and logistical arrangements of the project among the team members.

This is how the tasks were divided.

TABLE 1. Task division.

Team member	Responsibility
Dominique van der Peet (hearing)	Initiator, director, control of budget, contract, sponsorship- and partnership
Timothy Bonham-Carter (hard-of-hearing)	Sponsorship
Paul Hollingdrake (hearing)	Marketing and sponsorship
Moona Mohammed (Deaf)	Marketing, ticket sales and volunteer coordinator
Miriam Dubois (hard-of-hearing)	Programming, ticket sales and stage management
Katrina Jones (deaf)	Design
Anna Dageretzis* (hearing)	Programming and partnerships
Sophie Davis (hearing)	PR and partnerships
Claudia Leemans** (hearing)	Production
Esther Verlouw** (hearing)	PR management, marketing and partnerships.
Kim de Vos**	Programming and stage management

* Intern for Sencity from February 2011 until August 2011.

** Interns for Sencity from September 2011 until February 2012.

Although each team member had his or her own responsibilities, everyone had a say in every part of the project, giving them insight into the various aspects of event management.

Communication within the team

As the team worked together towards Sencity, clear communication and regular meetings were essential parts of the process. The team got together weekly and discussed the progress of each responsibility and area of work. If help was needed for an area of work, a team member would help out and ascertain the task was carried out effectively. Furthermore, the team was strict on meeting deadlines with good work delivery.

During the meetings, workshops, the Sencity event and seminar, English as well as British Sign Language were used. This was made feasible by team members and a volunteering interpreter who were able to interpret for the deaf and members who could not speak British Sign Language. This represents society (since not everyone speaks Sign Language) and fit perfectly with the aim to bring deaf, hard of hearing and hearing people together as the team understood the challenges that exist between the different groups.

Another communication channel the team used extensively was email. Updates on progress and meeting notes were sent out regularly to the whole team. Furthermore, email was often used to communicate easily and clearly within the sub sections of the team, such as production and programming enabling the team to work together from home.

Partnerships

During the project, the partners were involved in multiple dimensions. The Dutch Skyway Foundation communicated regularly with the team and was constantly informed on the progress of the project. It shared its knowledge and tips with the team and advised them on certain situations. The team members implemented this knowledge and advice in their planning and daily activities. The team also had regular face-to-face meetings with Momentum – Youth Development. Their expertise was very useful, especially with regards to team work and connecting with other organisations for sponsorship or help. The last partner, Imaginheroes was less involved compared to Skyway and Momentum but advised the team on the sense stimulating elements of Sencity's event programme.

Event date & venue

Before funding applications were completed the team had already researched potential venues and visited several. Team members made a shortlist of venues and enquired about rental prices. The budget was based on this initial research. After funding was confirmed more research was conducted into venues since none of the team members felt that the initial research had given them the perfect venue. The team's intern, Anna Dageretzis, came up with the Indigo2, which is part of the O2 Arena in Greenwich, London. The venue was

slightly bigger than what the team was looking for but after visiting the site they all decided it was the best venue they had seen so far. They liked the layout and high-quality look of the venue. An added bonus was that it was fitted with excellent sound and light systems and the venue management would provide the team with bar and security staff and a cleaning crew. This did come at a price that was higher than all other venues viewed. Another disadvantage of this venue was the transport links, it being on a tube line, which is often affected by upgrade works during the weekend and not having great transport links after the metro stops running at 1 am. After some discussion it was decided to use this venue for Sencity and that sponsorship had to be sought to cut costs in other parts of the budget. The date was based on the availability of the venue and the timeline of the plan. The team had already decided they wanted to hold the event on a Saturday evening to enable visitors to come from all over the UK. The event date was set for the 8th of October 2011.

After this some thought went into providing better transport links for the visitors. Ideas like bus or boat hire (since the venue is on the other side of the Thames from Central London) were discussed however in the end it was decided to rely on the existing transport since the O2 arena has several night club venues and visitors manage to arrive home every week.

Programming

The research into suitable acts was started early into the planning progress. Signmark, a Finnish Deaf rapper known worldwide came up in discussions early on. He had only given one concert in London and the team felt that he would be a popular act. His management was contacted and it turned out he might not be available on the date the team had initially in mind (September 2011). When the event date was changed to the 8th of October 2011 the team was happy to hear that Signmark was available on that date. There would be a Sencity in the Netherlands two months before Sencity London where Signmark would also perform so a joint deal was made between the team in London, Skyway Netherlands and Signmark. Contracts were exchanged and travel arrangements made.

The team proposed other acts and the ones that were considered suitable were contacted by the responsible team member. It was not an easy task to put together a line up that would attract both deaf and hearing visitors, would generate some press attention and would still be within budget. However, the team managed to confirm the following musical artists: Signmark and DJ Just Jack as headliners, DJ Goldierocks and deaf DJ Troi Lee as sub-headliners. Other DJs performing that night were Melechtric, Si Collard, Diogo Grilo and Dom Wood.

Sencity does not only provide a musical experience, it gives visitors a sensory experience of music. For this there are various entertainers, for example sign dancers and aroma jockeys. Neither existed yet in London so they were trained by the Dutch Skyway Foundation. The sign dancers took a workshop three weeks before Sencity and performed together with their trainer at the event. The aroma jockeys had to be trained on the day of Sencity due to logistical issues. In the morning they took a workshop with a Dutch aroma jockey and in the evening they performed together with their trainer.

Hair stylists, make-up artists and masseurs were found largely as volunteers and had their own area where they provided their services.

Food Events provided catering. Early in the process they were contacted and were very interested in participating and gave the team a good deal. Two team members met with Food Events for a tasting and it was quickly decided to book them for the event. Once sponsorship from Jelly Belly was confirmed, Food Events was asked to incorporate its jelly beans into the catering.

A very popular attraction of Sencity is the vibrating dance floor. This is a colour-changing dance floor with vibrating motors attached underneath which are connected to the amplifiers. This is how the dance floor vibrates according to the music making it easier for the deaf visitors to follow the music but also making it an enjoyable experience for all visitors. This dance floor had to be driven to the venue from the Netherlands and assembled on the day. The United Kingdom has very strict health and safety regulations and since the concept of a vibrating dance floor was unknown to the venue management it became a time consuming topic. A great deal of detailed information was

requested by the venue, which the owners of the dance floor in the Netherlands never had to provide before and did not quite understand. Dominique van der Peet was very involved with this process to ascertain all the information was provided and on a number of occasions she had to put the documents together herself based on information requested from the venue and information provided by the suppliers of the dance floor. In the end the venue was satisfied with the information provided and agreed to the usage of the vibrating dance floor.

The team decided on a theme to bring together all the different elements of the event. The theme was Circus and some additional acts like roller girls, hula-hoop performers, a clown and magician were booked. Team member Katrina Jones designed the decorations according to this theme. She sourced various items to hang around the venue such as top hats and sparkly items. Two art students approached the team and wanted to decorate the venue with a visual installation. This ended up being various figures, like ballerina dancers, taped on the wall with duck tape.

Another visual attraction of the event are video jockeys. The Dutch Skyway Foundation often works with two Dutch video jockeys that have pre-prepared visual content for a Signmark performance, basically a graphic display of the lyrics simultaneously with the actual performance. They were also informed of the theme of the event and built the rest of the video material around that. The video jockeys performed during the evening and were visible on screens around the venue.

Finally a street dance crew was approached and booked to provide some additional visual entertainment. This was the full programme of the event. It took plenty of time and effort by the team to create an attractive line-up within budget.

Marketing & PR

The marketing plan started by specifying the target group of the event to figure out how and where to reach them.

Sencity targets deaf, hard of hearing and hearing people between the age of

18 and 35. The deaf visitors are generally involved in the deaf community and mainly use sign language as their first language. They see Sencity as a meeting place for old friends who live further away and to meet new people. They enjoy the sensory experience but the social aspect is very important. The hard of hearing visitors that attend Sencity might have less strong ties to the deaf community and do not always use sign language. They are interested in the sensory experience of music and to find an event that is more catered towards them.

Some of the hearing visitors have links to the deaf community (e.g. interpreters, family members of a deaf person, social workers etc.) and are likely to use sign language. They come to the event to meet up with their deaf friends and to enjoy a different night out.

The other part of the hearing community does not have any ties to the deaf community at all and they are there to enjoy the sensory experience, see a particular artist or out of general interest.

Once the target group was clear it was easier to make a tailored marketing plan. The team looked at previous Sencities to acquire an idea of how their marketing was conducted. Previous Sencity events have always received a significant amount of word-of-mouth marketing. That is why the marketing for Sencity London focussed on the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs. Profiles were created by the marketing manager and were updated regularly. All the team members were asked to invite all their friends to the event page to increase awareness. The team contacted bloggers and informed them about Sencity, resulting in some bloggers writing a story about it. Early on it was decided that flyers were needed to give to people active in the deaf community so they had something to give to people interested in the event. Posters were printed and sent out to deaf clubs around the country with some flyers to display in the venues. The marketing budget was very small, most of the costs would consist of the design and printing of flyers and posters and postage to send them out.

The team hired UK P.O.E.T. to make a promotional video of Sencity, which went live during the summer. This video was meant to be shared by the community and generate awareness of Sencity. UK P.O.E.T. was hired to produce the promotional video and to film the event itself. Some issues in cooperation came to light during the production of the promotional video. The team viewed the first draft after which they provided their feedback and requested certain changes to be made. The production team implemented most of these changes, but not all. The team viewed the second draft, asked for some more changes and again not all changes requested were made. When the team requested to make those remaining changes, the production team wanted to charge extra since they would only make two edits before producing a final version. However, this was finally resolved and the team was happy with the final version and no extra charge was applied. Dominique van der Peet was hesitant about continuing the contract and having UK P.O.E.T. filming the event because of these earlier problems. When speaking about the concerns to UK P.O.E.T. they made it clear that they would not refund the deposit for the event and thus there was no other option than to try to ensure that UK P.O.E.T. would do a good job on the event coverage by giving them very specific instructions

Some promotion was conducted before the event to the Deaf community at Deaf Day. Deaf Day is an event consisting of exhibitions, workshops and entertainment aimed at everyone who is interested in deaf issues. The team had a stand there to talk about Sencity and hand out flyers during April 2011.

The team felt that it was important to generate some press attention. Since none of the team members had experience with doing PR it was decided to hire a PR firm to handle this. Two team members met with various companies and heard pitches until they came across Live PR. They seemed very interested in the event and happy to work for a reduced fee. A press release was put together by Live PR and approved by the team. Live PR sent this press release to various publications and did numerous follow up calls and emails. In the end they managed to receive a half page article with a photo in the Evening Standard, a popular evening paper circulated before and during evening rush hour with a circulation of 700.000 daily. Besides this a number of mentions and listings were achieved in national newspapers. Through this

interest from various TV and news organisations was generated. Phillips Sound contacted Live PR a few weeks before the event expressing interest in filming the event for their cultural segment. The team managed to negotiate a fee of £600 paid to Sencity for the filming and a beautiful video was produced by Phillips Sound and uploaded to their YouTube channel, generating over 2000 views by March 2013. Various other news outlets expressed interest in filming the event, however some cancelled at the last minute when it turned out Paul McCartney was having a last-minute wedding ceremony at his house in London that same evening. In the end a Russian film crew ended up staying and filming the event.

Budgeting

As said before, most the money for the event was raised through various funding programmes like Youth in Action and the arts council. Additional funding was generated from sponsorship and ticket sales. Tickets went on sale a some months before the event. The advantage of selling tickets in advance is to obtain a feel for how much interest there is in the event. If interest seems very low it could be an option to make last-minute changes to cut costs. However, one should be careful to maintain the quality of the event since many people prefer to buy tickets a few days in advance or at the door. Tickets were priced at £12 for advanced tickets and £15 at the door. A £2 discount was available for students on both advanced and door tickets. Advanced ticket sales were made through ticketmaster.com (organised by the IndigO2) and through members of the deaf community. A deal was proposed that these ticket sellers would receive 10 free tickets for each 50 tickets they sold. They were free to either sell these free tickets and keep the money or give them to friends. This way over 450 tickets were sold. Over 775 tickets were sold through ticketmaster.com and door sales. The total capacity of the venue was 1600 and 200 tickets were given away through competitions and guest list places. Around 100 tickets went unsold.

Various sponsors were involved with Sencity London. They were approached by phone or email by the responsible team members. If there was interest a sponsorship proposal was sent out. If the sponsor wanted to support the event contracts were exchanged outlining the exact sponsorship and what the

sponsor would receive in return. The following sponsors were found: Dyson (providing Dyson fans for aroma jockeys), Jelly Belly (providing jelly beans used in catering) and Marriott (giving a discount on hotel rooms for artists).

Besides this various suppliers were kind to give a discount, e.g. Tickle music from which additional visual and audio equipment was hired and Food Events who provided the catering.

A simplified overview of the final budget can be found in table 2.

TABLE 2. Simplified budget.

Income	£		Expenses	£
Youth in Action	35.500		Travel	3.700
Arts Council	10.000		Accommodation/Food	6.050
RSA Awards	2.500		Sencity	23.000
Customer Donation Fund Cooperative	500		Marketing	4.600
Ticket Income	11.150		Seminar	1.000
Phillips Sound	600		Workshops	2.900
			Organisational costs	19.000
Total	60.250		Total	60.250

A strict eye had to be kept on the budget. One of the rules from the Youth in Action programme was that money allocated to one area was not allowed to be moved to another area without approval, and even then only 10% of the amount was allowed to be moved. When the budget was made many figures were estimates based on research. Some items turned out cheaper (generally due to making good deals) and other items turned out more expensive. For anything that turned out more expensive than initially budgeted, additional

funding had to be found from a different source. This rule from Youth in Action made it almost pointless to try and save more than 10% on certain items since it was not allowed to relocate this money to other areas of the budget, making it almost impossible to achieve best value for money.

Event production

A number of weeks before the event the team started working on a production plan. It included an overview with contact details of all the team members and their responsibilities, performers, suppliers etc. This was done so everyone could easily find the relevant person to speak to when anything came up. It had a schedule for the build up, event schedule and the clear up. It included a responsibilities list during Sencity (since for some team members they were different than during the preparations) and a lighting plan for the lighting crew (to give them a general direction of what would be best for the deaf audience). Finally it included a risk assessment, props list (who was responsible for providing what), an overview of all the artist riders (e.g. Just Jack wants a bottle of Whiskey in his room, Signmark needs certain lightning on stage) and an overview of who needed parking (since this had to be communicated in advance to the venue). In addition it had an overview of the licences that were held by the venue. This production plan was distributed to the team and was available to everybody working at the event.

The availability of the venue was quite limited. It was not until 5 pm that the team could access the venue to start building up. This meant that the planning had to be very strict and everything had to be done in a very efficient way. The most time consuming activity was the building of the dance floor. This was started at exactly 5 pm and was only completed a few minutes before the opening of the doors. This dance floor consists of floor panels that light up with a vibrating machine underneath that is connected to the amplifiers to vibrate according to the music. Half an hour before the doors were meant to open the venue manager informed the team that the way the dance floor was at that moment it would not pass their health and safety requirements and that the doors would not open until that was resolved.

Luckily it was easily resolved by using duck tape to ascertain all the panels would stay together.

Another issue was that the driver with the mini van that was hired for the day was late in picking up groceries, meaning there was no food for the staff until 7 pm (while it was meant to arrive at 5 pm as soon as the venue opened). Luckily it was not too much of a problem, merely a small inconvenience. Other than that the building up went well. All the artists who wanted to sound check were able to. There were adequate volunteers to ascertain that everything was finished and the doors of the venue opened on time.

The whole event went very well. All the performers went on according to the time schedule and did a good show. The audience really enjoyed the evening and there were no problems related to the event. There were some minor issues like the high volume of alcohol consumption, which led to a number of incidents of girls in extremely high heels falling over. There was another incident that involved a girl being harassed by her former partner and her calling the police. This was all swiftly taken care of by the police with the help of one of our interpreters. The only other issue was towards the end of the evening. Some of the visitors who had left the event had had too much to drink and started fighting outside. The police were called but had trouble dealing with all the drunken deaf visitors mainly because of communication issues. The police ended up requesting to close the event earlier to make it easier for them to deal with the unrest outside. The team discussed this with the venue manager and it was decided to finish half an hour earlier. At that point there were not many visitors left and they all left quietly.

Straight after the lights went on at the end of the event the team and the volunteers started cleaning everything up. By that time everyone was quite tired so care had to be taken to make sure everything was done safely. There was a minor issue where the interns hired to make an art installation had used duck-tape on a painted wall. When they started taking off the duck tape part of the paint came off as well. This resulted in the team having to pay £100 to have the wall repainted. Other than that everything went smoothly and by 8 am (the agreed load out time) everything was out of the venue and everyone went home for some well-deserved rest.

Evaluation

After the event, feedback was gathered from the team members, partners and from the community. The feedback from the community was gathered through a survey on SurveyMonkey.com. This focussed on overall satisfaction, how much visitors liked certain aspects etc. The feedback from the team and the partners was given in writing and collected by some of the interns. This feedback enabled the team to obtain a sense of how the project and the event were perceived and what could be done in the future to improve both. The feedback was also used in a report to the Arts Council and the Youth in Action Programme from the British council and for the seminar the team organised at the end of the project.

Final seminar

After Sencity London 2011 took place, the team organised an evaluative seminar. This seminar facilitated dialogue between the team and partners, sponsors and community members involved with the project who attended the event. During the seminar, the partners, sponsors and attendees of Sencity had the chance to openly share their opinion and experiences on their co-operation with the team as well as how they experienced the event itself. One of the people who shared his experiences during the seminar was Andrew Hadley from Momentum. He presented his thoughts on the collaboration with the team and the progress over the past months with regards to their personal and professional conduct.

The seminar was ended with a little Aroma Jockey session where the participants had to link aromas and visuals to certain emotions like at Sencity. Overall the feedback received at the seminar was overwhelmingly positive. Small notes were made on how matters could be conducted differently in the future, which was useful. However, the team felt proud and celebrated a successful conclusion of the project.

4 RESULTS

The main objective of this project was to organise a successful event that would be break even and would make an impression on the deaf community. Another objective of this project was to give the team members work experience that they could use in their professional life.

Sencity started with a great deal of brainstorming. The team did not actually use the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) formula to test their ideas as recommended by Shone and Parry (2004, 165). Instead they went with the ideas that made them really excited and that they thought would be achievable. Down the line certain ideas did change slightly to ascertain the project still reached its objectives.

All of the literature on event management advises an event manager to write a plan. Again, the team was not as strict on this as literature advises. The team made an outline of what they wanted to achieve, a rough schedule, task division etc. but it was not in a formal written plan. The only written plans were those made for the grant applications. Most of the agreements and decisions were made during meetings and were written down in meeting. In hindsight it probably would have been better to write down a more formal plan but due to lack of time and interest of the team to read written documents this was not done. Luckily the team had regular conversations otherwise this could have become a significant issue.

A detailed budget was made early in the project for the grant applications and it was used as a forecast or plan as Shone and Parry advise (2004,108). The budget was largely dictated by what money was given from different institutions and the expenses mentioned in those grant applications. There was not a great deal of flexibility in changing the budget later in the project due to grant restrictions. Luckily the budget was quite well researched and did not hinder changes to the event too much.

The implementation of the plan went well considering there was no written plan. As expected certain aspects changed, e.g. a team member was

unavailable for a certain period and another team member needed to take over or certain tasks took longer than expected. Luckily the team adapted easily to these changes and the whole team was committed in organising the best event possible and to help out where necessary.

The marketing of the event overall was conducted well. Flyers were spread among the deaf community and Facebook and Twitter were updated regularly. The PR campaign ran by Live PR complimented the marketing and generated a fair amount of press attention both before the event and reviewing the event afterwards. A video was made by Philips Sound during the event, which reviewed Sencity very positively calling it very innovative. BBC3 was filming a documentary about deaf teenagers and had requested permission to film at Sencity. Sencity was featured in the last 5 minutes of the 1-hour documentary and participants expressed how they felt about Sencity (very positive). Besides that radio interviews were given on radio stations broadcasting to the UK and Europe on Resonance 104.4fm, Talk Europe Radio and Radio BBC London 94.9 fm.

The only issue encountered with the marketing was the production of the promotional video and the event video as mentioned earlier. The production company acted unprofessional and they are no longer in business. They were supposed to come and film a little of the setting up of the event and keep filming until close to the end of Sencity. This was clearly communicated and mentioned several times. However the production company had not communicated this to their camera crew, who ended up leaving at midnight because they had to work the next day. Their leaving at midnight meant that they did not film any of the headlining acts and did not obtain good coverage of the event and thus could not produce a satisfying event video. The team ended up not paying them the remainder of the invoice and never received any footage. There was a discussion about whether to take them to court however this was decided against because of the time and money it would cost for a relatively small amount the team had paid as a deposit. It was a shame however to not have footage of the event to produce a Sencity event video but luckily Philips Sound produced a high quality video thus the team had something to share with the visitors.

Otherwise when looking at the coverage Sencity got and the number of visitors attending the event it is fair to say the marketing of Sencity was done successfully.

The running of the event was overall very successful. There were minor issues with setting up the dance floor but they were resolved before the doors opened. The event went as planned and the audience had a great time.

The evaluation of the event was conducted both within the team and with the visitors of Sencity. Though Facebook and Twitter the visitors were asked to fill in a survey rating different aspects of the event. 42 people filled in the questionnaire, of which 81% actually visited the event. Of the people who visited the event 75% had heard about Sencity London through Facebook. This is probably not entirely representative of Sencity visitors since this survey was spread through Facebook and Twitter. However, from previous events the team knew that Facebook marketing was generally effective.

When asked how satisfied the visitors were overall with the event 90% were either satisfied or very satisfied. The visitors were also asked if they would recommend Sencity to others and 75% said they definitely would. The last question was if they would come to the next Sencity and 70% said yes, 30% said maybe. That means that everyone who filled out this questionnaire would consider coming again to Sencity. The full report can be found in the appendices. (See the Survey Monkey Report in Appendix 1.)

Overall this is a very positive outcome. Most the people who visited Sencity were very satisfied, would recommend it to others and would attend again at the next event. This shows that there definitely is a demand for organising another Sencity in London.

Feedback was also collected from the organising team. Part of the feedback involved actual event management but a large part focussed on the personal development of the team members, since this was one of the objectives of the event. The outcome was that the team members felt they really learnt something, that they had the opportunity to be involved in something special,

that it gave them tools they thought they could use in their professional career and that they really enjoyed being involved. Feedback written by the team members can be found in the appendices. (See the Team Feedback in Appendix 2.)

5 CONCLUSION

When organising a large scale event it is advisable to read available project and event management literature. This can make the organising process smoother and prevent certain issues. Every event will have different demands, for example in the logistics and entertainment but good organisation and communication are always key. Once an event manager becomes more experienced, the process will become easier and the event manager will establish a way of working that best suits him/her and his/her events.

Events for specific target groups bring their own challenges. When looking at organising events for the deaf community a different style of communication is required and cultural differences should be anticipated and acted upon. When the event is organised by a team of inexperienced deaf and hearing youngsters, they will require plenty of guidance and contingency planning. That team will gain invaluable experience that can help them in their future careers and which gives them an opportunity to be involved in something groundbreaking.

Organising an established event in a new territory provides the event manager with valuable information on what has been achieved in the past and what could be expected in this new territory. However here lies a pitfall, what has worked in one territory is not guaranteed to be successful elsewhere. Another danger would be to implement the exact same event without considering the cultural differences and expectations in this new territory.

The team really felt that the project achieved its objectives. The event was organised successfully and the team members enjoyed being part of the project and felt they learned valuable skills. The organisation and the running of Sencity went mainly according to plan and the deaf community reacted positively to Sencity. The grant providers were happy with the results of the project and have suggested that they fund the project in the future. The project achieved the desired financial success and almost all feedback was positive.

Many people have expressed an interest for either working on or attending future events in London. There have been requests from deaf people around the country for Sencity to be organised in different cities and when asked in the questionnaire no-one said they would not attend a future Sencity, making it a great candidate for a yearly event.

It is important that the organisers of future Sencity events make sure that they diversify and each event offers something new. Many recent events have had Signmark as a headline artist. It is important that Sencity does not become a Signmark gig. Within Sencity there is a plenty of room for experimentation and to bring different forms of entertainment, both from the deaf community and the hearing community, and to showcase them on a large stage. However the main objective of the event should always be kept in mind. It is about bringing together both the deaf and hearing communities, to inspire them and to let them know that nothing is impossible if they really put their mind to it.

In the end it can be concluded that Sencity London was a successful project. The team and the audience felt the project was successful and therefore it can be stated that Sencity London reached the stated objectives.

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7 APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Survey monkey report

Introduction

In order to get a fair and concrete overview of how the visitors of Sencity London 2011 have truly experienced the event, Skyway Programs has conducted an online survey via Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com). This is a useful tool to conduct surveys and collect responses easily.

The answers of our respondents have been taken into consideration for the Sencity seminar, which took place 26th January 2012. During this seminar, the results of the online survey were shown to Skyway Programs' partners and sponsors. Moreover, the responses serve as a part of the evaluation for Sencity London and a point of departure for the next Sencity London to be organised. The comments given by our respondents are taken seriously and will be considered when organising another Sencity event in London.

The survey could be filled in online via the web link. Besides it has been promoted via our Twitter account and the Sencity London Facebook page, as well as Skyway Programs' personal Facebook account. The survey could be filled in through the "Survey Monkey" Facebook application too.

The number of respondents of the survey is 42.

On the next page, one can find the outline of the survey conducted.

The Survey

Skyway Programs C.I.C. would like to know how you have experienced Sencity London 2011. Please share your opinion by means of answering this short survey. We take your opinion very seriously and will take this into account for future projects. Thank you in advance.

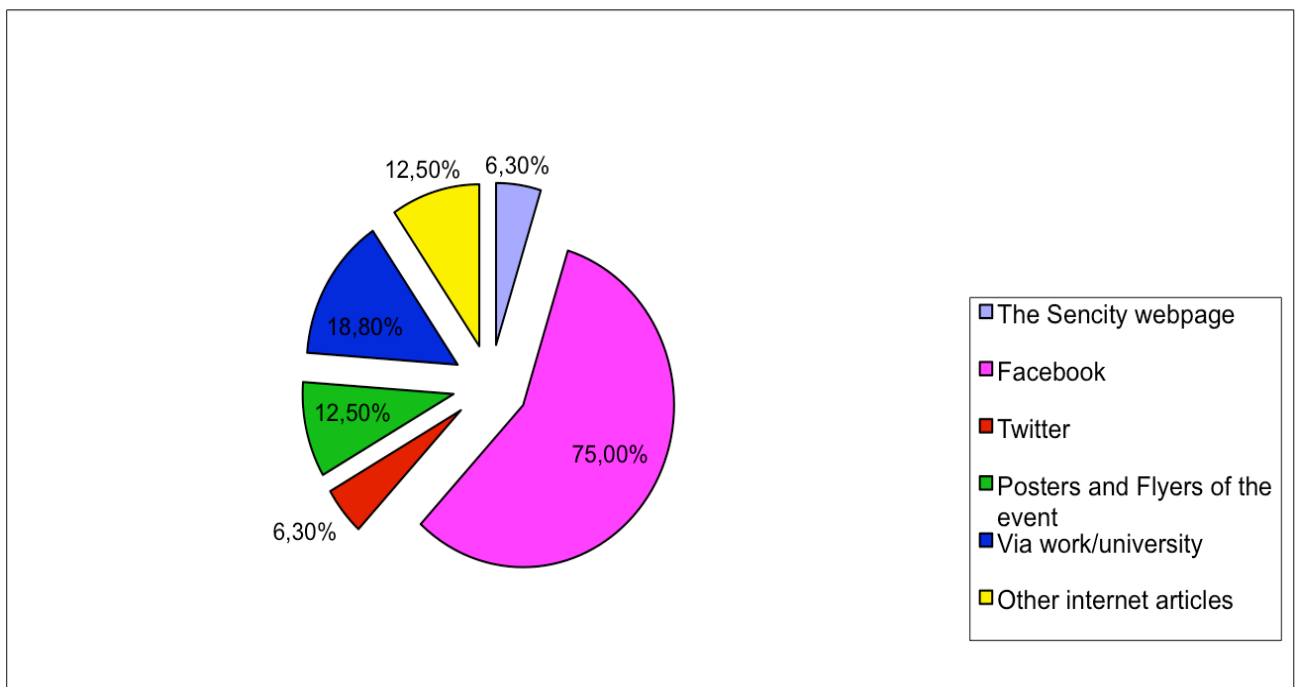
Question 1

- Have you visited Sencity London 2011?

	Response Percentage
Yes	81.0%
No	19.0%

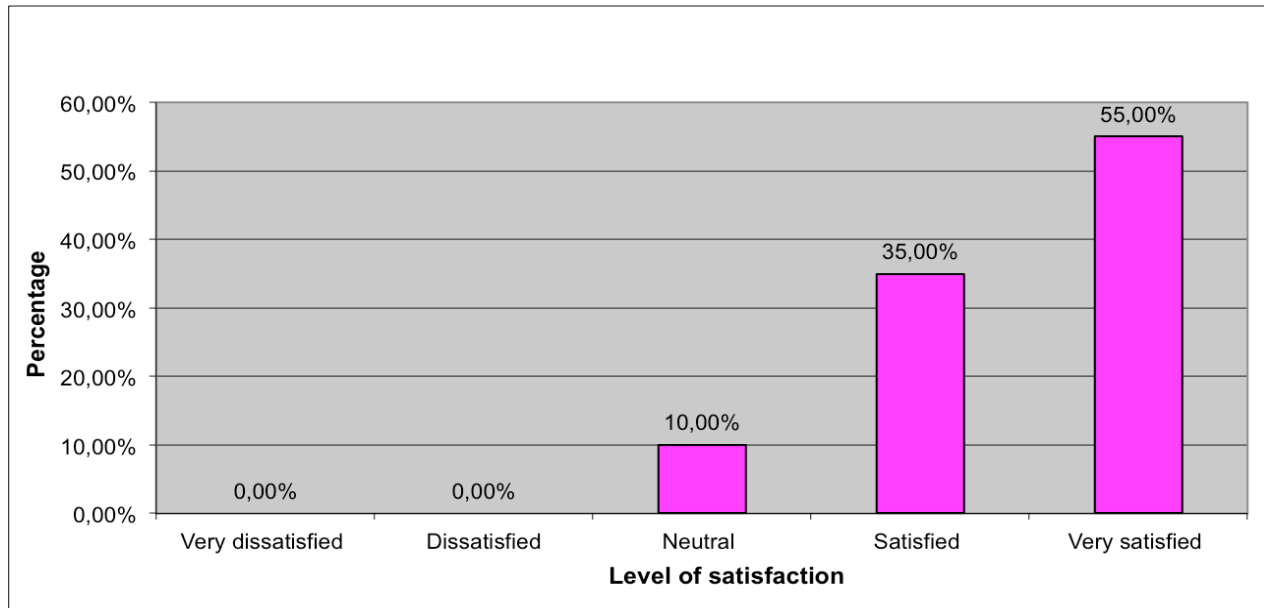
Question 2

- How did you hear about Sencity London?



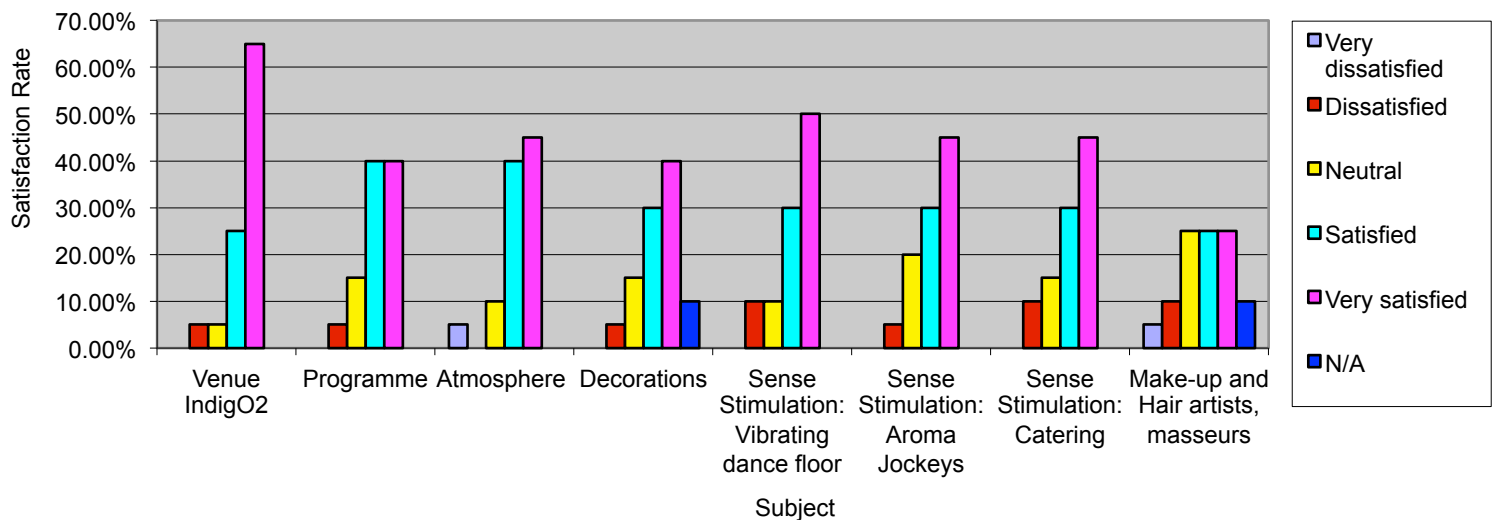
Question 3

- What is your overall satisfaction with Sencity London 2011?



Question 4

- Please indicate your level of satisfaction regarding the factors listed below.



Note:

As Sencity is a music event for Deaf, hearing impaired and hearing youngsters, the stimulation of the senses is a significant aspect of the concept. Besides asking the respondents to rate the venue (IndigO2), the programme, atmosphere and decorations, we have asked them about our sense stimulating services as well.

The vibrating dance floor stimulates the “feel” sense, translating the music into vibrations. The “Aroma Jockeys” spread various senses throughout the venue that match the emotion of the music being played and therefore stimulate the “smell” sense.

Furthermore, the catering pampers the visitors of Sencity London with self-made delicious snacks that match the scent and emotion(s) of the song too. The last “sense-stimulating service”, are the make-up artists, hairdressers and masseurs who also stimulate the “feel” and “see” sense.

Highlighted percentages per factor:**Factor**

- Venue
- Programme
- Atmosphere
- Decorations

Response percentage and type

68.2% very satisfied
40.9% very satisfied
45.5% very satisfied
45.5% very satisfied

Sense Stimulation

- Vibrating dance floor
- Aroma Jockeys
- Catering
- Make-up and hair artists, masseur

Question 5 (Open question)**- What did you enjoy about the event?**

Our respondents gave the following comments:

- 'The interaction between deaf/hard-of-hearing and hearing people. Unique experience!'
- 'The atmosphere and how it was so different to anything else I've been to.'
- ' The whole concept.'
- 'Means used to stimulate the different senses, the music.'
- 'The best were the artists.'
- 'The atmosphere.'
- 'For me as a hearing person it was the uniqueness of the event being bringing people together that can hear and people that don't. It was a very nice atmosphere that I have never felt before.'
- 'The theme was very well executed and fun. The atmosphere was great!'
- 'The atmosphere was brilliant, the collide between deaf and hearing people was a great and memorable experience!'
- 'The atmosphere in general, there were some very good acts (rap act), the combination of hearing and not hearing people.'
- 'The whole concept.'
- 'The look of the different stands (bikes etc), dance group Signmark.'
- 'Performing and vibrating dance floor and everything.'
- 'Goldie Rocks.'
- 'Facebook and friends.'
- 'Everything, it was amazing.'
- 'The people.'
- 'Loved the fact that it was accessible to all.'
- 'Meet new peoples.'
- 'I like to meet up old face and new face people.'

Question 6 (Open question)

- What do you think could be improved next Sencity event?

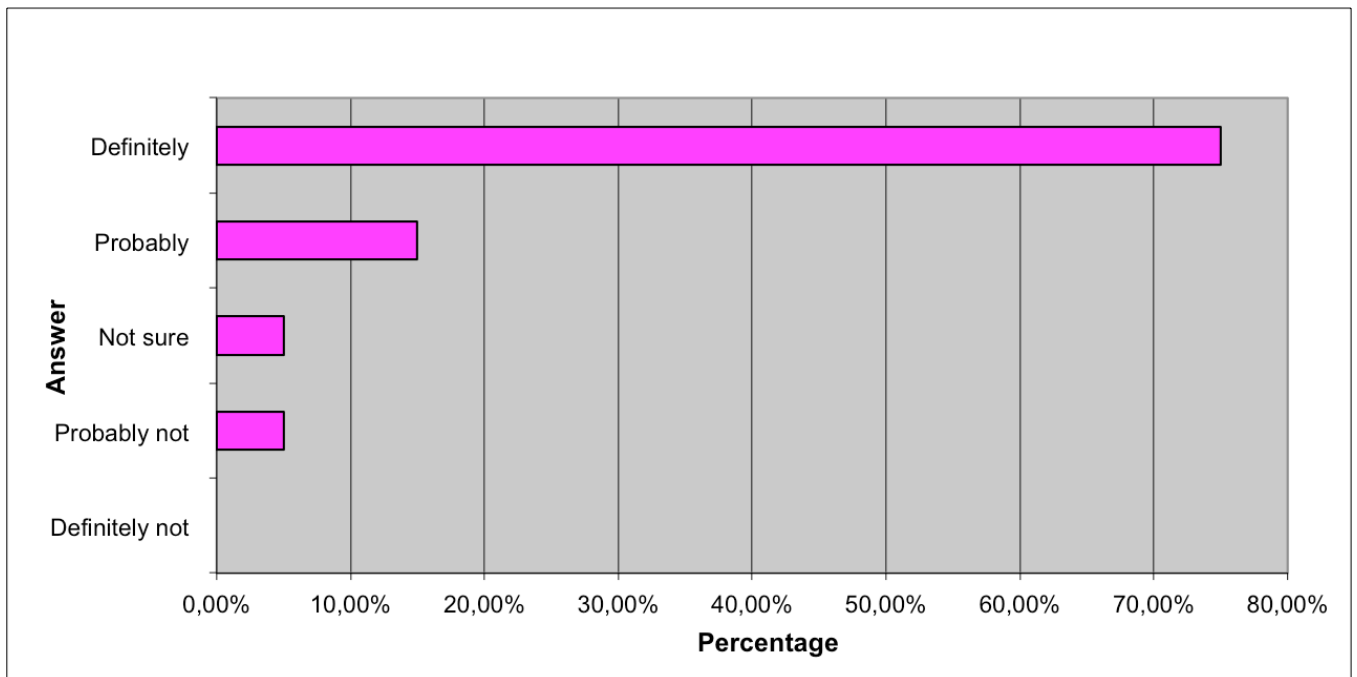
We do our best to make Sencity London 2012 an even more unforgettable experience. Please feel free to give us your honest feedback and mention points that could be improved next time. Thank you.

Our respondents gave the following comments:

- 'I felt some of the artist's weren't as approachable as they could have been. I also would've liked some savory choices with the catering as everything I was offered was sweet.'
- 'Start an hour earlier. Arrange transport back to city center after the show. More acts on stage. Every song to be interpreted and/or subtitles.'
- 'The dance floor should work better.'
- 'It was difficult to find the actual location in the O2Arena, some more indications would have been helpful.'
- 'I would like to come with my hearing brother, please send me more details.'
- 'Plan photo booth better, hopefully the dance floor won't die next time.'
- 'Make sure that the vibrating dance floor always works, but I guess you noticed that yourself already. Maybe give some leaflets, flyers and other indications so that deaf-mute and people without handicap might be better able to communicate. I loved the experience, only had a few expectations due to the planned programme but could not really imagine how it will be. Sometimes it was a little difficult for me to communicate, which is probably normal but which would be cool through giving some introductions to communicate with each other, besides that a great event with really cool experiences.'
- 'The dance floor must stimulate.'
- 'The vibrating dance floor was not working all the time.'
- 'I attended with my partner who is deaf and we're both just learning BSL (British Sign Language). Our few phrases weren't really enough to communicate with door staff. At least a few hearing people around would have been useful.'
- 'The topic "circus" could have been better executed. The venue was quite big so that it sometimes seemed to be a bit empty. I couldn't smell the different aromas, it was not strong enough.'
- 'To be honest this day is awesome and impressive experience so far.'
- 'There were no directions or way of finding the different areas e.g. masseurs so we lost out.'
- 'I think everything is fine.'

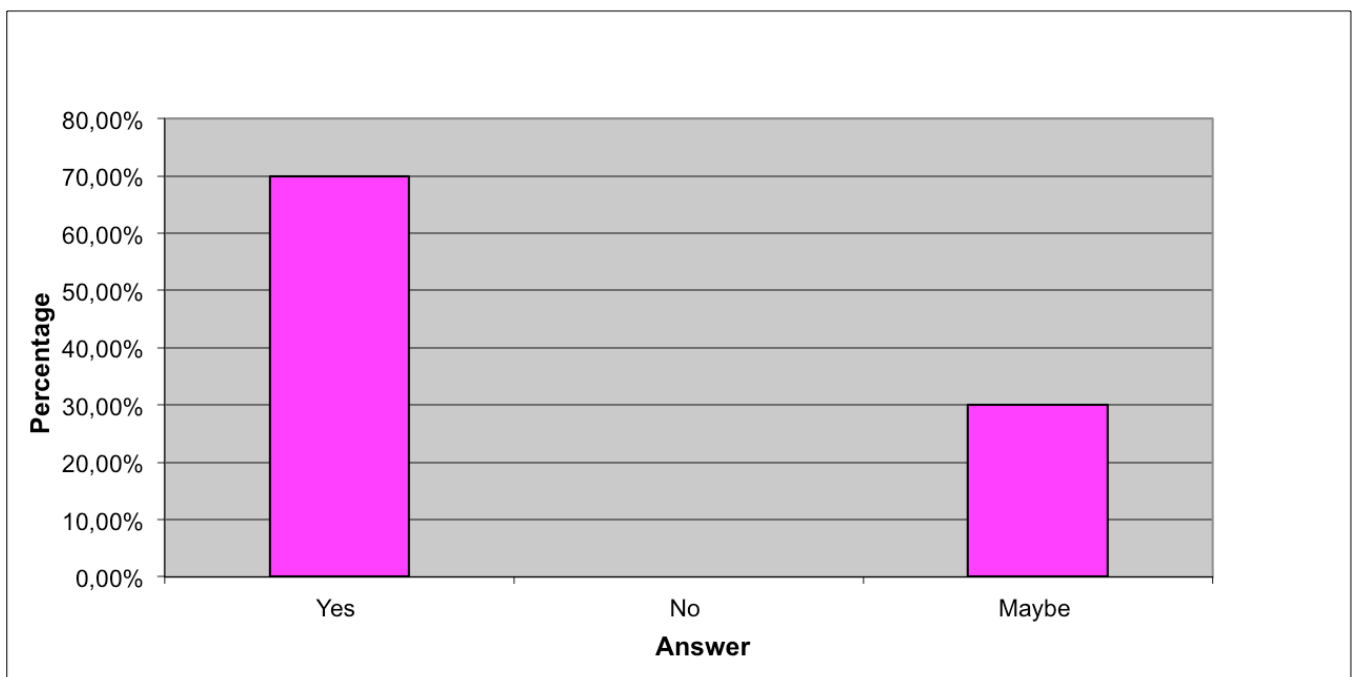
Question 7

- *Would you recommend Sencity London 2011 to others?*



Question 8

- *Would you visit the next Sencity event?*



Question 9

If you have any suggestions, remarks or other feedback regarding Sencity London: feel free to tell us below:

Our respondents gave the following comments:

- ***'You did a great job!'***
- ***'Good job! Next time more massage therapists would come in handy though...'***
- ***'Signpost inside of the event better.'***

Question 10

Please leave your name and email if you want us to get in touch with you in the future. If you do not want this, the question can be skipped.

Names for mailing list confidential

Appendix 2. Team feedback

Feedback from team members after the first 3 workshops and the seminar

Katrina Jones

Attending workshops with Ronald Lightenberg, Youp and Sencity Utrecht at the start of my participation was a great start. I believe that I was introduced to Sencity in the best way as possible, that time I was so inspired and determined to be a big part of the project, making Sencity London happen! Workshops with Momentum had come on the right time, when we all had a better idea of Sencity's vision and mission and it was time for us to look into our strengths and weaknesses. The workshop was mind-blowing which had extremely improved our team-building, confidences and trusts in each others.

Breish Rowe

Overall, I thought the project was very good for developing an awareness of what exactly is involved in creating an event. A lot of issues were addressed throughout the workshops, such as interpersonal skills, practical applications and team building. I felt that Ronald's workshop in particular was inspiring - it certainly motivated us to create something of our own. The legacy of Sencity is to instil confidence in young people and make them believe that they can do anything as long as they set their minds to it, and have the determination to succeed.

For myself personally, the project has helped me identify my strengths at a time when I had lost faith in my own abilities. It has helped me take control of my life and make me more proactive. I now have the confidence to move forward and make something of my career, with the conviction I need to succeed.

I will never forget the lessons I have learnt along the way, the people I have met, and certainly not the team I'm lucky enough to be in! Most importantly, it has been FUN :)'

Timothy Bonham-Carter

The first workshop we encountered with Ronald Ligtenberg was awe inspiring to me and the team as it gave us all a better understanding of Sencity and its vision. I felt refreshed by the experience of the workshop and it gave me a much-needed boost.

The second workshop was part of our trip to the Netherlands (Utrecht) with the Imagineroes whom taught us about ourselves having a vision and belief in the project we were to undertake which was motivating and the night that followed was great as we all got to see Sencity in full swing with Signmark, vibrating dance floor, aroma jockeys and everything that captivated the senses to the full!

The third workshop which took place with our partners Youth Momentum was a fun filled day, which helped the team to loosen up

and bond with each other which we had not the chance to do before. It was great getting to know that little more about everyone and their personalities.

The Sencity seminar was a nerve wracking but albeit a rewarding experience as I was presenting to approximately 50 people and was out of my comfort zone! It was interesting to see what people had to say about the project and how they could be involved so it was a positive evening all in all!

Feedback from team members after the whole project was finished

Sophie Davis

Working within the organising team for Sencity has been one of the most entertaining, enjoyable and interesting experiences I have ever been part of.

Having the opportunity to be part of an event that has the potential to bring something new to the British people, while integrating the Deaf & hearing world to form a lasting partnership in club and music industry.

Many people were of the opinion that a Deaf person was not able to enjoy or experience music. However, Sencity broke this misconception and opened up Londoners' eyes to the opportunities and benefits in the way Deaf people experience Music and how that can be used within the mainstream world.

Working within a team of Deaf and Hearing young people in this pioneering event has allowed me to better improve my team working skills within a mixed forum. I am training to become a teacher with the aim of becoming a teacher of the deaf. I feel that all the elements of social and business interactions I was open to within Sencity has better prepared me for the barriers and persecution deaf people face within society. Sencity allowed people to see how able young people, deaf or hearing, can be in this a very tenuous time in London with the riots and youth crime being a prevalent factor within the media.

I had the responsibility to organise the PR for the event and in doing this it gave me the skills to better appreciate the effect that language can have on the coverage an event can receive. Locating and negotiating the best deal with a PR agency was a tiring yet rewarding process. Along with this I was key in securing and booking several non-music acts. Once I was able to express my enthusiasm for Sencity, I found people responded positively and wanted to become involved regardless of the fee they may or may not receive. Being involved in the whole process of an event from start to finish has taught me many reusable skills for the future many of which I have already had the opportunity to put into practice.

I sincerely hope that Sencity has the chance to become an annual event within London or UK. Sencity had such a positive impact on the

young people involved in the organising, along with the Deaf and Hearing youth of the UK being opened up to a new and innovative way of experiencing a fundamental human expression, music.

Anna Dagaretzis

During the last year, I got the chance to be part in the brilliant project, called Sencity London 2011. Moreover I worked as an intern within the social enterprise Skyway Programs C.I.C. My daily duties and tasks were very diverse and interesting and I learned a lot.

Especially for me, as an international student was it very exciting to get to know different cultures, but not only the British culture, also work within a team of deaf, hard of hearing and hearing young people. I learned quite a lot from the deaf community, their habits and their life and made myself more aware of the deaf and disabled people in our society.

The team work and communication went very well within our team and which was one of the best experiences in that project. We figured out everybody's roles within the project and contributed to each other very good.

During my time, I've learned a lot, not only in terms of working experiences, but also for life. For the first time, I had the feeling I'd be doing something great and which could also be meaningful to others. Working in such a young team with many different cultures was challenging, but at the same time a lot of fun. I got to know many different personalities and even though I wasn't able to sign a lot, I became good friends with some of the team members.

Another important thing that I've learned was that nothing is impossible, even though if people don't believe in you and if it might be hard at first sight, but when you really go for something and you have a strong team behind you, everything can be made possible.

All in all, the team and I had a wonderful time together and it opened my horizon in a very positive way. Moreover, I believe that Sencity London opened a lot of other eyes towards the deaf culture and what actually is possible, even though you're young and without many experiences. I believe that this project is very important and needs even more international recognition.

All in all, it was a mind-blowing experience, which I enjoyed to the fullest and enriched my life.