

How does your organisation intend to use this grant?

Who we are

We are White Water Writers. We've published well over 100 novels written by a teams of disadvantaged young people. Sometimes this means students in a pupil referral unit ("Toxic Paradise: a london story") or young offenders institute("Beginning of the End"). Sometimes it means special educational needs ("The Mystery of the Locket") , children in foster care ("The unfortunate disease"), or working in a children's hospice (XXXXX). A lot of the time it means working with Pupil Premium students or in areas of significant deprivation.

Here's what we do: we take ten KS3 pupils out of lessons for a week and they write and publish a novel. For real.

In the process, the writers vastly improve their creative writing: everything from plotting a character arc to setting a scene to making sure that a sentence has exactly the rhythm they are looking for. On top of that, they have to properly work as a team, improving their ability to give feedback, take feedback, organise tasks and trust their group.

Groups start with a blank page on Monday morning. We take them through a series of exercises and activities and publish their own collaboratively written novel on Amazon on Friday afternoon. Nobody outside the group touches a key during the week: the novel is entirely the work of the students involved.

We wouldn't be able to run this project effectively without Amazon's self-publishing platform, so, you know, thanks for that.

Scaling up.

White Water Writers has been using university volunteers to run camps. Students train at one camp, then they lead their own. We grew to run 20-25 camps in a year.

We have grown as much as we can that way. Schools want camps all around the year but the students can only help on their breaks. It's also hard to manage to train all the students in time for them to run their own camps. Particularly because the covid lockdowns disrupted our recruitment - we were relying on a streaky stream of new volunteers.

Clearly, to help more children, we need people who running camps full time. The problem is that we are too small to create work for a full-time person and it would need us to risk a lot of money. If we had the people we'd have enough work, and if we had the work we'd be able to pay the people.

We could pay someone only when there is work for them, but that's unfair on them: camps come in groups. We'd also need to pay someone to co-ordinate schools to work in.

Here is what we'll do. We're putting the camp delivery and camp support jobs together. We'll provide at least ten hours of support/recruitment work every week. This carries over: if one of them has two camps in a row, then when they come back, there will be 30 hours of support

work (if they want it) for them. If they are very good at recruiting schools, the role will quickly turn into a full time one (again if they want that).

The role would be for a year. Of course, the more schools who want a camp, the more money we'll have. Each camp we book means we can pay a contract for three weeks more. So once a month we'll look at the number of bookings each person has made and change the contract size. I want this to be temporary. Once enough bookings are coming in, we can make the job more secure.

Are you a friend of Amazon?

We exclusively publish our books to the KDP platform, and use AWS to host all our web resources, including the code that makes the whole process work.

How does your process work?

It's worth you knowing a bit more about how we work so we use this section to give some more details on the overall team writing process.

Production is split into phrases: on the first day the writers work in one team. Using profiles produced in audience focus groups, they plan out a narrative at increasing levels of detail throughout the day. A key part of this is that the characters driving the narrative are identified early. After characters are identified they are assigned to writers (normally one per writer, but some writers have other jobs and some writers take on a minor character in addition to the main character).

Once characters are assigned writers only work on content that involves that character, and trust that other writers are making sure that other characters are engaging and consistent and that other team members will keep a wider-eye view of the narrative. This ensures that characters are consistent, that plot holes are prevented, and that writers are particularly motivated.

By the end of day one the writers should have completely storyboarded the novel as a team.

During days two and three writers draft the content: when two or more characters are in a scene the scene is written iteratively (one writer will outline, another will draft, another will redraft) so that there is never a time when one writer is watching another writer write. This constant redrafting provides a balance between a consistent style and an overly consistent merging of character identities.

From day four writers are rewriting, copyediting and proofreading, focusing on their own character but acting as sounding boards and second opinions for other writers so that themes can be reinforced and other aspects of style can be made rigorous.

How does your process work? (200 words version)

It takes five days. On day one they repeatedly plan a narrative at increasing detail. The characters that drive the narrative are identified early and then assigned to writers (normally one per writer).

From then on, writers only work on content that involves their character. They have to trust that other writers are making their own characters engaging and consistent. This ensures consistent characterisation, no plot holes, and high levels of motivation.

By the end of day one the writers should have completely storyboarded the novel as a team. Writers draft prose on days two and three. (when multiple characters are in a scene one writer will outline, another will draft, another will redraft). This constant redrafting balances consistent style and character voice.

For days four and five the writers rewrite, copyedit and proofread. They focus on their own character but acting as sounding boards for other writers so that themes can be reinforced and other aspects of style can be made rigorous.

How will you make this project or activity accessible and inclusive?

eQuality Time comes from a very strong background of disability work and inclusive design. Our first major award was winning the £50,000 Nesta Inclusive Technology Prize and accessibility is very much in our, and the project's, DNA. We believe in the social model of disability and we openly commit to make any and all adjustments that are needed for people to participate in and enjoy our work. We'll do this preemptively where possible and reactively where not.

Obviously inclusion accounts for more than just disability and we work hard to make sure that everybody we come into contact with is given our utmost empathy and respect regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation or any protected characteristic.

Who will manage the project or activity?

The lead on this project will be eQuality Time COO, Dr Joseph Reddington. He is familiar with managing artistic projects of this scale. He will be supervised by the eQuality Time trustees - particularly the Treasurer, Chair, and board member Francesca Baker for financial, personally and creative issues respectively.

Can you manage a budget

eQuality Time has managed grant budgets of £62k from Nesta, £45k from Comic Relief, and £10k from the National Lottery. We have provided arts projects to Kings Collage London, and Keele University to the value of £60k and £20k respectively.

The COO has completed an ACCA chartered accountancy qualification and will have responsibility for this project's budget which has been reviewed and approved by Trustees. He will be overseen by the treasurer who has a CIMA qualification and will present budget reports to the trustees at monthly meetings. We anticipate no cash flow problems as all income is from the Arts Council.

How will you monitor spending on this project or activity?

The project will have a dedicated account within Quickbooks, and financial reports will be submitted to the trustees monthly alongside our expected budget for the month. Our attached budget aggressively verified expected costs and any deviation from expected spending will be obvious to the project lead immediately.

How have you calculated costs for your project or activity?

The budget attached to this application gives full details on every line of the budget. In this section we present a summary.

For all equipment and facilities, we provide three quotes and a justification for our choice. For example, one (!) of the three quotes we have for renting (up to) ten laptops for a week slightly cheaper than the cost of buying ten laptops and we provide a justification in the budget for choosing to purchase rather than rent.

For our cover designers and selection day facilitators, we already have casual staff that can fill those roles, and we filled in our existing agreed rate with those staff.

For our project manager role, we looked at three similar (we focused on maternity cover because that gave us the right length of contact) job adverts and used the quoted salaries as the basis for an average, we do note that there was a wide range of potential salaries for almost identical roles.