

**kalasangam**

# Annual Review

2020/21





# Our Vision

**Kala Sangam is an intercultural arts hub which aims to reflect the diversity of contemporary Britain through the work we present, the artists we support and the communities we engage.**

Specialising in South Asian arts and culture, most of our work takes place in our Arts Centre in the heart of Bradford (between Bradford Cathedral and The Broadway Shopping Centre) with our outreach activities extending regionally and nationally.

**In Sanskrit, 'Kala' means arts and 'Sangam' means a meeting point.**

Kala Sangam aims to bring people and communities together to create and experience high-quality, diverse art, to increase understanding and awareness of different cultures, and to provide talent development pathways for young people and emerging artists into a career in the arts.

**ACROSS THE ARTS  
ACROSS CULTURES**

**AT THE HEART  
OF BRADFORD**

Image: Akeim Toussaint Buck and Issac Ouro-Gnao



# Summary

“ 2020/21 was the most challenging year this organisation has faced – as it was for many others. For most of the year our building remained closed to the public, many of our fantastic staff team were furloughed, and lots of the artists we support were without work.

I'm very proud to present an Annual Review that documents how Kala Sangam has risen to these challenges, adapting to an ever-changing situation to deliver our own activity and support the wider arts sector in Bradford and beyond.

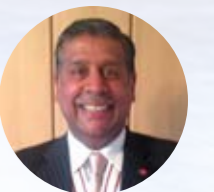
Nothing in this Annual Review would have been possible without the significant investment we received from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund. Without this funding, Kala Sangam would have had to close its doors for good at the end of 2020. We remain eternally grateful for this support, and also extremely positive that the Government recognised the value of what we do here. Alongside this funding, the ongoing support we have received from our regular funders, Arts Council England and Bradford Metropolitan District Council, has been crucial.

I also want to thank those members of the public whose support has carried us through this tough year. Nearly 100 people helped us raise over £4,000 through our Crowdfunder campaign at a vital time – your contributions really made a difference.

We know the arts are going to have a big role to play in supporting our communities post-pandemic and, although we are conscious that the pandemic is not over, we're also hopeful that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

**I can't wait to welcome you all back to Kala Sangam – when you're ready – to experience great dance, theatre, music, poetry and more.**”

**Jasbir Athwal DL**  
Chair of the Board





# Artist Support

To support the artists we work with, one of the first actions we took at the start of lockdown was to immediately honour all payments to the performers and technicians whose bookings with us had to be cancelled.

Subsequently, with our building closed to the public for most of the year, we refocussed our delivery, offering a significantly increased, much needed programme of support for professional artists.

Thanks to the Cultural Recovery Funding we were able to repurpose spaces otherwise used for commercial activity, dramatically increasing the amount of space available for artists.

**We provided 135 days of studio time for artists in the six months between October 2020 and March 2021 – more than two thirds of the amount we provided in the whole of 2019/20.**

In that time, we spent £41,000 on artistic support. This included freelancers, in supporting roles like technicians and photographers, as well as artists themselves. 75% of that money went to Bradford-based artists and/or artists of South Asian heritage.

Almost one third of the money we received from the Culture Recovery Fund was distributed to artists and freelancers as part of our support.

“ I just wanted ... to thank you for your kindness in making this happen. I really didn't expect you to honour the fee when the performance got cancelled as most venues / promoters don't do that. We as artists get so used to taking the brunt of all mishaps (especially dancers) that we believe that is how it is meant to be. So, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for being so honourable. ”

- Nina Rajarani

“ I was so relieved and felt valued getting this residency at this time. The ripple effect of it is greater than I expected. My body really needed that space to move – I have improved physicality. The ideas I worked on have filtered into the projects that I am currently working on. My general health and wellbeing has gone up. ”

- Chemaine Cooke



# Back to the Studio

At the heart of our artist support was the *Back to the Studio* scheme – designed to help and support dancers and physical theatre performers maintain and restart their creative practice during and after lockdown. Each artist received £1000 to cover living expenses, along with a week of no-pressure studio time and organisational/funding development support from Kala Sangam staff.

With a streamlined application process, we received eight times as many applications as we were able to fund. With such evident need, we revisited our budgets and increased the number of artists supported from twenty to **twenty six**. Ten performers were chosen because of our longstanding relationship with them, with sixteen coming from the open application process. A priority was placed on artists from Bradford district and/or working within a South Asian artform.

The successful recipients of the scheme were:

Akeim Toussaint Buck  
Azara Meghie  
Debbie Bandara  
Hiten Mistry  
Kamala Devam  
Lloyd Thompson  
Ruqeeya  
Shivaangee Agrawal  
Yuvel Soria

Anna Holmes  
Bobak Champion  
Displace Yourself Theatre  
Jaivant Patel Dance Company  
Kapow Dance  
Lucie Lee  
Sarah Lamb  
Theo Clinkard  
Zoe Katsilerou

Astha Desai  
Chemaine Cooke  
Ella Mesma  
Jake Evans  
Keira Martin  
Mez Galaria  
Sheetal Maru  
Vince Virr

*Back to the Studio* was one of the first schemes of its kind in the UK arts sector, and we were delighted to see many other organisations following our lead with similar opportunities.

Beyond *Back to the Studio*, we continued to provide space to local artists working in dance, theatre and music – particularly in 2021, as many looked to start creating performance work again. This work included the creation and filming of Kala Sangam Associate Company, Mobius Dance's new work, *Curious Playground*, and supporting Skipton Camerata to create a series of *Lockdown Diaries* videos with poet Ian MacMillan.

“ The synergy of the Kala Sangam team is amazing in understanding artists and supporting them during the creative process. The investment in continuing established relationships and the want to deepen them is unique to KS. ”  
- Jai Patel





# Digital Reach

While we were unable to welcome the public into Kala Sangam for much of the year, we continued to engage with audiences through our social media channels.

## Morning Break

Supported by Bradford Metropolitan District Council's 'Response' funding, in April we were able to provide some much-needed paid work to six local dancers who had seen most of their freelance work disappear due to the pandemic. Each performer was commissioned to create five stretching routines in their particular dance style – including Breakin', Kathak, Contemporary, Ballet, African and Pop. These routines were specifically designed for people suddenly finding themselves working from home, and received hugely positive feedback across our social media.

## Social Media Takeover by Keira Martin and Sonia Sabri

As part of their residency, dancers Keira Martin and Sonia Sabri, and Bradford-based producers Spin Arts, took over our social media channels for a week in July. They shared videos, images and conversations that made up the R&D for their new show, at the time called *Earth Mothers*, reaching over 8,000 people.

## National Poetry Day

Bradford poet, Sharena Lee Satti, was commissioned to produce a new poem for National Poetry Day in October based around that year's theme, Visions, and the impact of the pandemic. The piece was filmed and shared through Kala Sangam's social media channels on National Poetry Day.



## A Very bR\*T\*SH Museum

Kala Sangam provided funding for Seeta Patel's *A Very bR\*T\*SH Museum* – a short film directed by Seeta Patel & Julien Kottukapally which uses dance, projections and animations to comment on the ongoing discussions around museums returning looted artefacts, and to explore the complex relationships it leaves society with in the world today. The film received its online premiere as part of Chats Palace's Spring 2021 season.

## Bhangra Lexicon

Kala Sangam provided funding support and studio space for World Bhangra Day founder, Hardeep Sahota, and Bradford photographer Tim Smith's online exhibition, *Bhangra Lexicon*. The world's first 'visual dictionary' of movements found within this beautiful artform, the online exhibition features over 300 dance movements and gestures from Bhangra and its sub-genres, and was presented by Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

## Online Resources

Recognising the need to bring movement and creativity into the school day our Education and Outreach Officer, Fay Beesley, worked with dancer Sophie Hutchinson and technician Dave Searle to create short videos combining dance, poetry and movement. The videos and their accompanying activity packs were distributed nationally through the Schools Linking Network.



# Our People

## Our Patrons

David Lascelles Earl of Harwood  
Lord Patel of Bradford OBE

## Honourary Lifetime President

Dr Geetha Upadhyaya OBE

## Our Board

Jasbir Athwal DL	Chair
Amrit Gata-Aura	Trustee (appointed May 2020)
Caroline Harrison	Treasurer
Jenny Jowle	Trustee
Paul Nash	Company Secretary
Marie O'Reilly	Vice Chair
Rashmi Sudhir	Trustee
James Wilson	Trustee

## Our Staff

Jez Arrow	Head of Finance
Fay Beesley	Education and Outreach Officer
Sidra Bi	Bookkeeper
Bradley Cook-Pattison	Facilities Assistant
Alex Corwin	Marketing and Programme Manager
Alex Croft	Creative Director
David Dearlove	Facilities Assistant and Caretaker
Philip Henegan	Facilities Assistant
Mohammed Iftikar	Facilities Manager
Mo Khan	Facilities Assistant
Steve O'Connell	Head of Commercial
Mat Schofield	Caretaker (until September 2020)
Dave Searle	Freelance Theatre Technician
Thomasina Spencer	Receptionist
Marcia Travers	Cleaner (until October 2020)

“ We would like to thank the whole KS Team for being open, easy going and willing to find solutions, especially in these challenging times. You really manage to make things easier for artists! ”

- Gianluca Vincentini

# Making a Difference

Thanks to the Job Retention Scheme, we were able to retain nearly our full staff team throughout the year, with only one redundancy. As with many arts organisations, almost all staff were placed on furlough at the start of the pandemic, with many remaining at least part-furloughed throughout the year.

As well as supporting their families and delivering home learning, many staff members took the opportunity to volunteer and support efforts to tackle the pandemic. Both Fay and Steve volunteered at their local foodbanks – Steve estimates that he's helped to distribute more than 860,000 meals – whilst Alex Corwin helped make face masks for NHS staff.

## Vaccinations

The members of the team who work with the public most often were vaccinated in March 2021 (with the rest of the team getting their jobs as soon as they were eligible). Alex Croft and Mohammed Iftikar filmed a short video talking about their experiences of getting vaccinated, dispelling some of the misinformation about the process and encouraging everyone to go as soon as they are called. We shared this video across our social media, including a paid Facebook post, which reached **10,000 people** across Bradford.





# Our Building

Although closed to the public for much of 2020/21, for several weeks over the Summer we were able to welcome people back into our building for socially distanced business, training and education events, and to use the café. Alongside this, professional artists and companies were able to make significant use of our spaces from September 2020, especially as part of our *Back to the Studio* scheme. Ensuring that staff, artists and the public were safe in our building was our top priority.

## Covid safety

Thanks to Culture Recovery funding, we were able to install a comprehensive set of safety measures to keep people safe, including:

- Multiple, automatic hand sanitisation points.
- KS facemasks for all staff.
- An enhanced cleaning regime.
- Prominent signage throughout the building, encouraging hand sanitisation, face masks and social distancing.
- 2m queue and distancing markers on the floor where needed.
- A clearly signposted one-way system.

Establishing a one-way system through the building was only possible thanks to the cooperation of our neighbours Bradford Cathedral allowing us exit access through their grounds. We remain extremely grateful for their assistance.



We are registered with 'Good to Go' - a Covid-19 industry standard for visitor attractions and venues.

Image: Mo Khan



# Tenants

To support our tenants through such a difficult time we offered many, including the Rooftop Café, a rent discount or rent holiday for several months while the building was closed.

## The Rooftop Café

We helped the Rooftop Café to reopen safely over the summer. This included providing signage and sanitiser points, as well as sharing information about their opening hours and offers via social media. The café joined the 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme and offered takeaway meals, including delicious sharing boxes ideal for socially distanced picnics.



## Dance United Yorkshire

We supported Dance United Yorkshire to set up a food bank distribution point, initially from our car park and then from one of our meeting rooms. We also provided them with free space and IT support to stream their regular Women's Group activities.

# Key Events and Bookings

## Covid Lead

We hosted a series of training days for Covid Lead – an essential initiative training community advocates to tackle misinformation about Covid-19 vaccines, particularly within the Black and Asian community.

## Mencap

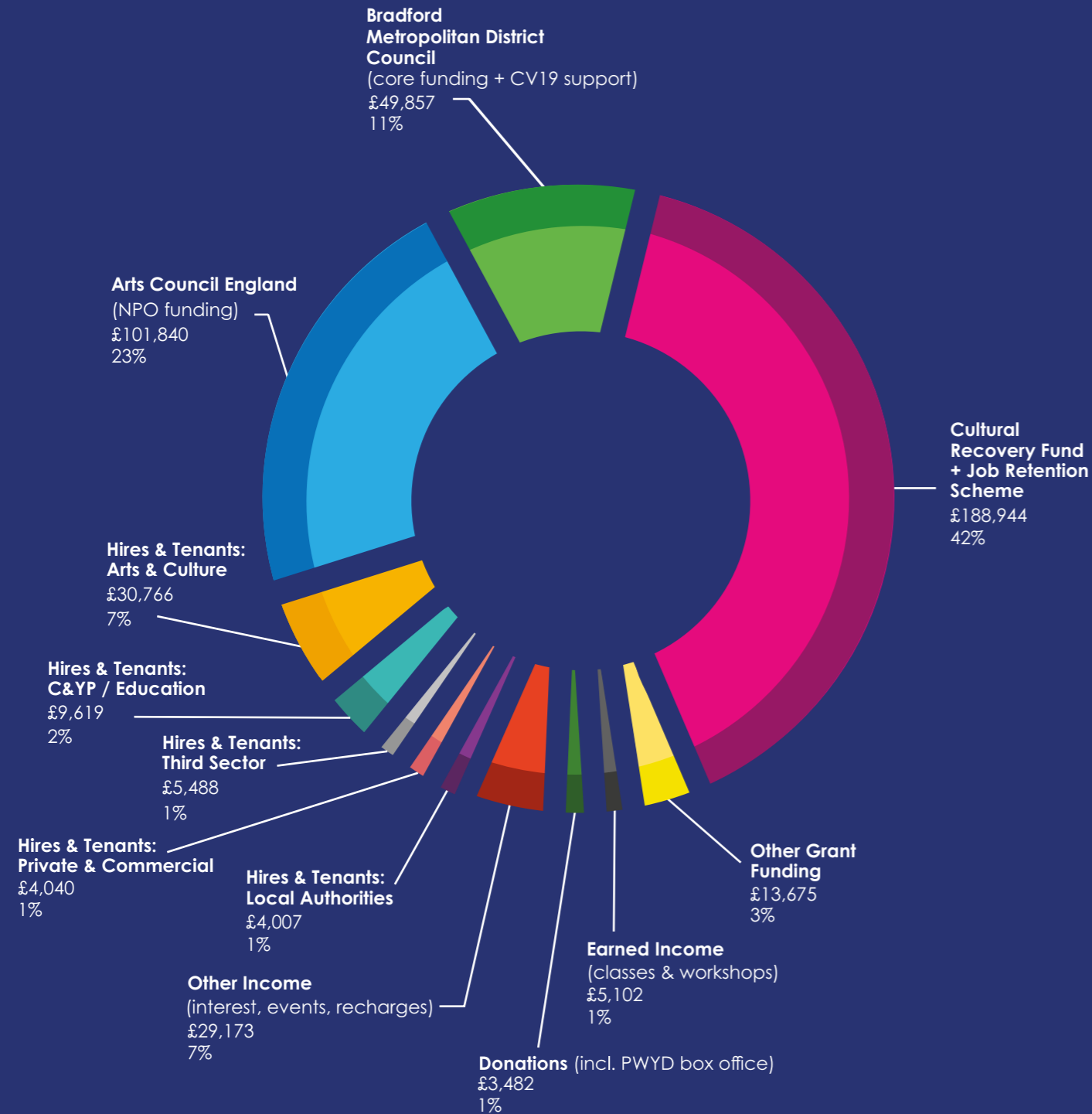
Beginning with just a short booking for one of our Meeting Rooms, we have since built a strong relationship with Mencap over the course of the year, and are now a permanent base for their work-skills programme in Bradford. Tutors and attendees have appreciated the safe space we've been able to provide during these uncertain times.

“ As for our relationship with Kala Sangam, I genuinely believe it was meant to be... All the staff and clients at KS are welcoming and positive about our presence which really assists the settling-in period for the learners. Our learners feel safe and that they can be themselves within the centre which is an integral part of their progression on the Supported Internship. ”

- Roxanne Coleman, Mencap.

# Total Income

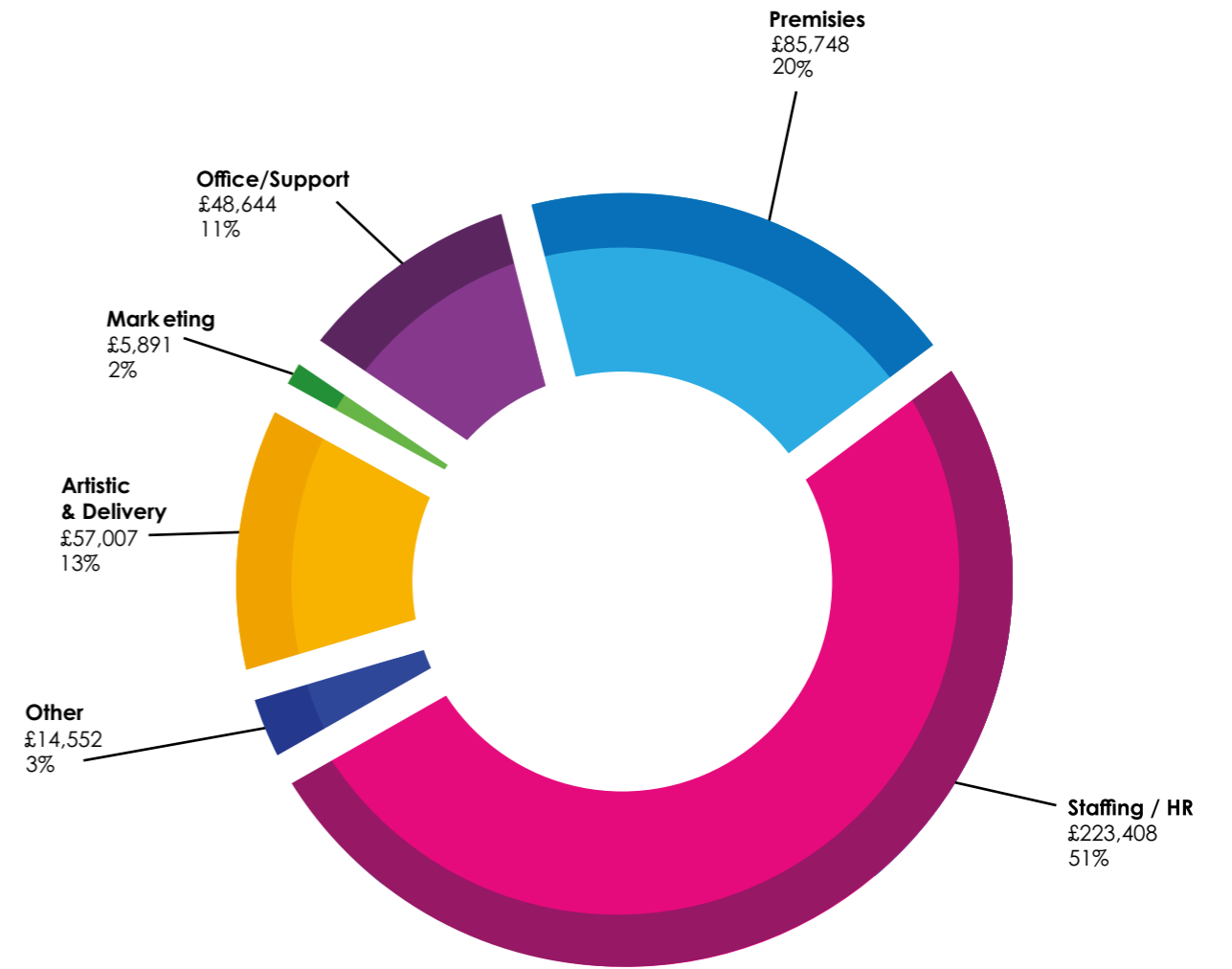
## £445,992



# Total Expenditure

## £435,250

excludes Capital Building Depreciation of £91,980



# Financial Overview

### Core Funders



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND**



### Supported by



### Supporters of



### Member of





**Kala Sangam**  
**1 Forster Square**  
**Bradford**  
**BD1 4TY**

Kala Sangam is just a 5-minute walk from both Bradford Interchange and Bradford Forster Square train stations. Find us between Bradford Cathedral and The Broadway Shopping Centre.

The building is fully accessible with a lift to all floors.



**kalasangam**

For more information:

visit our website: [www.kalasangam.org](http://www.kalasangam.org)

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email: [info@kalasangam.org](mailto:info@kalasangam.org)

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 **@kalasangam\_arts\_centre**

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