

Bright Osei-Agyeman Interview

VIBE Arts Youth-led Program and Outreach Coordinator
Previously Arts for Children and Youth

How long have you been involved in VIBE?

Around 6 or 7 years.

How did you get involved?

Working in photo and video. Started volunteering with community programs. Bridge building between film production work and community work. Did not know about all the different art types (murals, painting, music, dance). Learning along the way.

Hoping to go into film production. Learning skills at VIBE that will be transferable. Moving towards Production Coordinator (wanting to study at Humber college) has learned organization, cooperation and communication at VIBE.

What is a typical day like?

Consider how to program for schools versus community. Out reach to community agencies. Creating program for community is less structured. School programming is more complex. Facilitating art between agencies and the community. Creating partnerships between artists, educators, agencies and the community. Children wont remember the name of an organization they will only remember the actual program and who was involved. Agencies and schools will reach out to VIBE to create sustainable programs. Sustaining communities that can't sustain themselves, in terms of the arts. Working in areas designated as neighborhood improvement areas. Working within already existing community networks.

5 day programs in schools. 6-8 week programs in community. Divided differently depending on specific needs.

What are some challenges you encounter in your work?

Work to rule causes issues in schools. Certain programs need to be modified because the teachers can't have the commitment they usually do. Participants miss out on program elements. Other issues because of internal agency problems. Other issues providing consistent programming in communities. Will be there for 2-4 months and then not back until the next year. There is no follow up for the kids. Encouraging VIBE to create continuous programming. Young people want to make connections between what they're doing and the people around them.

What are some good things that come from your work?

Participants in the programs getting involved. The staff are examples of what the programming can do to create leadership opportunities. Youth Advisory Committee creates opportunities for youth. If they are involved they create their own presence in their community. There is opportunity to grow.

Do people understand what it means to be an art educator?

There is a disconnect between certain groups and the value of art. They don't see the arts as a place for growth and to learn life skills. Those who represent arts and culture have to be aware of the be able to articulate impact they have. People learn differently, people create differently. When working in schools there is a sense of pride and achievement in many of the student's labeled "bad kids" or "trouble" and this encourages them to do more. They can keep taking steps forward. You put a paintbrush in someone's hand and they'll do something with it and you can see them differently. It provides a different perspective for teachers in terms of how their students work and learn, and erases the "bad kid" label.

Moving forward... more focus on the young artist mentorship program creating opportunities for young artists to work with established artists and create lesson plans and programming.

Can't create cookie cutter programs. Make things different

Working with PANAM games. Working on the large scale in Toronto
Annual VIBE arts festival in June is a showcase of the youth work. It's growing.

VIBE engages children and youth in meaningful arts based programs.



Creative Spaces Partnership Exchange
November 2nd, 2015

Grassroots to Government Workshop

Speakers: Paulina O’Kieffe
Director of Art Reach

Aida Aydinyan
Vice President Business for the Arts

Sally Aan
Manager Cultural Partnerships City of Toronto

Effective Evaluation

- Document and evaluate impact
- Collect data
- Document in many different ways
- Put aside money for an evaluator
- Keep stat sheets
- Collect quotes from people
- Get stats throughout the year not just at the end
- Establish a track record
- Create your own organizations legacy

What to do with data?

- Share with people
- Share with funders
- Share with your team

Building Government Relationships

- Planning (what do you want to sell)
- Prospecting (who are you selling to)
- Making the approach (research)
- Stewarding (maintain the relationship, update)
- Look from the perspective of the funder
- Find partners that champion what you are trying to accomplish

Extras

Art Reach Toolkits

Workinculture.com

Toronto art facts and stats

Avnu.ca