

## Including people who are marginalized or disadvantaged

In order to ensure you are including in your Audience Development activities people in your community who are marginalized or disadvantaged, you first need to identify who they may be.

As outlined in the excellent 'definitions' paper provided to CircuitWest members by Project Coordinator Dolores Kinsman, these groups exist in each community but will differ from region to region; a blanket definition is not appropriate. For example, in one community the seniors audience segment may be of a lower socio-economic demographic and therefore less able to access performing arts. This however may not be the case in another regional community.

**Marginalization** at the individual level results in an individual's exclusion from meaningful participation in society.

Factors that contribute in a broad sense to marginalization include but are not limited to: education, gender, ethnicity, globalization, employment, stage in life and of course in Western Australia geographical isolation.

The term **disadvantage** refers to environments that are 'marked by deprivation especially of the necessities of life or healthful environmental influences'. A variety of research indicates that access to the arts is a highly valued part of Australian cultural life and has significance in terms of overall well-being.

So, your first task is to determine who in your community is marginalized or disadvantaged, using the above and Dolores's paper as a guide.

Once you have determined which groups in your community you need to ensure are catered for, you need to work out what programming will be appropriate to interest them.

Are they **stay-at-home mothers of young children**? Daytime performance may suit them better than evenings, and perhaps theatre or music, or maybe something like the National Theatre live filmed presentations. Find out what young mothers in your community are into. Maybe they're contactable on the phone – you could have a chat with about 5 or 6 of them to find out what kinds of arts/cultural events they prefer.

Barriers to attendance for mothers of young children will most likely include price (their family is living on one income), and childcare. Can you offer a deal on childcare, at your venue to avoid the extra time involved in dropping them off somewhere else? If you have a café, can you offer a cut-price deal on coffee and cake? Once mothers are enjoying some child-free time they'll want to make the most of it, and socializing with other young mothers will provide other benefits.

Marketing to young mothers could be done through mothers' groups, kindergartens, primary schools and childcare and child health centres. Emailing people who have previously purchased children's shows may connect you with some mothers of young children, but the ones who are most marginalized will probably not have attended your events before. Find out which staff in your local council interact with young mothers and ask their help in finding groups and networks in your community. If there are cafés where young mums and babies hang out, make sure you have posters and/or flyers available there.

Are they **seniors, perhaps pensioners**? Daytime performances may suit this audience better than evenings too, although many people prefer to do 'arts/theatre' things in the evenings. Can you offer an early evening time? Can you program events on pension payment days, to help with their cash flow management? Find out whether it's every second Thursday in your community, and program accordingly. 'Morning Melodies' type programming is the stereotype for senior audiences (e.g. singer and pianist or small group performing hits from music theatre and other popular/jazz standards), and it may work well in your community too, but be careful not to underestimate the opportunities to program more adventurous experiences as you build your audience.

Marketing to seniors could be done through senior citizens' centres and your local council staff engaged with aged care services. They will probably know about other local seniors' groups you can use as contact networks.

Are they your **local indigenous community**? Developing relationships with your local elders, if you don't have them already, is an important first step in reaching out to welcome local indigenous people into your venue. Programming events that will interest them is essential. Look for indigenous music, theatre and dance. Involving indigenous primary school children in a warm-up, pre-show performance is a great way to attract their parents. Some venues have successfully built relationships with their indigenous communities through programming indigenous content, getting to know their elders, finding ways of involving the children, and offering a cheap (or free) outdoor barbecue dinner before the show. In some cases these nights have become real community events, with many indigenous families growing into regular attendees. Wouldn't it be wonderful to develop an audience of black and white fellas to indigenous events, helping to increase understanding and appreciation of indigenous culture and improving tolerance and cohesion in your community?

Marketing to your indigenous community is more about developing relationships with elders and other key community members than traditional white fella marketing methods. The 'mob' grapevine is better than anything else you can do; once the right contacts within the community know about and like what you're programming for them, they will spread the word. You will need to keep in mind that many indigenous people don't have credit cards and may prefer to pay on the night.