

Imagine

2018 – 2021 Strategic Plan

“Children need to go to the theatre as much as they need to run about in the fresh air. They need to hear real music played by real musicians on real instruments as much as they need food and drink. They need to read and listen to proper stories as much as they need to be loved and cared for.

The difficulty with persuading grown-up people about this is that if you deprive children of shelter and kindness and food and drink and exercise, they die visibly; whereas if you deprive them of art and music and story and theatre, they perish on the inside, and it doesn't show.”

Philip Pullman, The Guardian



Background

Now in its 28th year, Imagine is a national organisation with an acclaimed international reputation for presenting, promoting, developing and advocating for professional theatre and dance for young audiences.

Born out of the annual Scottish International Children's Festival founded in 1989, the name Imagine was adopted in 2000 to reflect the year-round activity which includes artist and art form development, working with schools and advocating for article 31 of the United Nations Rights of the Child, the right to arts and culture.

In 2002 Imagine consolidated its place as the leading organisation committed to the development of artists, art form and engagement with schools by creating the new senior-management post of Creative Development Director.

2007 was a significant year, with the introduction of Scottish Government's Expo Fund and the creation of Festivals Edinburgh. Imagine was invited to be one of the founding members of Festivals Edinburgh, in recognition of the quality of the festival and the international leadership position of the organisation. The Expo Fund allowed Imagine to enhance the delegate programme of the festival and begin to commission new work. Imagine has commissioned seven new works since then.

Further leadership in the sector was demonstrated in 2009 when Imagine hosted the Starcatchers early years project, which had started at North Edinburgh Arts. By providing a base, infrastructure and through identifying additional funding, Imagine supported the project to become a company in its own right. It has gone on to become an internationally acclaimed leader in early years' arts and one of Imagine's strategic partners.

2015 heralded a new chapter for the organisation, when director of 21 years Tony Reekie, stepped down and the organisation underwent a restructuring process implemented by the new Chief Executive, Paul Fitzpatrick. The new structure separated the Chief Executive's responsibilities from the artistic demands of programming the festival so that he could focus on being the international ambassador for Imagine with the aim of developing the year-round activity, creating new partnerships and identifying a wider and more stable income portfolio.



Key achievements from 2014 – 2017:

- Securing EU funding for the PUSH project as lead partner
- Increased funding from trusts and foundations by 94%
- Increased festival ticket income by 41%
- Successfully launched the pilot Theatre in Schools Scotland initiative with the National Theatre of Scotland
- Introduction of the Festival Opening Weekend and a major partnership with the National Museum of Scotland
- First partnership with the Youth Arts Sector through the Time to Shine funded project, Livescore
- Introduction of the Project Imagine education programme
- Developed successful commissions with Scottish artists

Imagine Strategic Framework

Imagine's plan is based on a strategic framework which starts with the vision and mission. Aims are then identified for the three years of the plan, which break down into objectives. Activities are then linked to the objectives to deliver the aims, and therefore the vision and mission.

Vision and Mission

Mission

To promote, develop and be an advocate for theatre and dance for children and young people, so more children access and enjoy more high quality theatre and dance more often.

Vision

Scotland is a nation that is internationally recognised as a world leader in the production, presentation and promotion of theatre and dance for children and young people. Theatre and dance are valued as an essential part of children and young people's education, development and wellbeing. There is a vibrant and resilient network of artists and companies creating artistically challenging, emotionally engaging and socially diverse theatre and dance for young audiences.



Aims

This plan presents a framework to deliver, over a three year period, the above Mission and Vision through the delivery mechanisms of Performance Programme, Creative Development Programme and Advocacy, guided by four strategic aims. Through working with the board, the Imagine team and consultation with audiences, stakeholders and strategic partners, the following aims have been identified:

1. **AUDIENCE:**
Increase and diversify Imagine's audience
2. **ARTISTS:**
Support more ideas from artists to be developed into new high quality productions
3. **SCHOOLS:**
Deepen Imagine's engagement with schools
4. **INTERNATIONAL:**
Develop international reach and collaboration

Priority areas

In addition to the aims for the three years, we have identified priority areas which will address strategic gaps which have been identified. The priorities are to:

- Address the lack of black and minority ethnic stories being told for young people in Scotland
- Provide platforms for disabled theatre makers and performers in Scotland
- Encourage artists to use digital and new technologies in the making of new productions for young audiences

Objectives

The aims will be achieved through the following objectives.

1. AUDIENCE

Increase and diversify Imagine's audience

Objectives:

- a. Increase awareness and profile of the festival locally, nationally and internationally
- b. Maintain a renowned high-quality international festival programme
- c. Increase the diversity of the festival programme
- d. Increase the diversity of the family audience at the festival
- e. Increase accessibility to the festival
- f. Increase the overall capacity of the festival
- g. Increase the impact of Imagine across Scotland

2. ARTISTS

Support more ideas from artists to be developed into new high quality productions

Objectives:

- a. Increase awareness of the creative development programme
- b. Increase opportunities for the sector to connect with Imagine and each other
- c. Offer high quality skills development and create opportunities for artists in the young audience sector
- d. Foster and encourage artists' experimentation within the sector
- e. Create pathways for artists to produce new work
- f. Develop performance platforms for artists
- g. Continue the annual Imagine commission

3. SCHOOLS

Deepen Imagine's engagement with schools

Objectives:

- a. Create a new role of Education and Communities Manager
- b. Improve dialogue and relationship with teachers, schools and education professionals
- c. Develop a year-round artists-led schools programme
- d. Advocate for the importance of theatre and dance in children's learning
- e. Increase the number of high quality works touring into schools
- f. Proactively develop and present projects and performances for children with additional needs.

4. INTERNATIONAL

Develop international reach and collaboration

Objectives:

- a. Increase the number of countries represented at the festival delegate programme
- b. Provide more international opportunities for Scottish artists
- c. Continue to develop Imagine's representation of the Scottish young audience sector on international platforms
- d. Develop new international collaborations

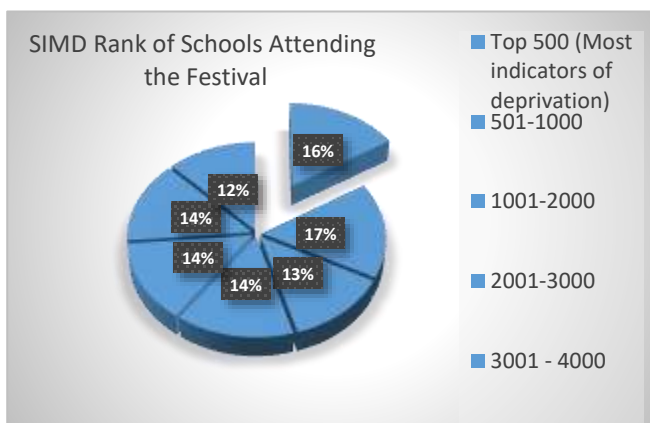
Imagine Audiences

Our audiences drive and shape the focus and content of our programmes and we regularly review our work to ensure it meets their needs. We focus on three audience groups:

Schools

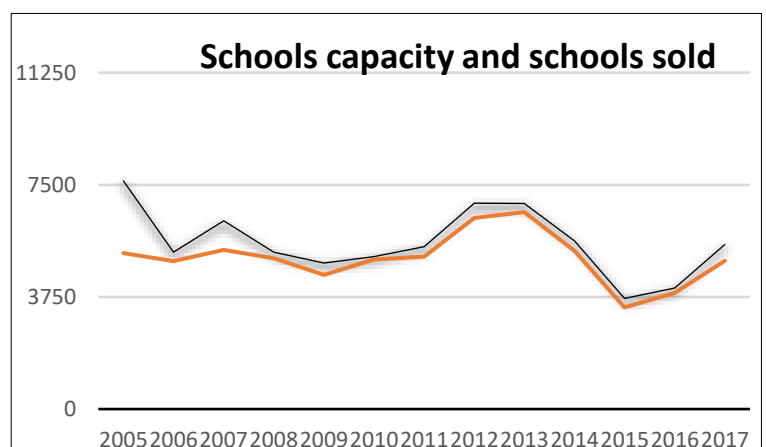
Schools are a key audience for Imagine and we have developed a growing number of committed nurseries and primary schools who trust and value the quality live experience we can offer to their pupils.

"I remember a class working on One Thousand Paper Cranes. They were able to explore really complex issues in a very safe way. That's what Imagine gives us. It touches every part of the Curriculum for Excellence and it absolutely enhances creativity. My children are now more confident than they ever have been before. I'm completely convinced that the experiences we can give our children through providing high quality theatre and dance can change their lives and raise their aspirations. That's what we get up out of bed every day to do."
Anne Moore, Head Teacher, Canal View Primary



This chart, taken from Imagine audience data over the last 6 years, shows that the festival reaches a broad range of schools from across the spectrum of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. We want to engage more schools with children from very deprived backgrounds, and at most risk of never engaging with theatre and dance. We have therefore developed links with head teachers in areas of high SIMD, have established an access scheme with three schools in the Craigmillar area in partnership with Lyra, and planning to develop further links with North Edinburgh Arts and WHALE.

The majority of schools (87%) attend from Edinburgh, with an average of 27 different schools making up the audience for any one festival. With 89 schools in Edinburgh alone, there is substantial scope for developing the schools audience. The graph to the right shows that in the last 8 years, schools have constantly been near to capacity and when the physical capacity of the festival grew, so did the audience. This shows a clear demand for more seating capacity for the festival. In 2017, within 6 weeks of going on sale to schools, we have already been unable to accommodate a total of 629 pupils (12.6%) due to a lack of available seats. Our partnership project with National Theatre of Scotland, Theatre in Schools Scotland (TISS) also shows a clear demand across Scotland for performances for primary schools. 89.5% of TISS teachers who responded to the Year 1 evaluation, rated their experience as excellent and 79% had noticed that their class was fully engaged with the show.



"I think this performance would be hard to beat. If we could have a performance like that every year, it would be a real asset to our teaching and learning resources." Teacher, Na h-Eileanan Siar

Families



Imagine has developed a very loyal audience of families who enjoy the festival experience and the opportunity it gives them to spend quality time with their children.

“Absolutely first rate theatre. It feels like a programme you can rely on for outstanding quality rather than the complete hit and miss of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. It doesn’t feel like you’re taking a gamble.” Parent attender, Festival 2016

In 2016, about half of the respondents (52.5%) were first time attenders. However, of those who had previously attended the Festival, the

largest group (42.4%) were very loyal attenders, who had been more than three times before and who were intending to come back in 2017 (79%).

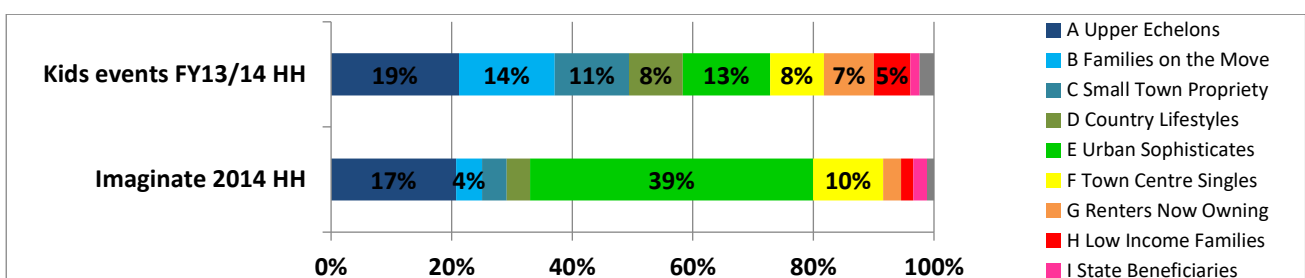
The majority of respondents had attended only one show (54%), with 27.3% attending two and 10.6 % attending three shows. However, those who had been before were more likely to attend two shows (33.7%), and 85.8% respondents wished they could have attended more shows than they did. Familiarity with the festival was therefore a strong indication of frequency and it would therefore be beneficial to cultivate relationships with first time attending families.

There was also a strong appetite for a festival that provided high quality shows and almost two-third of respondents (61.5%) were keen to see more children’s work following their experience at Imagine.

“I love going to see shows with my kids because it’s just so exciting to see how their imagination is engaged. They remember it for a very long time as well. I’m looking to stretch their imagination, and I think the fact that you can get perspectives from all around the world is really important.” Lexi Birch, Parent, Festival 2016

Awareness of the festival however is still relatively low, with 25% of Edinburgh residents having heard of the children’s festival. This survey also shows that of those who are aware of the festival, higher income families are more likely to attend. This indicates that our family audience has not changed much since 2014 when a Culture Republic report showed that the biggest attending Mosaic profile group was 'Urban Sophisticates' at 39%, i.e. young, well educated people living in small but well-appointed apartments in the older, inner areas of large cities.

In 2014, 5% of families with lower incomes were attending other activities for children while only 2% were attending the children’s festival.



Therefore, there is scope to increase awareness of the festival within Edinburgh (the name change of the festival gives us an excellent opportunity to do so over the next few years) as well as develop audiences from poorer families.

Industry professionals and artists



The festival is recognised as one of the best place for programmers to discover new talent and performances, and we have established a very strong and loyal network of industry professionals from high profile venues and festivals all over the world.

There is a clear demand from industry professionals and artists to attend the festival based on its excellent international reputation. A high percentage of delegates come back year after year with 40% of the 2016 returning delegates having been more than three times. In 2016, most delegates (85.4%) were

satisfied with their experience thinking it was either excellent (40.2%) or good (45.2%), and 71.1% were planning to attend again (with 80% of repeat attenders and 60% of first timers).

"I came to the festival because it has a reputation as the best festival in the world. It's very, very unique that someone will curate 12 to 14 of the best shows from all around the world and put them in one place. We're very lucky at the Opera House, we can have an international programme and festivals like these where it's almost a one stop shop are absolutely perfect in that context." Jamie Dawson, Sydney Opera House, Delegate 2016

The festival also manages to attract new artists and professionals each year - about half of the delegates (48.4%) who attended the Festival in 2016 were first time attenders. Through our festival volunteers programme, we also provide an excellent opportunity for graduates and those new to the industry to network with a range of delegates during the festival.

With a mix of programmers (32.5%), producers (32.5%) and artists (42.5%) and a wide range of countries represented (24% of the 2016 attenders were from outside the UK), the festival offers a fertile ground to develop new relationships. A number of international co-productions and partnerships have been developed as a direct result of networks created at the festival, such as our recent creative Europe-funded project PUSH and our 2017 commission, *Night Light*.

We work with artists from across Scotland by providing a range of year-round development and networking opportunities to support them at every stage of their career. Our Creative Development programme is consistently oversubscribed. In 2016, we were able to accept only 52% of all the artists (183) who applied for opportunities.



However, we have identified the need to reach further afield to emerging artists and those who may feel isolated because of geographical barriers, ethnic background or disability.

The support Imagine provides to artists can be transformative for their careers.

"My residency with Imagine has been key to the development of my choreographic practice. Having the time and space to delve deeper into my practice was a huge privilege. The support, encouragement and opportunities gained from my residency have been invaluable. As a direct result of my development with Imagine, I went on to work with Starcatchers and toured to Canada, Hong Kong and Macau, I am working with Barrowland Ballet on their new production, Wolves, and I have set up my own company, Tin Crate."

Hannah Venet, choreographer and performer

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

Socio-economic

Equality of access has always been crucial for Imagine, and it remains to be. In a country that boasts being the home of the world's leading festival city, one in five (220,000) children are still living in poverty. These children are more likely to experience poor mental health and by the age of five experience a gap of ten months in problem solving development and of thirteen months in vocabulary. Attending theatre and dance improves communication and listening skills, enables children to express themselves physically and emotionally and can be one of the tools in fighting the effects of poverty. Unlike maths or reading, where children are grouped by ability, or music tuition (which often benefits children who have already received music lessons at home), theatre and dance experiences are enjoyed equally by all pupils regardless of their background or ability.

Across the course of this plan we will maintain our drive to provide access to a range of experiences for children from Scotland's most deprived communities.

Disability

Imagine's festival has had a long and loyal following from schools for children with profound and multiple disabilities, with many Edinburgh special schools attending the festival annually. Every effort is made to facilitate their visit, from advice given at the time of booking and free spaces for wheelchair companions to support on arrival at the festival. In 2016 we introduced a new strand of programming to cater specifically for children with disabilities, with shows designed for disabled children and performed directly into schools. The response from schools was excellent and this programming element has become an annual feature of the Festival.

"Thank you so much. We were welcomed at the door and had front stage seats for our pupils. This meant that those with visual impairment were able to enjoy the scene with increased interest."
Teacher, Braidburn Special School, Festival 2016



Race/ethnicity

Imagine is reaching a wide range of ethnic backgrounds through our connection with schools. In 2016, 17.6% of our schools audiences and 9.2% of our family audience identified as being from a black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) background. This indicates that we are reaching audiences in line with the ethnic demographic of Edinburgh, and exceeding that of the national average. We feel a deep responsibility to reflect our audiences in our programmes. In 28 years of Imagine there hasn't been a company programmed at the festival from Asia, Africa or South America, and we therefore plan for our festival director to research and attend festivals in these areas and targeted efforts will be made to programme quality works portraying a more diverse range of stories and characters. Our marketing materials will continue to reflect our range of audiences and we will develop relationships with third sector organisations working with BAME families to encourage them to continue to attend the festival.

Year 1 Proposed Programme of Work: 2018 – 2019

This plan will follow Imagineate’s current annual pattern of activity. Activity is split into two programmes: the Performance Programme and the Creative Development Programme. In addition, we are engaged in a concerted effort to promote and advocate for the importance of theatre and dance in children’s lives. Each programme has strands, broken down into programme elements and projects.

ANNUAL PROGRAMME

Performance Programme

Edinburgh International Children’s Festival

- International performance programme
- Festival on tour
- Opening weekend
- Delegates programme

Theatre in Schools Scotland

Creative Development Programme

Residencies

- Accelerator
- Imagineate At...
- Artist in Residence
- Playwright development

Platforms for New Work

- Ideas Exchange and Scratch That!
- Commission

Schools Programme

- Artists in Schools
- Project Imagineate

Special Projects

Sector Support

PERFORMANCE PROGRAMME



Edinburgh International Children’s Festival

Fulfils our aims:

- Aim 1: Audience
- Aim 4: International

The festival programme is what defines and celebrates Imagineate. Imagineate has put Scottish children’s theatre on the map by creating a space in Edinburgh where the world looks for the very best in artistically challenging, emotionally engaging, intellectually stimulating theatre and dance. The festival marks the beginning and the end of a cycle – it celebrates the work we’ve done and inspires the year ahead. The festival programme is one of Imagineate’s greatest strengths, and one we will continue to invest in as a statement of the value of high quality theatre and dance for children and young people.

“If you want a glorious weekend of thoughtful fun in Edinburgh, then there’s no better way to spend it than revelling in the range and creativity of what is now one of the world’s premiere children’s theatre festivals... It’s worth checking out the sheer thrill that’s in store for them, in a festival full of brilliant colour, and of dreams that sometimes come true.” Joyce McMillan, The Scotsman (May 2016)

- **International performance programme**

CS's Ambitions: Excellence and Experimentation, Place, Connected to the world

CS's Themes: Equalities, Digital, Environment

The heart of the festival and where it all began, the performance programme is where our three audience groups, schools, families, industry professionals and artists come together. The festival has reached a plateau in terms of physical capacity, so year one will also include a scoping exercise to achieve a sustainable increase in capacity. The programme has a national and international reputation for presenting the world's best works alongside the best of Scotland. Attending festivals, showcases and venues throughout the world will continue to allow us to programme the very best performances, but will also maintain Scotland's reputation as an outward-looking international country. The programme will be a highly visible platform on which we will demonstrate our commitment to diversity by ensuring that we begin to programme works that are ethnically diverse and works which are made by disabled theatre makers or feature disabled performers. Programme choices will be prioritised to include shows that use digital technologies and explore environmental themes.

- **Festival on Tour**

CS's Ambitions: Access, Place

CS's Themes: Equalities

To broaden the reach and the access of the festival, at least one of the main festival productions will tour throughout Scotland in the lead up to the festival. In recent years the touring production has been the Expo-funded Festival Commission, which gives further opportunities to the commissioned artists, as well as reaching new audiences with new work.

- **Opening weekend**

CS's Ambitions: Access, Place

CS's Themes: Equalities

Pioneered in 2009 and reinvented in 2016 in partnership with the National Museum of Scotland, the opening weekend (previously referred to as Family Fringe weekend) will reach a wider family audience by providing free theatre and dance experiences throughout the museum building. In 2018, for the Year of Young People, the Opening Weekend will be billed as a Young People's Takeover. The weekend programme will be curated by a panel of young people and there will be an open call which will encourage young artists and youth arts organisations to apply.

- **Delegates programme**

CS's Ambitions: Workforce, Connected to the world

CS's Themes: Equalities

The quality of the performance programme and a varied offer of discussions, networking and works-in-progress has established the Edinburgh International Children's Festival as one of the essential dates in the calendars of industry professionals nationally and internationally. Historically, international delegates have been predominantly from Northern Europe. In 2018 we will begin our drive to attract a wider range of delegates, in particular from Asia, and our target countries of India, China and Japan in line with Scottish Government priorities.

"Imagine has played an instrumental role in Barrowland Ballet's international touring and was the launch pad for international promoters to see our work. The legacy of relationships and opportunities that came from our first performance of Tiger Tale in 2014 and subsequently Poggle in 2016 are still being realised by the company. Direct relationships built at Imagine have taken our work across Europe, Africa, China and Australia, relationships that we have been able to develop and strengthen every year." Belinda McElhinney, Barrowland Ballet

Theatre in Schools Scotland

Fulfils our aims:

Aim 1: Audience

Aim 3: Schools

CS's Ambitions: Access, Place

CS's Themes: Equalities, Creative Learning

2018 will see the final year of the pilot project, Theatre in Schools Scotland.

Led by Imagineate and the National Theatre of Scotland in partnership with Starcatchers, Catherine Wheels and Visible Fictions, Theatre in Schools Scotland is an action research project which aims to create a sustainable network which will enable every child in Scotland to see at least one high quality piece of theatre or dance in their school. The pilot will be reviewed in 2018 to establish how it will continue to operate and move towards fulfilling the aim of reaching every child in Scotland.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



Imagineate's year-round Creative Development Programme plays a central role in the development of a vibrant sector, nurturing and fostering good practice, new ideas and new methods of working with the overall goal of producing great work by passionate and enthusiastic artists. Underpinning our work is a desire to respond to the needs of artists, whether emerging or established, and to support a diverse and rich ecology of artists and creative companies working collaboratively for the benefit of the sector.

"I've felt a huge amount of support from Imagineate. Without it I don't think I would be as passionate about children's theatre, or feel as part of a community as I do. As an emerging artist I can't overstate the importance of a company that promotes such high quality work, and CPD opportunities for artists. This support has had a massive impact on my work, my ambitions and my understanding of craft and potential."

Creative Development programme participant 2015

Residencies

Fulfils our aims:

Aim 2: Artists

CS's Ambitions: Excellence and Experimentation, leadership and workforce

CS's Themes: Equalities, Digital, Creative Learning

Imagineate was the first organisation in the UK to offer artists residencies specifically for those working in the children and young people's sector. In 2018, we will implement a refocused residency programme which will concentrate on the creation of new work, developing play writing for young audiences and introducing partnership residencies, alongside the artist in residence programme.

• Accelerator

Accelerator will be a new approach to residencies which will focus on taking ideas to full production. Most residencies end with a sharing or a work in progress. Accelerator will take the artist beyond the point where ordinary residencies end and will help to secure partners and funding to enable the idea to be taken to full production. As well as artistic support and mentoring, the artist will be supported throughout the residency by a producer who will ensure that the work has a life beyond the residency.

- **Imaginate At...**

We want to encourage more artists to think about creating work for young audiences. In 2018, we will work with a network of strategic partners to engage with new artists who we may not be able to reach otherwise. Confirmed residencies for 2018 are: Imagine at the Work Room, Imagine at Aberdeen City Moves, Imagine at The Tron and Imagine at the National Theatre of Scotland.

- **Artists in Residence**

We will continue the artist in residency programme offering one residency each year. These residencies are artist led and enable the artist to set their own parameters and agenda. A residency may be about undertaking a period of research, developing practice or exploring new skills. We will seek out artists who will help us meet our priority themes of developing Black, Asian and minority ethnic stories, developing work by or featuring disabled artists and exploring digital as an artistic medium.

- **Playwright Development Programme**

Scotland has a proud tradition of playwrights and play writing, but the number of writers engaging with Imagine has decreased. In partnership with Catherine Wheels and Playwrights Studio Scotland we will develop a playwright's development programme with the intention of launching at the end of the year one.

Platforms for new work

Fulfils our aims:

Aim 2: Artists

CS's Ambitions: Excellence and Experimentation

CS's Themes: Equalities

Imagine is perfectly placed to give artists the right platform to share ideas or present new work to new audiences and the right industry professionals to give their work a future life. We do this in two ways:

- **Commission**

The annual Imagine commission has become a vital platform for artists. Funded through the Scottish Government's Expo Fund the commission has created seven new works which would not have been created without this strand of our work. Artists are selected on their artistic potential and the suitability of the idea for an international market. Presented at the Edinburgh International Children's Festival, the commission is one of the best platforms available for new work for young audiences in the UK.

- **Ideas Exchange and Scratch That!**

These are industry facing events where artists share works in progress (*Ideas Exchange*) and very early presentations of new ideas (*Scratch That!*). The format encourages artists to try out new ideas, and take a risk with an audience of peers. Both are open call opportunities so a wide range of artists can take part and selected by a panel which includes independent artists or industry professionals.

Schools and Communities Programme

Fulfils our aims:

Aim 3: Schools

CS's Ambitions: Access, Place

CS's Themes: Creative Learning, Equalities

Working with schools and communities is one of the fundamental ways of reaching a diverse audience and ensuring as wide a range of young people have a meaningful engagement with the arts. There is extensive research to show that people in lower socio-economic demographics are less likely to attend arts events. Whilst we engage with some schools and groups in areas of multiple deprivation throughout Scotland, we do not currently have the capacity to develop relationships with non-attending schools or work with new

community groups. To address this need and increase the opportunities for those children most at risk of not accessing the arts, we will appoint an Education and Communities Manager to build new relationships with schools and community groups and deliver two programmes.

- **Artists in Schools**

Imagine has an excellent network of exciting artists and strong connections with schools. In 2018 we will bring these two strengths together to create a new programme which will partner an artist with a school to work together on a creative learning programme. Based on the principals of Creative Learning, the artist will facilitate teacher and pupils in an inquiry which the pupils will lead according to their own needs and wishes. Built into the programme will be time for the artists to reflect on their practice in the context of making theatre or dance for young audiences.

- **Project Imagine**

Piloted in 2016 and co-created in collaboration with the City of Edinburgh Council, this creative learning project is inspired by and complements one of the productions in the festival programme. The children are set a challenge which relates to a theme or element of the show they are going to see at the festival. Under the guidance of an artist, they tackle this challenge creatively (eg. developing a play, re-creating a set design) and share the results with the rest of their school. Project Imagine enables the children to learn about problem solving and team work in a creative environment and primes them to be ready for the theatre visit without telling them what to think about the production.

Special Projects

Fulfils our aims:

Aim 2: Artists

Aim 4: International

CS's Ambitions: Excellence and Experimentation, Connected to the world

CS's Themes: Equalities, Digital

Special Projects is a strand of work that responds to initiatives such as the *Year of Young People*, one-off funds such as the *Time To Shine* Digital fund or specific programmes such as the European Union Creative Europe fund. Special Projects are additional to the core programme and support our strategic aims. They usually fall under the Creative Development programmes, but can fall under Performance Programme or have elements of both. In 2018, we will be delivering the final year of our EU-Funded PUSH Project, an international collaboration encouraging artists from five partner countries to investigate under-explored themes that some may consider to be difficult or even taboo such as gender or migration. We will apply to Creative Europe for another special project in the period of the plan.

Sector Support

Fulfils our aims:

Aim 2: Artists

CS's Ambitions: Excellence and Experimentation, Workforce, Connected to the world

CS's Themes: Equalities

This programme will provide a range of formal and informal support for artists and practitioners in the young audience sector, whether they are students, established artists or at the beginning of their career. These include:

- **One to one coaching/support** - Any artist making work in Scotland has access to the Creative Development Director or any other relevant member of the team, for one-to-one meetings on a specific area or for more general support.
- **Masterclasses/workshops** - Each year at least one professional development masterclass will be offered on an application basis and led by an artist with a particular specialism or international practice.

- **Go and See fund** - Artists, designers and producers can apply for small amounts of funding to pay for tickets and travel to go and see exciting and relevant work that will influence and inspire their practice or next project.
- **Hot desks** - Outside of the peak time of the festival, space in the office will be made available to any artist or small company on an ad-hoc, project-related basis. The space is free of charge to those working in the young audiences sector and comes with access to Wi-Fi and a printer/copier.
- **Feedback on work/works in progress** - The Creative Development Director and Festival Director will attend as many Scottish-made performances and works-in-progress as possible and provide structured, supportive feedback on request.
- **Ad hoc training** - Imagineate will respond on an ad-hoc basis to training or skills development needs in the sector which are identified through our regular communications with the sector.
- **Visits to international festivals** - At least once every two years Imagineate will take a delegation of Scottish artists to an international festival or an internationally significant event for the professional development of the artists and to contribute to a connected and resilient sector in Scotland.
- **Networking events** - Regular events to bring the sector together on a regular basis will be delivered annually. In 2018 we will respond to a sector request to have a regular discussion/issue based forum for the Scottish sector.

ADVOCACY

Imagineate plays a key role in advocating for more quality theatre and dance to be available to all children in Scotland. This will continue to be delivered through the following strategies:

- Developing partnership and providing advice to organisations wishing to engage with young people. This includes both performing arts organisations who currently create work for adults and wish to diversify their audience (e.g. National Theatre of Scotland) or organisations who have experience of working with children but want to integrate more performing arts into their practice (eg. Science Festival).
- Ensuring Imagineate is represented at senior level at all major international children's festivals. This not only means we have an excellent overview of the sector and its evolution, but it also maximises our opportunity to develop new partnerships.
- Attending conferences and being invited to speak authoritatively at conferences such as the International Society of Performing Arts (ISPA) or ASSITEJ. Being present on these platforms ensures Imagineate plays a key role in shaping the discussion on sector development and increases Scotland's reputation in the children's theatre sector.
- Being on the board of key strategic organisations such as Festivals Edinburgh, FST, ISPA. This enables Imagineate to advocate on behalf of the whole children's theatre sector, highlighting the importance of young people's needs and experiences.

"Imagineate provides a vital focus for the support and development of the performing arts for young audiences. The organisation has championed the creation of work for children from artists working across the performing arts and has been instrumental in helping to establish Scotland as one of the foremost producers of such work in the world." Lucy Mason, National Theatre of Scotland

Three year overview of activity: 2018 -2021

AIM 1: INCREASE AND DIVERSIFY IMAGINATE'S AUDIENCE	
OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
1a) Increase awareness and profile of the festival locally, nationally and internationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase outdoor visibility of the Festival in Edinburgh. • Increase marketing efforts, incl. through partnership with other family organisations and social media. • Increase the visibility of the opening weekend by including high profile events. • Present a free public event in response to the Year of Young People in 2018 and mark the 30th Anniversary of the festival in 2019. • Attend and present at international festivals and events. • Maintain membership and board positions on key national arts organisation.
1b) Maintain a renowned high-quality festival programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit all key international festivals. • Seek out new festivals and opportunities including in countries who have never engaged with the Festival. • Continue to select work based on stringent quality criteria. • Design a balanced programme that meets a range of ages and art form.
1c) Increase the diversity of the festival programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise attending festivals in priority continents or festivals that have work from those continents in their programme. • Include productions which tackle stories and themes representative of our multicultural society. • Prioritise seeing work that features disabled performers.
1d) Maintain the diversity of the family audience at the festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with Lyra and North Edinburgh Arts. • Develop new relationships with WHALE and other organisations working in areas of high SIMD. • Consult and develop relationship with BAME organisations • Encourage people from more diverse background to work and volunteer at the festival.
1e) Increase accessibility to the festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the bus subsidy and low price tickets. • Support freelance artists in Scotland to attend the Festival. • Ensure all venues for festival activities are fully accessible. • Maintain free tickets for wheelchair companions. • Continue to offer BSL and audio description for festival shows. • Ensure all video content created by Imagine include subtitles.
1f) Increase the overall capacity of the festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a clear strategy to increase seating capacity within current model. • Ensure a balance of capacity between schools, general public and delegates. • Maintain and develop the schools launch and connect with new schools every year.
1g) Increase the impact of Imagine across Scotland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to successfully deliver Theatre in Schools Scotland in partnership with National Theatre of Scotland. • Maintain the bus subsidy, including during the Festival on tour. • Continue and develop the Festival on tour.

AIM 2: SUPPORT MORE IDEAS FROM ARTISTS TO BE DEVELOPED INTO NEW HIGH QUALITY PRODUCTIONS

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
2a) Increase awareness of the Creative Development programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in collaboration with partners to promote the Creative Development programme to their audience • Ensure all creative opportunities and events are included on a range of online platforms, including CS opportunities. • Promote special projects to the press • Programme key events at the same time each year to ensure artists expect and attend regularly. • Promote and present the Creative Development programme at key industry events.
2b) Increase opportunities for the sector to connect with Imagineate and each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable the sector to identify a structure that places Imagineate as collaborator rather than lead organisation and pilot a bi-annual forum. • Review impact of forums to decide whether or not to roll them out. • Continue to develop events to encourage networking and creating new connections year-round and at the festival.
2c) Offer high quality skills development and create opportunities for artists in the young audience sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target artists who have not previously made work for young audiences to see new work for young people through the Go and See fund. • Introduce the new “Imagineate At...” Residencies working in partnership with other strategic organisations.
2d) Foster and encourage artists’ experimentation within the sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host one artist in residence every year exploring some of Imagineate’s key priority themes • Continue to encourage and support artists exploring issues relating to equalities (eg. gender and sexual identity)
2e) Develop international opportunities and partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend key international showcases and festivals • Present results of successful existing international partnerships to encourage new projects
2f) Create pathways for artists to produce new work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and pilot the new “Accelerator Programme” on an annual basis • Pilot a Playwriting Development Programme with Playwrights Studio Scotland and Catherine Wheels Theatre Company
2g) Develop performance platforms for artists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regular opportunities to showcase work and seek feedback from peers at Scratch Nights and Ideas Exchange • Maintain Works In Progress and Scratch Night at the festival to offer an international platform for Scottish artists
2h) Continue the annual Imagineate commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an annual commission with artists working in Scotland • Prioritise commissions which address the priority themes

AIM 3: DEEPEN IMAGINATE'S ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES
3a) Create new role of Education and Communities Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop job description and identify key priorities for Education and Communities Manager role
3b) Improve dialogue and relationship with teachers, schools and education professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establish a Teacher's Advisory Group and establish terms of reference for the group
3c) Develop a year-round artists-led schools programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot artists-in-schools residencies • Continue "Project Imagine" education programme to complement the festival offer for schools • Write a five year schools engagement strategy in collaboration with the teacher's advisory group
3d) Advocate for the importance of theatre and dance in children's learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend a head teachers meeting annually to present Imagine and the Festival • Develop relationship with the Education Secretary • Convince local authorities to continue funding and hosting TISS in their local authority
3e) Increase the number of high quality works touring into schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successfully deliver the final year of TISS pilot • Present a thorough review of TISS including suggestions for ongoing delivery. • Works collaboratively with key partners including NTS to identify quality performances to tour into schools.
3f) Proactively develop and present projects and performances for children with additional needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out work to present at the festival that has been developed specifically for children with additional needs. • Develop projects with special needs schools

AIM 4: DEVELOP INTERNATIONAL REACH AND COLLABORATION

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITIES
4a) Increase number of different countries represented at the festival delegate programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend festivals in countries where Imagine doesn't currently have links • Encourage delegates from other festivals to sign-up to Imagine's newsletter and receive updates about the festival
4b) Provide more international opportunities for Scottish artists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take delegation of Scottish artists to international festivals • Offer access to European networks through EU-funded PUSH project • Apply for a new EU-funded project
4c) Continue to develop Imagine's representation of the Scottish young audience sector on international platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend international festivals and events • Disseminate PUSH evaluation widely including by presenting its results at international conferences and festivals • Accept invitations and pursue opportunities to speak at international events
4d) Develop new international collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise new EU-funded international collaboration project • Devise a project framework to pursue one of the priority themes • Produce a new international co-production with RiccaRicca Festa, Japan • Develop relationship with India and China • Visit Shanghai to discuss possible collaborations with Arts Space for Kids and Shanghai Children's Arts Theatre