

2015-18 business plan

Updated January 2016

'acta is one of the UK's leading Community Theatres, highly respected both nationally and internationally' Professor Helen Nicholson, Royal Holloway, University of London

1. Introduction

Diversity and excellence are at the core of acta's mission to provide access to culture, and to create quality theatre with the least engaged and diverse sections of society. acta is an ambitious company, and is taking an increasingly strategic role at national and international levels, to explore and improve practice, and to raise the profile of community theatre as a vibrant art-form in its own right. In this exciting three year period, acta will develop and extend the actacentre, and deliver our first community theatre programme as an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation.

1.1. Programme

Our work specifically targets people without privilege, who are not connected to the cultural life of Bristol – isolated older people; migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; vulnerable young people; disabled people; people living outside the City Centre. acta's methodology validates the artistic input of both artists and participants, encouraging joint creative ownership and supporting participants as emerging artists.

The company's 10 year vision is to develop a full programme of community theatre at the actacentre, with visiting companies from the UK and around the world and an annual programme of seminars and debate; to develop as a resource for training and learning about community theatre practice. Central to this vision is the new capital development of the actacentre as a public space, providing a cultural hub and beacon of excellence, promoting better facilities for audiences with an increased and broader performance programme, which will link to a GTFA funded project - National Festival of Community Theatre in 2016.

The acta programme will focus on creating new theatre across the City – intergenerational and intercultural - with diverse communities, with all ages. Each year, acta will be creating, and producing at least 10 shows, delivering a full programme of original, relevant plays at the actacentre, and touring to community venues and schools, with at least two locally touring shows annually. It will include developing new plays with BME groups e.g. single parents from diverse cultures, Somali women, the African Caribbean community, asylum seekers. The company will also continue its commitment to working with children and young people, providing weekly theatre activities for vulnerable young people, young adults, young carers and school children, as separate projects in their own right, and integrated into our heritage and community theatre programme.

In 2016-18 the company has ambitions to further develop its Foundation initiative, with a new strategy aimed at increasing first-time job opportunities in the sector for people from under-represented sections of the community, creating a raft of new 'primary contact' projects for new participants, and sharing learning across the participatory theatre sector through the seminar programme.

1.2 actacentre development

The extension and development of the acta centre facilities was carried out in spring /summer 15, with the centre reopening at the beginning of the autumn term, with a celebratory launch event which coincided with the 30 years anniversary of the company.

The improvements to the existing building have created a high quality, fit for purpose resource, which is supporting acta's work at a local level, creating an attractive and welcoming facility, with a new bar/cafe area to encourage attendance, and the development of the building as a cultural hub.

As planned, the addition of the new performance space is enabling the company to programme more performances, without affecting weekly activities. The addition of backstage dressing rooms and toilets has improved the quality of acta's in-house shows, and has made the existing theatre viable for visiting companies. In Autumn 2015, acta hosted a visit from Irish community theatre company Upstate Theatre.

The new building is now more prominent in the local landscape, a high quality building tying in directly to the newly regenerated South Street Park area, placing a high-profile, well-resourced cultural hub right at the centre of this disadvantaged area.

The newly extended centre has enabled acta to increase its offer to local people, both in the range, quantity and quality of participatory arts activities and with an enhanced performance programme. The new bar and extended foyer has greatly improved the audience experience, and is attracting more people to see performances. Access has been improved, with new level entrances from Palmerston Street, and increased front of house seating for older audience members waiting to enter the theatre together with improved cloakroom facilities. For both audiences and participants, the new acta centre has enhanced the quality of the community theatre experience, both in the local area and supporting work across the City and beyond.

2. Community Theatre and the cycle of engagement

acta has an international reputation for excellence in participatory practice, and the company is playing an increasingly strategic role in the examination and development of community theatre methodologies.

acta's work enables people to see theatre in a different way, specifically targeting non-theatre goers from the least engaged sections of the community, as well as introducing quality community theatre to existing theatre audiences. acta makes new theatre which connects to these audiences, theatre which is relevant to, and reflective of, their culture and life experiences.

'Hard hitting, reality theatre presented with passion, elegance and a real sense of the self.' Theatre Bristol review, *Listen to our Story*, Oct 13

This connection is only achievable because of acta's unique methodology, focussing on a devising practice that allows the natural voice of participants to resonate through every performance. Participants are able to use their own experiences, imaginations, their own words to connect directly with audiences; encouraged in this process by skilful facilitation, and honed into quality theatre by professional writing and direction. The acta process is one where the participant and professional hold joint status with mutual respect and through this interaction remarkable theatre is created.

2.1 Cycle of engagement

acta works to two key strategic objectives:-

To develop new audiences for theatre in Bristol.

To initiate and deliver projects that enable new participants and communities to get involved.

These two objectives are most effectively considered together, as described by the acta Cycle of Engagement. In order to encourage people to get involved in theatre, acta provides opportunities for people to engage, develop and progress in community theatre at three different levels, providing progression routes through:-

Primary contact - a range of projects where large numbers of people access arts for the first time, targeting specific groups in neighbourhoods of least engagement e.g. the *Get Together* intergenerational & intercultural project in Bedminster/Redcliffe.

In 2016-18, acta is to increase the number of 'primary contact' projects it undertakes, as part of a conscious strategy to improve access to theatre in areas of least engagement in the City. This strategy is developed in parallel with developments to our Foundation Initiative (see under 4.)

Development projects - on-going opportunities for individuals to develop skills through creating theatre/arts in their communities, including adult community theatre groups, youth theatre network, work with young carers, refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants.

Community theatre - participants who wish to develop their skills further, and who are prepared to commit to a greater level of involvement, become part of acta's Community Touring strategy. Projects bring together experienced acta community performers to devise and tour high quality, original, relevant and affordable theatre to disadvantaged areas where there is no access to, or tradition of theatre-going; developing a new audience for theatre.

As more people access theatre as audiences, through this touring strategy, they feel more comfortable in taking up opportunities to engage with acta "primary contact" projects in their neighbourhood, thus bringing them into the Cycle of Engagement. This process also ensures a fluidity of participation, with participants moving through acta, accessing other arts opportunities.

acta has now established *acta company* – an ongoing group of community performers which will create several devised performances each year, to further develop skills, experiment with new forms of theatre, and give the opportunity for participants to develop skills in directing, writing, design etc.

2.2 Community Theatre objectives for 2015 – 18 are to:-

- produce at least two touring (Bristol) community theatre shows annually, targeted at working class audiences in areas of least engagement. In 2015-16 these plays were *Selfies*, which toured Bristol neighbourhoods in May/June 2015, and *The Crossroads*, touring primary schools in areas of least engagement in the City Jan-March 2016
- develop the extended acta centre, a public space that democratically engages local people of all ages, a theatre venue and local community hub for families, disabled and isolated older people, targeting intercultural & intergenerational audiences.
- deliver an enhanced programme of performances, to include at least 10 original acta shows annually, and bringing the best community theatre from visiting companies nationally and internationally.
- deliver projects in partnership & collaboration with a range of organisations to engage new culturally diverse groups in theatre. To prioritise and respond positively to enquiries from diverse communities e.g. parents' esol groups, asylum-seekers & refugees, who would not normally engage in theatre.

- create performances with schools and young people to attract parents, families and friends to see theatre for the first time, breaking down preconceptions and prejudice about theatre amongst the least engaged.
- boost acta's national profile, and further develop internationally, through development of the acta Foundation programme, to include quarterly seminars and the National Festival of Community Theatre in 2016.

Key community theatre initiatives 2016-18

Yusuf Can't Talk – National tour to conferences and Somali Community Groups (funded through Wellcome Trust)

Sailors' Tales – arts and heritage play - 10 performances in Bedminster and Avonmouth (funded HLF)

Gas Girls – re-work and regional tour (2017-18)

3. Children and young people

acta believes that engaging children and young people without privilege in theatre and the arts relevant to them and their communities is crucial to establishing them as the confident artists and audiences of a diverse 21st century Bristol. This commitment to making theatre with children and young people in areas of least engagement across the City is at the heart of our methodology to regenerate communities and is central to our cycle of engagement.

acta will develop further the range of engagement opportunities:

- acta youth theatres will focus on young people with the greatest needs, including young carers, NEET, with mental health needs, BME, socially isolated, disabled, or living in poverty;
- Inter-generational initiatives will bring neighbours together for the first time, eg isolated older people and children, or families engaging in the community choir;
- Family projects will engage new parents in the arts, through their children, such as Somali mums with their teenage daughters.

acta will continue to invest in young people primarily as theatre-makers, and our process-based methodology is designed to support this aim. All young people engaged in acta projects are enabled to create new theatre through the devising process, where acta workers facilitate creative input, supporting young people's imaginations and contributions with professional skills and experience, whilst ensuring that young people retain ownership of their work. Through this process young people learn what is possible, develop techniques, performance skills, and how to make the most of technical resources. Most of all, they are able to use their own words, their own experiences, and reflect their own lives through creating new work.

This process not only creates new, fresh and constantly surprising work, but also encourages children and young people to embrace theatre and develop a sense of belonging, and in many cases, to proceed to further education, or a career in the arts. Many young people also progress into other acta opportunities e.g.: Phoenix Theatre (young adults), intergenerational theatre (Sailors' Tales in 15/16) and our touring community theatre company.

We will continue to engage new children and young people on a weekly basis, as members of our youth theatre network, and through schools outreach projects, intergenerational community projects and other projects. Initiatives will be targeted at the most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people in the City, including extending our commitment to work with young carers and vulnerable young adults.

New initiatives

acta is working in partnership with Felix Rd Adventure Playground to lead a new theatre group for children aged from 8-13 years, to run as a pilot from Jan-July 2016. In Southmead, following local requests, acta has established a new Kids Theatre group for years 5-6 (9-11 years), to devise a new play for July 2016. acta is also leading three weekly groups for children and young people in the Bedminster area as part of the Get Together programme.

From September 2016, acta is planning a new raft of afterschool theatre projects with primary school children in disadvantaged areas of Bristol, including Hartcliffe/Withywood, Avonmouth, and Central/East Bristol (developing partnership with Hannah More School)

In addition, acta will develop further our support of schools in areas of least engagement, including an offer to produce an annual schools touring show, based on the success of this initiative over the last two years.

The artistic plan makes provision for:

- five / six weekly youth theatre groups, each devising at least one performance per year;
- a series of outreach and partnership projects with local schools in North Bristol, through the *Sailors Tales* project;
- annual schools' tours, taking devised theatre by adult participants into school settings.

With the plans to increase the number and variety of performances at the actacentre, children and young people will also have increased opportunities to experience theatre at a local and affordable level. Developing the actacentre as a public space with a sense of belonging in local people of all ages, enables young participants and their families to engage as audiences too, and brings fresh opportunities to bring new groups of people together through theatre and the arts.

3.1 Youth theatre provision

acta will provide a youth theatre network for vulnerable and disengaged young people across the City, working actively with excluded young people, to engage them and keep them engaged and involved, and working closely with a number of partners in the voluntary and statutory sector to refer vulnerable young people who cannot access arts elsewhere.

All through young people's engagement, great emphasis is placed on encouraging and valuing their creative input; acta often invests hugely into young performers, nurturing and supporting the development of their skills over a number of years, and creating specific frameworks where individual talents can be used to best effect.

Through their involvement, young people will:

- develop an appreciation of theatre & the arts, acquire new skills & experiences and broaden horizons;
- improve self-confidence, self-esteem, motivation & communication skills;
- improve self-awareness, including creativity;
- make informed choices about education, training and future employment progression (including creative industries.)

In 2015-16, the youth theatre network comprises:

- Phoenix Theatre (young adults aged 16-25)
- Bedminster Youth Theatre (11-15 yrs)

- Who Cares Youth theatre (young carers 10-16 years)

3.2 Youth arts awards

'Excellent support from acta staff... your approach is clearly successful – carry on this good work'
 Youth Arts Award Moderator March 2014

acta has embraced Youth Arts Awards since its inception, and to date the company has assisted over 100 vulnerable young people to gain 135 Youth Arts Awards, including eight Gold Awards. Ruth Jones from Arts Awards frequently uses acta as an example of good practice in YAA delivery in the South West. Three acta facilitators are YAA advisers to Gold level, and young people within our youth theatre network are encouraged to take up YAA's. acta is committed to this provision, and will ensure that this support can continue in future years.

3.3 Schools

acta works in partnership with schools in less engaged and disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Bristol on a wide range of projects. In 2015-18 this will include:

- *After-school* – leading after-school projects in local schools, often providing the first experience of drama/theatre for children (*Sailors Tales, Blood on the Coal*)
- *Outreach* – taster sessions for local school children within the school day to encourage them to access on-going acta workshops;
- Intensive community arts collaborations e.g. *Sailors Tales, Blood on the Coal*.
- Intergenerational community arts, linking with older people at the actacentre.
- Touring shows, with adult performers, to provide relevant theatre to appeal to schools / college audiences, but also to develop awareness of cultural diversity – re-telling stories from different cultures, tackling hidden and unpopular issues e.g. *Listen to our Story* was created and performed by asylum seekers. Annual touring schools' shows will include plays by an intercultural adult group, and another by older people.

3.4 Partnerships

In addition to our arts partners, acta has long-standing partnerships with diverse voluntary and statutory organisations to ensure we work with the wide diversity of young people in Bristol and surrounding area. Partners include Autism Independence, Prince's Trust, Crossroads Carers Centre (WSM), Princess Royal Trust, Barnardos, Bristol City Council, primary and secondary schools.

4. acta Foundation

acta Foundation provides work-based learning opportunities for young adults embarking on a career in community theatre. This programme has been successfully piloted in 2012-14, and will remain central to acta's programme. It includes an on-going seminar programme for UK practitioners and students. This initiative includes the appointment of a Foundation Production Assistant worker in Sept 2015, a further Admin Assistant in September 2016, both to be full-time, fixed appointments.

Following extensive evaluation of the first three years, acta views the Foundation initiative as key to sustaining both the company and the sector, and is planning to develop and extend the company's investment: increasing core support for staff on the programme; developing a new generation of workers; creating more access through 'primary contact' projects; increasing opportunities to share learning and improve practice in the sector. We intend to do this by:

1 Enriching the workforce - acta will develop an existing initiative to identify and provide entry level jobs for up to sixteen new workers from under-represented backgrounds to develop skills and enter the field through initial employment at acta.

2 Extending the programme - These new workers, mentored and supported by experienced acta core staff team from September 16, will co-deliver a participatory programme to engage new participants from diverse and marginalised communities in the creation and performance of original theatre.

3 Sharing learning and practice - Learning will be shared through acta's quarterly seminar programme, conference/festival in 2019-20; encouraging touring at national/international levels; staff exchange.

Key to this development is our intention to engage up to sixteen new workers from communities under-represented in the arts, including those without a formal education background. There will be a range of job opportunities, from one to three days per week, or shorter, intensive opportunities on specific projects. All Foundation workers will have regular training sessions, and meetings with mentors.

acta will support this new generation of facilitators, who in turn will bring to the company and the sector new energy, knowledge, skills and solutions which reflect 21st century cultures, helping to create new styles and forms of practice.

These Foundation facilitators will help to deliver an extended programme of 'primary contact' projects engaging new participants from marginalised communities: migrant families resident in Bristol (eg Somali, African, Eastern European); isolated older people; vulnerable young people; people living in areas of high need. Through the four year programme, participants will have further opportunities to develop skills, and create new relevant theatre to tour to communities lacking arts access, encouraging audience members to engage as participants in new projects, thus completing the 'cycle of engagement' at the heart of acta's work.

The sharing of learning at the heart of this programme will help to improve Community Theatre practice, raise profile and inform the creation of more and better opportunities for participants across the UK.

In this way, Foundation will become increasingly central to acta's offer. acta is looking for investment to help support this new development, including bids to Paul Hamlyn Foundation and other charities.

5. Programme Summary

5.1 National & International Community Theatre

acta continues to develop further links with national and European community theatre companies. This has included a performance by an international company at the actacentre in autumn 2015, and performances at the GtFA and AHRC funded National Festival of Community Theatre in June 16, preceded by a series of quarterly acta Foundation seminars.

National Festival of Community Theatre June 13-16th 2016

The festival will feature performances from Collective Encounters, Glasgow Citizens Theatre, CAN Manchester, Entelechy Arts and acta. All companies will present workshops about their work, with

additional workshops from London Bubble, Medart, and international guests from Divadlo Bez Domova (Slovakia) and Rotterdams Wijktheater (Netherlands). Other guest speakers include Francois Matarrasso, Dr Helen Nicholson, Dr Kerrie Schaefer.

MedArt (international project) 2015-17

Medart is a European project, funded by Erasmus+, which is aimed at sharing good practice amongst eight European companies who use theatre as a way of engaging socially disadvantaged adults, with the view of increasing personal and social skills and improving their chances of getting employment.

The project is being coordinated by Divadlo bez domova, who were partners on acta's Grey Matters project, (2013-15), and other partners include long-time acta collaborators Teatr Grodzki from Poland:

Divadlo Bez Domova, Slovakia – working with homeless people in Bratislava
Teatr Grodzki – theatre with disabled and disadvantaged people in Bielsko-Biala, Poland
Asociacion Acunagua, Canary Islands, Spain – drama and theatre with young people
Drustvo ProSoc, Slovenia – theatre for employability with young people
CSC, Sicily, Italy – youth opportunities and education
MVKBP, Hungary – theatre with homeless and disadvantaged people
Hogeschool Rotterdam, Netherlands – university – evaluation of project
(- See more at: <https://www.acta-bristol.com/medart/#sthash.hHdaGht7.dpuf>)

Creative Europe

acta will develop and coordinate a bid to Creative Europe for a new project in the period 2016-2018, focussing on audience and participation development within excluded communities in several European countries.

5.2 Local Programme

Our local programme delivered from and around the actacentre in Bedminster, and touring to some of the "least engaged" communities in Bristol, will include the second year of our Arts & Communities programme (15-16) and a range of actacentre weekly primary contact workshops funded by BIG Reaching Communities (15 – 18). In 16 – 18, it is envisaged that our touring community theatre programme will develop with new strategic funding support.

In 2015-16, acta delivered ten new plays which performed at the actacentre, and toured to community venues and schools around the City.

During 2016-18, acta will develop new partnerships with community groups, to create relevant community theatre reflecting the cultural diversity of the City. The programme will include:-

- *Yusuf Can't Talk* - national tour (2016)
- *Only the Lonely* - actacompany show May 2016
- *Fatima and Sumaya* – migrant women's theatre (March-June 2016)
- *Stories by Moonlight* – Malcolm X Elders, June 2016
- *The Battle of the Ones* – Bedminster Youth Theatre, June 2016
- *Surplus to Requirements* – The Thursdays intergenerational group
- Annual accessible and affordable Christmas show at actacentre
- schools tours by day-time adult community group
- new plays by Phoenix young adults Theatre group

The local programme at the actacentre will include a range of weekly arts activities for local people, including further development of the Community Choir, children's and youth theatres, and Making Time arts for older people. Most of these groups will also work towards productions.

5.3 Heritage projects

Sailors Tales 2015-2016

In Autumn 2015, work began on a new large-scale heritage theatre project for N Bristol, *Sailors' Tales*. acta is working in partnership with Avonmouth Community Centre and the two Avonmouth primary schools to develop a theatre project, which will focus on oral history from local Merchant Seamen sailors, and their families, celebrating their lives and experiences.

The main focus will be a community play – *Sailors' Tales* – involving 18 local people of all ages. This will perform in Avonmouth and Bedminster. There will be also be a schools-based project, with acta workers and participants leading workshops in local schools.

Blood on the Coal 2016-2017

Intergenerational partnership project with local neighbourhood group Way Out West, focusing on coal-mining heritage of South Bristol, involving local schools, acta choir, local performers, and existing acta groups.

Gas Girls regional tour 2017-2018

Following the success of *Gas Girls* (2014), applications will be made to ACE strategic touring and HLF to support the re-rehearsal and regional tour of *Gas Girls*, timed to commemorate the end of WW1. The proposed tour will target community venues outside Bristol, and will be part of acta's initiative to raise awareness and audiences for high-quality community theatre.

5.4 Young Carers

Our programme of work with young carers in and around Bristol will continue through this period, with new funding from BBC Children in Need

In addition to friends and family of the cast, a wider audience of local young people and professionals working with young carers will be targeted for the show, as part of a new campaign to raise awareness of the significant numbers of hidden young carers.

There will be two further young carers' theatre shows in this year, created intensively as "play in a week" challenges with new groups of young carers, whose family and friends will be supported to attend the final performance.

Monitoring and evaluation of previous acta young carers' show audiences provide evidence that over 90% of the audience are people who rarely or never attend the theatre. Our young carers projects provide some of our most effective shows in terms of engaging new working class audiences.

This programme will be developed further following the production in April 15, with new project funding being sought as a priority in the fundraising strategy.

6. Management and governance

The company is working to a ten year vision (2012-22), and is already achieving a growing reputation locally, nationally and internationally. In 2015-18, our capacity to respond to and deliver on the increasing demand for acta's innovative and diverse projects will be developed further. We will build further on the new marketing strategy, which has been developed alongside the fundraising strategy, to improve how acta communicates, and to raise the profile of the company.

6.1 Key risks:

- Failure of funding bids for projects: Should this occur, acta has a robust and effective fundraising strategy, led by Artistic Director with years of experience of raising funds from diverse sources. Bids are made well in advance of project start dates, ensuring there is enough time for business plans to be updated and new sources of funding identified.
- Losing Staff: acta have a committed core team, who are likely to remain for the period 2016-18. Also, our Foundation initiative is recruiting new young workers, bringing in fresh energy and commitment.
- Losing Board members; acta is constantly renewing the Board with new members, and at AGM January 2016 appointed 4 new members. The company is aiming to increase Board membership further by October 2016, with a target of another 4 new members.
- Finding partners: interest in acta is increasing, and acta's raised profile over the next 3 years will continue the demand for acta partnerships among other organisations.

6.2 Management

acta is managed by a Council of Management who are Directors of the Company and Trustees of the Charity. This diverse board of eight represents the different geographical areas, cultures and generations that acta engages with in the City. The skill-set of the board is appropriate to acta's mission to increase engagement amongst those least engaged; a retired Senior Youth Officer ; marketing director; Community Development worker in multi-cultural school; community housing officer; retired arts officer; representatives and participants from local community.

This Council is fully involved in governance, contributing directly to acta's effectiveness and accountability. Board members represent and advise the company, including on-going review of business plan progress, with 6 full board meetings per year, and more regular sub-committee meetings/communications with Senior Management Team in key areas: -

- Finance
- Diversity & engagement
- Human resources
- Health & safety
- Fundraising

In 2016-18 acta will maintain the strength and effectiveness of its Council of Management, whilst seeking to recruit new members to augment existing skills and knowledge.

6.3 Senior Management Team

acta's SMT comprises the Artistic Director, with overall responsibility for company management, artistic delivery, forward planning and fundraising; and Executive Director, with responsibility for programme delivery, line management of staff, marketing and financial management. The SMT meets formally weekly, and works closely together on strategic planning, balancing vision with pragmatism. The whole company meets weekly, and there are regular whole company planning, production and evaluation meetings. All staff members have weekly supervision meetings with a member of the SMT.

These meetings form part of the framework for acta's internal evaluation; each project has a 'kick-off' meeting to communicate project outcomes and discuss detailed artistic programme with project team; regular project meetings to measure progress against outcomes; full evaluation at end of project, including participant, audience and staff input, on occasion employing external consultants.

Staff members are involved in strategic meetings each year, evaluating company progress and adjusting forward plans.

Staff team:

Artistic Director

Executive Director

Associate Director

Production Manager

Programme Assistant

Director's Assistant

Production Assistant (Foundation)

Buildings Assistant (half-time)

Cleaner (part-time)

Theatre Bar Receptionist

6.4 Succession

The Board were fully involved in the Organisational Development in 2012, and the creation of our 10-year vision, including making long-term plans for succession, as the current Artistic Director will be approaching retirement by 2020. The measures that they put in place to address this include robust frameworks for marketing and fundraising, restructuring of job responsibilities within the existing team, and the Foundation initiative.

acta Foundation is designed to underpin and impact on all aspects of acta, with the creation of work-placed learning to prepare and train a new generation of workers for the sector, and promote an understanding of acta's methodology nationally, with the aim of facilitating succession in the long term. The seminar programme attached to Foundation is a means by which acta will be able to disseminate our specific methodologies, and reach potential workers. Our 10 year vision to raise acta's profile and invest in community theatre nationally, will ensure that the company will attract the best candidates for future vacancies.

7. Financial Viability

The latest 2016-18 revenue budgets include an extended core team alongside the small increases to fixed costs that have followed completion of the new actacentre, so project a small increase from the organisation's turnover over the last decade, to £460-465K. This potential increase in revenue is linked to acta's development of the Foundation Programme and subsequent bid to Paul Hamlyn Foundation (pending). The diverse range of sources of income is maintained, with approximately a quarter of annual income from ACE, a quarter from lottery sources, a quarter from charities and a quarter from other sources (including Bristol City Council and EU).

7.1 Arts Council England

In 2012-15, acta secured an average of £115K p.a. in ACE support. With an annual 15-18 NPO grant of £80k, the Company is working to secure additional support through other funds, in order to maintain the level of its income from ACE. The new NPO status will enable acta to develop further

our strategic approach to excellence in community theatre, providing confidence and flexibility, both to respond creatively to community need and to take a leadership role within the sector.

7.2 Costs

Salaries, which account for around 60% of total expenditure, are based on the proposed development of the existing core team, which now includes a Building Assistant, Theatre Bar Receptionist and a permanent Director's Assistant (formerly acta Foundation), to deliver the enhanced programme made possible by the extended acta centre. Core salaries are mainly covered by the core income that remains after fixed costs, with the balance covered by additional project income (where staff hours can be directly attributed to delivering projects.)

The increased fixed costs relating to the extended actacentre do benefit from economies of scale, and remain less than 10% of overall turnover.

Overheads (7% of turnover) will all be funded through an acta fee on project budgets, calculated at 17.5%. Direct project costs are estimated from the draft project budgets for the outline artistic programme.

7.3 Income & Reserves

Earned income projections for the new actacentre have been re-adjusted, to include a manageable loss from the theatre bar and hire income, based on the first four months of operation in the newly developed actacentre.

The main focus for the extended actacentre will be to improve the quality and breadth of acta's community theatre programme, and whilst hire income will increase significantly with a second space, delivery of an enhanced acta programme will take priority over income generation.

The project funding lines in annual budgets are total project budgets, including all partnership funding and other income, alongside the main project funding source e.g. EU, lottery or charitable trust.

The 15/16 capital and revenue accounts project a 25-30k reduction in reserves, which is in large part a result of the 4% overspend in the capital project this year. The Company aims to begin to once again build up its reserves in 16-18 in accordance with its reserves and risk management policy.

Other income is based on the success of our renewed fundraising strategy to date, and our assessment of potential future support for our innovative programme. In 2014 and 2015, acta made successful bids to:

- Big Lottery for our *Get Together* local programme
- HLF for *Sailors' Tales*,
- Wellcome Trust for *Yusuf Can't Talk*
- BBC Children in Need for *Young Carers Youth theatre*
- Erasmus plus for *MedArt* (with 6 European partners)
- AHRC to partnership fund the 2016 National Festival.

Bids are currently in progress for Esmee Fairbairn Trust, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, ACE Strategic Touring, HLF, Creative Europe.

In 2016-18, we will renew support from existing charitable supporters, with further development from new charities; we have already increased charitable support from 7% to 20% of our annual turnover. Projected income also includes increased donations, reflecting new strategies for internet and individual giving to be developed over 2015-18.

7.4 Monitoring

The Executive Director works closely with the Treasurer and Artistic Director to review budgets in accordance with quarterly accounts and fundraising targets, to mitigate financial risks. Financial controls are reviewed annually, and include a range of measures in accordance with auditor guidelines e.g. expenditure authorised by two signatories, one of whom is Treasurer or other trustee/director.

A key financial risk for the Company is the potential loss of a significant source of funding, and acta continues to mitigate against this risk with a diversity of funding sources; it is this range of different funders that is largely attributed to the resilience that the Company has shown over the last three years.

8. Appendices

Revised revenue budgets, 16 – 18

Diversity action plan

Audience development plan

Updated January 2016

Neil Beddow