

Battlecry: the plan to change publishing for the better.

*To make funding bids easier we typically copy the questions into a Word document and work on them there. This is one such document, intended for the Art Council.*

*However, it is a living document in its own right and contains a large amount of information and illustration that is intended for sharing with the wider public rather than a funding body.*

*With thanks to James Ecclestone for advice.*

Abstract

*Please give a concise description of the activity you are asking us to support.*

*No more than 600 characters. Please read the Basic details section of the How to apply guidance for information on how to complete this section*

During a time when publishing is seen as slow, unrepresentative, and in danger of collapse, 20 of the best young British writers will team up create two topical novels that are relevant to the changes in life in 2018/2019. They will go from blank pages on Monday morning to a publication on Sunday night.

eQuality Time will select these writers for their words and their ability to speak to audiences whose voices aren't heard in mainstream publishing. Audiences will be hit by the twin shock of characters that are both like them and are reacting to events that they themselves are still processing.

# Introduction

## Why eQuality Time?

*Please provide a brief summary of your (or your organisation's) recent relevant artistic work, experience and achievements:*

*No more than 1500 characters.*

eQuality Time's recent achievements include:

winning the 2015 Inclusive Technology Prize

being named in the 2016 Nominet top 100, alongside projects like #blacklivesmatter and Well Told Story.

Producing over 80 novels with 800 young people with our creative writing intervention White Water Writers (whitewaterwriters.com).

Winning and delivering the tender for providing an artistic installation for Bath Spa’s MIX conference on the theme of creative writing.

The key team members for this project, who will also interview and select the project's writers are:

Dr Joe Reddington, a designer with a focus on inclusion and creativity. His art projects include the 418 teapot (http://goo.gl/Wf3056), and Flowers for Turing (http://goo.gl/nNrdtf). He pioneered group novel writing interventions to improve outcomes. In the process he produced over 80 novels with groups from schools, universities, hospises, and special units, developing the software and horning the techniques to be used in the BATTLECRY project.

Dr Douglas Cowie is an American novelist and senior lecturer in creative writing at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is the author of Owen Noone and the Marauder (Canongate 2005), Sing for Life: Tin Pan Alley (Black Hill Press 2013), Sing for Life: Away, You Rolling River (Black Hill Press 2014), and Noon in Paris, Eight in Chicago (Myriad Editions 2016).

Francesca Baker is a journalist, events organiser, and marketer. She is founder and creator of Let’s Tell Stories, a space to read and write to inspire and learn and produced the book Eating and Living (2016).

## The Project

*What is your proposed artistic activity, and what do you want to achieve by doing it?*

*No more than 1500 characters.*

The 2015 report: ‘Writing the Future: Black and Asian Writers and Publishers in the UK Market Place’ found that BAME authors were less likely to be published or have an agent and were pushed to have their characters match cultural stereotypes. The 2015 Diversity Baseline Survey Results found massive underprepresentation for disability at all levels in the publishing industry, At the same time, writers are more likely to been privately educated and older.

The results are novels far from the perspective of most UK readers, losing sales in an world that puts more and more value on 'now' and 'real'.

Our project is the answer. Twenty of the best young British writers will team up create a topical novel that is relevant to the changes in life in 2016/2017. They will go from blank pages on Monday morning to a publication on Sunday night and show that the long-form novel remains a reflection of life rather than a memory of it.

eQuality Time will select these writers for their words and for their ability to speak to audiences that feel their voices aren't heard in mainstream publishing. Audiences will be hit by the twin shock of characters that both like them and are reacting to events that they themselves are still processing.

This is a 'time to write' project, compensating two groups of ten professional- standard writers for the time over week-long periods to produce two full length literary works on topics in the 'now'. It is supported by industry figures whose testimonials are attached and our methodology and has been shown to produce spectacularly strong, heartfelt work with writers from primary school age to university students.

# Our Goals

* To employ writers
* To improve (20) writers and put them on the path to a real publishing deal
* As a proof of concept for TooManyCooks operating at high level.

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## Development of the writers

*Why is this activity important for your artistic development?*

*No more than 1500 characters.*

A core goal is the development of the selected writers. The writers will work in a way that is entirely new to them - with group structures in place to help them focus their creativity onto their work. By working in a highly collaborative environment with nine other writers, they can influence, and be influenced by the other writers think about writing, rather than only viewing each other’s work at clearly defined stages.

We believe that one of the great tragedies in literature is that the modern commercial environment accepts only the 'complete package' - there are writers who craft breathtaking narrative but who are let down by their dialogue; writers who can give a world utter realism, but who have underdeveloped characterization. By putting writers in a highly collaborative environment, we give them the space to really exercise their skills, creating an extremely strong narrative, but also the experience to strengthen their weaker areas and become more acceptable to publishing outlets.

A second core goal is to push the boundaries of collaborative published fiction as an art form. The project will demand more from the writers than they have ever delivered before. The result of our work will challenge the art communities’, and the public’s perception of what the relationship between author and work should be. Indeed, an advantage of the process is that the novel can be set astonishingly close to the time it’s read, and respond to political and cultural events that may have only happened a couple of weeks ago from the reader’s perspective.

## Work already completed

*Please briefly identify the main stages of any planning and preparation activity completed to date. Please note this work should not be included in your budget, as we cannot fund any part of an activity that has already taken place.(1500)*

*We want to know what planning you have done to date so that we can understand if your activity is well considered and realistic. Please list the preparation you have done for this activity. For example:*

*• research*

*• developing partnerships*

*• scoping work (eg audiences, building) • considering potential risks*

*• planning the delivery of the activity (eg producing a timeline)*

*• securing commitment from partners subject to funding*

eQuality Time has been working on this for two years. During this time, it has been one of our three main goals. Our steps so far include:

-writing a comprehensive Theory of Change on the topic of making publishing more modern and diverse: from there, building a project concept that met the needs of writers, readers, influencers, and funders.

-scouting of potential project locations; covering several cities and a number of implementation plans

-trialing the creative process with University Student groups at Royal Holloway, Keele University, and the University of Central Lancashire.

-creating 'IMPS', the bespoke software that allows the writers to collaborate effectively around the creative process.

-creating a detailed project risk assessment at strategic and tactical levels.

- developing relationships with organisations seeking to increase diversity in publishing.

Publishing engagement

*Fundraising*

*Please describe your approach to raising as much money as you can from other sources. Identify which other sources of funding you have applied to, and the progress of any other applications you have made (including the date you will know the outcome)(1500 char):*

To raise funds for this project we have been charging schools and community groups to deliver similar creative writing projects with their underprivileged children. So far we have raised £5,000 and are on course to raise the remaining £4,300 in the next few months. These amounts, in combination with a grant from the Arts Council, will allow us to carry out the project.

### Support in kind

As a design decision, this project includes no ‘Support in Kind’: a key reason for the project is that we believe all of our artists should be, and must be, paid fairly. There will be no volunteering on this project, and all of our costs within our budget document.

In addition, there are several organisations that specialise in fiction produced by writers from diverse backgrounds. We have had firm commitments from the following organisations to help us recruit participants for the project:

* Inclusive Minds
* Spread The Word
* Common Word
* Letterbox Library
* [The Writes of Woman](https://thewritesofwoman.wordpress.com/2016/04/17/in-the-media-april-2016-part-two/)

Recommendation Letter from Literary Agent

*Please provide a brief summary of your and your partners' recent experience in managing similar types of activity (1500 char):*

All members of the eQuality Time team have extensive experience of both event management and the novel writing process. Significantly, eQuality Time has produced over 80 novels with groups from schools, universities, hospises, and special units, developing the software and horning the techniques to be used in the BATTLECRY project, which will our first aimed at commercial and critical success (the others were aimed at writer development).

Regarding the media facing aspects of the work, we have dealt with a variety of significant media events in the past 12 months including being the winner of the £50,000 Nesta Inclusive Prize and being chosen as one of the 2016 Nominet 100 projects for social good. We have also budgeted for extra resources from a media agency we have close links with.

Our links with publishers and agents are evidenced by the recommendation letter attached to this application.

## Our financial responsibilities.

*Briefly tell us about your experience in managing budgets, and describe how you will manage the budget:*

*No more than 1500 characters.*

Equality Time was awarded grant funding of £34k in 2014 and £50k in 2015 and receives an increasing amount of earned income as projects mature and become sustainable.

Equality Time has a mix of restricted and unrestricted funding. Overhead costs are clearly identified and we aim to apply 'full cost recovery’ in all cases. Core costs are apportioned to projects and 20% of invoiced income is allocated to overheads.

Prior to joining eQuality Time our treasurer had experience of budgeting in the social enterprise sector, having founded and run West Lancs Positive Living (charity) EnDevA (CIC) and Phil the Box (Co ltd by guarantee) and is currently legal and financial officer with Burscough Parish Council managing an income of over £100,000 pa which is subject to strict budget controls and external audit.

Accounts are prepared using a spreadsheet, and all income and expenditure is allocated to a budget heading and to a fund. A bank reconciliation and analysis of variation from budget is completed monthly so that we always know that expenditure is on track. All expenditure decisions are decided at committee meetings and all payments require two signatories. Financial controls are robust.

At the outset, Equality Time invested in the services of an accountant (TLL) who has specialist knowledge of the third sector, so that as we grow we are confident that our accounting systems are capable of growing with us and that we always have access to sound advice.

## Rate justification.

*Please describe how any fees, rates and purchases have been calculated:*

*No more than 1500 characters.*

Our Insurance cost is a policy quote from http://insuranceoctopus.co.uk/

We have used the median Non-profit Project Manager Salary (United Kingdom) £29,923 <http://www.payscale.com/research/UK/Job=Program_Manager,_Non-Profit_Organization/Salary> as the basis for project manager salary. We have also used the Society of Authors guidelines on paying artists to come to a writer payment of £11 per hour. The accounts cost is from a quote from our accountant and all other costs were estimated from our records on previous similar projects.

*Who will engage with this activity? Tell us about the target audiences or people taking part, and how they will engage with the activity. If the activity will not engage people immediately, e.g. some research and development activities, please tell us about who you anticipate will engage with your work in the longer term:*

Readers of contemporary fiction who buy fewer than five books a year will engage with this activity by reading the novels that our project produces. To ensure that we are matching their needs, we will be running several focus groups (we did not record the focus group participants as activity participants because we they are gaining no long-term benefit from the activity shortly before our writing weeks to identify the ‘missing stories’. The audience development plan goes into much more detail on this and discuses how we tread the line between giving our writers complete artistic freedom and allowing our audience research to shape the narrative.

From a 2014 YouGov survey, 39% of the publish public buy fewer than five books in a year, but the vast majority of them do buy some. (Source, YouGov). These are people who do read, but rarely. Finding ways to increase book sales in these groups would significantly grow the market.

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We’ll be co-ordinating our press strategy with the aid of Consilium Communications. And give more details on this in the Audience Development Plan.

## Evaluation

*Please briefly describe your plans to evaluate this activity(1500chars):*

*Please briefly tell us how you plan to monitor*

*the progress of your activity and to evaluate your achievements throughout the activity. If we give you a grant, we will ask you to evaluate your work and fill in an activity report form at the end of your activity.*

*Evaluation is a structured way of thinking about what has happened. Evaluation can help you to:*

*• make decisions during your activity*

*• shape future activities*

*• improve your work*

*• show what happened as a result of your activity*

*Where appropriate, you should tell us about how you plan to share your findings with the sector.*

*You can find a basic introduction to evaluating arts activities in the information sheet ‘Self evaluation’, on our website.*

Our audience development plan (attached) gives details of the specific audience and media engagement that we are tracking in order to achieve our targets in those areas. The quantitative data we shall be recording includes the engagement and reach of press coverage.

In terms of evaluation of the artistic output – in additional to critical evaluation, we will be collecting qualitative information from both our artists and members of the public by means of interviews, focus groups and other engagement activities associated with the performance. We have a particular focus on how the artists believe they have grown during the project.

In terms of using the information to monitor performance and achievements during the activity - Project management will involve informal and formal review meetings between Dr Reddington and the eQuality Time directors. Formal review meetings will be scheduled at the end of each month, with written reviews of progress at the end of each three-month period. These meetings and reports will each evaluate the status of the project against its indicators and relevant changes will be made where necessary.