

TRINITY:

# IGNITE EVALUATION REPORT



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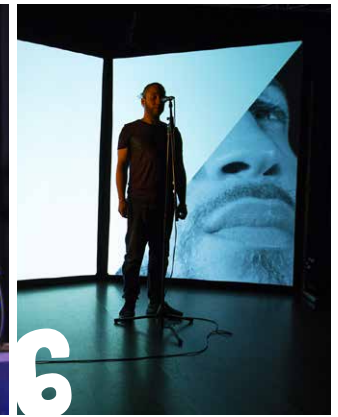
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 KHALI ACKFORD & JESSICA BARTOLINI



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**ARTS COUNCIL  
 ENGLAND**



# SUMMARY

Trinity’s mission is to empower and connect communities through the arts and ensure everyone has the opportunity to shape arts and culture.

In 2016 we piloted IGNiTE, funded by Arts Council England (Grants for the Arts) and The Garfield Weston Foundation as part of our programming strategy, to increase diversity and participation in the arts.

We set out to achieve this by creating meaningful relationships between internationally renowned artists and local audiences and by presenting a series of residencies, workshops and live performances reflective of Bristol’s diverse communities and resonates with their experiences. In the pilot phase we:

- Presented a programme of 11 visiting productions spanning theatre, live art, spoken word and dance from **critically acclaimed artists** and companies like Cardboard Citizens, Liz Aggiss, and Polarbear.
- Hosted eight local **artists who put participation at the heart of their practice** through our residency programme.
- Empowered **local people to take an active role in creative decision making** through our Programming Forum.
- **Developed the skills of local artists** via a series of workshops, talk-backs and master-classes.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Attracting a **highly diverse audience** (20% non-White British) with **limited previous engagement**, many of whom were **significantly younger than the average theatre goer** (59% <35 years old)
- Presenting a **well-received programme** (86% of audience members rated the show they’d seen

as ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’)

- Programming a **diverse range of critically acclaimed artists and companies** (82% of programme delivered by under-represented artists or organisations)
- Supporting resident artists to **unlock additional funding** (£29K in confirmed grants) and **establish new professional relationships** with organisations like Pavilion Dance South West.

## CHALLENGES:

- Budgeting appropriately for adequate staffing capacity to deliver the in-depth support, marketing and engagement activity required to enhance project scope and reach
- Investing in the Programming Forum to ensure it is fully representative, supporting and nurturing the group so that they are confident in their decision-making
- Improving access to audience data, supported by our new ticketing system, to fully capitalise on our offer and successes
- Increasing uptake of ticketed children and family performances, through additional targeted marketing?
- Raising project profile at national level, through additional marketing capacity for PR and profile raising activity
- Greater impact reporting across delivery to ensure we capture the importance of arts participation amongst target groups

This evaluation report seeks to understand the strengths of IGNiTE and inform the next steps beyond our initial pilot project.

**“Really amazing, heart-breaking, genuinely makes me feel quite shaken – I’ve never felt anti-benefits or anything like that but it made me rethink homelessness”**

CATHY - CARDBOARD CITIZENS

**“Amazing – so glad trinity is programming this kind of work.”**

I-DENTITY - RIDER SHAFIQUE

**“Joyful show of life energising choreography and memorable visuals”**

27 – PETER MCMASTER

**“A warm, engaging story that took me back to being 10”**

MOUTH OPEN STORY JUMP OUT – POLARBEAR

# BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

"...one can always expect to find a range of high quality arts, culture and community events here. From local radical histories to all-night dub raves, international acts, markets, anarchist book-fairs and over-50s lunches, the Trinity represents a lot of what's good about Bristol: a mix of hedonism and people, with a good dose of grounded discussion and action."

—  
THE GUARDIAN

'PUTTING THE BAND BACK TOGETHER' JESSICA BARTOLINI



# 1.0

# BACKGROUND & CONTEXT



## 1.1 ABOUT IGNITE

Historically, Trinity Community Arts has worked in partnership with other arts organisations across Bristol such as **MAYK, In Between Time, Diverse City and Circus City** to present a high-quality live performance programme to our audiences. In 2015 we undertook a consultation to better understand the strategic role Trinity could play in Bristol and the UK's cultural ecology through an in-house artistic programme designed to increase the diversity of participation in the arts. Our Programming Strategy identified a number of key priorities, including:

- ▶ to ensure that our arts programme reflects the diversity of the communities we serve
- ▶ to engage members of local communities so they can influence key artistic decisions
- ▶ to expand opportunities for people to experience art and culture by linking the artistic programme to our existing provision
- ▶ to reduce the impact that economic hardship and lower income has on participation

Over 2016/17 we ran a pilot, IGNITE, designed to deliver on these priorities by:

- ▶ setting up a Programming Forum of local residents and community

leaders to support Trinity in key artistic decisions

- ▶ presenting a programme of live performance from critically acclaimed touring theatre and dance artists
- ▶ hosting 8 artists with participatory practice in 3-month residencies
- ▶ providing wrap-around activity including talk-backs between mixed discipline artists, and open techs, to develop deeper relationships between audience and performers, as well as providing development opportunities for local artists.

## 1.2 IGNITE PROJECT TEAM

This project team was led by Rhiannon Jones, Trinity's Programme Manager; Rhiannon has 11yrs arts programming experience and has helped to raise Trinity's artistic profile through building critical relationships with arts organisations and developing a high-quality combined-arts offer in the venue.

In order to increase capacity and complement the skills of the existing Trinity team, we appointed a freelance Associate team for the pilot period:

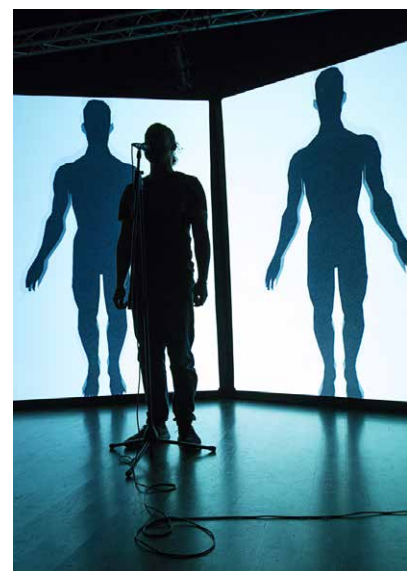
- ▶ Fergus Evans - **Producer**
- ▶ Dr Edson Burton - **Engagement Officer**
- ▶ Sarah Bentley - **Marketing Officer**

**"More stuff like this please! Immersive and involving"**

DAUGHTERS OF THE CURRY REVOLUTION – AFREENA ISLAM

**"It was amazing. Put it on again!!"**

MOUTH OPEN STORY JUMP OUT – POLARBEAR



# PROGRAMMING FORUM

“It was really wonderful to hear how our show had come to be programmed at Trinity. Our creative process invites people to take part. They help inform the theatre we make. So, it felt really good to know that members of Trinity’s community had programmed our show. We had a fantastic take up of people wanting to join the show’s house band, and had a really special night at Trinity.”

—  
UNFOLDING THEATRE, VISITING COMPANY

'I-DENTITY' JESSICA BARTOLINI

2.0

PROGRAMMING  
FORUM

IGNiTE's artistic decisions - from the shows we programmed, to the artists we supported through our residency programme - were made in collaboration with our Programming Forum. The Forum consisted of local residents and community leaders who have long-standing relationships with Trinity, as well as representatives from key arts organisations with whom we have worked closely together in the past.

Our Forum was first convened in Autumn 2016 to choose our Spring programme and select our artists in residence. Therefore, our Autumn 2016 programme and residents were chosen by our Programme Manager. The impact of the Forum's involvement can be seen, with a **27% increase in audience satisfaction** ratings from Autumn 2016 to Spring 2017.

**"Warmly, friendly powerful and outstanding performance... an innovative way of bringing the audience in without intimidating"**

AN INVITATION... - JO FONG

## 2.1 FORUM MEMBERSHIP

- › Natasha Benjamin – Local resident and CEO of Hype Dance
- › Jasmine Haque – Local resident and community leader
- › Tom Marshman – Local resident and live artist
- › Julia Thorneycroft – Local resident and Gerry's Attic Dance Company
- › Kate Yedigiaroff – Local resident and Co-Director of MAYK

Our Forum was particularly diverse in terms of protected characteristics. **40% identified as BAME and 20% as having a disability. 80% of the Forum were female.** In addition, all of our Forum members have long-standing relationships with Trinity and come from the local community.

The Forum's involvement had a **positive impact on our programme** – in addition to increasing audience satisfaction as above, we also saw **an increase in ticket sales** of 5% from Autumn 2016 to Spring 2017. We believe that this was due to our Forum, which was broadly representative of the communities we serve, so helped to ensure that **our programme was engaging and relevant to target audiences.**

## Recommendations

- › **Ensure the Programming forum is representative** - As a cornerstone of our diversity programming strategy, further engagement needs to take

place to widen representation and encourage members who may not have directly been involved within the arts. We acknowledge such members will require more support to increase confidence and experience through seeing a range of work; more capacity to support and funds to see work/ attend events is needed.

- › **Sustain participation levels amongst the Forum** – numbers dropped significantly over time, with 100% of Forum members were involved in the decisions around our Spring season reducing to 40% by our Summer programme. The biggest reason cited for not being able to participate in the same way was 'other commitments'. A more flexible membership model may be worth exploring, including the possibility of 1:1 meetings. Whilst meeting with Forum members 1:1 may be more time-intensive, this will be a worthwhile investment if it means we can involve a wider range of people and perspectives.
- › **Provide better stewardship and support** – while feedback from our Forum members suggests that their experience has been positive, there have been internal challenges around clear stewardship of those relationships amongst staff and project members. Increased capacity would allow us to ensure more meaningful engagement.

# ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

“At a time when Bristol has a dearth of good, accessible spaces to present studio work, Trinity is developing a reputation for presenting high quality contemporary performance that engages with its diverse communities and audiences in a range of exciting ways. The mix of people at events in the Ignite programme has been markedly different to other venues this season, testament to the engagement Trinity have developed through partners and support groups local to the venue.”

—  
THEATRE BRISTOL

'AN INVITATION' JESSICA BARTOLINI



## 3.0 ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

### 3.1 PROGRAMME DEMOGRAPHIC

Across the 2016/17 seasons we presented a range of work from award-winning critically acclaimed dance, theatre, live art and spoken word artists. **The art form most represented across our programme (45%) was dance.**

In general, audience satisfaction was high across all three seasons, **with 86% of audience members rating the show they'd seen as 'very good' or 'excellent'**. Shows which scored higher than average include:

- › Afreena Islam – *Daughters of the Curry Revolution*
- › Liz Aggiss – *Slap & Tickle*
- › Rider Shafique's – *I-Dentity*
- › Polarbear – *Mouth Open Story Jump Out*

All of these shows had a strong focus on **identity politics and marginalised experiences**, suggesting there is a very strong appetite for such work amongst our audiences.

In total, we reached 730 people through our 11 ticketed performances. Sales varied significantly season to season, but across 2016/17 **our shows sold to just under 62% of capacity**. The best-selling visiting production was Liz Aggiss' *Slap & Tickle*, which sold out. Indeed, dance sold well across the year, selling on average to 71% capacity.

**Work from BAME artists also sold higher than average** at over 72% capacity, and attracted a **more diverse audience** in terms of

ethnicity (48% BAME). **64% of the shows we presented were led by female artists / directors**, compared to the 36% national average.<sup>1</sup>

The lowest sales across all three seasons was our only offering for families – Polarbear's *'Mouth Open, Story Jump Out'* (25% capacity). This was despite a **targeted marketing campaign reaching all local schools and listings in well-regarded outlets like Mumsnet and Weston Super Mum** in addition to local press like Bristol 24/7 and Bristol Post. We have considered some potential factors that may have impacted negatively on take up:

- › choosing to present work during summer holiday, rather than during term-time
- › not offering a year-round programme of performances for families to build audiences over time
- › offering a ticketed event alongside a number of free events
- › choosing a show which was targeted at children aged 7-11 and therefore excluding under 7s.

However, feedback on Polarbear's show was unanimously positive, with **100% of those who attended ranking the show as 'excellent'**. This shows that, if we can get it right, there is scope for future targeted family programming at Trinity.

<sup>1</sup>'Mind The Gender Gap' UK Theatre Magazine, May 2016

### 3.2 AUTUMN PROGRAMME

- › *Holy Smoke* by Ultimate Dancer
- › *An Ecstatic Ritual of Life and Death* by Peter McMaster
- › *Cathy* by Cardboard Citizens
- › *Our Mighty Groove* by Uchenna Dance
- › *An Invitation...* by Jo Fong

### 3.3 SPRING PROGRAMME

- › *Slap and Tickle* by Liz Aggiss
- › *Ceci n'est pas Noire* (This is not Black) by Vocab Dance Company
- › *Putting The Band Back Together* by Unfolding Theatre
- › *I-Dentity* by Rider Shafique
- › *Daughters of the Curry Revolution* by Afreena Islam

### 3.4 SUMMER PROGRAMME

- › *Mouth Open, Story Jump Out* by Polarbear

### 3.0 ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

#### 3.5 ARTIST IMPACT

In order to best evaluate the experience of visiting artists and companies, we issued an anonymous survey to those who'd presented work as part of our 2017/18 pilot. Feedback from visiting artists and companies was overwhelmingly positive with 100% of visiting artists telling us:

- › 100% said they would present work with us again
- › 50% their time at Trinity exceeded their expectations
- › 75% said that the audiences at Trinity felt more diverse than those reached at other venues on average.

#### 3.6 AUDIENCE DEMOGRAPHICS

Across our pilot, audiences were significantly more diverse than audiences reached by other venues across the country:

- › 23% of our audience had low levels of engagement with theatre and dance (including 5% who had not attended any other theatre or dance in the previous year.
- › 20% of our audiences came from non-White British backgrounds, as compared to the national average of just 2% for other subsidised theatres outside of London<sup>2</sup>
- › 59% of our audience is under the age of 35, compared to 6%<sup>3</sup> for other subsidised theatres outside of London a national average age of theatre audience members being 52.<sup>4</sup>
- › 49% of our audiences told us this was

the first time they'd visited Trinity, which suggests our pilot has been a very successful means of engaging new people.

In order to ensure that our work reached the widest range of people possible (especially vulnerable adults with limited access to arts provision) we worked in partnership with local social care organisations to increase engagement and participation. For example, we were able to offer heavily subsidised tickets for Cardboard Citizens' *Cathy* to service users from Bristol Drugs Project – meaning that vulnerable adults with a history of substance misuse made up over 11% of those audiences.

#### 3.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- › Undertake further research around the demand for ticketed children and family performances
- › Expand the programme of well-received art forms such as dance and spoken word
- › Continue to actively identify and support the work of BAME artists and companies

**"Every shameful portrayal of woman, cast in a mad, comic, brilliant new light. Antidote to the stereotypes we are bombarded with every single day. Again and again and again. / A breath of fresh air... and about bloody time!"**

SLAP & TICKLE - LIZ AGGISS

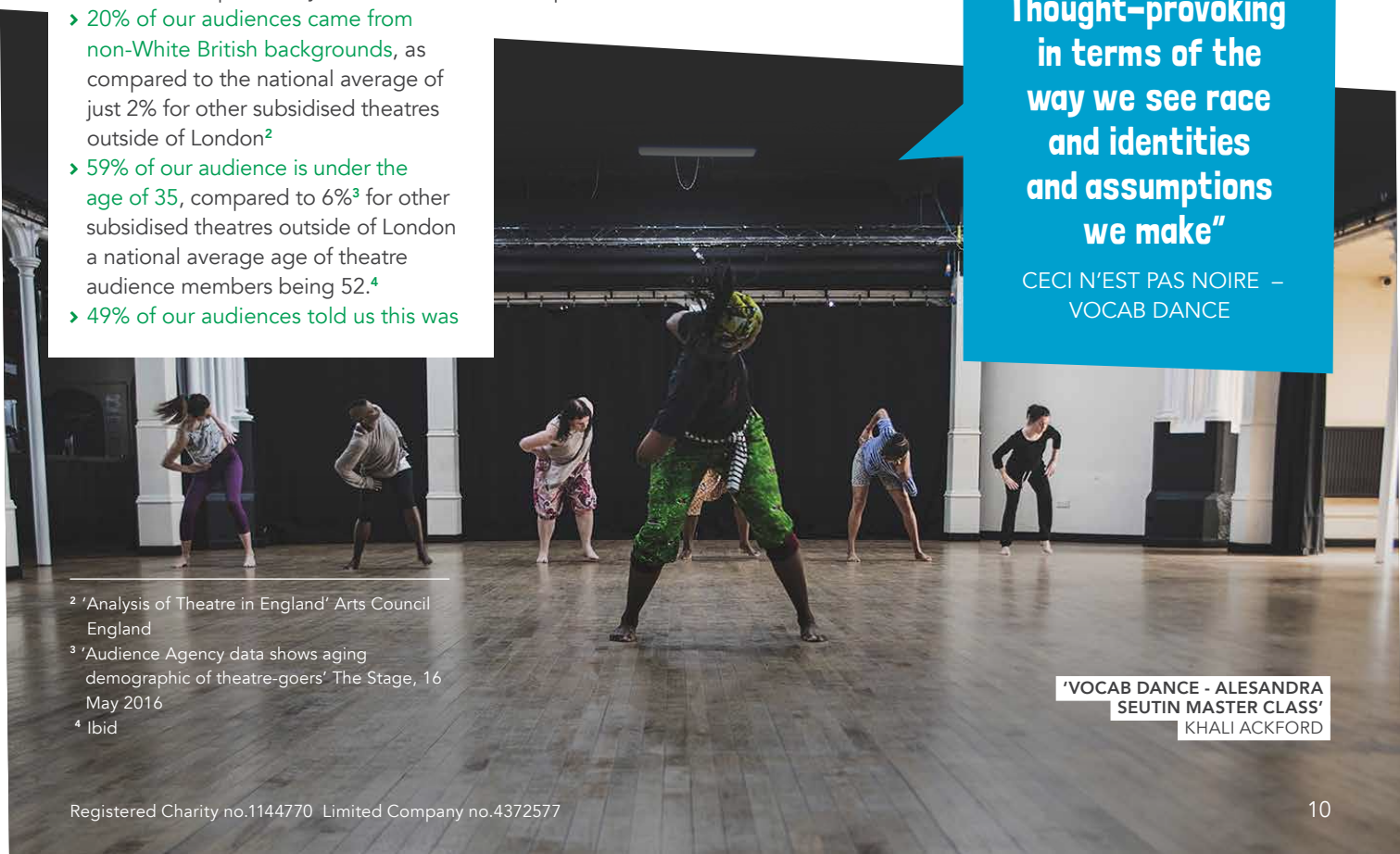
**"Powerful, a stark insight into complex identities. Goosebumps, mesmerising complicated dance Thought-provoking in terms of the way we see race and identities and assumptions we make"**

CECI N'EST PAS NOIRE – VOCAB DANCE

<sup>2</sup> 'Analysis of Theatre in England' Arts Council England

<sup>3</sup> 'Audience Agency data shows aging demographic of theatre-goers' The Stage, 16 May 2016

<sup>4</sup> Ibid



# RESIDENCIES

“We were drawn to working with Trinity because of its excellent connections with the local community, the beautiful space in which to work and the open supportive nature of the residency offer. The residency offered us space, technical support and opportunities to engage with different groups who use the building without any pressure of a ‘product’ at the end. This supportive approach allowed us to test new ideas at a relatively early point in our creative process and help focus the direction of the new show we want to make.”

UNINVITED GUESTS

VOLAB DANCE COMPANY

'VOCAB DANCE - ALESANDRA SEUTIN MASTER CLASS'  
KHALI ACKFORD

# 4.0

## RESIDENCIES

In the context of our overarching aim to increase diversity and engagement and given our long-standing relationship with a wide range of community groups, our decision was to focus on providing residency space to artists who put participation at the heart of their creative practice. This gave us a unique offer within Bristol and a wider national arts ecology.

### 4.1 APPLICANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Our first two Autumn artists in residence were strategically chosen by our Programme Manager to help build Trinity's profile with family audiences (though it is noted that this did not appear to have significant impact on our family programme in Summer 2017).

Our Programming Forum helped to inform the selection process for subsequent seasons. **We received 43 applications** across Spring and Summer seasons. The quality of applications strong and **represented a higher percentage of diverse artists/companies, compared to the UK demographic** (Office for National Statistics):

- > 69% of applicants were female or from female-led companies (UK population, 51%)
- > 22% were non-White British (UK population, 13%)
- > 25% of applicants identified as non-heterosexual (UK population, 2%)
- > 30% identified as working class (16% of professional actors report coming from working a class background<sup>5</sup>)
- > 10% of applicants identified as disabled (compared to 8% of the UK population)

Though the diversity of applications was high, we received no applications from Asian artists or Asian-led companies.

From the applications received, six artists / companies were selected to undertake residencies as part of the programme. **All were female or female-led and half were BAME.** The highest art form represented was dance, with three **of our residents working in dance** or dance theatre. Of the remaining three, one company worked in visual arts and two worked in theatre.



**"Immersive, heart-warming funny time - edifying, empowering. Would love to see more like this at Trinity"**

DAUGHTERS OF THE CURRY REVOLUTION  
- AFREENA ISLAM

**"I haven't watched anything at The Trinity centre before but think it has a great space that really worked for this performance piece' - Challenging, funny, vulnerable, different a must see whether you're into it or not"**

AN INVITATION... - JO FONG

## 4.2 RESIDENCY BIOGRAPHIES

### AUTUMN 2016

**Tessa Bide** is theatre-maker, writer and performer based in Bristol. Tessa makes innovative theatre productions for family audiences that tell original stories, aimed at encouraging a dialogue between the generations.

While with us, Tessa developed a new show, *A Strange New Space*, in partnership with May Park Primary

School, Integrate Bristol and Circomedia, funded by Arts Council England.

**Adesola Akinleye** is the artistic director of DancingStrong. She trained at Arts Educational School, London and The Rambert Academy. She began her professional career as a dancer with the Dance Theatre of Harlem. Since then she has danced with companies in North America and Europe.

While with us, Adesola continued developing *The ILA Project* - a unique opportunity for young people to be a part of the creative process of dance, exploring ideas about line, linking to the curriculum, and witnessing the creation of dance performance. Adesola worked with three schools and their local museums in London, Bristol and the US. A performance workshop took place at our Annual Garden Party.

### SPRING 2017

**Uninvited Guests** are a Bristol-based company led by Paul Clarke, Richard Dufty and Jessica Hoffmann and produced by FUEL who entertaining and provocative performance blurs the line between theatre and social festivities, with audiences joining in events that are celebratory and critical of these times.

Uninvited Guests used their time at Trinity to develop a new small-scale touring participative theatre piece called *To Those Born Later*, about the legacy we will leave our families, communities and society and will place

the audience at its heart.

**Caroline Williams** works in multi-disciplinary participatory performance. Her work focuses on current political issues, migration or the relationship between loneliness and technology. She is an Associate Artist with The Yard and Somerset House in London and has worked with The Globe, ENO, BAC & The Young Vic.

Caroline used her time at Trinity to create experiments around the notion of ethnic segregation in Bristol, exploring what happens on a personal level and to communities if you name segregation, try to break it apart and

devise new patterns of exchange? *Who We Meet* is an interactive audio tour.

**Sara Dos Santos** has been working as a choreographer since 2011. Her thought provoking and emotionally charged work incorporates a variation of urban contemporary styles and raises awareness to social and political affairs.

Sara's aim was to research and develop a new dance theatre piece *'Journey - a site responsive artwork responding to the changing demography of Bristol's Old Market*. Working with a cross-generational company of dancers, Sara worked investigate and discuss taboo topics about our ever-changing society.

### SUMMER 2017

**Ella Mesma** discovered dance at Cotham school in Bristol before training at Laban and The Place. She was selected as a future Dance Leader for the ABLE leadership program and was awarded a Bench fellowship for emerging female choreographers. She has trained internationally in Cuba, Brazil and USA including The Graham school - New York.

During her residency Ella used Latin, HipHop and Contemporary dance theatre to explore what it is to be a 'citizen of the world' and challenge notions of belonging, home, identity and coming of age as

'other' through her project *'Foreign Bodies'*.

**Back in 5 Minutes Squad** make immersive installations that imagine possible futures, taking a tongue-in-cheek look at the post-apocalyptic, the nihilistic, the existential and the revolutionary through the lens of popular culture.

**AIM** provide opportunities for artists with learning disabilities to engage with contemporary multidisciplinary arts to explore ideas and concepts with a specific focus on heritage the built environment and a sense of place.

During their residency both groups worked together for the first time

to produce *'Paradise City'* - an epic, evolving installation about what utopian cities of the future might look like.

**Latisha Cesar** is dancer and dance teacher who has studied, taught, and performed in the US, UK, and Brazil. A native New Yorker, she studied dance at Lehman College at City University New York.

During Latisha's resident she will develop *'Barye'*, a project that will offer an introduction of Haitian culture to the community in and around Trinity. This will include workshops and a sharing of traditional Haitian Drumming and Dance. This project also explored the themes of taboo, shame, and the barriers that come with being other.

### 4.3 RESIDENCY IMPACT

The artists we worked with represented a wide range of artistic practices, research interests, and professional development needs. In addition to free studio time, residents benefited from a **bespoke package of support** from the IGNiTE Project Team. Across the year:

- Four resident artists received advice and support as part of the project to prepare funding bids, leveraging **£29,299 in confirmed grants to support their work**
- Five artists were supported to broker **new relationships with community organisations** such as Awaz Utoah Asian women's support group and Catch22 young offenders project
- Two artists received **professional introductions** to Pavilion Dance South West and award-winning choreographer Lea Anderson, both of which have resulted in **continued professional support and mentoring**
- We hosted a number of **scratch performances and professional sharings attended by potential commissioners and co producers** such as the Wellcome Trust, Watershed, FUEL, MAYK, Theatre Bristol, Camden People's Theatre, Battersea Arts Centre, Bike Shed, Tobacco Factory Theatres, One Dance UK and Wardrobe Theatre.

Following their residencies, we issued artists an anonymous feedback form. On the whole, feedback was positive

with all artists who responded saying **they would recommend the IGNiTE residency at Trinity to other artists they know**. The main aspects of the residency that were noted as particularly strong include the venue itself and the 'openness' of the residency. This bears out in the other feedback we received:

**"This supportive approach allowed us to test new ideas at a relatively early point in our creative process and help focus the direction of the new show we want to make."**

—  
Uninvited Guests

**"During the residency I had the opportunity to engage with local people and Trinity staff, collect data, meet like-minded creatives and develop long-standing relationships. I personally enjoyed the hands-on approach Trinity used to encourage me to develop my practice, especially my understanding of creating site specific work through shared contacts, resources and shared ideas."**

—  
Sara Dos Santos

Respondents from the initial Autumn season were markedly less satisfied with their experience than counterparts in the other two seasons – expressing that they did not feel they were supported by Trinity staff to make new connections, and did not feel that Trinity was a safe space to take artistic risks and try new things. Core concerns



#### Resident Artists

**Top:** Back In 5 Minutes/AIM

**Middle:** Ella Mesma

**Bottom:** Caroline Williams

## 4.0 RESIDENCIES

included disruptions such as 'very noise work happening somewhere else in the building' and not feeling Trinity staff were 'invested and interested in the work.'

This early negative feedback prompted us to reallocate project funds to allow for **increased capacity with our Producer, who was then able to take on a greater pastoral role** for subsequent residencies. This increased capacity allowed us to instigate meet-and-greet sessions between residents and the Trinity team at the beginning of each residency, which encouraged more involvement from across the organisation. From these measures it became clear that the **continued involvement of Trinity staff is clearly vital to the experience of artists in residency.**

In addition to the impact on the artists themselves, the IGNiTE residencies also created new opportunities for local people to engage. All of our residents offered public sharings, **offering local people the chance to observe work in progress and feed back on the creative process.** In addition:

- ▶ Five resident artists offered **open creative workshops in a wide range of artforms** including visual art, contemporary dance and Haitian drumming
- ▶ Three offered **professional showcasing opportunities for local dancers**, including dancers from our in house elders dance project Gerry's Attic)
- ▶ Four directly **engaged community groups in the building as**

**collaborators or focus groups** to help generate material and refine their approaches to participative elements of their work.

The opportunity to engage with local groups and residents was regularly cited as one of the reasons artists applied to this scheme, and a key strength of the programme. However, respondents also told us that a **longer period of residency would improve the programme**, and this was regularly noted in face-to-face conversations with residents. This was also reflected in informal feedback from our community groups, who noted that whilst they enjoyed being engaged by resident artists the **short residencies and the frequency with which they were introduced to new residents prevented deeper engagement** and could lead to fatigue over time.

### 4.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Actively seek applications from under-represented groups who did not apply during pilot, such as Asian and British Asian artists and companies
- ▶ Increase investment in project staff, and improve integration and communication of core staff to the project to ensure residents are well supported
- ▶ Ensure the continued involvement of all staff through meet and greets / attending work in progress sharings
- ▶ Adapt the residency programme to provide more intensive support smaller number of artists over an extended period, increasing depth and decreasing community 'participation fatigue'.

**"Interesting show, lacking an explanation. A post show discussion or some prose to go along with the performance would have been beneficial"**

HOLY SMOKE – ULTIMATE DANCER



#### Resident Artists

Top: Latisha Cesar

Middle: Uninvited Guests

Bottom: Sara Dos Santos

'CECI N'EST PAS NOIRE' JESSICA BARTOLINI

# ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

"Seeing the impact of Hype Dance parents observing their kids engaging with the Uchenna Dance workshops and then immediately coming downstairs to buy tickets for the show was a great highlight. The presence of young people and their families at the performance created a completely different energy."

—  
RHIANNON JONES,  
PROGRAMME MANAGER

'I-DENTITY' AUDIENCE KHALI ACKFORD



## 5.0

## ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Engagement and participation sat at the heart of IGNiTE. From involving our Programming Forum in key decisions to supporting artists who put participation at the heart of their practice, our pilot has empowered local people to take an active role in the arts as decision-makers and collaborators.

In addition to the engagement undertaken by our resident artists outlined above, **we also offered a range of workshops and master-classes from artists** aimed at both professional artists and people with limited previous engagement with the arts.

## 5.1 WORKSHOPS &amp; SEMINARS

A clear priority for us was to ensure that local artists benefited from the calibre of artists and companies we were bringing to Bristol through our programme. Therefore, where possible we encouraged visiting artists to present professional master-classes for both amateur and professional artists:

› Uchenna Dance offered an open workshop in *Waaking, Vogue and House* – reaching 40 participants. In addition, they offered a master-class for *Hype* – our in-house street dance company for young people – who

were also offered heavily subsidised tickets to a performance of *Our Mighty Groove*.

- › Cardboard Citizens invited audiences to participate in a forum theatre version of the show itself, meaning a further 172 people were engaged as participants.
- › Jo Fong offered a master-class in contemporary dance for our in-house older people's dance company Gerry's Attic, attended by 20 people. Company members were then offered heavily subsidised tickets to a performance of *An Invitation...*
- › Vocab Dance offered an open workshop in contemporary West African dance – reaching nine people.
- › Unfolding Theatre offered an open workshop for amateur musicians, which culminated in participants joining the 'house band' for that evening's performance. In total, 11 local musicians took part.

In addition, our artists in residence also offered a number of formal artist development opportunities:

- › Sara Dos Santos offered a series of master-classes in contemporary dance, working with three local dancers
- › Ella Mesma offered a series of master-classes in afro-Caribbean dance working with five local dancers
- › Latisha Cesar offered a series of open workshops in Haitian Dance and Drumming reaching 97 people over three days.

On the whole, take-up for open classes was somewhat less than expected. As many of the workshops we offered were focused on dance artists, we will consult with groups more widely to understand interests and to explore whether other art forms – such as spoken word or devised theatre – may generate increased interest and take up.

In addition to our workshop series, we worked in partnership with two local organisations – Karla Shacklock Dance Company and Tribe of Doris – to host events aimed at local artists:

- › 'Getting Out of the Box: How to Survive As A Dance Artist' **was a free event where dance artists, venues, producers, programmers and funders were invited to have authentic conversations**, to play with thinking in new ways and to consider how they can work together in order to survive and thrive. This sold-out event was attended by 90 local dance artists, dance students and organisations.
- › Tribe of Doris hosted a series of Diverse Arts Network Meetings, where **artists from a range of cultures and art forms were invited to share experiences and create an action plan for improving diverse representation in mainstream arts**. This sold-out event was attended by 50 local artists and organisations and has initiated an ongoing partnership with Trinity.

"Like nothing I have ever seen, so glad I experienced this!"

SLAP & TICKLE - LIZ AGGISS

## 5.2 TALK-BACKS & WRAPAROUND ACTIVITY

In Spring 2017 we piloted a series of talk-backs aimed at widening the conversation around the subjects raised in our programmed performances:

- › ‘Art and Ageing’ was a discussion between Liz Aggiss and Vicki Amedume (Artistic Director, Upswing) about **what it means to be an ageing maker in a physical arts practice that empathises youth**. Programming Forum member Tom Marshman moderated the conversation.
- › ‘Art and Identity’ was a discussion between Vocab Dance’s Artistic Director Alesandra Seutin and spoken word artist Rider Shafique about how **they both have explored their ethnic and cultural identities through their arts practices**. Local community artist Jaz Picnkney moderated the conversation.

**Both talk-backs were extremely well attended**, with the majority of audience members returning after an interval to participate in the conversation. As such, Trinity should explore offering talk-backs as standard for all programmed performances.

In addition, we used the performance of Rider Shafique’s *I-Dentity* to launch a new photography exhibition, which was created in collaboration with

friend and local photographer Khali Ackford. *LOC’S* is a photographic series celebrating and showcasing the diversity of dreadlock culture. **The exhibition hopes to readdress the balance in a predominantly white media landscape** with a collection of between 20-30 portraits of people with locks of all shapes and sizes. The launch was very successful, reaching 98 people on the launch night alone. As such, Trinity should explore more opportunities to host cross-artform events which support our performance programme.

## 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

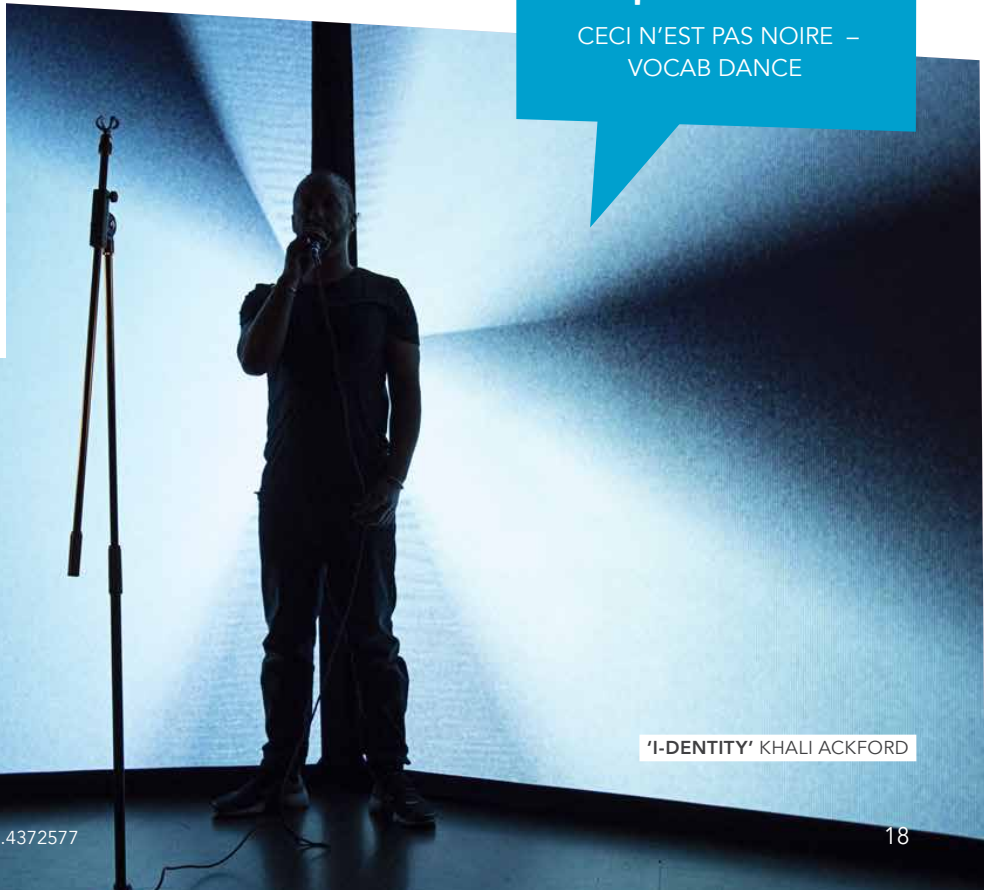
- › Consultation with groups and residents to gain better understanding on interest
- › Trial workshops in art forms such as spoken word or devised theatre to test demand
- › Offer talk-backs for all performances to increase understanding and improve accessibility
- › Explore more opportunities to host cross-artform events that support our performance programme

**“An honest story of a powerful brave young woman sharing her family history around a table over wine and popadoms”**

DAUGHTERS OF THE CURRY REVOLUTION  
– AFREENA ISLAM

**“An exciting and novel experience designed to make me think and challenge stereotypes. A phenomenally energetic performance that exhausted me just to watch it! Beautifully presented”**

CECI N’EST PAS NOIRE – VOCAB DANCE



‘I-DENTITY’ KHALI ACKFORD

# MARKETING AND PRESS

"The show is about a topic that important to us so this is such a great opportunity to understand the experience for the younger generation of migrants. Having a bespoke show reserved for our group means that older women feel safe to take a risk and go see something new."

—  
AWAZ UTOAH

IMAGE KHALI ACKFORD

# 6.0

## MARKETING AND PRESS

### 6.1 PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

In general, our IGNiTE programme received a good amount of coverage in local press, including:

- > [A preview in local independent paper The Bristol Cable for Cathy](#)
- > [A feature about our Spring 2017 season in Bristol 24/7](#)
- > [A radio interview with the Associate Producer and Programme Manager on BCFM Saturday show](#)
- > [A mention in Bristol Post](#)

[In addition, Slap & Tickle at Trinity was included in the Lyn Gardner's Top Tickets.](#)

However, other than a mention in the Guardian, our programme received limited coverage in national broadsheets or specialist press, which we recognise would have significant impact on our national profile. Press releases were issued to relevant press outlets, but the constraints of our available marketing capacity prevented chasing up initial contacts which could have resulted in additional coverage. Our IGNiTE Marketing Officer had a wide remit spanning PR, social media, print marketing, and advertising despite being contracted for one day a week. Trinity does not employ any permanent marketing staff (with responsibilities shared amongst permanent staff). Additional marketing capacity could significantly impact IGNiTE's profile and reach.

### 6.2 WEBSITE AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

Over the course of the IGNiTE project, Trinity's website underwent a significant review and restructure, including the creation of a dedicated space on the website for IGNiTE activities. Over the year, **we received over 19.5K individual page views to the IGNiTE section of the website.**

In order to ensure continued engagement, our Marketing Officer created a number of digital assets including video interviews with visiting artists like Uchenna Dance, Rider Shafique, and Jo Fong. In addition, in Spring 2017 we created our first video trailer using photos and images from our upcoming visiting productions.

### 6.3 SALES AND AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Across our season we sold to just under 62% capacity, reaching a total of 730 people across 11 visiting productions. Concessions made up over 40% of tickets sold, suggesting that a **very significant proportion of our IGNiTE audience included under-represented groups such as young people, older people, disabled people, and people who are unemployed or in receipt of benefits.**

However, for much of the season we used third party box office solutions

**"Thank you for doing such powerful and difficult stuff! Great to see Political Art and Social Change"**

CATHY - CARDBOARD CITIZENS

**"Emotional + Inspirational Therapy for musicians – Seriously!"**

PUTTING THE BAND BACK TOGETHER – UNFOLDING THEATRE



including Bristol Ticket Shop, and Party for the People. Whilst we were issued with anonymous sales reports, not having access to booking data somewhat limited our ability to draw conclusions about individual ticket buyer's behaviours - including the take-up of various ticket offers or multiple buys across the season / Trinity's wider programme. Furthermore, not having contact details for ticket buyers made it difficult to direct market to previous bookers based on their booking behaviour.

With support from an Arts Council England (Catalyst Evolve) we were able to launch a new in-house CRM system using CiviCRM open source software in July 2017. Whilst this was too late to effectively collect data for IGNiTE audiences, the system has already resulted in much richer data in terms of who our audiences are and how they behave. For instance, we know that just **over 25% of ticket buyers across Trinity's wider programme come from the local area**. Furthermore, we have already seen a 10% increase to our e-newsletter subscribers – meaning that **we are better able to speak directly with our audiences**. Our new software also allows audiences to self-select affiliations by interest such as theatre, live music and community group – meaning that **we are now able to distribute targeted messages to people who have already declared an interest in theatre or dance**.

Despite the limited amount of data we were able to access over IGNiTE, we were able to strategically target community groups and existing audiences with relevant programming. For instance, we offered:

- › £1 tickets to young people from Hype Dance and heavily discounted tickets for their families to attend *Our Mighty Groove* to **encourage young peoples' participation with our theatre programme** and crossover from our existing workshops programme
- › £1 tickets to Bristol Drugs Project

service users to attend *Cathy* to **encourage vulnerable adults to access high quality theatre which reflects their lived experience**

- › A discount multi-buy offer for people who booked for both *I-Dentity* and the *Teachings In Dub* club night to **encourage a cross-pollination of audiences**
- › a performance of *Daughters of the Curry Revolution* specifically for vulnerable Asian women who engage with Awaz Utoah to **encourage crossover from our community programme**. The take-up of this opportunity was so high we ended up offering a second performance for Awaz Utoah service users
- › free workshops for children and their families from our Artist in Residence Adesola Akinleye as part of our annual Garden Party to **raise the profile of our theatre & dance programme amongst local residents**.

Many of these initiatives were successful, especially when we were able to make a personal invitation to the organisations involved. However, this was somewhat hampered by limited capacity – especially for our Marketing and Engagement Officers. Increased capacity could significantly impact take up of targeted ticket offers aimed at engaging vulnerable adults and marginalised communities.

## 6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- › Increase marketing capacity to improve reach, profile and local and national press coverage
- › Track audience behaviour through our new in-house box office system
- › Increase Engagement Officer capacity to allow better take up of targeted ticketed offers amongst local residents and community groups.
- › Pro-activity disseminate our strategy and successes; to identify sharing platforms and partners towards increasing the profile of our strategy and its potential to be a model for the sector

**"Thank you for programming a watch that was out of my comfort zone"**

HOLY SMOKE –  
ULTIMATE DANCER

**"[An] Extremely satisfying a beautiful moment of human connection"**

27 – PETER MCMASTER

**"Excellent moving, so relevant and I identified with it myself. Go see it!"**

I-DENTITY - RIDER SHAFIQUE



**'PUTTING THE BAND BACK TOGETHER'**  
JESSICA BARTOLINI

# FINANCE AND RESOURCING

Overall we are pleased to say that our project came in largely in budget and we achieved all of our proposed outcomes. Some amendments were made to the expected expenditure following a reduction in match funding and slightly under-achieving our ticket income goal.



IMAGE KHALI ACKFORD

## 7.0

## FINANCE AND RESOURCING

## 7.1 EQUIPMENT

A significant area of investment was for equipment for our performance space in Fyfe Hall. With support from Arts Council England and match funding from The Garfield Weston Foundation, we were able to **invest in a new flexible rake seating system** that was used in its standard format for six of our 11 shows and in a re-configured state for three of the remaining shows. The versatility of the system made a significant impact on our ability to present high quality shows in a professional environment. The raked seating has since been used for external events such as In Between Time Festival, Firebird Theatre and Rise Youth Dance showcase enabling Trinity to **reduce costs for partner organisations**.

The purchase of a new in-house lighting desk has been a great investment for the centre and the fact that all equipment can be used in the different spaces within the building ensure we get best value. Further planned lighting investment will capitalise on this and **increase revenue to subsidise future in-house programming**.

## 7.2 ARTIST FEES

Performance fees, on the whole were as expected **averaging at £885 per performance**; however several of our Autumn Season performers required extra income due to extended get-ins and overnight stays. When contracting our second season we were careful to

ensure that fees stayed within budget through pre-contracts.

We secured support in-kind from Cardboard Citizens for their production *Cathy* which meant we were able to host three performances across two days and were able to offer a significant number of subsidised £1 tickets to local support groups.

**Uchenna Dance's engagement workshop prior to their performance of *Our Mighty Groove*, was supported by OneDanceUK** meaning this could be offered for free to local street dance company Hype. A sell out open class was offered for the general public for a reduced fee and the show itself achieved the highest box office of all our programme.

Our Spring Season came in on budget, and despite the fact that additional one of our named partners was unsuccessful in securing their match-funding. We completed the project with an overspend of 13%, which reduced the core cost contribution from the overall project budget.

Following our first call-out for artist residencies we introduced a SEED fund for resident artists, instead of a commissioning budget. This proved successful in assisting applicants to draw down match funding and to provide expenses for their residency with us. Feedback suggests that we should continue to include this in future projects.



### 7.3 TICKET INCOME

Ticket income for our Autumn Season achieved slightly over the target. Our Spring Season included several smaller capacity performances and in the end, despite good overall attendance final sales averaged at £400 per show. This combined with poor ticket sales for our family show in the summer meant that we only achieved 76% of our expected ticket income.

The introduction of our new CRM with ticketing capabilities means that **for future in-house programming, we will not need to pay for outsourced ticket fees** generating approximately 10% more revenue. Early reports also show a **3% donations revenue from total ticket purchases** - an area for growth in terms of match funding for future projects.

### 7.4 STAFFING

As a pilot programme we projected expected staff hours in based on other previous projects delivered. The ambition and scope of the team meant that we needed to be flexible with capacity in order to achieve the desired goals and work around the other commitments of freelance staff.

We would aim to deliver future projects over a 2yr+ period, to enable

staff to be employed for extended contracts allowing greater stability for workers and improved retention.

### 7.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- › Increased capacity for project team to support delivery outcomes
- › Further investment in equipment to reduce expenditure and increase revenue to subsidise programme
- › Any expenses agreed in advance to avoid overspend on small/unforeseen items
- › To change resident commissions to SEED funding to open up more opportunity for match

### NEXT STEPS

Following completion of our one year pilot project we are progressing our three year programme strategy and seeking ongoing funding in order to secure the future of IGNiTE. In taking on the recommendations outlined in this evaluation report we aim to place Trinity at the forefront of developing new ways to make the arts truly representative of the communities we serve.

**IF YOU WISH TO READ THE FULL EVALUATION AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS PLEASE CONTACT:**

[info@trinitybristol.org.uk](mailto:info@trinitybristol.org.uk)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TRINITY COMMUNITY ARTS VISIT:**

[trinitybristol.org.uk](http://trinitybristol.org.uk)

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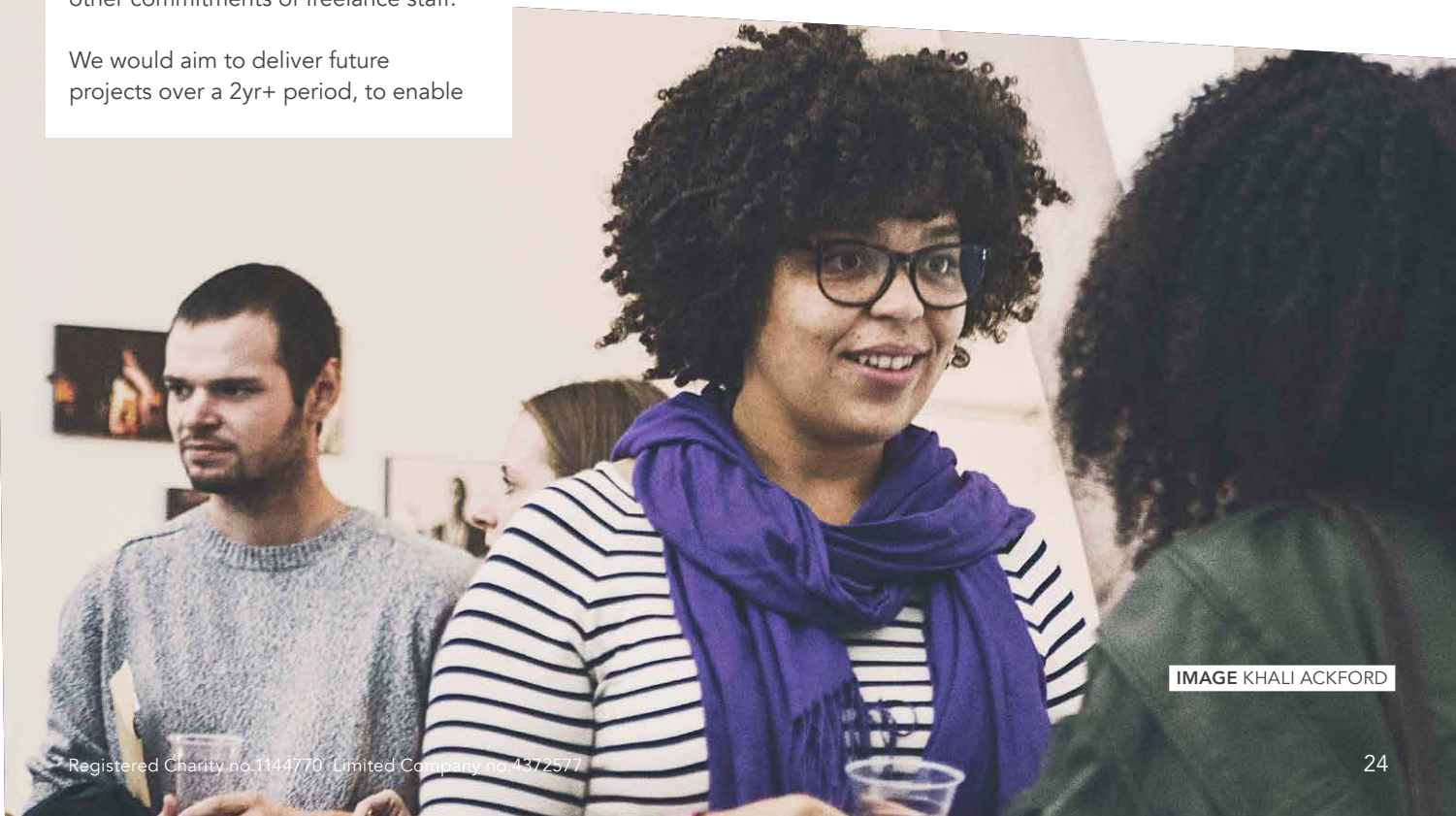


IMAGE KHALI ACKFORD