

Invitation to Tender for the Evaluation of Shubbak's Community Engagement and Participation Programme

Introduction

Shubbak is Europe's largest festival of contemporary Arab culture. It runs every two years, with the next festival in the Summer of 2019. Our 2017 festival took place across London over 16 days, with more than 60 events in 30 venues, reaching over 50,000 people. Media coverage and plaudits included being included on BBC Radio 4's Front Row, in The Guardian's Top 10, and chosen as Time Out's pick of the week. Our festival partners include the Royal Opera, the Southbank Centre and the Barbican.

As part of our 2017 festival we had a strong focus on participation and engagement work, supported in part through 'Explore and Test' funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF). Our work explored ways of overcoming the 'participation gap' faced by Arab audiences, something we now aim to address further with increased support from PHF through their 'More and Better' funding stream.

Our engagement work will be developed over the next three years, with a focus on West London and on collaborations between artists based in the Arab world and UK artists of Arab origin. This work will be led on by our full-time Programme and Engagement producer.

Although there is much research on participation in the arts in general, there is very little on Arab audiences specifically. Through this work, we aim to explore the participation gap for Arab audiences and potential ways of addressing it. We also want to identify how Shubbak can place participatory and engagement work on an equal footing to other work in our festival, supporting artists, audiences and participants to experience artistic work of very high quality.

About the engagement and participation programme

Our PHF-funded engagement and participation programme will focus on Arab audiences in West London. The overarching goals for this programme are to:

- Provide opportunities for people from Arab backgrounds to participate in high quality, community-based activities in West London
- Encourage/support more people from Arab backgrounds to attend events as part of the main Shubbak festival
- Encourage/support more people from Arab backgrounds to access our partners' programmes
- Learn more about how we can embed strong participatory practice at Shubbak and the organisational changes this may require us to make.

The programme is still being designed, and our plans are likely to develop and change over the three-year period of our grant. However, we anticipate that activities will include:

- Community engaged artist residencies – involving international artists working alongside UK-based Arab artists to design and deliver participatory art projects aimed at Arab audiences. Each of these projects is likely to take a different shape, involve a different art form, and last for a different length of time, although a six-week period seems likely. We anticipate that there will be two residencies a year, in each of the three years, with around 20 people participating in each (120 in total). Will plan to engage a wider group of people as audience members (approximately 500 for each project, or 3000 in total).
- Visible public realm programming - involving activities at both the 2019 and 2021 festivals, with around 200 people participating in each year (or 400 in total). We hope that a wider audience of up to 2500 people might experience these events at both festivals (so 5000 in total).

- Accompanied visits to arts institutions. We will broker and organise visits to key events in the 2019 and 2021 Shubbak festivals where participants will be accompanied by staff and volunteers from local community organisations. We anticipate that this activity will reach around 150 people in total.
- Youth engagement programme – we plan to carry out a range of engagement work aimed at young people, including establishing an Arab-led Youth Council to help shape future festival activities. We hope that up to 1000 young people might be engaged in the 2019 and 2021 festivals in some way (2000 in total)
- Intern programme – we plan to offer up to six, two-month, paid internships for young people from Arab backgrounds over the course of the three years. We will explore how plans for the intern programme can link with plans for the Youth Advisory Council (above).
- Research and sector engagement – we will also explore how we can contribute to the existing evidence base about participation in the arts by Arab communities and we will share learning from our work with our colleagues and partners in the sector.

It is likely that there may be some overlap in participants involved in these different activities. For example, some of the people involved in the participatory projects may take part in accompanied visits or be recruited to the Youth Advisory Council.

In addition to this specific engagement and participation activity, we are planning a range of other activity at festival level that will support our participation aims. This includes work to increase our kaleidoscope creativity audience and create a major, new, family-friendly, one-day, Summer festival in one of West London's parks in 2021.

Our engagement and participation activity will develop over the three years. In the first year we will focus on:

- Two artist residency projects targeting Arab populations in West London. These will result in two public-facing exhibitions during Shubbak 2019.
- Feasibility work to set up a new Arab Youth Council, with the Council up and running in subsequent years
- The intern programme – this is up and running already but needs further development to more effectively support work in West London
- Accompanied visits – these may take place during or after the 2019 festival, depending on the outcome of discussions with partners about the availability of free tickets to events etc.

Our requirements for the evaluation

With support from PHF, Shubbak commissioned an independent evaluation of the community element of the 2017 festival. We are now seeking a suitably qualified organisation or individual/s to conduct an evaluation of our PHF-funded More and Better programme.

We hope that the evaluation will provide a range of findings and recommendations that will support continuous improvement in our programme over the next three years, contribute to shared learning with our partners, and meet the evidence requirements of current and new funders. We are also keen for the evaluation to support our thinking and organisational practice in relation to the monitoring and evaluation of our participatory practice.

We would like the evaluation to help us review the effectiveness and impact of the different strands of engagement and participation work outlined above, against our goals for each. At this stage, and certainly in the first year, we anticipate that the priorities for evaluation will be our participatory projects and the evolving youth engagement work.

We would also like the evaluation to support our reflection on some key learning questions related to our evolving participatory practice.

We are currently developing a logic model for the engagement and participation programme. This process is helping us to clarify our goals for each of the strands of participatory activity outlined above, and the learning questions we are interested in exploring. Outputs from this process will be available from the week beginning 4th February 2019. However, some of the learning questions we are interested in exploring in the evaluation are likely to include:

Questions relating to all the strands of our participatory work:

- What are we learning from our work about the distinctive contribution that participation in the arts (as opposed to other participatory activities), and in Arabic arts in particular, makes to the lives of people from Arab communities in London?
- How do we think about the spectrum of participatory arts work? (E.g. from that which is 'artist-led', and where the primary purpose is about the work, to that which is fundamentally about the participants and their journey). What are we learning from our work about what quality or excellence looks like in these different contexts?
- How can we frame and approach our participatory work such that it maximises the agency of the people who take part? What are the opportunities for and challenges of doing 'participant-led' work? How does this fit with our aspirations to be 'artist-led'?
- What are we learning from our work about how difference can be handled constructively in participatory processes?
- How can we reconcile the need for participatory work to be organic and emergent with the need for good project and budget management and clarity of roles and expectations with partners?
- What new ideas, inspiration and voices are we finding through our participatory work and how is this shaping our thinking about the main festival?

Questions related to our participatory projects in particular:

- What are we learning from our work about which groups within Arab communities in West London could benefit from our work? What kinds of participatory activities would they like and find the most inspiring?
- What are we learning from our work about what a 'fair exchange' looks like when a national arts organisation works with a local non-arts organisation? What needs to be in place for both parties to feel working together is beneficial?
- What are we learning about what needs to be in place for Shubbak to have a longer-term, more embedded presence in communities? How can we do participatory work effectively with limited capacity and without a permanent physical presence in the area?
- What are we learning from our work about possible mechanisms we can use to encourage and support people who take place in participatory projects to go on to access main Shubbak festival events, and other arts provision from our partners? How might we go about tracking/evidencing this journey in future?

As in previous years, Shubbak plans to commission the Audience Agency to produce statistics about the reach of the 2019 and 2021 festivals. Questionnaires will be administered at a sample of events by Shubbak volunteers. As part of their scoping activities, we would like the appointed evaluator to help us review the methodology for this work to help ensure as far as possible that the impact of our engagement and participation programme is captured in the Audience Agency figures. We are also hoping that the evaluator will help us to think through how we might track the impact of our participatory work on audiences for our partners' programmes.

If possible within the available budget, we are also interested in the evaluation making a wider contribution to the evidence base about the barriers to participation in the arts experienced by Arab communities in London. This may include supporting Shubbak staff members and volunteers to carry out research and investigations as part of their other work.

We recognise that this is a very ambitious set of evaluation objectives and are very open to hearing what is feasible, and what is not, within the available budget.

Methodology

We do not wish to prescribe the evaluation methodology however we feel it would be helpful for bidders to consider the following elements:

- Support to prioritise our goals and refine our learning questions, drawing on the logic model that the team is currently developing, and development of an evaluation framework
- On-going support for team reflection
- Consultations with community partners, arts partners, artists, participants and, where possible, with wider audience members.

Required outputs

We would like the following outputs from the evaluation:

- A revised project plan, based on your proposal, following initial scoping conversations with us
- Two brief interim reports setting out progress and emerging findings, most likely in the Autumn of 2019 and 2020
- A final report, of no more than 20 pages, setting out the evaluation findings, in December 2021/January 2022. This should include an Executive Summary, of publishable quality, which can be shared with a range of audiences.

Budget for the work

The dedicated budget for the evaluation is £15K (inclusive of VAT and expenses). In addition to this evaluation, Shubbak has received some additional funding from the Drosos Foundation in Zurich to explore two issues: how our work helps to change perceptions of the arts among Arab communities in the UK; and the experience of artists coming to the UK from the Arab world. The focus of this research is likely to be wider than the evaluation detailed in this proposal (for example, Drosos is interested in the experiences of international artists involved across the whole of our festival, not just in our community projects). However, there is likely to be some overlap with the evaluation, especially in relation to the experiences of community members and artists involved in the projects in West London. It may therefore be possible to draw on some additional funds for the evaluation, if activities can also support Drosos research aims. We anticipate that a further £7.500 may be available for this purpose, including the writing of a report on the impact on perception change within Arab audiences in London. We would welcome bidders' thoughts on how this could be allocated to the evaluation to best effect.

Skills, experience and qualities of evaluation team

We anticipate that the successful bidder will have the following skills and experience:

- Experience of evaluating participatory projects in the arts
- Experience of working with community organisations, and with people from black, minority and ethnic communities, new arrivals, and asylum-seekers and refugees
- Strong qualitative and quantitative research skills
- The experience and ability to work in a formative and constructive way with Shubbak staff members, volunteers, associates, artists, partners and participants

- Experience of writing publishable-quality outputs that can be shared with sector partners.

Arabic language skills would also be an advantage.

It is important the person/organisation appointed can field appropriately qualified personnel over the three-year contract.

Your proposal

Your proposal should be limited to 4 sides of A4, excluding appendices, which should be kept to a minimum. It should include the following information:

- Your skills and experience of relevance to this work
- Your proposed methodology, including the rationale for suggesting particular activities and methods
- Details of the evaluation team (CVs can be included in an Appendix), with a clear indication of the person who is accountable for the quality of the work
- A breakdown of the budget showing the time to be allocated to the different tasks
- A timeline for completing the evaluation.

Your proposal should be submitted to Daniel.gorman@shubbak.co.uk by email by 18 Feb 2019.

Timetable

Deadline for asking questions	7 Feb 2019
Deadline for submission of bids	18 Feb 2019
Interviews, if required	Week commencing 25 Feb 2019
Successful bidder appointed	1 March 2019
Successful bidder available to begin work	Early March 2019

Further information

If you have any questions about this Invitation to tender, please contact Daniel Gorman by email on Daniel.gorman@shubbak.co.uk . Please note that the deadline for asking questions is 7 Feb 2019.