



**Annual Report  
2020/21**

# Contents

Our objectives	2
Inspiring children, teachers and families through high-quality performances	4
Working with schools to develop a culture of creative learning	7
Supporting artists, freelancers and the sector	11
Championing diversity	13
Working with schools in Edinburgh's most deprived communities	14
Our supporters	16
Our staff	16
Artists we have supported in 2020/21	17
Financial review	18

## Our objectives

### Who we are

Imagine is the national organisation in Scotland, which promotes, develops and celebrates theatre and dance for children and young people.

### Why we exist

Imagine's purpose is to improve and enrich the lives of children and young people. We want more children in Scotland to experience theatre and dance that is deeply engaging, innovative and inspiring. We believe that all children deserve the opportunity to develop their creativity, emotional intelligence and reach their true potential. Our work is inspired and motivated by Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child which recognises the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life.

### Our Aims

- ★ To ensure children, young people and their adults, throughout Scotland, have access to a wide range of artistically exciting and emotionally engaging performances.
- ★ To offer a wider range of artists and creative practitioners a varied, collaborative and evolving programme that develops and sustains careers, influences practice and fosters experimentation in the young audiences sector.
- ★ To sustain and increase engagement with schools and their communities through partnerships with experienced artists and access to professional theatre and dance.
- ★ To maintain internationality at the heart of our programmes and collaborations, whilst ensuring Imagine is environmentally responsible.



## How we do it

Our work falls into three strands:



*Family Sex show by this egg as part of Digital Delegate Encounters*

## The Edinburgh International Children's Festival

An annual celebration of some of the world's best theatre and dance for young audiences presenting performances that are deeply engaging, innovative and inspiring. The nine day festival attracts a loyal audience of 15,000 families, schools and artists and opens with a Family Day of free pop-up performances and arts activities at the National Museum of Scotland.



*Mixed Up by Katy Wilson as part of Theatre in Schools Scotland*

## Schools programme

A year-round programme with schools to develop children and teachers' creativity, including Immerse – a 3-year programme working in 6 schools in some of Edinburgh's poorest areas – and artists-led school projects and residencies. The schools programme also includes Theatre in Schools Scotland (TiSS), a national touring programme in partnership with National Theatre of Scotland, which brings high-quality performances specially designed for school settings.



*Emily Nicholl, Jerwood Fellow*

## Creative Development programme for artists

A year-round programme to support and inspire artists and freelancers involved in the theatre and dance for young audiences sector including residencies, workshops, mentoring, professional development programmes and international projects.

# Inspiring children, teachers and families through high-quality performances

In March 2020, Scotland went into lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Like so many others, we were forced to change our plans at very short notice. The Children's Festival which was to take place in May was cancelled and a number of staff were briefly put on furlough.

Following an initial period of reflection, we decided to focus our efforts on supporting our community of artists, providing alternative ways to engage with schools and families with children in lockdown at home.



Fort Building by Niamh O'Loughlin



Granny Fenella by Christine Urquhart and Zoe Bullock

## Ideas Fund

Ideas Fund was established to develop creative projects for children and their families to do at home, while supporting artists in the sector with paid work at a time when most of their jobs had been cancelled. Ideas were selected from a series of open call-outs and distributed online to families. These ranged from letter writing and fort building in bedrooms to creating stop motion animations and shadow-box theatre. Children affected by digital poverty and unable to access online content were also catered for with specific projects such as providing art material and instructions to create street art. Many of the projects reflected on the situation children were facing during lockdown.



Small Small Rainbows by Siân Bevan



For example, in *Buff & Sheen*, artists Alex McCabe and Suzi Cunningham created a roaming, comical dance show aimed at people shielding and isolating. A performance viewed through a window, it explored how people can touch without touching and toured in family homes, schools, nurseries and nursing homes, and was subsequently programmed as part of Festival Encounters at the 2021 Children's Festival. You can watch the trailer [here](#).

The Ideas Fund generated a total of 8,000 views and gave a platform to 15 artists based in Scotland. For example, D/deaf artist Petre Dobre created a short online visual story which was noticed by a Thai programmer. As a result, Petre was invited to take part in a panel discussion at the BICT Festival in Thailand and was showcased alongside a number of international artists. This was particularly exciting as this was the first time that Imagineate had programmed a graduate from the Conservatoire's BA Performance in BSL and English programme.



[Click to open YouTube in your browser](#)

Imagineate also collaborated with National Theatre of Scotland by recommending artists for *Play Dates*, NTS' curated series of digital work for children.

## Digital Delegate Encounters

In order to mark the cancelled Festival, Imagineate organised a series of free online encounters to bring the children's theatre and dance sector together. As well as providing rich content to our loyal audiences, Digital Delegate Encounters gave us the opportunity to trial online events and get feedback from delegates on their experience. 557 industry professionals from 34 countries joined the two-day digital event which included discussions with artists, panel talks and networking events.

The Digital Encounters created a friendly space for delegates to share experience in the early days of the pandemic and was very well received by all attendees. The event enabled a wider reach within the sector and paved the way for a series of four Digital Encounters which took place between Sept 2020 – Jan 2021 and attracted a total of 450 attendees. The events were also recorded and available to watch for one month after each event.

**“The thinking that you put into it and the care you took over curating the programme to make it fresh and relevant was just brilliant.”**

**“I really appreciate Imagineate offering this delegate program for free, online. It helps break down barriers to those not tied to organizations that can support their attendance. The opportunities for accessibility and inclusion across the sector are HUGELY valuable!”**

## Planning Festival 2021



While initial plans on cancelling the 2020 Festival was to restage it in 2021, it became clear in Autumn 2020 following new waves of Covid, that we need to start planning for a different kind of Festival in 2021, in light of uncertainty over social distancing in theatres. Plans were devised, changed and changed again to explore ways to deliver the Festival safely. The final plan enabled us to continue serving our three main audience groups: schools, industry professionals (delegates) and families.

The Delegate and Schools programme were created to be delivered entirely online, while the public programme included a mixture of online and outdoor events with reduced capacity.

# Working with schools to develop a culture of creative learning

Schools are a key audience for Imagine and the cornerstone of our commitment to engaging with children from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The relationship we have developed with a number of schools who trust and value the quality experience we can offer to their pupils enabled us to continue delivering projects throughout the pandemic and school closures.

## Theatre in Schools Scotland (TISS)

Theatre in Schools Scotland is a partnership between National Theatre of Scotland and Imagine, bringing some of Scotland's best productions for young audiences to schools across the country.

Theatre in Schools Scotland is unique in that:

- ★ Its programme is selected from some of the best Scottish performing companies specialising in theatre and dance for children and young people.
- ★ It reaches every local authority in Scotland.
- ★ It raises the quality of theatre and dance performances shown to children in schools.
- ★ It is specially designed to support teachers and suit schools settings.
- ★ It works with councils, touring networks and theatre venues to support performances in a wide range of schools, and helps build audience interest in theatre across Scotland.

Following the cancellation of the two TISS Spring tours, Imagine worked with the performing companies, schools and local authorities IT specialists to find ways to still bring performances in the classroom.

We explored a hybrid model to try and keep the essence of live performance at the heart of our plans and commissioned Shona Reppe to create a new show based on her award-winning *Potato Needs a Bath*. The new version was told via a short film and through a live-stream with the performer. With the support of Orkney Islands Council, 400 children in twelve schools took part in this new experiment, with the collaboration receiving recognition in Scottish Parliament.



*Potato Needs a Bath* by Shona Reppe

## Explore

The Explore project seeks to spark learners and teachers interest in live performance and is a great introduction for schools who would like to experience theatre and dance performances, but aren't quite sure where to start. In 2020-2021 the project was to include a TISS and a Festival performance, however due to the pandemic both were cancelled and schools were offered alternatives including online performances of *Potato Needs a Bath* (Shona Reppe), *A Small Tale* (Punchdrunk) or *Mixed Up* (Katy Wilson/ Starcatchers).



## Immerse

Immerse is a ground-breaking programme which develops a long-term relationship and embeds high-quality theatre, dance and creativity in 6 primary schools located in some of the poorest areas of Edinburgh. Over the period covered by this report (i.e. the end of Year 1 and the beginning of Year 2 of the project), participating schools were involved in the following activities:

- ★ Immerse Ideas Fund (Apr–Jun 2020)
- ★ A Small Tale by Punchdrunk (Oct–Dec 2020)
- ★ An artist in residence programme (Jan–Mar 2021)

**“I absolutely loved the project from start to finish. Considering the whole project was delivered online, I have been impressed with the adaptability of ideas and activities. The kids have enjoyed every part of it too and most joined us online when in lockdown. Then when in class it was clear just how much they did enjoy the residency time. It created discussions, creative thinking and lots of fun!”**

Teacher involved in  
*Artist in Residence*

### Immerse Ideas Fund

Schools were due to attend the Children’s Festival in May 2020 and take part in a week long in-school project to complement it. Both of these were cancelled. To replace this part of the Immerse programme, we worked with artists to design resources suitable for at-home learning, including workshops on Stop Motion Animation (Tim Reid), letter writing (Elspeth Chapman), how to do Shadow Box Theatre with Lisa Wilson. We commissioned Kate Temple to create Arty Packs full of materials and ideas, to be distributed to children who didn’t have internet access at home. Teachers also used some of the Ideas Fund which were suitable for at-home learning.

### A Small Tale

A Small Tale, was delivered in partnership with Punchdrunk, with teachers creating a mysterious universe where characters disappear from books and pupils are inspired to write stories to bring them back.

### Artist in Residence

With Scotland in lockdown, the artists in residence projects could not be delivered in person but were instead delivered in partnership with the teachers. During the residencies the artists constantly adapted to the situation moving from delivering online when the children were learning at home to delivering outdoors (eg. exploring moss and chalk graffiti in street art), through podcasts, sketchbooks or video making. In Forthview Primary, artists Brian Hartley, Katy Wilson and Lucas Chih-Peng Kao worked with children to create masks, goggles and outfits from recycled materials and perform in a film about how people connect. The residency gave pupils an opportunity to learn about new ways of working creatively together.





*A Small Tale*



*Artists in Residence at Forthview*



*Artists in Residence at Craigroyston*



*Artists in Residence at Craigroyston*



*Artists in Residence at St Ninian's*

## In A New Light

This new international online performance project created by Gudrun Soley Sigurdardottir as a collaboration between artists and children in Scotland, Bangladesh and Singapore who faced barriers accessing the arts. Young people from each country worked together with a team of artists to explore the collective voice of children and young people in relation to the current ecological crisis. Connecting children and artists across borders was key to this project, as was the celebration of diverse stories, cultures and experiences through contemporary performance. The groups met online between Sept 2020 and May 2021 and engaged in a variety of tasks that encouraged creativity, reflection and collaboration. The project culminated in the creation of a performance film using movement, song and original text written by the children, which was featured in the Children's Festival 2021 delegate programme and can be watched [here](#):



[Click to open YouTube in your browser](#)

Children at St Ninian's talk about their experience [here](#):



[Click to open YouTube in your browser](#)

**“What I’m most proud of has to be the long speech that I did. It took tonnes of tries but after a while I did manage it, and I sounded really nice in it for once, because I don’t normally sound nice in videos.”**

P6 pupil, St Ninian's

## Teachers' Theatre Club

This 3-year project is run in partnership with Edinburgh Festival Fringe to encourage teachers to see more live performance, develop their critical thinking skills, become more confident discussing them and in turn, inspire their classes to do so.

From March 2020, the Teachers Theatre Club moved online, with members watching a number of digital performances made available over the lockdown and then discussing their experience in online conversations with Imagine staff and people involved in making or planning the work. The programme was complemented by an event opened to teachers all over Scotland, which served as a pilot to developing a new national Theatre Club.



# Supporting artists, freelancers and the sector

In order to develop innovative productions, artists and freelancers need practical support and space to dream. They also need to feel part of a diverse and strong young audiences sector. Through Imagine's year-round Creative Development Programme, and on-going advocacy and sector support work, we strive to build an inspiring, supportive environment for Scottish artists and freelancers who make performances for children.

## Jerwood Fellowship

This new project in partnership with Oily Cart is offering professional development support for four artists over two years to explore new performance ideas for children and young people with additional support needs. While the two fellows (Emily Nicholl and Claire Willoughby) were unable to attend a special needs schools or take part in a placement with Oily Cart as originally planned, they received mentoring from Imagine staff and spent time developing their ideas. The two fellows will have the opportunity to undertake their placements in 2021.



Brown Grass

## EU funded project: PUSH+

Our Creative Europe funded co-operation project PUSH+ was in its second year when the crisis hit with restrictions on social distancing and travel making activities for the year ahead impossible. As a result, all planned activities and live Labs have been rescheduled to 2021-2022.

However, we were able to offer a couple of online initiatives to keep the project partners and artists connected. This began in May with *Sit With Me*, a two-week online mentoring workshop for PUSH+ artists facilitated by experienced artist Luke Pell. This mentoring offered time and space to reflect while connecting the artists from different Labs with each other.

All the artists selected for the Different Bodies Lab have also taken part in a half-day session to get to know each other ahead of the live Lab next year. This new model will be evaluated at the end of the project and may well be incorporated in future projects if we find that online connections before an international Lab is indeed a positive add-on.

In order to keep interest in the project online, we have also commissioned a series of PUSH+ artist blogs which have been published on the PUSH+ website.

Following the success of *Sit with Me*, the project was delivered again as part of the on-going Creative Development programme and was open to 20 more artists based in Scotland.

## Accelerator and Launchpad

All the artists being supported through the Accelerator programme were affected by Covid and chose to shift their work in different ways.

Shotput rescheduled their planned work-in-progress at the Children's Festival and focused on development work through *The Slow Dance*, a podcast in which teens talk to other teens about sex. These conversations will feed into the process of making the physical show, once rehearsing is possible again. Xana Marwick worked on a play, which was then performed as a rehearsed reading at the 2021 Children's Festival. Playwright Hannah Lavery worked on a new piece of writing for age 10+, extracts of which will be presented as work in progress in the Festival's delegate programme.

Ruby Hirsch and Cynthia Cheung were recruited for Launchpad, with Cynthia shadowing the artistic team behind the new Imagine commission *Mixed Up* as part of her Launchpad placement and Ruby developing a participatory show that situates the audience inside a human body.



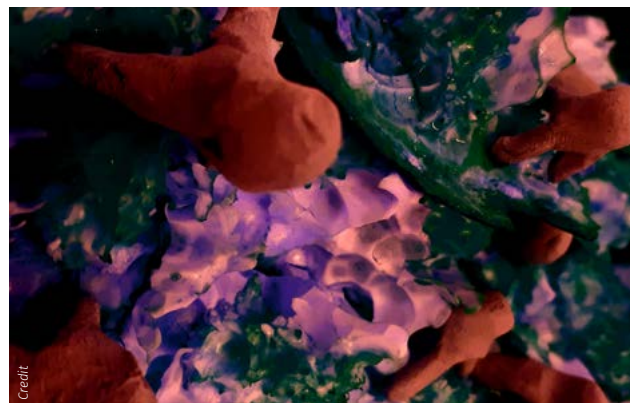
Thrown by Xana Marwick



Young children protesting – illustrating Hannah Lavery's work in progress



(l-r) Ruby Hirsch, Cynthia Cheung, Hannah Lavery, Jim Manganello, Lucy Ireland, Xana Marwick



Ruby Hirsch's *lungworkers*



# Championing diversity

As an organisation, we want to represent and celebrate the richness of the communities who make up Scotland, and are making a commitment to ensure that the artists and freelancers we support, the platforms and opportunities we offer, the productions we put on stage and the projects we prioritise are more reflective of the diverse society we live in.

We also recognise that institutional and systemic racism exists in our society and in the arts and want to be an active agent of change in welcoming and celebrating different cultural and ethnic identities. We realise that we are at the beginning of a journey and are committed to listen, learn and effect meaningful change. Some of the areas we have looked at in the last year include:



TYA USA anti-racism webinar series



Children from Safe Heaven group at Multicultural Family Base who will take part in *Where We Are*

- ★ We have recently recruited three new board members including two who identify as BPOC+. They represent 25% of our board.
- ★ The Creative Development programme of work with artists and schools now ensures representation of BPOC+ artists across projects, panels and performances platforms, including targeted initiatives advertised for BPOC+ artists only.
- ★ We are actively recruiting permanent and temporary staff who feel their voice is under-represented in our sector.
- ★ All staff have taken part in a series of anti-racism trainings sessions with Intercultural Youth Scotland, and many senior staff members have been doing individual anti-racism reading and attending online events and talks, incl. most recently UK Theatre's Speak/Listen/Reset/Heal process and TYA Anti-racism series.
- ★ One of our new projects, *Where We Are*, in partnership with Multicultural Family Base and Refuweegee, will involve two teams of artists working with children from refugee families to create a performance together. Both creative teams include an artist of colour.
- ★ We are leading a sector-wide working group on anti-racism and collaborating on steps that we can take to ensure people who experience racism feel safe, included and represented in our sector.

# Working with schools in Edinburgh's most deprived communities



Artists in residence at Canal View Primary

**“Our school is located in an area of high deprivation, and there are a lot of barriers to learning for the pupils in my class. A project like this is exactly what these pupils need to get engaged and immerse themselves in their learning.”**

Teacher talking about  
*Immerse* project

**“There was one girl – a very reluctant writer who needed lots of support but also lots of motivation to get writing as well. After taking part in this, she was really inspired and just didn’t stop. She became involved in not just this, but all curriculum areas. She kind of found a wee love of learning and discovered what she could do with just a little bit of self-belief.”**

Teacher talking about *A Small Tale*





Artists in residence at Craigroyston Primary

Imagine believes that all children, regardless of background and circumstance, deserve the opportunity to develop their creativity, emotional intelligence and reach their true potential through the arts.

We have always prioritised reaching and working with children from communities experiencing deprivation and those with additional support needs. Our intensive Immerse programme partners with six schools located in areas of high deprivation where pupils have few opportunities to attend theatre or dance with their families. In 2020/21 our commitment to these schools has been particularly important as many of the children have been hit hard by Covid.



Artists in residence at Forthview Primary

Working long-term with these schools meant that we were able to adapt our programme to suit the needs of the pupils and deliver most of the planned activities.

For example, during lockdown, we created 150 arty packs of craft material to encourage play and family collaboration, and distributed them via the Immerse schools (either directly to the children's home or through the school's foodbanks), specifically targeting families who were struggling to access digital learning.

Despite the restrictions, the benefits of this arts-based learning has already become apparent as year 2 of Immerse ends.

# Our supporters

Imagine's work is supported by a range of national and international organisations, trusts and foundations, businesses and individuals. Their generosity and flexibility, especially during the onset of Covid-19, meant that we could continue to inspire children, families, schools and artists. We would like to thank them all for their invaluable support.

## Major Funders



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot



Co-funded by the  
Creative Europe Programme  
of the European Union

## PLACE Programme

## Jerwood Arts

## Supporters

Accion Cultural Espanola  
Artemis Charitable Foundation  
Backstage Trust  
Baillie Gifford  
Bank of Scotland Foundation EIS  
Consulate General of Ireland  
Corra Resilience Fund  
Cruden Foundation  
D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust  
EIS  
Foyle Foundation  
Government of Flanders  
Idlewild Trust  
John Watson's Trust  
Lothian Buses  
Merchant City Festival  
Nancie Massey Charitable Trust  
National Museums of Scotland  
Norwegian Honorary Consulate General  
Performing Arts fund NL  
Postcode Community Trust  
The Hugh Fraser Foundation  
The Mackintosh Foundation  
The Robertson Trust  
Walter Scott & Partners Limited  
William Syson

# Our staff

Imagine is led by a small enthusiastic team who brings the breadth of professional skill and experience necessary to manage a high-profile organisation with a reputation for excellence. The team is supported by a board of directors whose members come from a range of backgrounds.

## Imagine Team

### Julian Almeida

School & Delegates Booking Coordinator / Administrator

### Marion Bourbouze

Head of Marketing & Communications

### Anna Derricourt

Producer (Theatre in Schools Scotland)

### Fiona Ferguson

Creative Development Director

### Paul Fitzpatrick

Chief Executive (until Nov 2020)

### Fi Fraser

Production Manager

### Molly Goyer Gorman

Fundraising Manager (until Nov 2020)

### Amanda Grimm

Administration Co-ordinator (until Aug 2020)

### Becca Inglis

Festival Marketing Co-ordinator

### Noel Jordan

Festival Director

### Belinda McElhinney

Chief Executive (from Feb 2021)

### Helen McIntosh

Festival Producer

### Kirsty Robertson

Schools Project Manager

### Pamela Walker

Senior Producer

### Eva Wall

Marketing Assistant (Napier Uni placement)

## Board members

### Diline Abushaban

### Mandy Armstrong

### Daniel Cosgrove

### CLlr Cathy Fullerton

### Serena Jagpal

### Kenny McGlashan (vice-chair)

### Zoe Todd

### Laura Turney (chair)

### CLlr Donald Wilson

### Natalie Wilson



# Artists we have supported in 2020/21

**Natalie Arle-Toyne**

Lost Lending Library video project

**Siân Bevan**

Small, Small Rainbows

**Zoe Bullock**

Granny Fenella

**Elsbeth Chapman**

Letter Writing

**Cynthia Cheung**

Launchpad / Immerse Artist in Residence

**Lucas Chih-Peng Kao**

Immerse Artist in Residence

**Alice Mary Cooper**

Outside my Window I See

**Suzi Cunningham**

Buff & Sheen

**Petre Dobre**

Search for the Lighthouse

**Marion Geoffray**

Immerse Artist in Residence

**Brian Hartley**

Immerse Artist in Residence

**Ruby Hirsch**

Launchpad

**Lucy Ireland**

Accelerator

**Mark Kydd**

Lost Lending Library video project

**Hannah Lavery**

Accelerator

**Jim Manganello**

Accelerator

**Heather Marshall**

My Auntie's a Vandal / Immerse Artist in Residence

**Xana Marwick**

Accelerator

**Alex McCabe**

Buff & Sheen

**Alice Muir**

Search for the Lighthouse

**Emily Nicholl**

Jerwood Fellow

**Niamh O'Loughlin**

Fort Building

**Luke Pell**

Sit With me / Navigating the Now

**Jamie Rae**

My Auntie's a Vandal

**Tim Reid**

Making Stop Motion Animations

**Greg Sinclair**

Immerse Artist in Residence

**Gudrun Soley Sigurdardottir**

In a New Light

**Ros Sydney**

Lost Lending Library video project

**Kate Temple**

Arty Packs

**Charlie Tonner**

My Auntie's a Vandal

**Christine Urquhart**

Granny Fenella

**Claire Willoughby**

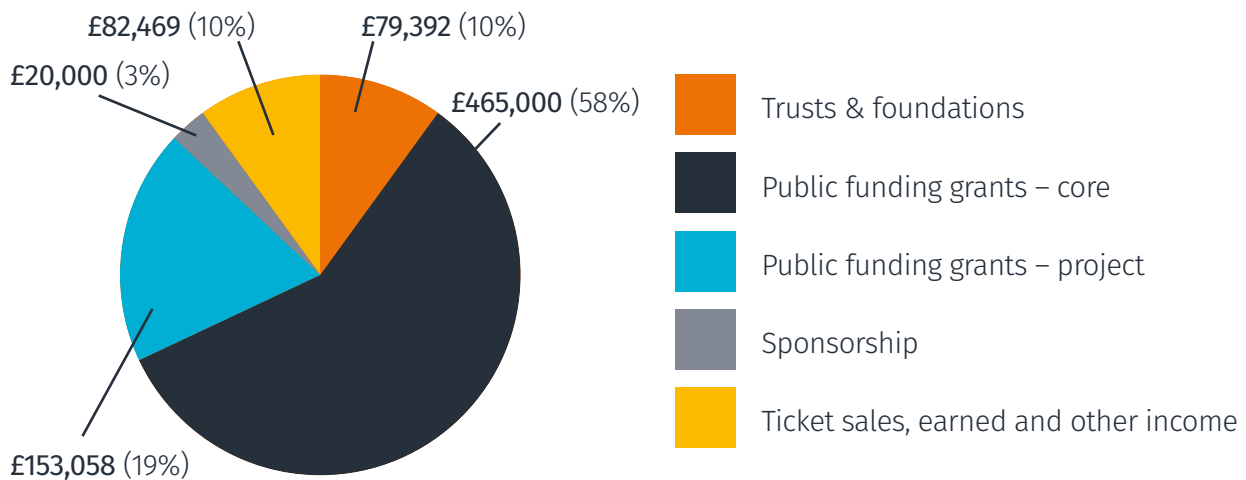
Jerwood Fellow

**Lisa Wilson**

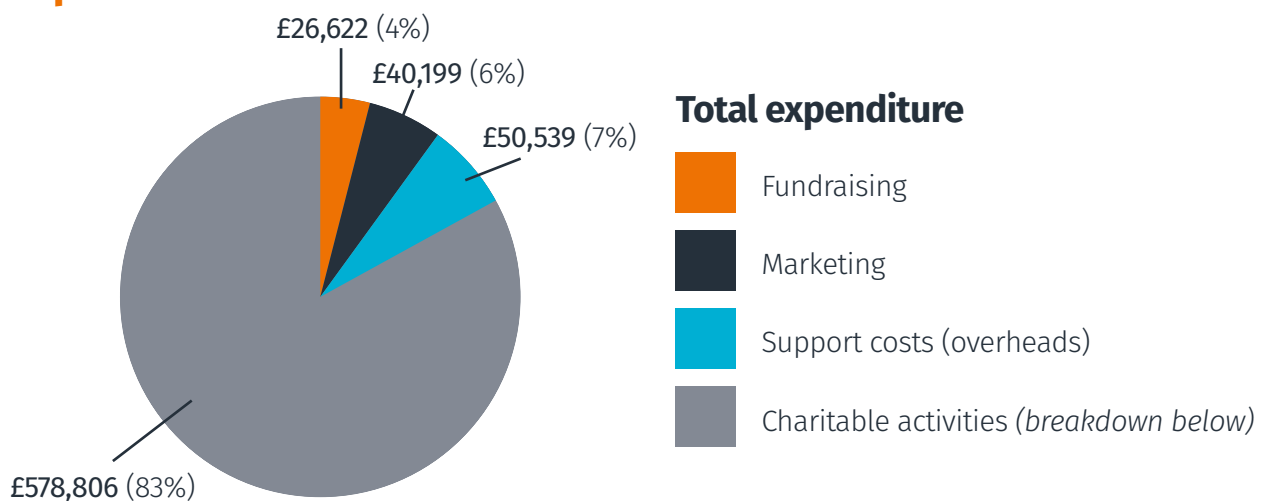
Colourful Shadow-Box Theatre

# Financial review

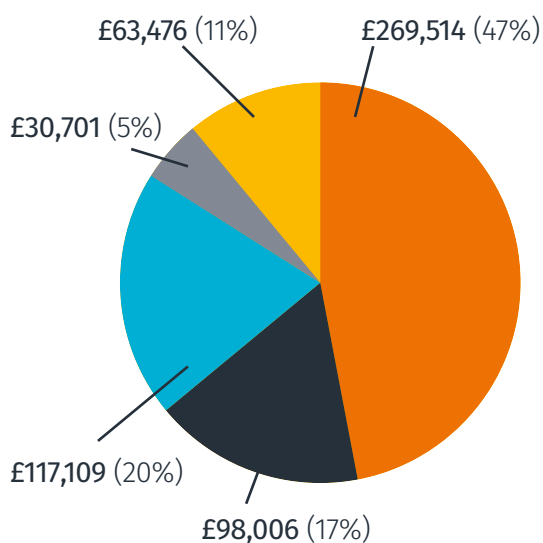
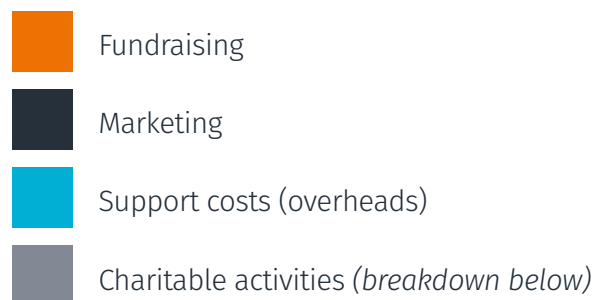
## Income



## Expenditure



### Total expenditure



### Charitable activities









30B Grindlay Street, Edinburgh, EH3 9AX

**Tel:** 0131 225 8050

**Email:** [info@imagine.org.uk](mailto:info@imagine.org.uk)

**[www.imagine.org.uk](http://www.imagine.org.uk)**

Imagine is a company limited by guarantee. Company No. SC115855. Charity No. SC016437. VAT Registration No. 553 3970 29