



OPEN
LENS
MEDIa

2020 Annual Outcomes Report

Developing Young People.
Creating Opportunities.
Opening The Lens On The Youth Perspective.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR.

Hello and welcome to our 2020 Annual Report,

Unprecedented was definitely an accurate description for 2020, as none of us could have predicted the pandemic or its pending impact on life as a whole. As the news unfolded week by week, we watched, reluctantly accepting that 'normal' was unrecognisable but instead 'adapting' was the order of the day; a tall order at that due to the everchanging information. However, I'm proud to say that here at Open Lens Media CIC we have given our all to adapting our services to enable us to continue to support the young people within our community.

Whilst the number of young people we have been able to work with over this last year has been much lower than in previous years; we are celebrating the impact we have been able to have on the community of young people we have had the privilege of working with. In addition to this, we have built new partnerships with some great organisations and we look forward to our ongoing relationships with them into 2021.

Open Lens Media is a Youth Training and Development Enterprise providing Courses, Training, Projects and Educational Programmes in Media and Communication, that focus on developing young people's social, communication, personal and professional skills to increase their ability to access further opportunities.

We work closely with young people stemming from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds between the ages of 5-10, 11-15, 16-29. By delivering engaging and progressive programmes that equip them with the tools they need to successfully transition into Further Education, Employment and/or Training, we aim to help young people onto the right path to achieve their goals and ambitions.

Our work is built on ensuring we are listening and responding to the thoughts, concerns and passions of the young people we work with. This is reflected in the content they produce on our programmes and courses as well as the issues they highlight through our platforms. 2020 was a heavy year for our young people, with concerns for their loved ones due to the pandemic and also their concerns for global society due to social injustices witnessed through the Black Lives Matter movement following the tragic death of George Floyd.

I speak on behalf of all of our team here when I say we are so proud of the achievements we've seen from our young people in making their voices heard. From the production of Documentaries, the release of our new weekly podcast 'A State Of Opinions' to transitioning into further opportunities; they have taken part in vital conversations, built their confidence and skills and taken hold of their futures. The purpose of this document is to reflect on the performance of Open Lens Media CIC (OLM) for the year 2019/2020. Providing an insight into our successes and areas for improvement as we continue to make an impact in the lives of the young people we serve.

Thank you for taking the time to read our annual report and we welcome your feedback.

Daina Anderson
CEO & Director



IMPACT OF COVID-19.

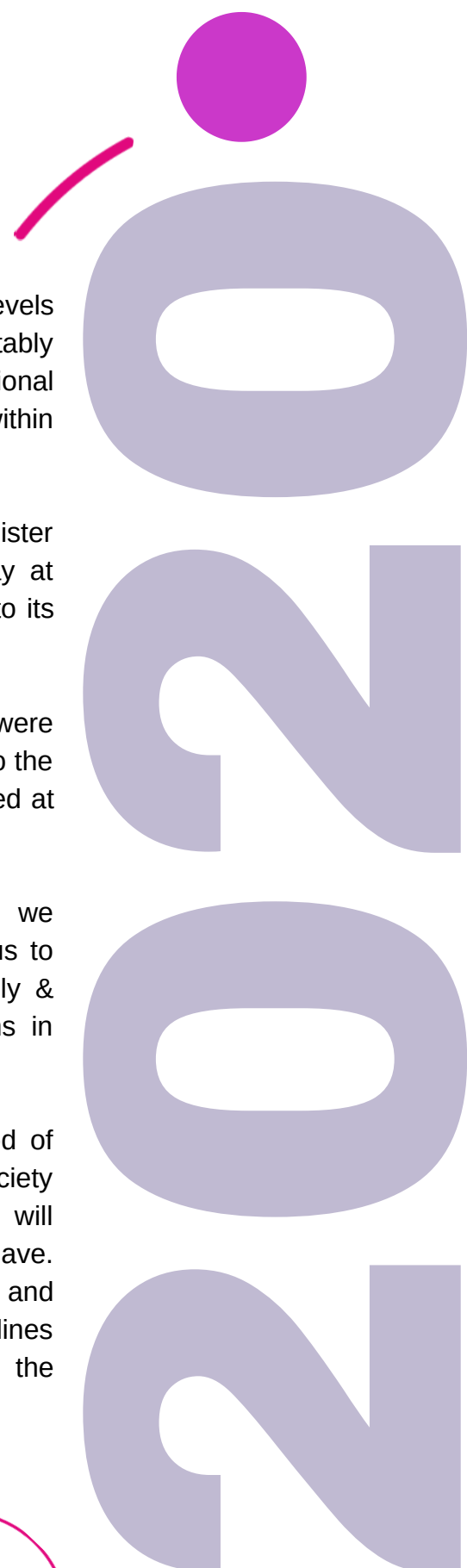
2020 was very challenging for Open Lens Media CIC (OLM) at all levels due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and national restrictions that inevitably followed. Restrictions were placed within social, work and educational settings, limiting the physical interactions we were able to share within those settings in the attempt to reduce transmission of the virus.

In March 2020, following the national order announced by Prime Minister Boris Johnson for everyone (exempting essential workers) to stay at home we were plunged to an abrupt halt as the country entered into its first period of Lockdown.

With such drastic changes enforced onto business operations, we were unable to continue delivering and had to enlist our full staff team onto the Furlough Scheme whilst we revised our working practices and looked at ways to resume through safe online delivery.

Thankfully, due to the hard work of our Governance board, we successfully conducted a full audit review in June 2020, leading us to update all of our policies and retrain our operational team in July & August 2020. Ultimately we were then able to resume operations in August 2020 and un-furlough the majority of our team.

The Coronavirus Pandemic is still an on-going event at the period of writing this document and continues to have drastic effects on society and businesses. It is unclear how long this state of uncertainty will continue to affect the world and the long-term impacts it may have. However we are committed to continually reviewing our services and activities in order to comply with safeguarding and government guidelines and deliver the best service possible to our young people and the communities we serve.



ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SUPPORT

At OLM our aim is to build a fully sustainable Social Enterprise by 2025. We recognise that this takes time and as such have always appreciated the important role that funding has played in our survival and the roll out of our services. In 2020 this was even more crucial due to the pause in our ability to deliver our service as normal and fulfil our contracts. With various schemes and grants made available by the Government, OLM successfully managed to access funding including:

Government Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

BBC Children in Need Booster Grant

TNL Community Fund – Coronavirus Community Support Fund

Arts Council Culture Recovery Fund

The support of this funding has enabled OLM to continue to deliver our services to young people in the community, procure a COVID-19 secure venue and ensure we have kept our staff team safe and in employment.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Despite 2020 being a year of distance, OLM have continued to work together with Community Partners to help deliver elements of our programmes to the young people on our courses. In the Summer, OLM partnered The E.N.D.Z Project who helped to create a narrative and focus for our Summer Cohort and their documentary film. In September 2020, OLM returned to work with one of our existing community partners, Black Country Radio, who were helpful in delivering elements of the podcasting programme which was running at the time.

We would like to thank our community partners for their support during the year 2020. Furthermore, OLM continues to seek and work collaboratively with new partners within the community, across all areas of Birmingham and The Black Country, for future projects.



TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT

OLM continued to train our staff throughout the Pandemic with regular training meetings via Microsoft Teams. It was a great opportunity to reflect and refresh practices with intensive training on various topics such as Safeguarding, Partner and Youth Engagement and Managing Behaviour. With more programmes being offered through OLMs online systems, it was critical that our staff were trained in online delivery and online safeguarding so that our Facilitators were confident in delivering our STEP Programme via the new online systems.

Recruitment is an on-going process at OLM with the desire to grow a team of suitable facilitators and operational staff. In 2020, OLM used the opportunity to deliberate on the type of candidates we needed to suit the needs of the business as it grows. Nearing the end of the year, we were successful in hiring a Lead Facilitator and we welcome them to our team. Recruitment is on-going and opportunities will continue to be made available through recruitment portals and our website.

2020



RESPONSE TO COVID-19 & MITIGATION

It was critical that OLM could adapt and implement new measures as a response to COVID-19. As such, OLM now has a range of responses that mitigate the impacts on our day to day operations. These responses include having an Online Learning Management System (LMS) built, creating online programmes and securing a covid-19 secure building. It was agreed that these actions would increase the chances of OLM's survival during the Pandemic and would be beneficial for future circumstances and delivery.

Online Learning Management System and Online Programmes

With many people in 2020 being told to home, it was critical that OLM could provide our services, courses and resources online to be accessed from anywhere.

Many of the young people who OLM has had the opportunity to work with in 2020, mentioned how the Pandemic had a negative effect on their mental health and reported keeping busy during lockdown periods helped considerably.

As a result, we commissioned an Online Learning Management System (LMS) to be built. Alongside this we created the The STEP Programme which provided an opportunity for remote learning that both the facilitators and students could engage with. OLM has received great feedback from those who have participated in the online sessions throughout the year and will continue to develop online programmes so that it remains successful in the future.



OPEN LENS STUDIOS

Due to the Pandemic, many of OLM's existing Partner Venues had to close which meant that there were no venues available for the delivery of programmes despite OLM's ability to deliver them safely.

To mitigate the impact of this, it was decided that OLM needed to secure its own venue which could accommodate both its office staff and programme delivery. In October 2020 a venue was secured in Walsall town centre. Renovations took place during October and November in time for the first programme to be delivered in December. Development of the building will continue to equip the premises for the full scope and range of OLM's services.

PROGRAMMES IN SUMMARY

Despite the challenges that COVID 19 imposed onto OLM's ability to deliver programmes face-to-face, we were determined to deliver our services to as many participants as we could during the year. Though the numbers were considerably lower than a typical year, we managed to deliver on all of our contracts and partnerships (see table below).

Funding Partner	Numbers	Completed To End	Completion Rate
St Vincents Catholic Primary School	7	Could not complete due to Covid	--
BBC Children In Need	6	6	88%
Black Country Impact	10	8	
Talent Match	2	2	

2020

St. Vincents Catholic Primary School

Size of Cohort - 7 Children

In January 2020, Open Lens Media entered into its first Primary School to deliver a new and exciting programme to 7 children and their parents. The programme was designed to bring children and their parents closer together and engage with something that would not only be fun but also beneficial. The programme got off to a great start receiving positive feedback from the school, parents and children. Unfortunately, in March 2020 this programme had to be cancelled with 3 remaining sessions to go due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and the restrictions implemented on schools and businesses. We hope that we may be able to run the programme again in the future, however with current restrictions, it is not known when that may be possible.

2020



Summer Programme 2020

Size of Cohort - 6 Young People

The Summer of 2020 was a great success for Open Lens Media who were able to deliver a specialised holiday programme funded by BBC Children In Need to 6 young people. The Summer was the first time a psychical programme was delivered in 2020 by the organisation following the lifting of national restrictions. The cohort created a documentary film exploring the meaning of being Mixed-Race in the 21st Century, a topic stemming from the Black Lives Matter movement of 2020. The group responded well to the adapted programme and adhered to Covid Regulations over the Summer. OLM received great feedback from the group who expressed how the programme was an overall positive experience for them to be a part of.

Acknowledgements

OLM would like to say a special thank you to the E.N.D.Z Project who helped us to deliver a successful programme over the Summer.



Black Country Impact & STEP

Size of Cohort - 8 Young People

Throughout the year, OLM have worked with 10 young people referred over from Black Country Impact who have participated in both online (5 young people) and physical sessions (5 young people). The 5 young people who worked via online sessions during the lockdown thoroughly enjoyed having something to work on. They explored topics such as Goals and Ambitions and explored barriers into employment, education and training.

The 3 young people who were able to participate in a physical programme enjoyed OLMs new Podcast Production Programme. The sessions took place at Gem Studios in Birmingham and a visit to Black Country Radio also occurred during this programme. The young people created podcasts relating to the chosen topics e.g. Women's Equality etc. The cohort were particularly excited that their podcasts were uploaded onto streaming platforms such as Spotify and have since been released as a series on Youtube. Overall, the programme was a great success.

Acknowledgements

OLM would like to say a special thank you to Roger Moore and all of those who work at the GEM Studios. We would also like to thank Jacqueline at Diamonds in the Rough for supporting our online delivery and SEN support.

"I learned to be more confident and do everything with more conviction"

Walsall BCI & Talent Match

Size of Cohort - 4 Young People

The final cohort of 2020 were a mixture of young people referred over from Black Country Impact and Talent Match. The programme took place over 3 weeks in December to 4 young people who were all interested in Podcast Production. Unfortunately, only 3 young people completed the course to the end but OLM received positive feedback from all remaining participants. This programme, though a success, did not come without its challenges as OLM recognised that the young people on the course needed additional support. OLM were happy to offer its services to those individuals who will continue to work with OLM via online sessions to continue progression and hopefully help get them into further education, employment or training.

"I've gained more confidence"



The progress OLM has made this year, given the unprecedented circumstances, is applaudable however there is more in which OLM needs to do to sustain its impact.

One important development would be the Accreditation of our courses; currently we do not offer any formal qualifications young people but we intend to begin certification in 2021.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the year of 2020 has been quite a challenging one for Open Lens Media and we have navigated the impacts of the Coronavirus Pandemic as best as we could.

The uncertainty of 2021 remains, however as an organisation we feel much better prepared to pivot and adapt if necessary.

With all the progress that has been made in such a challenging year, we would like to acknowledge that none of it could be achieved without the support of all of our partners, stakeholders and supporters. Therefore we would like to say a HUGE THANK YOU to all our staff, partners and participants for the support.

We look forward to 2021 and our continual growth and impact in the communities we serve.

Thank you.

Open Lens Media CIC.